



WEST LOTHIAN 50+ NETWORK (SCIO)

Scottish Charity No: SC051335

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS year ended 31 March 2026

Trustees' Annual Report

Statement of Receipts and Payments including Statement of Balances
and notes to the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Report

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Producing an annual report provides the opportunity to bring together all the facts and figures from the past year, taking stock of where we have come from and pointing the direction for the future.

2025/26 has been characterised by strong membership growth, new developments, revitalised member involvement, new connections and the introduction of some exciting new events and activities. We appointed a new Chief Executive who in his first year has reinvigorated our charity, inspiring and enabling our members to take on new challenges and taken the reins of operational activities to allow trustees to focus on the strategic direction of the charity.

Towards the end of the period, we developed a new 3-year strategic plan which points the direction for the charity until 2029. A key area of focus, kick started in 2025/26, is the recognition that by working with others we can do so much more for our members. We took the initiative to renew and deepen our connections with like-minded organisations, looking to extend the Network's offering whilst increasing our visibility both locally and nationally. We acknowledge and appreciate the enthusiastic reception we have received from all those organisations to which we have reached out.

Engagement with group leaders and other volunteers, the linchpin of our activities, was stepped up, providing a forum for shared experiences as well as a channel for guidance and support from the staff team. Through these channels, members got behind our call to action at the beginning of the year to support our internal fundraising efforts. Our first ever Big Fundraising Week exceeded all our expectations, leading us from a position of financial uncertainty in the early part of the year to one where we are now in the best financial position than we have been for some years. Whilst external fundraising remains highly competitive, with more charities than ever chasing fewer funds, in December 2025 we were delighted to have the confirmation of a three-year award from the National Lottery Community Fund. Securing a multi-year award such as this is a substantial step forward for our charity and improves the Network's stability.

With membership growing to over 800 this year we became more aware of our responsibility to speak up on behalf of older people. Our visit in February 2026 to the Scottish Parliament to meet the Minister for Equalities provided an opportunity to discuss the lived experience of older people and the important role organisations like the West Lothian 50 Plus Network play in tackling isolation and loneliness, expressing our willingness to contribute to discussions around future policy and support for community organisations.

This year we have once again witnessed the transformation of many more lives, as more people found their way to new purpose following retirement, new social activities and new friendships, helping them to avoid the social isolation that so many older people can face. Anecdotally there are many stories of how new members change and increase in confidence as they find their feet in the Network. The Member Survey conducted at the end of 2025 also provides many personal testimonials from members who have felt the benefits of being part of the Network.

We achieve these outcomes through a wide variety of activities and events, all of which serve the key aim of bringing people together for positive social interaction.

During the year our members had the opportunity to take part in three short group holidays, visited many interesting places on our monthly day trips, and enjoyed some excellent events. As well as several regular events in the Network calendar, we held our first Christmas ball as well as

our traditional Christmas Party. We introduced our Christmas and Spring Makers Markets, bringing together the skills of our crafters in two fantastic fund-raising events, and we introduced regular Digital Drop-In sessions, providing a helping hand for members getting to grips with technology.

Growth in the number and spread of group activities on offer to members continued, with care given to establishing more activities in the evening and at weekends for the benefit of members who are still in employment. We have also established new activities in new locations outside Bathgate, such as our third Men's Group which meets in Livingston. It is early days, but this will be an important part of our 3-year strategy.

It remains for me to thank our excellent staff team, who co-ordinate our day-to-day operations whilst providing a friendly, supportive and welcoming presence for our members. They have worked particularly hard this year as our membership has increased, bringing forward new ideas and streamlining our operations.

With a committed staff team and board of trustees, an energetic and enthusiastic team of group leaders and volunteers, strong membership growth, a stable financial base and a solid strategy for the next three years, we can look forward with confidence to 2026/27.

Sue Bedford-Visser, Chair
ANNUAL REPORT
(year ended to 31 March 2026)

This is the third annual report and accounts of West Lothian 50+ Network (SCIO).

CONTEXT

The West Lothian 50+ Network operates in an environment where the local elderly population is growing faster than the national Scottish average. Figures published by West Lothian Council, in the context of local demand for health and social care services show that the numbers of people in West Lothian aged 65 to 74 is expected to increase by 19% by 2028, with those aged over 75 increasing by 39%. This is compared to the Scottish average growth of 14.4% in the 65 to 74 population and 25.4% increase in those aged over 75 during the same period.

