Loch Sunart and the Sound of Mull

Community Association of Lochs and Sounds

(CAOLAS)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026

Charity registration number: SC047982

SCIO registered on: 07 December 2017

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name:	Community Association of Lochs and Sounds
Also known as:	CAOLAS
Charity registration number:	SC047982
SCIO registered on:	07 December 2017
Registered Office:	Kiel House, Lochaline, Morvern, PA80 5XT
Country of Origin:	UK

Trustees	**Appointed**
Peter Guthrie	July 2024
Jo Mackichan	January 2024
Alasdair Firth	December 2017
Andy Jackson	December 2017
Allison Jackson	October 2023
Annabel Lawrence (Chair/Treasurer)	December 2017
Floriana Lawrence	May 2023; resigned January 2025
Laura Harvey (Secretary)	December 2017. Resigned January 2024
Mark Woombs (Vice Chair)	December 2017; Resigned October 2023
Dale Meegan (Treasurer)	December 2017; Resigned August 2023
Fee Zanke (Chair)	October 2021. Resigned December 2023

Bankers: The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), Fort William

Website: www.caolas.org

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/marinecommunitygroup/

The Trustees present their 10th annual report and financial statements for the period April 2025– March 2026

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Community Association of Lochs and Sounds was set up as an informal association in 2015 but on 7 December 2017 it registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Association (SCIO). The Charity is administered in accordance with the terms of its Constitution.

Recruitment and Appointment of Board

The Board are appointed by election from the membership at an Annual General Meeting according to its constitution, articles 57-76. The Board may at any time also appoint any member to be a charity trustee if there is a vacancy. The maximum number of trustees is 10.

Trustee Induction and Training

New trustees are provided with a summary of their role and the responsibilities, the constitution, minutes and financial reports of previous meetings and access to online advice from Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Formal training can be accessed if required.

Objectives and Activities

The charity has been formed to:-

- encourage and promote sustainable use of local waters for recreation, fishing and other marine activities.
- promote and carry out research, surveys and investigations of the local marine environment.
- involve the community and raise awareness of marine issues and the related cultural heritage.
- educate and involve younger members of the community.
- protect and allow recovery of biodiversity and natural processes in the Sound of Mull, Loch Sunart.
- Work with other community organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), statutory organisations, the Scottish Government and others, to record, promote and protect our marine environment.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

Staff Capacity & Strategic Coordination

In 2025-2026 funding from the William Grant Foundation enabled CAOLAS to employ a part-time Administrator. Over the course of the year, this evolving role has become a central pillar of the organisation’s internal coordination, communications, and strategic development. The post has significantly enhanced CAOLAS’s capacity to deliver on its aims in research, outreach, education, campaigning, and governance.

Over the past two years, support from the William Grant Foundation has enabled CAOLAS to establish and sustain a part-time Admin role, supporting the day-to-day running and development of the organisation.

During this period, the role helped strengthen organisational capacity across communications, membership, governance support, digital systems, and community engagement. Alongside supporting ongoing activity, the funding also enabled the development of clearer systems, improved continuity, and stronger organisational resilience across CAOLAS.

As this funding period comes to an end, CAOLAS is in a stronger organisational position, with more consistent processes and improved coordination across multiple areas of work.

CAOLAS would like to sincerely thank the William Grant Foundation for its support over the past two years. Flexible funding for organisational capacity is invaluable for small volunteer-led charities, and this support has had a lasting impact on the sustainability and development of the organisation.

Membership Growth & Engagement

A major focus over the past year has been strengthening and growing CAOLAS membership. This included improving membership systems and onboarding processes, maintaining the central membership register and CRM, and increasing outreach through newsletters, social media, events, and printed materials.

