

# Trains Across Strathearn (TrAcS) Memorial Project

## Trustees' Annual Report

January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2024

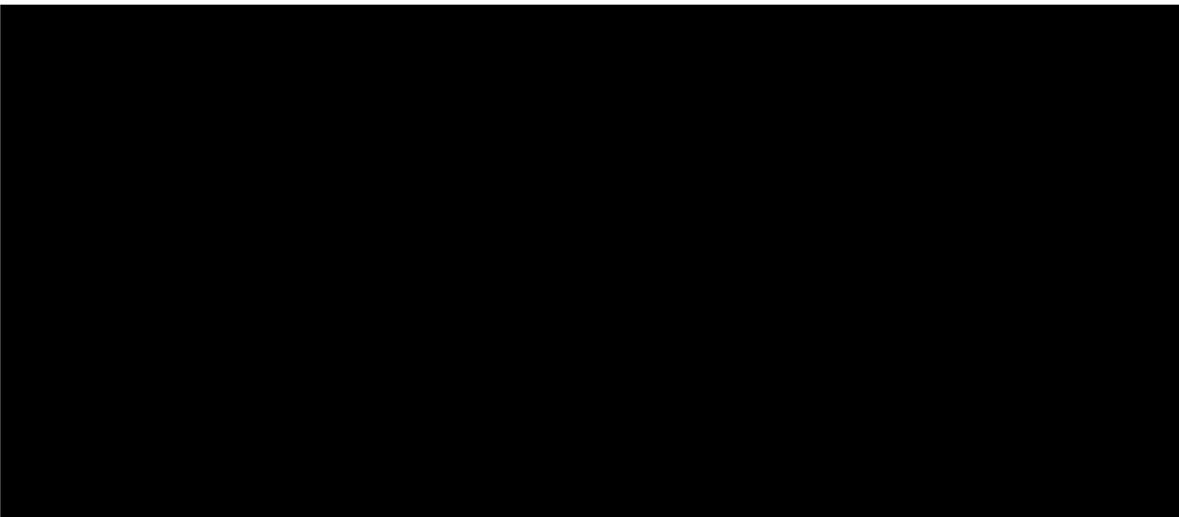


## Charity contact information



### **Trains Across Strathearn (TrAcS) Memorial Project**

Scottish Charity Number: SC050176

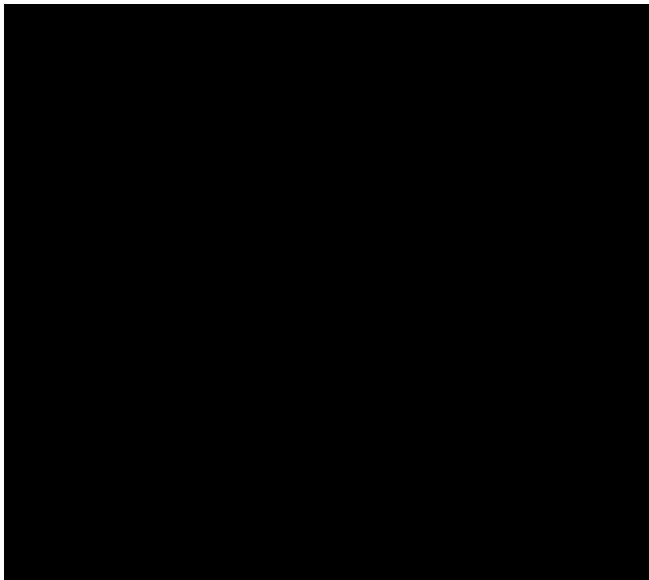
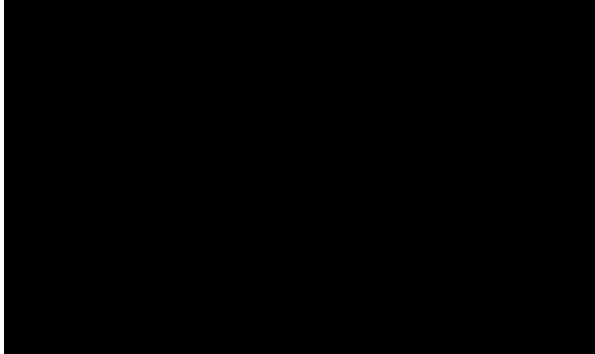


Website N/A

Facebook Crieff Lines Railways

## Charity Trustees

Name all of your charity trustees for the period, and the date they left if they were not in post for the whole year



## Objectives and activities

The TrAcS Memorial Project is a small, local community group established to interpret for the local area the history and benefits that, the now vanished railways and their staff brought to Strathearn, and to protect and preserve relevant local railway artefacts and features.

