Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group

Trustees' Annual Report

For the year ended 31 March 2026

Scottish Charity Number: SC054026
Legal Structure: Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)
Principal Address: 20 McGregor Drive, Newton Stewart, Minnigaff, DG8 6PE
Financial Year: 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

---

1. Introduction

The Trustees are pleased to present the Trustees' Annual Report for Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group for the financial year ended 31 March 2026.

This reporting period represents the charity's first full year operating as an officially registered Scottish charity. The charity's Constitution was formally adopted and accepted by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) on 4 March 2025.

Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group has its roots in very humble beginnings, having grown and developed from a group of local residents who shared a passion for making Christmas special for the town and surrounding communities. From those beginnings, the Group has evolved into an increasingly well-established community organisation with a clear commitment to creating a Christmas celebration that is free, inclusive and accessible to the whole community, across all generations.

The year ended 31 March 2026 was one of considerable growth and achievement. The charity substantially increased the scale and ambition of its Christmas activities, developed new partnerships, secured significant external funding, invested in reusable Christmas lighting equipment and delivered what the Trustees consider to have been the biggest community event hosted in Newton Stewart.

The Trustees are particularly proud that the charity's work has continued to be centred on community participation rather than simply the provision of a Christmas lights display. The charity seeks to bring people together, reduce barriers to participation, create opportunities for volunteering and strengthen community spirit.

2. Charitable Purposes

The charitable purposes of Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group, as set out in its governing document, are:

> “The advancement of citizenship and community development through the provision and installation of Christmas Lights and equipment during the festive period and accompanying public switch-on celebration activity throughout the holiday period.”

The Trustees have sought to fulfil these purposes throughout the reporting period by providing and developing the town's Christmas lighting display, organising a major public Christmas celebration and working collaboratively with residents, community groups, volunteers, local businesses and public bodies.

The charity's activities are designed to provide a shared community experience which is free and accessible, particularly benefiting children and families, older residents, people experiencing financial hardship or social isolation, and the wider community of Newton Stewart and surrounding areas.

---

3. Who the Charity Benefits

The charity's work is intended to benefit the whole community.

Particular beneficiaries include:

- Children and young people;
- Families;
- Older residents;
- People who may experience social isolation;
- People and families experiencing financial pressures;
- Local residents;
- Visitors to Newton Stewart;
- Local community groups and voluntary organisations;
- Local businesses and traders; and
- Volunteers who contribute their time, skills and experience.

By providing a significant programme of free activities, entertainment, food and festive experiences, the charity seeks to ensure that participation in the Christmas celebrations is not dependent on a family's ability to spend money.

The Trustees also recognise the wider social value of bringing different generations and sections of the community together in a positive and welcoming environment.

---

4. Trustees

The following Trustees served during the reporting period:

- Joey Logan
- Robert Boan
- Tammy McDowell
- Jane Boan
- David Bleasdale
- Sandra McKinnon
- Robert McLeman
- Shirley Cronnie
- Laura Dick

The Trustees collectively contributed significant amounts of voluntary time throughout the reporting period, including fundraising, administration, procurement, liaison with external organisations, event planning and management, installation and dismantling of Christmas lights and equipment, and the organisation and delivery of the Christmas Light Switch-On Festival.

The Trustees also worked closely with volunteers and community organisations to ensure that the charity's activities remained focused on its charitable purposes and provided meaningful benefit to the wider community.

The Trustees would like to place on record their sincere thanks to **Robert Boan** for his invaluable contribution to the charity during his time as a Trustee. His time, experience, knowledge and commitment were greatly appreciated and made a valuable contribution to the development and work of Newton Stewart Christmas Lights Group. The Trustees are grateful for the contribution he made to the charity and the wider community.

We would also like to welcome to the board two additional trustees **Michelle McShane** and **Johnnie Johnston** and wish them all the success with this new role which we are sure they prove themselves to be invaluable.

Current Trustees at the date of approval

The Trustees currently serving at the date this report is approved are:

- Joey Logan
- Johnnie Johnston

- Tammy McDowell
- Jane Boan
- David Bleasdale
- Sandra McKinnon
- Robert McLeman
- Laura Dick
- Michelle McShane
- Shirley Cronnie

---

5. Trustee Recruitment and Appointment

Trustees are formally adopted through a process involving proposal, presentation and approval by the existing Trustee body.