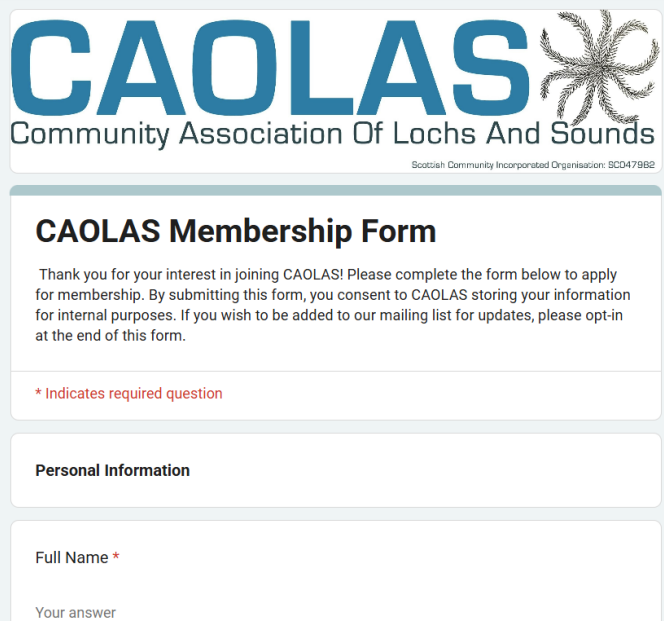


Figure 1 CAOLAS Online Membership Form

Work was also undertaken to develop a more structured and accessible membership offer, including the early development of a Welcome Pack concept and clearer member communications. Alongside this, membership promotion became more consistent and visible across CAOLAS communications and events.

Communications & Outreach

Consistent communications were maintained across newsletters, social media, and local community channels throughout the year.



Figure 2 Example social media posters for CAOLAS events

This included preparation of monthly newsletters, regular social media content, contributions to the local magazine Dè tha dol?, and communications supporting events, campaigns, and trustee recruitment. A clearer communications structure and workflow was developed, helping improve consistency, visibility, and community engagement.

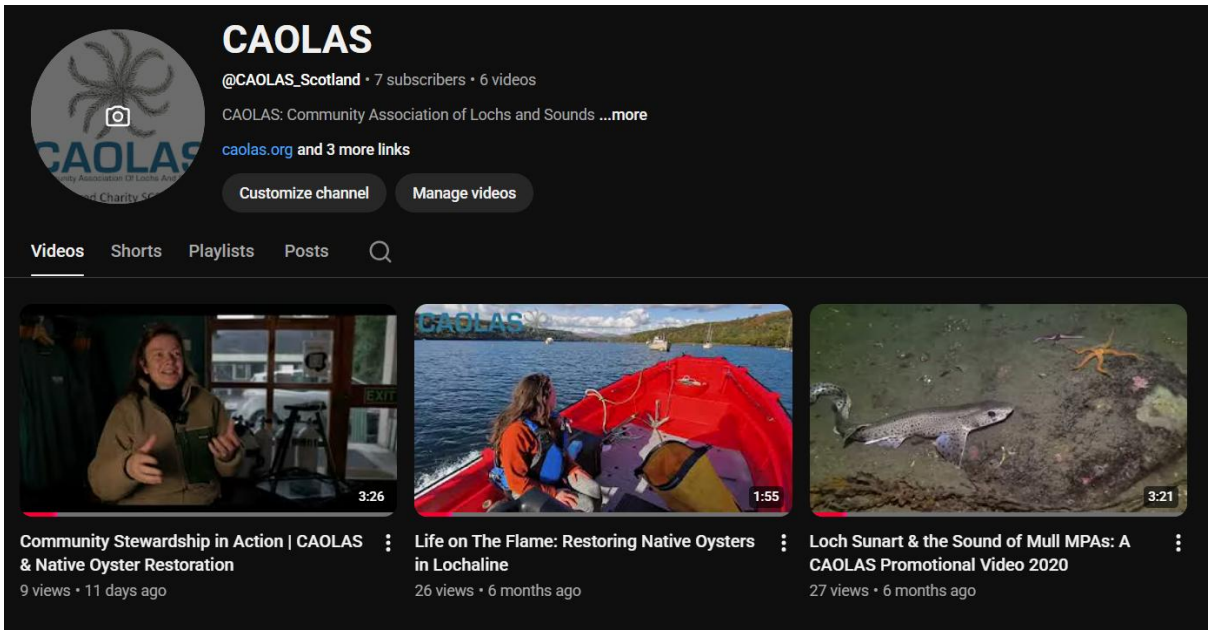


Figure 3 New CAOLAS YouTube Channel

Events, Projects & Partnerships

The role supported delivery and coordination across a range of projects, events, and partnerships during the year.

This included support for the Ocean film screenings, Coastal Testimonies activity through the Our Seas partnership, and wider engagement with networks including the Coastal Communities Network. CAOLAS was supported by Fauna and Flora in the production of a film and other digital assets about the work of CAOLAS which have been very useful in the promotion of CAOLAS. CAOLAS also made a film with Our Seas called “A Line in the Sound” which is raising awareness about the management of the Loch Sunart to Sound of Jura MPA.

CAOLAS Strategy workshop November 2025

CAOLAS with the support of Fauna and Flora Community Support Specialist held a strategy workshop to continue to develop the internal capacity of CAOLAS.