This rate of growth has implications for the Network as a provider of services for older people and is likely to impact on membership growth leading to increased demand for member activities, staff time, volunteers, premises and funding.

DIRECTION AND STAFF

The Network is overseen by a Board of Trustees, all volunteers elected from the membership. The trustees give the Network strategic direction and ensure that the funds are properly managed. There are four Office Bearers: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. In addition, individual trustees oversee areas appropriate to their experience.

The trustees who have acted in 2025/26 are as follows:

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|--------------------------------|---|
| ➤ Sue Bedford-Visser (Chair) | ➤ John Yule |
| ➤ Sheila Jamieson (Vice-Chair) | ➤ Linda Ferrier |
| ➤ Jeanette Scott (Treasurer) | ➤ Catriona McFadzean |
| ➤ Frank Ellam (Secretary) | ➤ Marianne Hair (resigned 8 October 2025) |
| ➤ Sheila Linscer | ➤ Ron Mills (appointed 8 April 2026) |
| ➤ Eleanor Shaw | |

Day to day operations at our Members' Hub/administrative centre are run by a part-time chief executive officer and two part-time member support staff.

The Network is a registered Real Living Wage Employer and has voluntarily registered with the ICO (Information Commissioners Office).

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the West Lothian 50+ Network at 31 March 2026 stood at 808, a 5.6% increase over the number at end March 2025.

Statistics show that 72% of the membership has joined since Covid, which has resulted in a large cohort of new members, and unprecedented demand for group membership.

Although based in Bathgate, traditionally the hometown of most of our members, we remain committed to our strategic aim of broadening our membership across West Lothian. This has had some success, with the membership outwith Bathgate now at 66%, up from 61% a year ago.

Our members range in age from those in their 50s, to a few in their 90s. The highest percentage of our members (42%) are 70-79 years. Those in their 50s and 60s comprise some 35% of our membership. 78% of the membership is of pensionable age. We have been working hard to increase the percentage of men in the Network, traditionally outnumbered by women at roughly 5:1. We're pleased to report that this has risen to 24%, or nearly 3:1.



VOLUNTEERS

Our member volunteers are the lynchpin of the West Lothian 50+ Network. Including our volunteer trustees, and those who lead and support 78 different interest groups and activities, over 12% of our members are actively involved in volunteering, a truly fantastic contribution and one which begins to explain the Network's success.

Some 79 volunteers lead a group, some lead more than one group, bringing people together on a regular basis, providing companionship and purpose for many, week in, week out.

A smaller group of dedicated volunteers support our events, whether it be in the planning of those events, or delivery on the day – undertaking home baking, organising raffles, setting up tables and chairs, rolling sleeves up in the kitchen, providing refreshments, serving teas, washing up...

Our team of "meeters and greeters" volunteer alongside our staff team in the hub, helping to welcome members and those enquiring about becoming a member.

Others have supported our fundraising efforts, seeking sponsorship and support from local businesses, whilst others still have helped to promote our Network in the wider community, manning stalls at community awareness days, distributing posters, assisting at bucket collections.

PREMISES

Our Members' Hub and administrative centre in the centre of Bathgate continued to be well used by many of our activity groups, with 32 groups meeting in the designated Activity space on a regular weekly or fortnightly basis.

The Members' area to the front of the building is used as an informal meeting space/drop in area for members and visitors. Tea and coffee are available as well as information on the Network and its activities. There is also space for information about community activities. This space remained very popular with members providing a social space to sit and meet others, enjoy a free cuppa, or take a book or puzzle from our bookshelves. Our premises are accessible, with a stairlift to deal with a small flight of steps.

After staff, premises are our biggest cost and in 2025/26, we had to bear a particularly high, unexpected roof repair cost in addition to the annual rent and normal maintenance costs.

Groups that do not meet at our Members Hub come together in a wide range of other premises across West Lothian, including community centres, church halls, sheltered housing complexes, sports centres, cafes, pubs and restaurants. We continued to start new groups in locations both within and outwith Bathgate, aiming to improve access to activities for members across the county.

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

i) Members' Meetings

Members' Meetings were held on the third Saturday of each month, except for April '25 (when we held our Swing into Spring event), July '25 (summer break), October '25 (replaced by our annual Coffee Morning and Crafts event), and December (when we held our annual Christmas party). Our Members' Meeting in August followed our Annual General Meeting.