A prospective Trustee is proposed by an existing Trustee. The prospective Trustee is invited to put forward a pitch outlining why they would like to become a Trustee, including their interest in the charity and the contribution, skills, experience or knowledge they believe they can bring to the organisation.

Following the proposal and presentation, the existing Trustees consider the appointment and a vote is taken by the existing Trustee body.

The Trustees consider this process important in ensuring that individuals appointed to the Trustee body have a genuine commitment to the charity and are able to make a meaningful contribution to its governance and activities.

---

6. Office Bearers

During the reporting period, the charity's office bearers were:

- Shirley Cronnie — Chairman
- Joey Logan — Treasurer
- Dave Bleasdale — Secretary

Since this period the during our AGM in July the office bearers changed to the following list which currently stands:

- Shirley Cronnie — Chairman

- Joey Logan — Treasurer
- Robert McLeman — Secretary
- Dave Bleasdale — Officiator

The term *Officiator* is used by the charity to describe the Trustee responsible for chairing meetings of the Trustee body and supporting the orderly conduct of Trustee business.

The Trustees work collectively in overseeing the charity's activities, financial management, governance and strategic development.

---

7. Activities During the Year

The principal activities undertaken during the reporting period included:

- Planning and delivering the annual Christmas Light Switch-On Festival;
- Installing, operating and dismantling the town's Christmas lights;
- Purchasing additional Christmas lighting equipment;
- Upgrading lamp-post fittings to accommodate energy-efficient lighting;
- Installing more than 30 street-light Christmas motifs;
- Providing two Christmas trees within the town;
- Introducing moving projectors as part of the Christmas light display;
- Organising the annual Christmas parade;
- Providing free children's activities and entertainment;
- Providing free food and refreshments as part of the community celebrations;
- Supporting a free Santa experience;
- Organising and coordinating volunteers;
- Raising funds through community fundraising activities;
- Securing grants and external funding;
- Working with local community organisations and businesses;
- Supporting local traders and community groups participating in the festival; and
- Working with Dumfries & Galloway Council and other relevant organisations to ensure that the event could be delivered safely and effectively.
- Engaging with local schools to design a lights to be placed around the town for both children involvement and addition to the displays.

---

8. Christmas Light Switch-On Festival

The principal event during the year was the Christmas Light Switch-On Festival held on Saturday 15 November 2025.

What had originally developed as a relatively small Christmas light switch-on has grown considerably over recent years. During the reporting period, the event developed into a major town-centre street festival involving community organisations, volunteers, local businesses, traders and visitors from across the surrounding area.

The Trustees consider the event to have been the biggest community event hosted in Newton Stewart. This assessment is based on the scale of the event, attendance, participation, the number of organisations involved and the extent to which the celebration occupied and brought activity to the town centre.

The festival provided a full programme of free activities throughout the day and was specifically designed to be accessible to families and people of all ages.

Festivities began at 10.00 am at Vibe 75 Community Hub, where children's craft activities and a bouncy castle were available.

The NSI Winter Fayre at McMillan Hall was also very well attended, adding another important element to the town's Christmas programme.

Victoria Street was closed for the main festivities, allowing the street to become a focal point for community activity. More than 22 street vendors were involved, alongside food vans, a coffee trailer, local community group activities and a fairground attraction.

The festival also included free food, children's entertainment, activities, Santa and a range of other festive experiences.

The Trustees believe that providing these activities without charge was particularly important in ensuring that families and individuals could participate regardless of their financial circumstances.

---

9. Christmas Parade and Light Switch-On

A major feature of the day was the annual Christmas parade from McMillan Hall towards the Vault Arts Centre.

The parade was led by Santa and the Galloway Pageant Queen, with Santa travelling ahead of the Queen of Galloway. The Newton Stewart Round Table Christmas sleigh was also an important part of the parade.

Approximately 600 people took part in the procession to the Christmas light switch-on.

The main switch-on attracted more than 800 people, including a very large number of children and families.

The Christmas lights were switched on by the Queen of Galloway, creating a significant community celebration and bringing together residents, visitors, volunteers, community groups and local businesses.