Native Oyster Restoration Project

The Lochaline Native Oyster Restoration Project (LNOP) has remained a cornerstone of CAOLAS’s work throughout 2025-2026. Supported by the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) in partnership with Ardtornish Estate, the project aims to reintroduce and monitor native oyster populations in Loch Aline - enhancing biodiversity and supporting long-term ecosystem recovery.

Project Summary

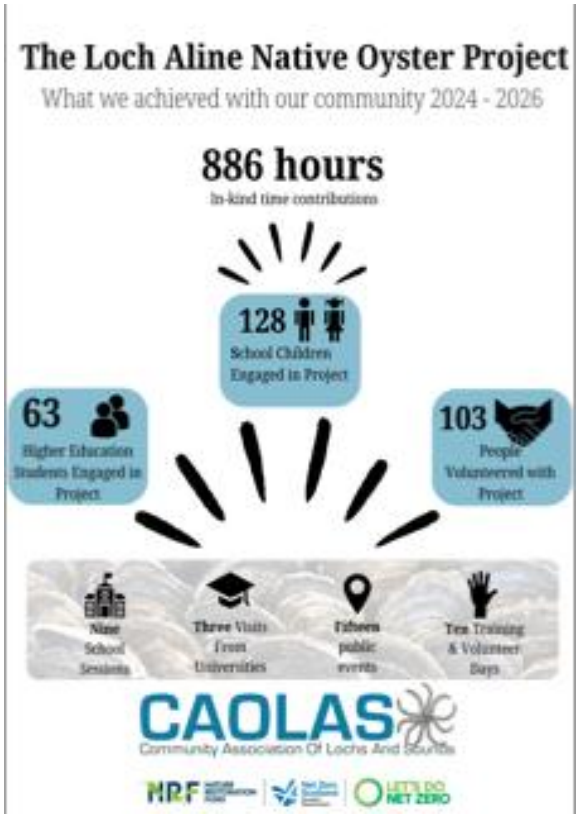
Native oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) provide significant ecosystem services, including water filtration, nutrient cycling, and the creation of complex reef habitats that support biodiversity (van der Schatte Olivier et al., 2018). However, oyster reefs are among the most threatened marine habitats, with an estimated 85% of global populations lost (Beck et al., 2011).

The Loch Aline Native Oyster Project (LNOP) was established in 2021 to restore a native oyster population within Loch Aline on the Morvern peninsula and carried out by volunteers and trustees of CAOLAS (Community Association of Lochs and Sounds). Early shoreline surveys by CAOLAS volunteers revealed the near-complete loss of the historical population, with only three live oysters identified within the loch.

In January 2024, CAOLAS and Ardtornish Estate secured funding through the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) Delivery Phase to support restoration activities. The project supports the NRF priority theme of *coastal and marine initiatives* through promoting the restoration of native oyster habitat. It has also met aims outlined in the Morvern Community Action Plan, by expanding the existing oyster project, and engaging the community in marine restoration.

Community Outreach 2025 -2026

CAOLAS continued to grow its presence within the local community this year through school engagement, participation in local events, educational partnerships, and a consistent online outreach strategy. The LNOP has provided a focus for our wider engagement: An Infographic of the events and volunteer engagement is below:

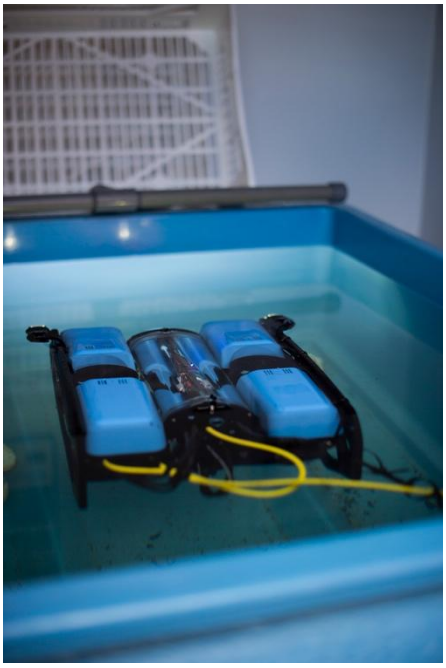


The team hosted stalls at the Morvern Highland Games and in Lochaline during Gala Week, connecting with residents and visitors to share CAOLAS's work and promote marine stewardship. Activities included fun facts about oysters and our local environment, which helped boost local engagement and visibility.