A variety of guest speakers brought topics of interest to our members, with members hearing about the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, Commonwealth War Graves, the work of the Conservation Volunteers, the duties of the Lord Lieutenant for West Lothian and Bathgate Band's proposals for a Music Hub in Bathgate.

These meetings have traditionally been the main opportunity to bring members up to date with the business of the Network. They have provided the opportunity to let members know of any trips, holidays or events coming up, with minutes of the meeting being taken and issued to members by email or post so that every member is kept informed. However, over the last year numbers attending have dropped off considerably, averaging 45 -50 at each meeting, with a notable absence of new members attending. This could be attributed to the improvements that have undoubtedly been made in communications with our members, through the weekly Friday Update email, and the regular monthly newsletter. Whilst the meetings will continue, it has been agreed to reduce the number held in 2026/27 to four.

ii) New Members' Meetings

Informal regular drop-in meetings are held for members who have recently joined the 50+ Network or for those who are interested to find out more before taking the plunge. These well-attended meetings give new members the chance to meet informally with other new members and Network trustees, and to find out more about the Network. They have also proved to be an excellent way of introducing new members to the Network. In 2025/26 we held 6 New Members Meetings. We held five meetings in Bathgate in May '25, August '25, October '25, January '26 and March '26, and one in Linlithgow in March '26. Recently rebranded as Discover the Network, we plan to expand our geographic spread of these meetings in 2026/27.

iii) Activity Groups

An extremely important aspect of the Network's activities is the wide range of group activities and social opportunities on offer. These are one of the mainstays by which the Network fulfils its aim of providing opportunities for companionship and helping members keep active in mind and body.

At year end, 31 March 2026, the Network offered some 78 special interest groups, with 79 members involved as volunteers to lead them. Their time and support is greatly appreciated.

During 2025/26 sixteen new groups were started, namely: Basics in Gaelic; Oot and Aboot Walking Group; Craft and Recreate Group; Beginners Ukulele; Tech & Phone Help Session; Tai Chi; Badminton (additional group); The Last Wednesday Social; Beginners Italian; Sound Bath Meditation Group; Evening Walking Group; Mens Group Livingston; Wine Tasting; Flyfishing Group; Saturday Games Group; Sunday Social Supper.

During the same period three groups were discontinued: Slowcoaches Walking Group; Chair Yoga at The Hub; Genealogy.

A particular focus this year has been given to establishing more activities in the evening and at weekends, such as our new Friday evening Wine Tasting group, so that members who are still in employment can benefit. We have also begun to improve our geographic coverage by establishing new activities in new locations outside Bathgate, such as our new Men's Group in Livingston. It is still early days, but this will be an important part of our 3-year strategy.

One of our key challenges of our growing Network is meeting the demand from new members to join activity groups, and so members with a special interest or skill are encouraged to seek support to test demand for a new group to share that interest with others. Leading a group in this way can help find a renewed sense of purpose, routine and social engagement, and supports the Network in its aims. Members who become involved in this way are supported by our member support team to promote, manage and resource their group and benefit from regular meetings with other group leaders to share experience and best practice.

In 2025/26 the Network also offered certain taught classes for which a specialist instructor is required (such as Yoga and Move n Improve).

Whilst most of our group activities were offered at no additional cost to the membership fee, a small charge was applicable for classes which incurred a tutor fee and/ or room hire cost.

Current Network groups include the following interests:

Art (2 groups) Badminton (2 groups) Balloon Drumming Book & Blether Book Club (2 groups) Bowling (2 groups) Canasta (2 groups) Chair Yoga Chess For Fun Classic Silver Screen Coffee Club (8 groups) Coffee and Games Group Crafts (2 groups) Culture Cycling (2 groups) Fly Fishing French (3 groups) Gardening Genealogy Guitar Italian Jewellery Line Dancing Lunch Club (2 groups) Mah Jong and Games Men's Group (3 groups)	Monday Stitchers Move 'n' Improve (2 groups) Nattering Needles Network Singers NuYu (exercise and healthy eating) Patchwork Photography Pins and Needles Pool Reminiscence Rummikub Saturday Games Club Saturday Night Club Scrabble (2 groups) Spanish Squawkers Supper Club Table Tennis Tai Chi Theatre Ukulele Veterans Wine Tasting Walking (6 groups) Writers' Chat Group Yoga
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iv) Day Trips by Coach

We continued to run monthly day trips by coach throughout the period with an affordable base cost set at £21pp excluding attraction entrance fees. The trips all proved very popular, with many being oversubscribed, resulting in two coaches being booked for 4 of the 12 trips undertaken, notably during the summer months.