Our constitution states our purpose to be-

‘The advancement of education and the heritage of the local railways of Upper Strathearn, through the creation and preservation of appropriate Memorials and other educational materials and events.’

Upper Strathearn lies north of the hill ridge running east-west between Perth and Abercairny and separates the area from the current main railway line running through Auchterarder to Perth. The railway between Perth and Balquhidder, with the junction at Crieff and the branch off to Gleneagles, served Upper Strathearn for over 100 years and the benefits it brought to the area, including the money from tourism and the local estates, can still be seen all around us today.

It was due to the coming of the railway that Crieff and Upper Strathearn began to develop generally from weaving communities to a health and tourist resort, resulting in the building of the Hydro and many other hotels the length and breadth of the Strath. This was preceded by the building of our well-known Morrison’s Academy, with Crieff again being chosen due to its railway connection.

The amount of wealth pouring into the area saw the building of many fine villas and the laying out of new streets and a general raising of standards, making the area a great place to live, work and holiday in.

Although there are many signs of the railway still to be seen through Upper Strathearn, it was felt a proper memorial to mark the railways and their staff would be a welcome addition. Due to Crieff being the junction and the largest station on the lines, it was decided that this was where the memorial should be sited.

At present it is planned that the feature will consist of an ex-Caledonian Railway signal of a type previously seen in the area,

accompanied with interpretation boards to tell some of the story of the lines, with relevant photographs, including staff.

This preserved and restored railway icon feature will act as a point from which to raise the profile of the local lines where it is hoped that the local community and visitors will have a chance to increase their learning.

## Structure, governance and management

### Type of governing document

The TrAcS Memorial Project is governed by our Constitution, and as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation under the watchful eye of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

A copy of these documents can be examined by contacting the Secretary of TrAcS.

### Trustee recruitment and appointment

The Board of TrAcS Charity Trustees has remained the same throughout the year in question.

Should any of these Trustees wish to step down for whatever reason, it would fall to the members of TrAcS to appoint a replacement.

Any person can apply to become a member of TrAcS simply by contacting the Secretary and filling in the appropriate form.

At present our group include individuals who either have had family members who worked on the local lines, or who have a close affinity with them for other reasons, such as travelling to school or on business. This direct link adds significantly to the group and other members who are younger, or have maybe moved into the area, and so have no first-hand knowledge, can learn so much from the others.

### Induction

Currently the group feel there is no need for a formal Induction process due to the small size, both of the group, but also the Project. Any new members have been recruited locally and have already attended the group's meetings and so have a good understanding of our aims and objectives. However, should any of our dynamics change, then that would be the time to introduce a formal Induction programme.

## Achievements and performance



The Trustees report for 2024 opens with our semaphore signal still undergoing restoration at the premises of the Scottish Railway Preservation Society at Bo'ness. Unfortunately due to the poor summer weather and the hour travelling time between Crieff and Bo'ness, there were only a few visits by our volunteers to physically work on the signal. With this in mind, we asked if it would be possible for members of the Bo'ness Signal & Telegraph Dept. to work on our signal in order to speed things along, but due to their own current work commitments, they said this will be more likely to happen once we are at the stage of piecing the signal back together.

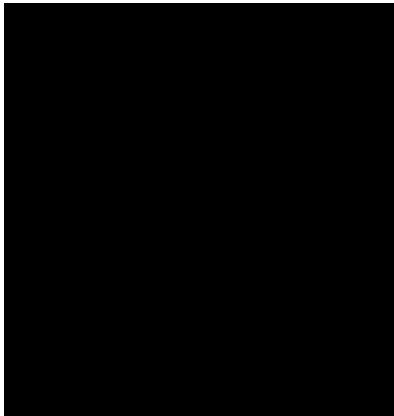
### **Volunteers visit Bo'ness**

It had been noted that very few of our group had actually seen our semaphore signal 'in the flesh', so a meeting was arranged with Donald McLeish of the Signal and Telegraph Dept. at Bo'ness, who very kindly showed 5 members of the group around the site on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024. ██████ explained about the signal and the restoration process ahead, and then gave us a tour of the Museum of Scottish Railways, for which he was thanked sincerely.

