



Chairperson's Report for AGM

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairperson's Report for the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Biggar Bonfire (FOBB). This report covers the period from April 2025 to April 2026 and highlights the significant progress and achievements of the group in its first year as a registered charity.

Charitable Status and Governance

A major milestone for the group was the submission of the application to OSCR for charitable status, with the expectation of a decision within 100 days from June 2025. Thanks to Mike Chad for his help and advice in this area.

The group established its financial processes with the opening of an RBS bank account. Nancy Yuille and Susan Ward were ratified to hold the two debit cards, and a digital banking system for making payments was agreed upon and adopted following a helpful illustration and guide from Treasurer Jerry Sumpster in October 2025.

We successfully completed our first year of fundraising activities, and as of February 2026, the FOBB account holds over £9,000.00. An independent auditor was commissioned to look at the accounts before tonight's AGM.

Fundraising Activities

Our fundraising efforts have been incredibly successful, thanks to the hard work and creative ideas of a dedicated, small but mighty team.

Activity	Key Details	Outcome/Progress
Stalls at Local Events	A very wet Gala Day and Biggar Show! Ideas included 'Splat the Rat', tombola, bottle stall.	Pop up sign and banners organised and donated by Steven Ward and Jimmy Ritchie. Thanks to Jerry and Cat for lending their much-needed tent!
Patrons Letter	Annual letter sent out in September/October.	Raised approximately £5000.00 by November 2025. Names of patrons were put on the FOBB website.
Pub Quiz & Raffle	7 November 2025 at the Crown.	Sales of tables went well and the event sold out. An excellent raffle boosted funds further and a great night was had by all.
Buy A Stick for the Bonfire	Selling pieces of pallet wood for a suggested	Sold at late-night Christmas shopping in RE/MAX and the museum drop-in.

Activity	Key Details	Outcome/Progress
	donation of £5.00/piece, with a logo/stencil design by Steven Ward. Colin Murphy created 130 sticks with the majority sold.	Local businesses also supported. Excellent feedback from the community regarding nailing the sticks around the Bonfire- definitely a new tradition in the making!
Crowdfunder	Webpage went live in January 2026	Brought in approximately £363.00 by February 2026.
Grants	Applied for a microgrant	BCC grant accepted for £180 (card machines) and £400 (hats and vests).

Heritage and History

The group has been active in promoting the heritage of the Biggar Bonfire.

- **Museum Presence:** A community drop-in/wee exhibition was held at Biggar Museum starting 18 November, 2025, with a great response. The event included rolling photos, historical artefacts, and children's artwork. Nancy Yuille received permission to display the bonfire tapestry from the medical centre.
- **School Engagement:** Susan Ward, Simon Kane, and Al Stewart led a school assembly on 5 November, 2025, at Biggar Primary, inviting children to contribute artwork/writing for the museum exhibition.
- **Seguisers Play:** Anthony Bowers of Corn Exchange Young Performers announced the submission of a funding application for a Biggar Seguisers play, led by high-school-aged young people and professional playwright Martin Travers, with a debut planned for late 2026. The application for a young performer grant was accepted for £14,000.
- In 2024, the UK joined many countries in supporting the 2003 UNESCO **Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**. The Convention looks at Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) or living heritage, as we call it, which is cultural heritage that is living and practised. In March 2026, we applied to have Biggar Bonfire added to the inventory and recognised as culturally significant.

Looking Ahead

We will continue to build on this year's successes. Key areas for 26/27 include:

- **Fundraising:** Seeking a lottery licence, more conversations with local businesses, and looking into a 'guess the serial number' idea at Remax.
- **Heritage:** Repeating the Biggar Primary School assembly, considering High School engagement, and repeating the Bonfire exhibition.
- **Administration:** Thinking about Gift Aid for 2026 and boosting general membership. A callout for new members will accompany the AGM announcement.

Conclusion

This first year has been a period of significant development, successful fundraising, and enthusiastic community engagement. My sincere thanks go out to every member of the committee and the community for their energy, hard work, and support. We are in a strong position to continue our mission to support the Biggar Bonfire tradition, keep the Bonfire burning and doing all we can to Let the Deed Shaw.

Susan Ward, Chairperson, FOBB, 11 May 2026