The popularity of the coach trips helps the Network to generate a surplus once all costs have been met and this makes a valuable contribution to network running costs.

Trips during this period took members to The Kelpies, Falkirk Wheel & Callendar House; Falkland & St Andrews; Holy Island (2 coaches); Helensburgh & Loch Lomond (2 coaches); Kailzie Gardens & Peebles; Isle of Bute (2 coaches); Stanley Mills & Pitlochry (2 coaches); Scottish Maritime Museum & Largs; House for an Art Lover Christmas Fair, Glasgow; Summerlee & Garrion Bridges Garden Centre; Abbotsford House & Melrose; and the V&A Museum, Dundee.

v) Holidays

During the period we organised three coach holidays, taking 43 members to North Wales in September '25, 32 members on a short Twixmas break based in Harrogate, and 45 members to the Isle of Man in April '26. All three holidays generated operator contributions to Network funds based on participant numbers.

vi) Events

Volunteers in our Events Team organised a number of excellent events for our members during the year, providing many opportunities for people to come together and find companionship, as well as generate funds for the Network. These include:

- Swing into Spring Coffee Morning in April '25
- VE Day Quiz Night in May '25
- Art Group's Exhibition in May '25
- Members' Coffee Drop in in July '25
- Yoga in the Park in July '25
- Silent Auction in Aug '25
- Music and Musical Theatre Themed Quiz in Sept '25
- Thrift Shop in September '25
- Coffee Morning and Craft Fair in Nov '25
- Makers' Market in Nov '25
- SP Energy Networks - Raising awareness of the Priority Service Register and energy support for vulnerable people over winter in Nov '25
- Art Group's Exhibition in Dec '25
- Snow White Panto at Regal Reconnect in Dec '25
- Network Singers' Carol Concert in Dec '25
- Members' Christmas Party in Dec '25
- Members' Christmas Ball in Dec '25
- Twixmas Drop-In session in Dec '25
- Volunteers Lunch in Jan '26
- Carers Awareness Session in Jan '26
- Musical Afternoon with Alex & Carol in Feb '26
- Spring Makers' Market in March '26
- Film Screenings in conjunction with Condor Entertainment in Dec'25, Jan '26, Feb '26

In 2025/26 we introduced the option for members to book day trips and events online. Take up of this option has been good, facilitating bookings for members for whom it is not always easy to come into the Hub, as well as easing the administrative load on staff.

FINANCES

The organisation holds a current account and a savings account with the Bank of Scotland (and began the transition to new Virgin Money accounts towards the end of the financial year).

The accounts are formally reported on by our external examiner, Brian Maloney F.C.C.A.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees review the Reserves Policy for the Network each year. To ensure a viable future for the organisation, it is necessary to retain a sufficient reserve to cover essential running costs.

The Trustees consider 6 months of core running costs and salaries to be a minimum level of reserves - some £44,000 based on our budget for 2026/27.

Unrestricted funds at the period end were £66,183 and so fully cover the required reserves.

OPERATING COSTS AND FUNDING

Income from membership fees and our own fundraising events have been supplemented by significant external funding streams. This has enabled us to maintain our staff, premises and general running costs as well as funding new groups, activities and venues.

The total annual cost of running the Network in 2025/26 was £126,000 (budgeted to be £118,000 in 2026/27). That includes salaries, rent and repairs, insurance, electricity, stationery, telephone and internet, bank charges, professional fees, refreshments, IT support, cleaning and rubbish removal, equipment, postage, the Christmas party and other miscellaneous costs.

Much of our work is made possible by several external funders and charitable trusts, and we are indebted to them all for their support and encouragement.

Our freelance fundraiser identifies suitable funding opportunities and submits applications to funders and charitable trusts on behalf of the Network. As much of the funding received is restricted to specific purposes, she also completes the required monitoring and reporting to demonstrate how the funding has been used. She has worked with the Network for seven years and has developed a strong understanding of our work, priorities and funding needs

In 2025/26, external grants covered 71% of the annual running costs, principally for rent and staff salaries. This percentage is up from 66% in 2024/25 and is the first year to show an increase since Covid. However, we remain in an increasingly competitive environment for the limited funds available. We are also advised that our ability to attract funds has been impacted by the changed priorities of some funders who no longer target their funding towards charities for older people. A further challenge of this type of funding is its short-term nature, typically made available for one year only, which makes it hard to plan for the long term. However, at the end of 2025 the National Lottery Community Fund confirmed a three-year award, paid in annual instalments. Securing a multi-year award such as this is a substantial step forward for our charity and improves the Network's stability.