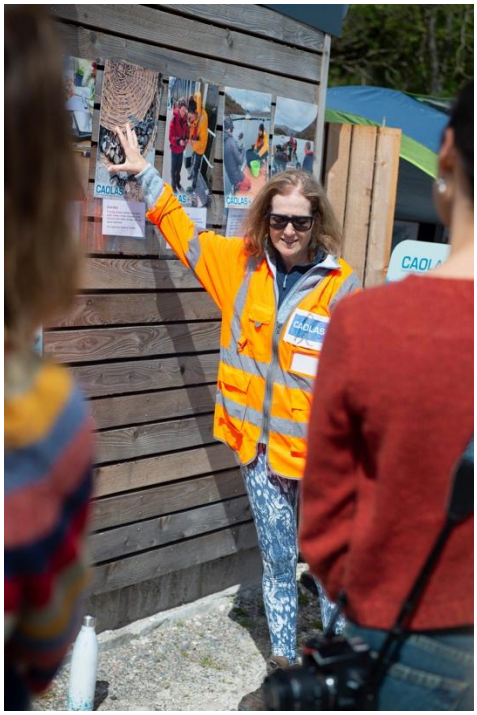
To mark the end of the LNOP in March 2026 CAOLAS held an open day at the Lochaline Pontoons.



CAOLAS team at the Open Day



ROV demonstration in CAOLAS tank



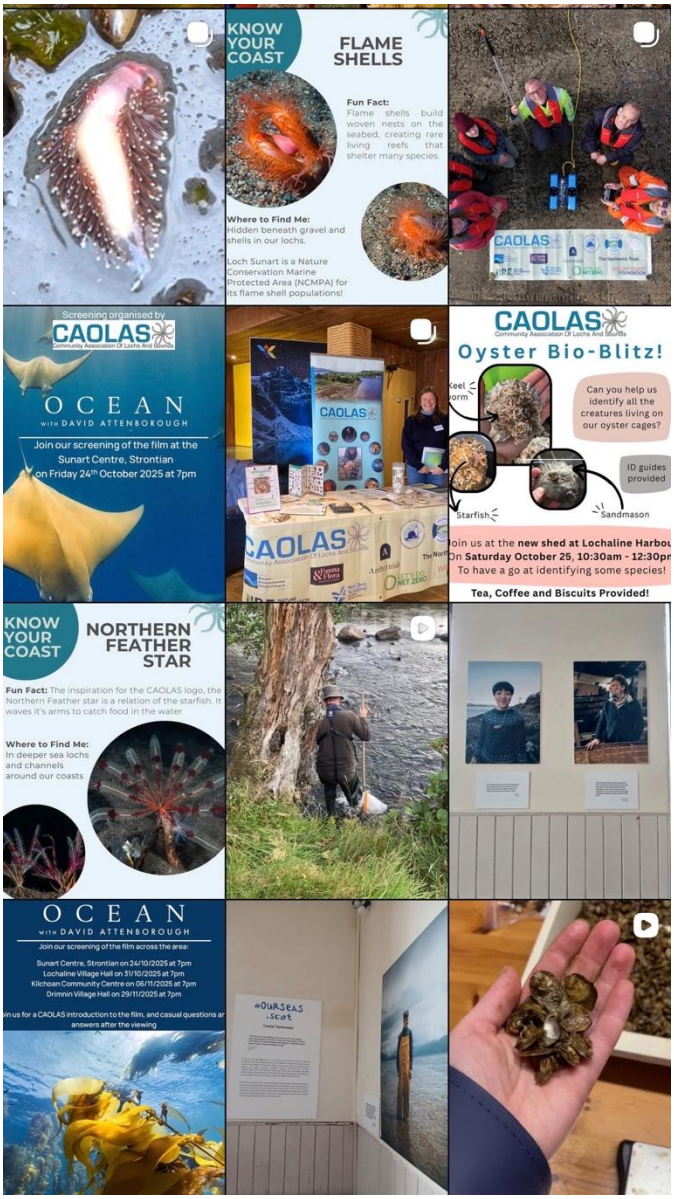
CAOLAS Trustee at Open Day

Together, these activities have helped CAOLAS deepen its roots in the community while strengthening ties with regional research and conservation networks.

Networking

CAOLAS continues to play an active role in local and national marine conservation networks. We remain a committed member of the Coastal Communities Network (CCN), attending regular meetings and training opportunities facilitated by Fauna & Flora International (FFI).