The scale of participation demonstrated the importance of the event as a community gathering and as an opportunity for people to come together in a safe, welcoming and celebratory environment.





Please see images taken from a drone on the night of the switch-on celebration of the crowds after the lights were switched on by the Queen of Galloway.

Below please images of the parade itself.







---

10. Christmas Light Display and Community Assets

During the year, the charity continued to invest in the development of the town's Christmas light display.

More than 30 street-light motifs were delivered, installed and subsequently dismantled and stored for future use.

The charity also upgraded lamp-post fittings to support the installation of energy-efficient Christmas lights.

Two Christmas trees were placed within the town, and new moving projectors were purchased and incorporated into the display.

The introduction of moving projectors added a new visual element to the Christmas display and attracted wider attention, including national news coverage.

The Trustees view this investment as important because it creates lasting community assets rather than simply funding a one-off event. Christmas lighting equipment can be maintained, reused and developed in future years, allowing the charity to continue delivering community benefit while building the organisation's asset base.

---

11. Fundraising and External Funding

During the reporting period, the charity received a total income of **£22,570.53**.

This comprised:

Unrestricted income — £7,367.28

The charity generated £7,367.28 through its own fundraising and donations, including:

- Event stalls — £962.56
- Quiz night — £455.02
- Raffles — £2,638.39
- Donations — £3,311.31

The Trustees and volunteers devoted considerable time and effort to generating this income through community fundraising activities.

Restricted grant income — £15,203.25

The charity received the following restricted funding:

- **Kilgallioch Community Benefit Fund — £4,352.54**
- **Coastal Community Benefit Fund — £6,100.71**
- **Dumfries & Galloway Council Discretionary Grant — £3,750.00**
- **Dumfries & Galloway Council Events Fund — £1,000.00**

The Trustees are extremely grateful to all funders and supporters who contributed to the charity's work during the year.

---

12. Use and Impact of Funding

The funding received enabled the charity to increase the scale and quality of the Christmas celebrations while also investing in equipment and infrastructure that can be reused in future years.

Total expenditure for the year was **£17,263.84**.

This included:

- Purchase of Christmas lights — **£6,207.67**
- Installation and material costs — **£6,574.53**
- Insurance — **£359.61**
- Event costs — **£3,889.10**
- Fundraising costs — **£71.58**
- Governance costs — **£45.00**
- Bank charges — **£24.64**
- Miscellaneous expenses — **£91.71**

The restricted grants totalling **£15,203.25 were fully utilised during the year**, with the corresponding restricted expenditure also totalling £15,203.25.

This enabled the charity to purchase lighting and equipment, meet installation and event costs and deliver the Christmas activities for which funding had been secured.

The Trustees consider that the funding had a significant direct community impact, enabling the charity to provide free activities, food, entertainment and festive experiences while also developing reusable community assets.

---

18. Financial Review

The charity's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

The charity began the financial year with an opening balance of **£6,775.22**.

During the year, total receipts were **£22,570.53**, comprising:

- Unrestricted income of **£7,367.28**; and
- Restricted grant income of **£15,203.25**.

Total payments during the year were **£17,263.84**.

The charity therefore recorded a surplus of **£5,306.69** for the year.

At **31 March 2026**, the charity held:

- **Cash at bank — £11,981.91**
- **Cash in hand — £100.00**
- **Total closing funds — £12,081.91**

The closing balance of £12,081.91 represented unrestricted general funds. The charity's restricted funds were fully spent during the reporting period, with no restricted fund balance remaining at year end.

The Trustees consider the financial position of the charity at 31 March 2026 to provide a sound basis from which to continue planning and developing the charity's activities.

---

19. Reserves Policy

The Trustees recognise the importance of maintaining an appropriate level of unrestricted funds to allow the charity to continue operating, meet its ongoing commitments and respond to unforeseen or emergency expenditure.

The charity's reserves are held primarily to provide working capital and financial security for future activities, including the purchase, maintenance and installation of Christmas lights and equipment, insurance, event preparation and other costs associated with delivering the annual Christmas programme.

At **31 March 2026**, the charity held **£12,081.91 in unrestricted general funds**.