Our thanks to the following organisations which funded us in 2025/26:

- Albert Hunt Trust
- Allied Vehicles Foundation
- Basil Death Trust
- Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (Scottish Government Fund, administered by VSG WL)
- Coop Community Fund

- Edinburgh Airport Community Fund
- HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust
- Heather Hoy Charitable Trust
- Home Instead
- Hugh Fraser Foundation
- JTH Charitable Trust
- The Lady Marian Gibson Trust
- Link Group - The Link in The Community Fund
- The National Lottery Community Fund – Community Action Fund
- Peoples Postcode Trust
- Queensbury Trust
- Sydney Black Charitable Trust
- Tesco Stronger Starts (Groundwork UK)
- Walker-Shoolbraid Charitable Trust
- Wellbeing Hub
- West Lothian Council – Pensioners’ Christmas Fund
- A number of West Lothian councillors have supported the Network through local disbursement funds
- Wood Foundation (YPI)

We are also grateful for the support we have received in the local community, with donations from Morrisons, Tesco, Scotmid and other local business regularly supporting our activities.

With only 71% of running costs met by external funders, this leaves a considerable sum to be covered by the membership fee and our own fundraising activities. However, we recognise that funds raised internally help to meet the expectation from external funders that the Network has the capacity to meet some of its own running costs.

MEMBERS’ FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Membership fees currently raise around £29,000 each year, which represents only 25p for every £1 of our budgeted running costs in the current year.

This leaves quite a sum to be raised each year from members’ fundraising activities.

At the start of 2025/26 we brought group leaders together to share with them concerns about the Network’s financial position. We explained the need to increase membership fees for the year ahead and asked for help in ensuring that we ended the year in a healthier position. Members’ response was nothing short of amazing, with new-found energy and creativity responsible for turning things around. A record total of £28,975 was raised through internal fundraising efforts, which allowed trustees at year end to conclude that no further increase in membership fee was necessary for 2026/27. Without these efforts, we would realistically have been looking at a percentage increase of around 28%.

Our first ever Big Fundraising Week in June 2025 saw several groups and individuals undertake a range of fundraising efforts. And for the first time last year we raised funds through sponsorship of members and staff taking part in the Edinburgh Kiltwalk.

Significant financial contributions were also made by our annual pop-up thrift shop, which this year exceeded all previous fund-raising efforts, and by events such as the annual coffee morning and craft fair, concerts performed by our choir, and other events, raffles and donations, book, jigsaw and greetings card sales, surpluses on coach trips and holidays, gift aid recoveries and interest on bank savings.

COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Our new 3-year Strategic Plan (2026-2029) which was developed towards the end of the financial year, recognises the importance of building strengthened, deeper working relationships with other third sector organisations with similar client groups.

West Lothian 50+ Network plays an important role in helping people aged over 50 keep socially connected, active and involved in their communities. We have been working hard in 2025/26 to ensure that public services, community organisations and residents clearly understand the role the Network plays.

Strengthening the organisation's profile helps to ensure that people who may benefit from the Network are more easily referred, and that partners recognise the organisation as a trusted and professional community resource.

In 2025/26 the Network has taken great strides forward in developing new partnerships and increasing our visibility across the county.

The Network is a member of Age Scotland, the national Scottish charity for older people, and West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway, which works to strengthen the third sector and build partnerships.

In addition, the Network is represented at meetings of the following groups: Third Sector Strategy Group, Older People Provider Forum, and the West Lothian Volunteer Network.

Over the year we have begun to develop partnerships with the following local organisations including:

- Broxburn United Sports Club
- Health in Mind
- Ageing Well (Xcite)
- Carers of West Lothian
- West Lothian Community Race Forum
- Sporting Memories
- Bathgate Mens Shed
- West Lothian Food Bank

During the year the Network also took part in a number of events which brought together third sector organisations across West Lothian. These included:

- **Senior People's Fair:** held at Strathbrock Partnership Centre in September 2025, where local organisations shared information, advice and support with older people.
- **Bathgate Job Centre:** an over 50's information session for job seekers about other activities they can get involved in July 2025