In 2025, CAOLAS hosted the Our Seas Coastal Testimonies Exhibition in Lochaline and Drimnin providing a space for community members to engage with powerful stories of coastal connection and marine environmental change.



Sample of CAOLAS posts on social media

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The charity's reserve policy is to ensure that it holds enough funds to cover at least 6 months unrestricted expenditure. The Trustees therefore do not have any uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Risk Review
The Board of Trustees has conducted its own review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. In particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity, and it is satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate those risks.

Investment Policy
In accordance with the constitution, the charity has the power to make any investment which the trustees see fit.
Exemptions from disclosure

There are no exemptions from disclosure.

Funds held as custodian Trustee on behalf of others
CAOLAS does not hold funds as a custodian Trustee on behalf of others.

Statement of Trustee Responsibilities
The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and accepted accountancy practice.

Charity Law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and of incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the SCIO for that period.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the SCIO and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the relevant legislation. The financial statement contained in this report was independently examined.

Thanks
The Trustees of CAOLAS would like to thank the following funders:-
William Grant Foundation (WGF)
Highlands and Islands Environmental Fund (HIEF)
The Northwick Trust
NatureScot (Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund) SMEEF
Nature Restoration Fund
Highland Council Nature Restoration Fund
Morvern Community Development Company
Community Alliance Scotland Knowledge Exchange Fund

Fauna and Flora continue to provide crucial support and advice to the organisation and Peg Shaw of FFI provides mentoring support for CAOLAS.

We would also like to thank the many members of the community, visitors and volunteers who continue to support us.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Name: Annabel Lawrence (Trustee - Chair)



Date: 28th October 2026

Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating the income and expenditure account)

For the Period 1 April 2025 to 5th April 2026

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice.

The financial statements were independently examined by Voluntary Action Lochaber and approved by the CAOLAS Board.

Signed on its behalf by



Annabel Lawrence
Trustee (Chair)

Date: 28th October 2026

Notes to the Financial Statements: for the Period 1 April 2025– 5 April 2026

INCOME

1. **Charitable Activities for generating funds**

2. **Charitable Activities – grants**

Grants were also received from the following:

- In partnership with the Ardtornish Estate, a grant was secured from NRF for the continuation of the Lochaline Native Oyster Restoration project including funds to employ two staff.
- CAOLAS was awarded a grant by The Highland and Island Environment fund for the Community Marine Officer to undertake a Baseline survey of the waters around Morvern.
- William Grant Foundation supported the CAOLAS admin post and the development of the CAOLAS website.

3. **Investments**

There was no investment income

EXPENDITURE

4. **Salary and On costs**

This included the continued employment of one part-time member of staff, the Community Marine Officer, and the associated on costs such as National Insurance, Pension, expenses for travel and training and payroll services[1]. In February 2024 two more members of staff were recruited: a full-time Project Manager and part-time Project Officer for the Native Oyster Restoration project. These posts were funded by the Nature Restoration Fund.

5. **Professional and Consultancy Fees**

No external professional expertise was engaged during the year.

6. **Insurance**

CAOLAS is insured through the Encompass Charity Scheme: this includes public and employer's liability insurance.

7. **Publicity and Promotion**

Publicity and Promotion was delivered at no cost using online channels.

8. **Materials and Equipment**

The Native Oyster project included the purchase of materials and equipment, live oysters, and the costs of outreach work in the community and local schools.

9. **Subscriptions**

CAOLAS has a subscription for video conferencing including meetings with staff, public talks, Board meetings, and the AGM.

10. **Sundries**

This included postage, accommodation and refreshments for volunteers and meeting venues.

[1] Provided by Voluntary Action Lochaber

Community Association of Lochs and Sounds SCIO
Scottish Charity Number SC047982

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited accounts of Community Association of Lochs and Sounds SCIO.

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2026 which are set out on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of trustee and independent examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the 2006 Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

* to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
* to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met, or

2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Marie McMillan

Marie McMillan Cert Acct (Open)
Date: - 31st October 2026
Finance Manager
Voluntary Action Lochaber
An Drochaid, Claggan Road
Fort William
PH33 6PH

VOLUNTARY ACTION LOCHABER
Buidheann Saor-Thoileach Lochaibsair

Community Association of Lochs and Sounds SCIO
Receipts and Payments Accounts
For the year ended 31st March 2026
Scottish Charity Number SC047982