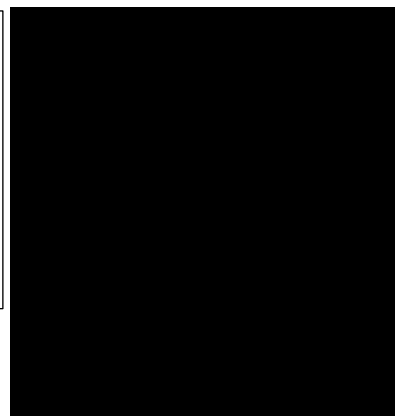
### **Volunteers working on the signal at Bo'ness**

A few visits to Bo'ness to physically work on the signal at Bo'ness did take place over the year. The work still consists of physically chipping, burning and scraping off the many layers of old paint from the lattice

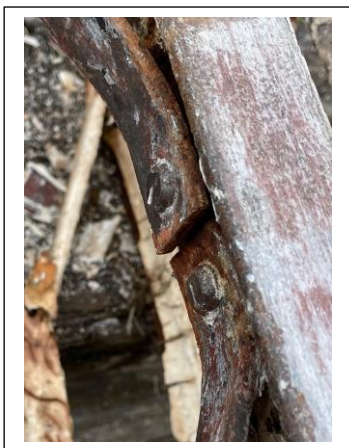
framework to expose the bare metal work and allow checks to be made on the overall condition of the signal post.



Tools of the Trade!



To date a few sprung rivets and a couple of fractures have been discovered, but thankfully nothing more significant so far.



Sprung rivet can be seen on the left, and a fracture by the rivet on the right.



It was suggested that we should get ██████████ of Welding Fabrication Solutions to carry out any necessary work before we turn the signal to expose and chip the next side. However, it was then decided that perhaps the best course of action would just be to ask ██████████ to go ahead and carry out the work himself, and this would avoid the delays experienced by volunteers travelling down from Crieff as and when they can manage. Although it is great to have people volunteering and working ‘hands-on’, it would be much easier to have a contractor work on the signal and significantly speed up its restoration. With our funds in a better position, it was decided to go ahead and ask ██████████ to commence the work.

In September, DF met up with ██████████, of Welding Fabrication Solutions, Bo’ness, to discuss the way forward. ██████████ was very helpful



and advised that we should remove the paint ourselves, but we did not have to remove all of the paint from the signal post, only the loose parts, which would reveal any cracks or issues in the metalwork.



Comparison shots showing the progress in the cleaning up operation.



■■■■ also suggested a firm called Highland Galvanisers & Colour Coaters, who originated in Elgin, but also have a base in Cumbernauld, who could perhaps collect the signal from Bo'ness, after any required repairs were complete, transport it to Cumbernauld, shot-blast it, dip it in their tanks to galvanise it, then colour coat it, and possibly then transport it to Crieff. ■■■■ thought this would be fantastic.

Unfortunately when ■■■■ contacted HG&CC, they said they could not do this operation for us, as they feared the signal would be too old, and the process would damage the metalwork.

So it's back to the original plan of having the post shot-blasted, followed by painting by hand.

■■■■ also suggested the TrAcS Project should contact Perth & Kinross Council regarding what the maximum height allowed is within the conservation area where we propose to site the signal, before we agree on the final length of the post. ■■■■ will then cut the post to size.

■■■■ having contacted PKC received the following reply, "From a planning perspective we wouldn't have any particular limit on the height, but it would depend primarily on what it looked like in terms of impact on the wider conservation area. It's hard to give any exact measurements prior to any planning application being submitted. It

might be best to submit an application for the height that you want and if there are any issues with this from any of the consultees it could potentially be reduced in height to suit any specific requirements. There may be traffic and road safety requirements that I am not aware of, but any issues would be raised by consultees as part of any planning application submitted.”