- **Memory & Future Care Information event:** at Blackburn Partnership Centre bringing together local organisations and providers to share advice and support for carers and the wider community, focusing on memory support and future care planning.
- **YPI Charity Fayre** at Bathgate Academy. This gave S2 pupils the chance to meet a range of charities, learn about their work, and begin the process of selecting which organisations they would like to represent. The Network was selected by to be represented by pupils at this school and by pupils at Linlithgow Academy. We were subsequently awarded a donation of £3,000 by our association with the Youth Philanthropy Initiative in Linlithgow Academy.
- **World Mental Health Day event** in October '25 at Strathbrock Partnership Centre, bringing together over 50 organisations.
- **Age Scotland Awards & Conference** in October '25
- **Exercise Is Good For You event** at Craig Inn Community Centre, Blackburn in Feb 2026
- **International Women's Day event** hosted by Kirsteen Sullivan MP in March 2026
- **Age Scotland's Supporting Older People to Age Well workshop** in March 2026

In addition, 2025/26 has seen the Network get involved in the following noteworthy activities:

- We began supporting **West Lothian Foodbank's** distribution outlet at St David's Church which needed short term space for a few hours each week due to temporary building access issues. They have been allocated space in the Hub for this vital community work on Mondays and Fridays, 1.00–3.00pm.
- Following earlier engagement with **Age Scotland**, prior to Christmas 2025 the Network was invited to take part in their new national Legacy Campaign. Several members were selected to feature in a short promotional film highlighting the importance of connection, activity and community support in later life. Filming took place at the Hub on 11 February, the concept following a simple "journey" narrative, showing individuals starting their day alone before coming together in a group setting, demonstrating the positive impact of belonging and community connection.
- **Rosemount Gardens Campaign:** Following the announcement in early 2025 that the café at Rosemount Gardens in Bathgate was to be closed by the IJB, we joined the local lobby in support of many of our members who are residents, and the 7 groups that meet there, to petition to keep the café open. Our CEO, worked with Business Gateway advisers to develop a new proposal for the IJB that would keep the café open. Whilst only partially successful, it helped to demonstrate the Network's willingness to speak up on behalf of our members and older people in general.
- **Scottish Parliament Visit:** Network representatives including the Chair of the Board of Trustees, our CEO and a number of members and volunteers, attended a meeting at the Scottish Parliament with the Minister for Equalities, Kaukab Stewart MSP. The meeting provided an opportunity for members and volunteers to speak directly about the impact West Lothian 50+ Network has within the community. Discussion focused on the lived experience of older people and the important role organisations like ours play in tackling isolation and loneliness, in line with the Scottish Government's Recovering Connections 2023–2026 strategy. Overall, it was a positive meeting and a valuable opportunity for members to share their experiences directly with the Minister and contribute to discussions around future policy and support for community organisations.

COMMUNICATIONS

We communicated with our members using traditional methods as well as electronic / online media.

- **Face to Face:** Our Members' Hub is our primary point of contact for members wishing to drop in to join/ renew their membership, enquire about or book events, trips and holidays, or just to find a friendly face when they need one. We have a members' area where all members can drop in at any time to pick up a book, jigsaw or simply have a tea or coffee and chat with friends.
- **Minutes of Members Meetings:** distributed by email or by post to all members, benefiting those unable to attend whilst providing a written reminder of key points and dates.
- **Minutes of Trustees' Meetings:** In the interests of transparency, minutes of Board meetings were made available in the Hub.
- **Website:** Our website www.westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk provides a wide range of information about the Network and is a good source of information for our members, our partners, our funders and anyone considering joining the Network. This is well used by potential members, external funders and interested parties.
- **Social Media:** We use our Facebook and Instagram pages to share upcoming events, trips and other activities with our members in a way that encourages interaction with and between members. We also share information and activities organised by our partners and other organisations which may be of interest to our members. We currently have some 3.9K followers on our facebook page. The Network also has a presence on LinkedIn.
- **Email:** 91% of our members have email which is by far the most cost-effective means of communicating with our members. A weekly Friday update email is sent to all those with email. A monthly newsletter Network News is also emailed to members, with hard copies also available in the Members Hub.
- **Print:** A minority of our members have continued to receive postal communication, however as this has become increasingly expensive, we ask all members to provide an email address where possible.
- **Telephone:** Our telephone lines are answered during our advertised office hours, outside of which voice messages can be left.

MEMBERS SURVEY

In early 2026, we carried out a survey to better understand how members engage with the organisation and how they would like the Network to develop in the years ahead.

