

The Edinburgh Society of Organists

Scottish Charity Number SC013728

Annual Report of the Trustees and Accounts
for the financial year from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

The Edinburgh Society of Organists

Trustees' Annual Report

Trustees during the year and to date:

Dr Martyn Strachan (President)

Russell Duncan (Honorary Secretary)

Dr Caroline Cradock (Honorary Treasurer)

Members of Council during the year and to date, in addition to Trustees:

Michael Harris (Past President) – retired 13th May 2025

Sandy Chenery (Vice President) – resigned 13th May 2025

Calum Cooper (Membership Secretary) – elected 13th May 2025

Dr John Kitchen (Editor of Console)

David Turner (Webmaster)

Imogen Morgan – retired 13th May 2025

Morley Whitehead – retired 13th May 2025

Dr Chris Johnson

Justin Nash

Simon Bertram – elected 13th May 2025

Ben Shanks – elected 13th May 2025

Contact address

c/o Russell Duncan, Honorary Secretary
20 Briarbank Terrace, Edinburgh, EH11 1SU

Charitable Purpose

The Edinburgh Society of Organists (the “ESO”) was established as an unincorporated association in 1913. Its principal aim is the advancement of education in music, with particular emphasis on liturgical and organ music. The objectives and administrative arrangements of the Society are set out in its Constitution.

Management of the Society

The Trustees of the Society are the President, the Secretary and the Treasurer. The Trustees delegate the routine management of the Society to a Council consisting of the President, the Vice President, the retiring President during an ex-officio year of membership of the Council, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Membership Secretary, the Editor and at least six and no more than nine ordinary members, elected from the Society’s own membership. The election is performed at the Annual General Meeting, which takes place in May.

Turcan Connell (TC) lodged the application for Voluntary Registration of Hollins House with the Registers of Scotland (ROS) prior to the deadline (31st March 2024). Confirmation was received from TC on 3rd November 2025 that the Title Sheet for Hollins House had now been issued. TC have subsequently checked it and confirmed it is in order. Any changes in the Trustees requires to be notified timeously to ROS.

The President serves for two years after which the Vice President automatically assumes the role of President. All other office-bearers hold office for one year and are eligible for re-election. Ordinary Council members serve for three years and are eligible for re-election only after one year has lapsed. Members of the Council receive no remuneration.

Affiliation

The ESO is affiliated to both the Incorporation of Organists (the “IAO”) and the Scottish Federation of Organists (the “SFO”). An annual capitation fee is paid by the Society in respect of its affiliation to the IAO. Two members of the Society represent the Society at the SFO committee meetings.

2025-2026 Events and Achievements

The ESO has enjoyed a successful year of varied, interesting and eclectic events over the 2025/2026 session. Attendances have, as usual, fluctuated. It has facilitated several events designed to promote an understanding of pipe organs, of organ music, of composers, of organ improvisation and an organ masterclass for young players.

Saturday 5th April 2025 – Composition Masterclass with William Whitehead

This was held at Palmerston Place Church. The focus of the event was very much on the nature and content of Bach’s *Orgelbuchlein* rather than on the techniques of composition. William played works by Joanna Marsh, Jan Laukvik, Gabriel Jackson and Nigel Allcoat. Compositions were also played by those present that afternoon including John Riley, Robert Douglas Kerr, Luis Meseguer Mira and Imogen Morgan.

Tuesday 13th May 2025 – ESO AGM and recital at Greyfriars Kirk

Twenty two members of the ESO (out of a total of just over two hundred members) attended the meeting. Twenty five members sent their apologies. It would be very encouraging if more members attended given that the date is announced roughly one year before the event. The meeting ran smoothly and efficiently, there being no contentious or problematic issues. Chris Nickol’s recital was meticulously prepared and very well thought through. It included pieces by Kenneth Leighton, Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers, Kester Clark and C-M Widor.

ESO Trip to The Netherlands – May 2025

In the third week of May, a group of twelve ESO members enjoyed a wonderful trip to see and play organs in the Netherlands. ESO member, Alan Ireland put together the itinerary with assistance from Dutch organists Henk de Vries and Sander Booij. Michael Harris booked the accommodation. Visits included Appingedam, Krewerd – ’t Zandt, Zeerijp – Loppersum and Zuidbroek – Bellingwolde.

