

**STORNOWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

Scottish Charity Number:	SC023424
Current trustees:	Alexander Matheson, Honorary President Malcolm K Macdonald, Chair George H Macdonald, Vice Chair Catherine M Macleod, Secretary John A Smith, Treasurer Esther Cowan, Membership Secretary Kenneth W Galloway Jessie Murray Catherine Mackay William R Foulger Anna Tucker Isobel Macritchie Duncan Mackay Muriel Macleod Marion Maclellan Catherine Maclean Neil Macdonald Karen Macdonald John Dickie Janet Campbell - appointed 17.11.25
Other trustees during the year:	Lorna Macaulay - resigned 21.04.25
Contact address:	Town Hall 2 Cromwell Street Stornoway Isle of Lewis HS1 2DB

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Society is an unincorporated association and is operated under the terms of its constitution. The Society was formed in 1992 and was registered as a charity with effect from 7 March 1995.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The management of the Society is the responsibility of the office bearers and council members who are elected or re-elected under the terms of the constitution by the Society's members at the Annual General Meeting which is held in March each year. The Society's council members are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Charitable purposes

The objects of the Society are to advance the education of the public about the history, heritage and culture of Stornoway and the Island of Lewis.

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Summary of main activities

2025 was both busy and challenging for the Society.

The year's summer exhibition was entitled 'Behind The Iron Railings – Stornoway's Architectural Heritage' and showcased the iconic railings and notable buildings in the town's rich history. The exhibition was researched and mounted by the committee. Feedback indicated that the visitor experience was appreciated by locals and tourists alike.

At the end of the year the tenure of our Town Hall premises was threatened by Comhairle nan Eilean's budget cuts. Meetings were held and a Sub Committee formed which met with Councillors and Council officers but no resolution had resulted by the New Year. This instability has, of course, impacted on planning ahead for projects, publications, and on the Society's financial future

FINANCE

Over the year income received from donations at the exhibition and the Winter Series of Lectures was gratefully received. It has proved to be a difficult year, as several grant applications having been unsuccessful. The costs of running the Society have increased year on year and the future is uncertain. Membership has remained healthy nevertheless and research has continued unabated. The support from the membership and the community is much appreciated by the committee during difficult economic times.

EXHIBITION

The summer exhibition was staged in our main office. Much work went into preparing for the event which was staffed by our committee and members. The opening of the new deep water harbour resulted in many interested and interesting visitors from all over the world paying us a visit.

EMPLOYEES

The Society, as an approved Gateway organisation, has been able to continue the employment of a 25 hours per week Apprentice Archivist from 2022. From September 2024 he began studying Modern Apprenticeship Modules. He continues to make substantial inroads into cataloguing the Society's files, photographs and artefacts. The Society also has a cleaner for the offices (1 hour per week) for the last four years. She works out of hours and the work is greatly appreciated.

DISPLAY & STORAGE SPACE

Our main book stock, cabinets, tables and many other items not required immediately, are located in Marybank Depot within an unused office in a heated Portakabin. This followed discussions with CnES regarding the lack of storage in our present premises. The Society also has a collection stored in the Marybank Depository.

OFFICE

A "new" second-hand photocopier/printer has been networked to serve our five workstations. Office costs include over £1,000 per annum for licenses and Adobe Software and there are also fees for our website, etc. All of the five Society computers are getting old and require replacing. A laptop is also required as the old one is now unusable.

A "Doors Open Day" held via Historic Scotland was held in September.

Interviews were made with John Kennedy and committee member John Dickie filmed them and they are now available on You Tube along with those of Sandy Matheson (2024) and the Winter Series of Lectures.

A reorganisation of the office and society resources was undertaken in the Spring.

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PUBLICATIONS

SY Gone By, the Society's bi-annual magazine, continues to sell over 700 copies a year. The magazine is produced in-house by members of the committee, up to the print stage. It is then printed by Tradeprint in Dundee. Costs of paper have risen considerably and postage has soared causing the Society to raise membership fees, which, with advertising, help to make the printing costs economical.

The most recent book, *A Considerable Town*, a monumental and superbly illustrated work about the built heritage of Stornoway has now sold half of the print run and is now in profitability.

Due to a fall in income, we have not been able to reprint William H Macdonald's 'Old Stornoway Revisited' or publish 'Memorial Inscriptions of New Sandwick Cemetery' which was researched in 2020. We did reprint 'Memorial Inscriptions No 1 – Old Sandwick Cemetery'.

The Society assisted with the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar book celebrating 50 years since it became the established authority of the Outer Hebrides. The Society also assisted with the Lord Lieutenancy commemorative book celebrating "Fifty Years of Serving our Monarchy in the Western Isles".