A total of 247 responses were received, including 25 paper submissions. This represented approximately 32% of the membership at the time of the survey, based on around 760 members, and provided a strong evidence base for understanding members' experiences and priorities.

The findings confirmed that the Network plays an important role in helping members remain active, socially connected and involved in their communities.

Key findings included:

- Most respondents took part in Network activities on a weekly basis.
- Overall satisfaction with the Network was very high.
- Members reported positive improvements in their social connections and wellbeing.
- There was demand for more activities in communities across West Lothian.

- The Members' Hub in Bathgate was widely valued, although it was not equally accessible to all members.
- Trips, holidays and events remained an important part of the Network's social programme.
- Members generally felt that communication from the Network was clear and effective.
- Members were highly likely to recommend the Network to others, with an average score of 9.36 out of 10.

The survey findings will inform future planning, programme development and strategic decision-making.

THE FUTURE

West Lothian 50+ Network (SCIO) will continue to play an important part in the lives of the over fifties in West Lothian, offering many and varied opportunities to combat social isolation.

A growing Network presents a number of challenges. We will continue to strive to meet the needs of a growing membership by developing relevant new groups and activities. We recognise that when members deepen their involvement with Network, especially through some form of volunteering role, they get more out of it and gain a sense of purpose and belonging. It is essential that we continue to provide good support and recognition for our volunteers who are key to the Network's sustainability.

Whilst the Hub offers a purpose-designed space under our own management, it has its own challenges as costs rise. We will continue to monitor other premises used by our groups. There are challenges here too, with concerns around the future of community centres, and increasing room hire rates. As part of our strategy to become less centred in Bathgate, we will continue to use and seek out alternative new venues to further our aim of extending our activities across the wider West Lothian area. The support of the private sector and other organisations, in providing spaces for our groups to meet, is appreciated.

During 2025/26 we took stock of the impact of rapid membership growth, considering its implications for member activities, staff, volunteers, premises, funding and our relationships with other organisations in the wider community and set out the following Strategic Priorities for 2026 - 2029

- Protect and Strengthen Member Experience
- Deliver Smart, Capacity-Led Expansion
- Be a True West Lothian-Wide Charity
- Be the Recognised 50+ Organisation in West Lothian
- Strengthen Financial Sustainability
- Build Volunteer, Leadership and Governance Strength

We are ending 2025/26 in a much stronger position than we started it. Our visibility across West Lothian has grown, our partnership work is delivering real value, and we have secured multi-year funding that strengthens our financial footing going into 2026/27. The Hub is operating more effectively with better equipment, improved access and clearer group structures. Member engagement remains high across events, trips and activities. There is still work ahead to increase capacity and further strengthen resilience, but the direction is clear, and the organisation is moving forward with confidence.

This report has been approved by the Trustees on 15 July 2026 and is signed on their behalf.



Sue Bedford-Visser
Chair



Frank Ellam
Secretary

WEST LOTHIAN 50+ NETWORK (SCIO)
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
for the year ended 31st March 2026

	Unrest'd £	Restricted £	y/e 31.03.26 £	y/e 31.03.25 £
Receipts				
Membership Fees (note 1)	31,353	0	31,353	18,920
Gift Aid	3,359	0	3,359	1,084
Grants Received	0	92,446	92,446	72,786
Class Fees	13,168	0	13,168	7,417
Holidays and Trips (note 2)	33,854	0	33,854	55,730
Thrift Shop	9,423	0	9,423	5,757
Fund Raising & Other Income (note 3)	28,271	0	28,271	11,328
Bank Deposit Interest	713	0	713	895
	<u>120,141</u>	<u>92,446</u>	<u>212,587</u>	<u>173,917</u>
Payments				
Salaries and Related Costs	101	53,293	53,394	65,103
Rent and Service Charges	13,221	14,916	28,137	19,670
Insurance	1,538	1,864	3,402	3,234
Holidays and Trips	24,310	0	24,310	53,104
Telephone and Internet	917	0	917	1,030
Heat and Light	3,447	3,936	7,383	7,954
Stationery, Promotion and Office Costs	1,596	38	1,635	1,765
Cleaning	1,136	0	1,136	686
Equipment & Members' Resources	117	9,875	9,992	2,662
Postage	2,548	0	2,548	2,201
Social and Fundraising Events	1,957	4,018	5,976	4,435
IT Support	1,239	0	1,239	1,477
Professional Fees	1,258	0	1,258	1,465
Fundraising Costs	5,456	0	5,456	5,040
Group Venue and Activity Costs	10,398	479	10,878	7,052
Members' Travel	69	412	481	349
Bank Charges	1,134	0	1,134	1,271
Hardship Fund	0	123	123	188
Donations and Gifts	5	105	110	1,169
Sundry Expenses	1,412	195	1,608	872
	<u>71,861</u>	<u>89,254</u>	<u>161,115</u>	<u>180,727</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	48,280	3,192	51,472	(6,810)
Funds brought forward	38,159	50,349	88,508	95,319
Closing Funds	<u>86,439</u>	<u>53,541</u>	<u>139,980</u>	<u>88,509</u>