Saturday 13th September 2025 – ESO Young Organists’ Recital

Six young organists under twenty years of age, with the youngest being thirteen played on the fine Morningside Parish Church organ before a decent sized audience of ESO members, friends and family. Whilst naturally of varying degrees of difficulty, all of the music played was from a repertoire that one might expect to hear in any “professional” organ recital. It was both a hugely enjoyable musical experience and also an encouraging one given the scarcity of young people who are learning the organ.

Thursday 9th and Friday 10th October 2025 – Palmerston Place Church

Gerard Brooks gave an illustrated lecture entitled “Gigout 100” on the life and organ music of Eugene Gigout over two consecutive evenings. The first was an illustrated lecture about Gigout’s life and compositions in the context of the cultural surroundings of the time interspersed with demonstrations of several of his organ works. The second was a recital of some of Gigout’s other works.

Tuesday 11th November 2025 – The Music Room, Mary Erskine School

John Kitchen was the interviewer of Jack Oades – composer, conductor and organist - to find out more about one of our newest members following his recent appointment to St Giles' Cathedral (the fifth organist since the Reformation). It was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative evening.

Saturday 6th December 2025 – Online meeting with John Brennan

John Brennan – well known graphic designer, organist and publisher gave a richly illustrated presentation entitled “British organs, saved, rehoused and restored”. It was on some of the important organs that BIOS and its members have been involved with since its founding in 1976. Many have been relocated within the UK but also in Europe, particularly The Netherlands, often with the help of Gerard Verloop. This was the second presentation that he has given to the ESO.

Saturday 24th January 2026 – President's Meeting

This was held in the afternoon at Reid Memorial Church. Martyn Strachan gave a splendid recital, presenting six pieces of which not only the music but the very names of the composers would have been known to few. He held back both title and composer until the end of the performance inviting our guesses as to their provenance. Hence his title for the afternoon drawing on a radio programme of yesteryear “Music for Innocent Ears”. Exceptionally high quality refreshments were served afterwards by the kind bakers of the congregation.

Friday 20th February 2026 – ESO recital and dinner

The ESO dinner was preceded by a recital at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. This year we were particularly fortunate to have Jeremiah Stephenson as the guest recitalist. The programme included the Concert Overture in C minor by Alfred Hollins; Imogen Morgan's Chorale Prelude on Picardy and Dupre's Variations sur un Noel. Dinner was held again at the Scottish Arts Club where Jeremiah afterwards gave a speech delivered with the passion and drive of a man on a mission to spread the organ as far and wide as people will hear it.

Saturday 7th March 2026 – St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Kilmarnock

This proved to be an ideal activity for members of the ESO, Glasgow and Lanarkshire Society of Organists. The occasion was a recital for organ and strings performed by John Kitchen and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland string players. An enthusiastic crowd of over one hundred attended the event, including church parishioners. The star of the show, of course, was the recently restored 1903 Harrison and Harrison pipe organ which sits in the church's gallery.

SFO

I have attended various SFO Council meetings by zoom during the year. Caroline Cradock also attended. The SFO's Annual Conference was held in Newport-on-Tay on 9th and 10th May 2025. I attended it on the Saturday as did a number of ESO Council members and others. Members can access their webpage if they wish to be kept updated.

Composing Sacred Music: The next generation – Monday 11th August 2025

This competition is supported by grants from the ESO and RCO and with prizes privately donated. Paul Mealor was the principal adjudicator. Six choral compositions were expertly sung by a small choir of young singers, conducted by Calum Robertson, at Canongate Kirk. Giles Longstaff, won the First Prize. It is very reassuring to see that the art of composing is flourishing among young composers.

Console

I am most grateful to Ruairaidh Sutherland for having stepped in to take on the role of transitional editor of Console. This provided us with the necessary space to explore and evaluate future models of how Console will be produced in the future.