PROJECTS

Our old videos, cine films, etc., are in the process of being digitised.

Work continues in digitising our stock of old Valuation Rolls as the paper copies are now very fragile.

We are to seek funding as a Society, or in partnership, to digitise our photographs and artefacts for a database. This will be a costly project and will need a full-time member of staff to deliver over an indefinite period of time.

TRAINING AND SEMINARS

The emigration conference 'Homesickness and Hope,' run by Museum & Tasglainn nan Eilean was attended by six committee members.

The Western Isles Roadshow in the Town Hall was attended by the Chair.

SCHOOLS

No school visits were undertaken through the year, but the Society remains committed to assisting local schools.

WINTER SERIES OF LECTURES

In January Donnie Morrison and Colin Tucker delivered 'A History of Island Buses' and in February Duncan Macinnes lectured on the local fishing industry. The Chair gave an illustrated talk on Stornoway football in March. In October Andrew Sim gave the Council Chambers 'A Knotter's tale' and the Chair gave 'Old Stornoway Buildings' in November. All were filmed and are on You Tube.

OTHER TALKS

Over the year the Society has been pleased to deliver talks and photographic presentations on a variety of subjects to groups within the community; the monthly Sporting Memories group, Cearnas Community Association, Taigh Shiphoint and Highlands & Islands Airport (Iolaire).

EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

In 2025 the Society has helped with photographs and information to businesses including the Cabarfeidh Hotel. It has also assisted Professor Ann Frater, Dr Tearlach Wilson (Taigh Ceilidh) and others.

MUSEUM NAN EILEAN

The Society contributed on loan, five artefacts for display at the Museum which opened in 2016.

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NAMING OF DEVELOPMENTS

The Society continues to be consulted regarding the names of new developments and streets.

OTHER BODIES

During 2025 the Society consulted with or was represented on the following bodies: Sustainable Communities Group, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Stornoway Library, Museum nan Eilean, Tasglann nan Eilean, Stornoway Trust, Harris Tweed Authority, UHI, Highlands & Islands Assessors, Sportscotland, Heritage Network Forum, 50th Anniversary of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Point & Sandwick Trust, Stornoway Community Council, Iolaire Centre Group, Highlands & Islands Airport and other historical societies.

ENQUIRIES BY EMAIL/LETTER, ETC

We dealt with 115 mail inquiries (115 in 2024), plus 13 (19) on Facebook. Several of these involve research and follow ups.

The Chair has dealt with 35 (30) enquiries sent directly to him. These enquiries do not include enquiries from other Comunn Eachdraidh, from CnES staff or the above bodies. No charge is made for this service.

There has been a continuing media use of the Society for research purposes and for photograph acquisition. The Society charges £20 each for the first four copies and £15 per additional copy. The Archivist deals with these requests. The above figures do not record these enquiries. Neither do they cover all dealings with management, contractors, etc.

WEBSITE

The website had 33,297 visits in comparison to 31,917 in 2024. The website was updated by She Online in March 2025.

YOU TUBE

Lectures appear on You Tube and these have received favourable comments from all over the world. You Tube channel subscribers in the year amounted to 691 (570 in 2024) with 16,856 video views (17,587).

FACEBOOK

Facebook followers number 3,729 (3,414).

COMMITTEE

The committee worked hard behind the scenes to deliver our Exhibition and *SY Gone By*. Many of the committee members attend regularly on Tuesdays and Thursdays to research and work on the exhibition.

In November Janet Campbell replaced Lorna Macaulay who had tendered her resignation in April 2025.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership has been sustained throughout another difficult year. Considerable work was undertaken by the Membership Secretary to set up and manage membership records on Excel; and a mail merge for labels for the delivery of *SY Gone By* addresses has helped administration considerably. There are 273 members on the database.

ARCHIVES

The archive continues to grow considerably. At the end of 2025 the number of items catalogued exceeded 13,000.

Many artefacts have been acquired or donated. Many photographs of shops and buildings were contributed by Ken Kennedy.

REMEMBRANCE

A Society wreath is laid at the Lewis War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Summary of main achievements

During the year, the Society continued to be instrumental in raising awareness of the general public to the need to preserve all aspects of the town's early and most recent history. The Society actively participated in the presentation of information on the town through exhibitions, public lectures and publications. The Society also continued to maintain, preserve and add to its collection and archive.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The Society finances remain stable and membership has remained healthy. The support from the membership and the community is much appreciated by the committee during difficult economic times.

As a result of the deficit of £16,462 for the year (2024 - surplus of £14,726) unrestricted funds have decreased to £7,516 (2024 - £8,351) and restricted funds have decreased to £Nil (2024 - £15,627).