	Note	Year to 2026 Unrestricted £	Year to 2026 Restricted £	Year to 2026 Total £	Year to 2025 Total £
Income					
Charitable Activities - Grants	1				
Grants		15,750	52,315	**68,065**	72,585
Other Income	2				
Donations		2,804	-	**2,804**	20
Payment Refund		-	-	**-**	77
Total Income		18,554	52,315	**70,869**	72,682
Expenditure					
Projects					
Native Oyster Project / NRF Project					
Materials & Equipment		-	-	**-**	-
Salary Costs / Other Personnel Costs		1,939	45,315	**47,254**	53,363
Professional Fees		-	2,000	**2,000**	-
Knowledge Exchange / Training Costs		-	-	**-**	4,758
Morvern Baseline Survey Project					
Salary Costs / Other Personnel Costs		-	-	**-**	9,181
Materials & Equipment		-	-	**-**	17,879
Core Activities					
Salary Costs / Other Personnel Costs		13,080	-	**13,080**	7,857
Insurance		453	-	**453**	827
Admin Expenses		-	-	**-**	300
Publicity & Promotion		315	-	**315**	-
Room Hire		30	-	**30**	137
Advertising		-	-	**-**	235
Training / Course Expenses		87	-	**87**	-
Boat Equipment / Expenses		6,546	-	**6,546**	1,097
Sundries		1,254	-	**1,254**	123
Governance Costs					
Independent Examination	7	360	-	**360**	180
Total Payments		24,064	47,315	**71,379**	95,936
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year before transfers		-	5,000	**5,000**	(23,254)
Transfers between funds	6	-	-	**-**	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		-	5,000	**5,000**	(23,254)

		£	£	£	£
Statement of Balances - as at 31st March 2026					
Opening cash at bank and in hand		10,044	-	**10,044**	33,298
Add Income		18,554	52,315	**70,869**	72,682
		28,598	52,315	**80,913**	105,980
Less Expenditure		24,064	47,315	**71,379**	95,936
Transfers	6	-	-	**-**	-
Closing cash at bank and in hand		4,533	5,000	**9,533**	10,044
Bank and Cash Balances					
Business Current Account		4,533	5,000	**9,533**	10,044
Outstanding lodgements		-	-	**-**	-
Outstanding cheques		-	-	**-**	-
Petty cash		-	-	**-**	-
	9 & 10	4,533	5,000	**9,533**	10,044
		-	-	-	-

Signed on behalf of all Trustees:



Name: Annabel Lawrence, Trustee (Chair)
Date: 28th October 2026

The notes on the following pages form part of these financial statements.

Community Association of Lochs and Sounds SCIO
Scottish Charity Number SC047982
Notes to the accounts
For the year ended 31st March 2026

Basis of Accounting
These accounts have been prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with the Charities & Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Nature and purpose of funds
Unrestricted funds are those that may be used at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity. The trustees maintain a single unrestricted fund for the day-to-day running of the charity.

Restricted funds may only be used for specific purposes. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for specific purposes.

Related party transactions
No remuneration was paid to the trustees or any connected persons during the year (2025: £NIL).

1 **Grants**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2026	Total 2025
Flora and Fauna International (F&F)	-	-	-	2,314
William Grant Foundation (WGF)	15,750	5,000	20,750	15,000
Scottish Community Alliance (SCA)	-	-	-	1,639
SMEEF (SMEEF)	-	-	-	3,114
Ardtornish Estate Hydro Community Fund (HF)	-	2,000	2,000	-
Nature Restoration Fund (NRF)	-	45,315	45,315	50,518
	15,750	52,315	68,065	72,585

2 **Donations**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2026	Total 2025
Misc Donations	204	-	204	20
William Grant Foundation	100	-	100	-
Flora & Fauna International	2,500	-	2,500	-
	2,804	-	2,804	20

6 **Transfers between funds**
There were no transfers between funds during the year (2025: £4,200).

7 **Governance Costs**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2026	Total 2025
Independent Examination	360	-	360	180
	360	-	360	180

9 **Restricted Funds**

	At 1st April 2025	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	At 31st March 2026
Survey Costs (HF)	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Website Development Costs (WGF)	-	5,000	-	-	5,000
Staff Costs (NRF)	-	45,315	(45,315)	-	-
	-	52,315	(47,315)	-	5,000

Ardtornish Estate Hydro Community Fund - Survey Costs
William Grant Foundation - Website Development Costs
Nature Restoration Fund - Staff Costs

10 **Unrestricted Funds**

	At 1st April 2025	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	At 31st March 2026
Unrestricted Funds	10,044	18,554	(24,064)	-	4,533
	10,044	18,554	(24,064)	-	4,533