We have been extremely fortunate in securing the services of Hugh Hillyard-Parker, a highly and well known editor, publisher and musician based in Edinburgh, Special thanks to John Kitchen who has taken over as Editor and the ESO Council editing team for all their hard work, dedication and enthusiasm. The quality and breadth of articles make it a much anticipated publication for ESO members and beyond.

Website

David Turner continues to maintain the website and timeously keeps the events updated once he has been notified of them. I would like to thank David for quietly working away in the background on this.

If you know of any forthcoming recitals which may be of interest, do contact David direct. Members are encouraged to look at the website including Meetings and Events, Recital Diary, Deputy List, Publications, Organs for Sale and Vacancies.

Membership

Our Membership Secretary, Calum Cooper, continues to work diligently, very efficiently and effectively in all matters regarding membership; keeping our data base up to date and the distribution of Console. He is often the first person potential new members contact and members intimating any changes to their contact details. The current membership is one hundred and ninety seven members, of which seven new members joined in the past year.

A history of the ESO - A Fellowship of Organists - Dr Nicola Macrae

Nicola MacRae's book appeared at the start of 2025 and is free to ESO members. Copies are available at all ESO meetings or from Members of Council.

ESO Records/Archives

The ESO/Records/Archives are now stored at Reid Memorial Church with the exception of some "working" files which are presently held by the Secretary and also Turcan Connell.

Summary

The ESO Council is thanked for their hard work over the past year as well as the encouragement they have given me in my fourth year as Honorary ESO Secretary.

In conclusion, I believe we have had another successful year, with the breadth of events, welcoming new members (including younger ones) to our Society, making grants together with the spending incurred to enable the ESO history book to be published, which are all core aims of the ESO as a charitable body.

Financing

The Society maintains three reserves for specific purposes, all of which are unrestricted funds. The **General Reserve** supports the ordinary activities of the Society and is funded by subscriptions, donations and interest earned on bank deposits.

The **Hollins House Reserve** is intended to meet any capital expenditure arising from Hollins House, a property that was bequeathed to the Society in 1946 by Dr Alfred Hollins. The flat is currently let. D J Alexander, continue to be our letting agents, having been appointed in August 2023. A new tenancy commenced on 2nd July 2025, with the rent being increased to £2,120 per calendar month and the letting agents preparing an annual inspection report.

The **Special Purposes Fund** is used to undertake any activities that could not be ordinarily financed from members' subscriptions. During the year the fund awarded grants and concert sponsorship consistent with the Constitution of the Society, including (One) a grant of £500 to the Herrick Bunney Memorial Recital held at St Giles' Cathedral and (Two) a grant of £500 to a young member towards their travel costs of attending the Sacred Music Academy, Yale.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. M. Duncan', written in a cursive style.

Russell M Duncan WS

Honorary Secretary – The Edinburgh Society of Organists

Date: 18th May 2026

The Edinburgh Society of Organists

Receipts and Payments Account for the year to 31st March 2026

	Note	2025/6 £	2024/5 £
Receipts			
Voluntary income			
Subscriptions		4,189	4,647
Donations		250	750
Gift Aid		-	-
		<u>4,439</u>	<u>5,397</u>
Receipts from charitable activities			
Sales of other books and CDs		-	10
Members' meetings and events		4,560	1,902
		<u>4,560</u>	<u>1,912</u>
Investment income			
Rent of Hollins House		23,488	22,680
Bank interest		1,230	1,174
		<u>24,718</u>	<u>23,854</u>
Total receipts from activities		<u>33,717</u>	<u>31,163</u>
Loan from Baird Ross Trust	4	-	4,783
Total receipts		<u>33,717</u>	<u>35,946</u>
Payments			
Fundraising costs			
Hollins House expenses	1	<u>17,875</u>	<u>24,480</u>
Charitable activities			
Publications		3,696	4,906
ESO History book cost of production		206	3,007
Meetings and events		7,842	5,841
Capitation fee IAO		702	738
Grants	2	1,800	4,900
Administration		225	229
		<u>14,471</u>	<u>19,621</u>
Governance			
Annual accounts		<u>59</u>	<u>71</u>
Total payments		<u>32,405</u>	<u>44,172</u>
Net receipts/(payments)		<u>1,312</u>	<u>(8,226)</u>
Movement in bank balances			
At 1 April		79,744	87,970
Net (payments)/receipts		<u>1,312</u>	<u>(8,226)</u>
At 31 March		<u><u>81,056</u></u>	<u><u>79,744</u></u>