The trustees consider that the level of free reserves in unrestricted funds held at 31 December 2025 is sufficient to meet the Society's ongoing operational requirements and enable the charity to continue with its activities for the forthcoming year.

Reserves policy

The general fund represents unrestricted funds from past operating results not yet utilised. It also represents the free reserves of the charity. The trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the charity and consider that three months operating expenditure, which currently equates to £9,000, should be held in unrestricted reserves. This would allow the charity to continue to operate in the event of an interruption in its income streams. The trustees aim to build reserves to this level through planned operating surpluses over the next few years. Funds are also raised for specific projects as required.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Malcolm K Macdonald, Chair

Date: 30 March 2026

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RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.12.25 Total funds £	31.12.24 Total funds £
Receipts					
Donations		1,118	-	1,118	670
Grants	1	400	2,000	2,400	33,470
Subscriptions		5,259	-	5,259	3,966
Gross receipts from other charitable activities	2	9,373	-	9,373	11,744
Income from investments other than land and Buildings	3	143	-	143	27
Total receipts		<u>16,293</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>18,293</u>	<u>49,877</u>
Payments					
Payments relating directly to charitable activities	4	15,949	17,627	33,576	33,924
Governance costs:					
Accountancy fees		708	-	708	672
Payroll fees		291	-	291	375
Legal and professional fees		180	-	180	180
Total payments		<u>17,128</u>	<u>17,627</u>	<u>34,755</u>	<u>35,151</u>
Net (payments) receipts		(835)	(15,627)	(16,462)	14,726
Transfers to (from) funds		-	-	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) for year		<u>(835)</u>	<u>(15,627)</u>	<u>(16,462)</u>	<u>14,726</u>

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STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.12.25 Total funds £	31.12.24 Total funds £
Bank and cash in hand				
Opening balances	8,351	15,627	23,978	9,252
Surplus/(deficit) for year	(835)	(15,627)	(16,462)	14,726
Closing balances	<u>7,516</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,516</u>	<u>23,978</u>
Reserves				
General fund	7,516	-	7,516	8,351
Restricted funds	-	-	-	15,627
Closing balances	<u>7,516</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,516</u>	<u>23,978</u>

Approved by the Trustees on 30 March 2026 and signed on their behalf by:

Malcolm K Macdonald, Chair

John A Smith, Treasurer

STORNOWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

1. Grants

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.12.25 Total £	31.12.24 Total £
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Membership grant	-	-	-	350
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Ward Priority Fund	-	-	-	1,120
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Crown Estate Funding	-	-	-	24,000
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Bord na Gaidhlig grant	-	2,000	2,000	-
The Stornoway Trust - Wind Farm Grant Scheme	-	-	-	7,000
LWP Sponsorship Fund	400	-	400	1,000
	400	2,000	2,400	33,470

2. Gross receipts from other charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.12.25 Total £	31.12.24 Total £
Newsletter and publications	5,444	-	5,444	5,801
Lectures and exhibitions	2,218	-	2,218	4,654
Images and photographs	275	-	275	310
Employment Allowance	1,436	-	1,436	854
Other income	-	-	-	125
	9,373	-	9,373	11,744

3. Income from investments other than land and buildings

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.12.25 Total £	31.12.24 Total £
Bank account interest	143	-	143	27

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4. Payments relating directly to charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.12.25 Total £	31.12.24 Total £
Newsletter and publications	3,690	-	3,690	4,616
Exhibitions and events	-	-	-	141
Projects	117	2,000	2,117	3,478
Wages	2,023	15,627	17,650	16,102
Pensions	345	-	345	271
Premises costs	4,410	-	4,410	5,578
Cleaning expenses	708	-	708	631
Repairs and renewals	188	-	188	428
Equipment	1,156	-	1,156	215
Computer expenses	726	-	726	-
Insurance	603	-	603	603
Postages, printing and stationery	462	-	462	770
Advertising	210	-	210	-
Website expenses	1,200	-	1,200	144
Donations	-	-	-	720
Sundry expenses	25	-	25	25
Bank charges	86	-	86	199
Interest payable	-	-	-	3
	<u>15,949</u>	<u>17,627</u>	<u>33,576</u>	<u>33,924</u>

5. Trustees remuneration and expenses

The trustees did not receive any remuneration or expenses during the year.

6. Nature and purpose of funds

General fund

The general fund represents unrestricted funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objects.

Restricted funds

This represents funds received from public funding agencies and trusts for a specified purpose.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF STORNOWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are set out on pages six to nine.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and 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 (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 2006 Accounts Regulations. 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
 - 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.

Name: John E Moffat BA FCA

Address: CIB Services
Chartered Accountants
63 Kenneth Street
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2DS

Date: 30 June 2026