Following the year end, the Trustees have **designated £5,000 of the charity's unrestricted funds as an emergency reserve**. This reserve is intended to provide financial protection against unforeseen expenditure, emergency repairs or replacement of essential equipment, unexpected event costs and other circumstances which could otherwise affect the charity's ability to continue its activities.

The £5,000 emergency reserve remains part of the charity's unrestricted funds and is not a restricted fund.

The Trustees will review the level and adequacy of the emergency reserve regularly, taking account of the charity's planned activities, anticipated expenditure, available funding and the level of financial commitments associated with future Christmas events.

The Trustees consider that maintaining an emergency reserve of £5,000 provides a reasonable level of financial protection while allowing the remaining unrestricted funds to be used to further the charity's purposes and support the development of future community activities.

---

20. Governance

Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group is constituted as a **Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)** and is governed by the **Newton Stewart Christmas Light Constitution**.

The Constitution was formally adopted and accepted by OSCR on **4th of March 2025**.

The Trustees are responsible for the governance and administration of the charity and for ensuring that its activities are undertaken in furtherance of its charitable purposes.

The Trustees meet to consider the charity's activities, finances, fundraising, equipment, event planning, community partnerships, health and safety and future development.

The Trustees collectively oversee the charity's financial position and ensure that funding received is applied for charitable purposes.

---

21. Trustee Remuneration and Related-Party Transactions

No Trustee received remuneration or any other financial benefit from the charity during the reporting period.

There were no transactions between the charity and its Trustees requiring disclosure during the reporting period.

---

22. Independent Examination

The charity's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 are subject to independent examination.

Independent Examiner:
LM Bookkeeping Services
8 King's Road
Whithorn
Newton Stewart
DG8 8PP

The Trustees acknowledge the importance of maintaining appropriate financial records and ensuring that the charity's accounts are independently examined in accordance with the applicable requirements.

---

23. Principal Address and Charity Information

Charity Name: Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group

Scottish Charity Number: SC054026

Legal Structure: Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

Principal Address:
20 McGregor Drive
Newton Stewart
Minnigaff

Financial Year: 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

Governing Document: Newton Stewart Christmas Lights Group Constitution

Constitution Adopted/Accepted by OSCR: 4 March 2025

Independent Examiner:
LM Bookkeeping Services
8 King's Road
Whithorn
Newton Stewart
DG8 8PP

---

24. Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity is properly managed and administered in accordance with its Constitution and applicable charity law.

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining appropriate accounting records and for preparing accounts that accurately reflect the charity's receipts, payments and financial position.

The Trustees are also responsible for ensuring that the charity's funds are applied solely in furtherance of its charitable purposes.

The Trustees have taken reasonable steps to ensure that the charity's activities during the reporting period were undertaken in accordance with its charitable purposes and that appropriate arrangements were in place for the management of the charity's finances and activities.

---

25. Conclusion

The year ended 31 March 2026 has been a significant year in the development of Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group.

The charity moved from its humble beginnings as a group of local residents with a shared passion for Christmas into its first full year as an officially registered Scottish charity.

During the year, the charity raised **£22,570.53**, invested substantially in Christmas lights and equipment, delivered more than 30 street-light motifs, introduced new lighting technology, developed a major town-centre Christmas festival and brought together hundreds of volunteers, residents, families, community organisations, traders and visitors.

More than **800 people** attended the main switch-on, while approximately **600 people** participated in the parade.

However, the Trustees believe that the most important achievement was not simply the scale of the event. The charity succeeded in creating a free and inclusive celebration which brought the community together, provided opportunities for volunteering and participation, supported local groups and businesses and created lasting community assets for future years.

The Trustees are extremely grateful to everyone who has supported Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group during the year, including funders, donors, volunteers, community organisations, local businesses, public bodies and the residents of Newton Stewart and surrounding communities.

The Trustees look forward to continuing to develop the charity responsibly and to building on the foundations established during this important first full year of charitable operation.

26. Approval of Trustees' Annual Report

This Trustees' Annual Report was approved by the Trustees of Newton Stewart Christmas Light Group on:

APPROVAL DATE:

Please enter the actual date on which the Trustees formally approve the Trustees' Annual Report and accounts.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

Joey logan
Treasurer / Trustee

Signature: Joey Logan

Date: 01.10.2026