The Edinburgh Society of Organists

Statement of balances as at 31st March 2026

	Note	2026 £	2025 £
Bank Balances			
Current account		28,929	16,267
Savings accounts		52,127	51,051
National Savings		-	12,426
		81,056	79,744
Other net assets			
<i>Investment property</i> – Hollins House	3	-	-
<i>Debtor</i> – estimated Gift Aid recoverable		2,000	2,000
<i>Creditor</i> – Loan from Baird Ross Trust	4	(3,983)	(4,783)
<i>Deferred income</i> – SFO conference receipts		(2,070)	-
Total Funds		77,003	76,961

Funds

Capital Fund	2,000	2,000
Revenue Fund	1,000	1,000
General reserve	42,112	31,395
Hollins House Reserve	31,859	41,534
Special Purposes Fund	32	1,032
	77,003	76,961

Movement in Funds:

	General Reserve £	Hollins House Reserve £	Special Purposes £
At 1 April 2025	31,395	41,534	1,032
Hollins house maintenance	-	(11,675)	-
Other movements in funds	12,717	-	(1,000)
	44,112	29,859	32
Transfers			
To Hollins House Reserve	(2,000)	2,000	-
To Special Purposes Fund	-	-	-
At 31 March 2026	42,112	31,859	32

There are no movements on the Capital and Revenue Funds

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf:



Caroline S Cradock,
Honorary Treasurer
23 July 2026

The Edinburgh Society of Organists

Notes to the Account for the year to 31st March 2026

1. Net Rental Income from Hollins House

	2026 £	2025 £
Gross Rent received	23,488	22,680
Management fee	3,209	2,722
Maintenance - agent	722	15,925
Maintenance – ESO (2026: window refurbishment)	10,953	2,300
Insurance	2,397	3,299
Miscellaneous	594	234
Hollins House Expenses	17,875	24,480
Net receipts/(payments)	5,613	(1,800)

2 Grants

During the year, the Society awarded two grants consistent with the Constitution of the Society, to the value of £1,000. See page 6 for details. A further grant of £800 was awarded as described in note 4 below.

3 Hollins House

The Society owns Hollins House, which is a tenement flat in Grosvenor Street, Edinburgh that was inherited by the Society in the 1940s from the late Dr Alfred Hollins, past president of the Society. This property is considered to form part of the permanent endowment of the Society, since it is unlikely that it would ever be sold to realise cash.

A value for neither its original nor current value is available and consequently has not been included. In the opinion of the Trustees, the cost of conducting a professional valuation to include a value in this account would be disproportionate to any additional benefit derived by users of the account. In May 2025 Hollins House was insured for £1,050,000, which is an estimate of the cost of reconstruction of the property at that date in its existing design and materials following total destruction. Replacement building cost does not represent market value of the flat and does not include a valuation of the land on which the tenement building is situated.

4 Loan from Baird Ross Trust

During 2024/5, The Baird Ross Trust, a charity with the purpose of financing a competition to encourage the composition of church music in Scotland, transferred its residual bank balance, amounting to £4,783, to the Society in the form of a loan. During 2025/6, The Baird Ross Trust instructed the ESO to pay a grant of £800 to the Sacred Arts Festival to fund a composition competition, which reduced the outstanding balance of the loan to £3,983.

5 Trustee remuneration, benefits and expenses

No Trustee or member of Council received remuneration or benefits in respect of service as a trustee or member of Council, other than reimbursement of expenses made on behalf of the Society.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Edinburgh Society of Organists

I report on the accounts of the Society for the financial year ended 31 March 2026, which are set out on pages 7 to 9.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and examiner

The 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 Trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the 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 Society 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 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:
 - a. to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
 - b. to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulationshave 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.



Ian A S Lawson

A member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
1 Belmont View, Edinburgh, EH12 6JJ

23 July 2026