Notes:

1 Membership Fees		
Received for current year	15,199	10,076
Received in advance for following year	16,154	8,844
	<u>31,353</u>	<u>18,920</u>
2 Holidays and Trips (Income)		
Received for current period	30,656	54,242
Received in advance for following year	3,198	1,488
	<u>33,854</u>	<u>55,730</u>
3 Fund Raising and Other Income		
Includes monies received for following year	904	320

WEST LOTHIAN 50+ NETWORK (SCIO)
STATEMENT OF BALANCES
at 31st March 2026

	31.03.26	31.03.25
	£	£
Bank and Cash In Hand		
Funds brought forward	88,508	95,319
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	51,472	(6,811)
	<u>139,980</u>	<u>88,508</u>
Split Between Funds		
Unrestricted Funds	66,183	27,507
Members' Funds	20,256	10,652
Restricted Funds (note 4)	53,541	50,349
	<u>139,980</u>	<u>88,508</u>
Made Up As Follows:		
Bank Current Account	8,051	12,237
Bank Savings Account	131,829	76,171
Cash In Hand	100	100
	<u>139,980</u>	<u>88,508</u>

Notes:

4 Reconciliation of movements in members funds

	At 01.04.25	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	At 31.03.26
Unrestricted Fund	38,159	120,141	71,861	86,439
Restricted Funds				
Wellbeing Hub	0	750	0	750
W.L. Community Mental Health & Wellbeing (2)	25,000	17,500	25,000	17,500
The Wood Foundation (YPI)	0	3,000	0	3,000
The Sydney Black Charitable Trust	0	1,000	0	1,000
The National Lottery CF - Community Action	0	20,000	0	20,000
The Walker-Shoolbraid Charitable Trust (2)	2,000	1,000	2,000	1,000
The Basil Death Trust	0	2,000	2,000	0
Home Instead Charities	0	500	500	0
West Lothian Council Pensioners Christmas Fund	0	1,732	1,732	0
Coop Community Fund (2)	500	1,436	1,402	534
Lady Marion Gibson Trust	0	3,000	3,000	0
Allied Vehicles Foundation	0	825	588	237
Hugh Fraser Foundation (2)	2,131	3,000	5,131	0
The Heather Hoy Charitable Trust	0	5,000	1,964	3,036
Edinburgh Airport Community Fund	0	3,348	3,348	0
West Lothian Councillors' Disbursements	0	1,800	1,800	0
The HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust	0	1,500	1,500	0
JTH Charitable Trust (2)	500	500	833	167
Peoples Postcode Trust	0	18,499	14,400	4,099
Tesco Stronger Starts (Groundwork UK)	0	500	200	300
Queensbury Trust	0	5,000	5,000	0
Link Group and Edmundson Electrical	0	500	500	0
Albert Hunt Trust	5,000	0	5,000	0
Thistledown Charitable Trust	1,000	0	1,000	0
Souter Charitable Trust	1,000	0	0	0
The National Lottery CF - Awards For All	6,381	0	6,381	0
Stagecoach Community Fund	797	0	797	0
Royal Co.of Merchants of Edinburgh Com. Fund	251	0	251	0
Coin Jar	87	56	105	38
Other, Older Funds	5,702	0	4,823	879
	50,349	92,446	89,254	52,541
Total Funds	88,508	212,587	161,115	139,980

**Independent Examiner's Statement
To The Trustees of West Lothian 50+ Network
Period Ended 31st March 2026**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the financial statements for the period ended 31st March 2026, which comprise the Statement of Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Balances.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustee and Examiner

The charity 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 (as amended). The charity's 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 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 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:

Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that any material respect the requirements of the 2005 Act and Regulations to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1)(a) of the Accounts Regulations and:

To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations have not been met; or

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


Mr B M Maloney, F.C.C.A.

15A West End, West Calder EH55 8EH
Date