██████████, architect, and member of the TrAcS Project, suggested that TrAcS should prepare a PreApp consultation (pre Planning Application), which would consist of documents giving a preamble of what we’re trying to achieve and why, coupled with drawings and specifications which would illustrate how the completed Memorial would look in-situ. This PreApp would be presented at a meeting between TrAcS representatives and PKC. Costing around £120, the PreApp meeting would hopefully allow TrAcS to become aware of any potential planning issues before submitting a formal Planning Application, and so ensure a more successful outcome. To fully prepare the required documents, TrAcS would need to consult an engineer to have plans prepared for a foundation for the signal.

██████████ spoke with his friend ██████████, who is a locally-based Civil Engineer, who is happy to work with the TrAcS Project to achieve this. Currently we are awaiting ██████████ to compile the PreApp before arranging a meeting with PKC.

## **Hours**

Over the year it has been estimated that around 154 hours have been spent by volunteers working on the Trains Across Strathearn (TrAcS) Memorial Project.

## **Peers**

TrAcS has also continued to seek other similar projects to learn from where possible, one of these being the Highland Main Line Community Rail Partnership, who have recently completed their own signal project at Pitlochry. ██████████, Chair of HMLCRP, has been very helpful with advice on contractors, costings and possible funders. TrAcS are currently seeking information from ██████████ regarding the foundations

used for their signal, as TrAcS could possibly adopt a similar foundation if appropriate, and also information in relation to any possible vandalism or accidents which have taken place since the HMLCRP signal was installed in parkland near Pitlochry Station in May 2024.



## Funding

A new pop-up display was bought for when the group attend any events, which we aim to do over the coming year. Unfortunately due to poor communication from the organiser of the event we were looking to attend, it resulted in our not being given enough information before the event in order for us to arrange staffing and transport, and so did not attend.

We did also intend to have a stall at Crieff Highland Gathering, but unfortunately space was fully booked when we asked, so better luck next year.



During the year, we approached Gleneagles Hotel seeking a possible donation from them, but they suggested we ask Highland Spring Group, which we did, and were donated £250. TrAcS thanked Highland Spring Group very much and put out an article in the local press to highlight their generosity to us.

We also have to place on record our grateful thanks to [REDACTED] for his extremely generous donation of £2,000 to the Trains Across Strathearn (TrAcS) Memorial Project. [REDACTED] had agreed at

our last AGM to stand as one of our Trustees, but unfortunately had to withdraw due to personal reasons, although he does still attend a number of our monthly meetings.

In another attempt to boost our funds, we attended a locally run workshop regarding local funding applications, but discovered that the priorities were still being given to issues connected with the cost of living crisis, and so did not really apply to our area of work. Hopefully next year the guidelines will have changed and we will become more eligible.

An application for funding was also made to the 'Community Champions' fund run by Persimmon Homes, but regrettably we were unsuccessful here too. Since they are building locally, we will try another application to the fund and hope for better luck.

Another big achievement we have managed this year is to become accredited under the HMRC 'Gift Aid' scheme, which allows us to reclaim tax on donations below a certain amount. This has been very successful and has secured us another £500 at least, just from the £2,000 donation we received from [REDACTED]. The TrAcS Project would like to thank [REDACTED], Treasurer, for achieving this goal for us.

## **Financial review**

We started the year with £1,900 in our account, and after various payments and donations, we now have a current total of £4,149.

Thanks goes to [REDACTED] our Treasurer and [REDACTED] our Auditor.

TRAINS ACROSS STRATHEARN MEMORIAL PROJECT

(TRACS)

TREASURERS REPORT JAN.2024—DEC.2024.

This has been a busier year on the financial front for two main reasons. Firstly we have benefitted from a significant increase in income from donations. In particular we had a single donation of £2000 from one individual bringing the total donations for the year to £2375. This enabled us to end 2024 with £4149 in our bank account. At the present time we have no outstanding debt so that we are in a good position to meet our future expenditure.

The second significant financial development is that HMRC has recognised us as eligible to use the gift-aid system for some of our donations. The rules around gift-aid are strict but it means that donations from individuals who are tax payers will have their donation increased by 25% at no additional cost to them. Not all donations are eligible such as those from companies but overall we should see significant benefit.

There are no other significant matters of which I am aware at present.



TRAINS ACROSS STRATHEARN (TRACS) MEMORIAL PROJECT

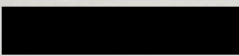
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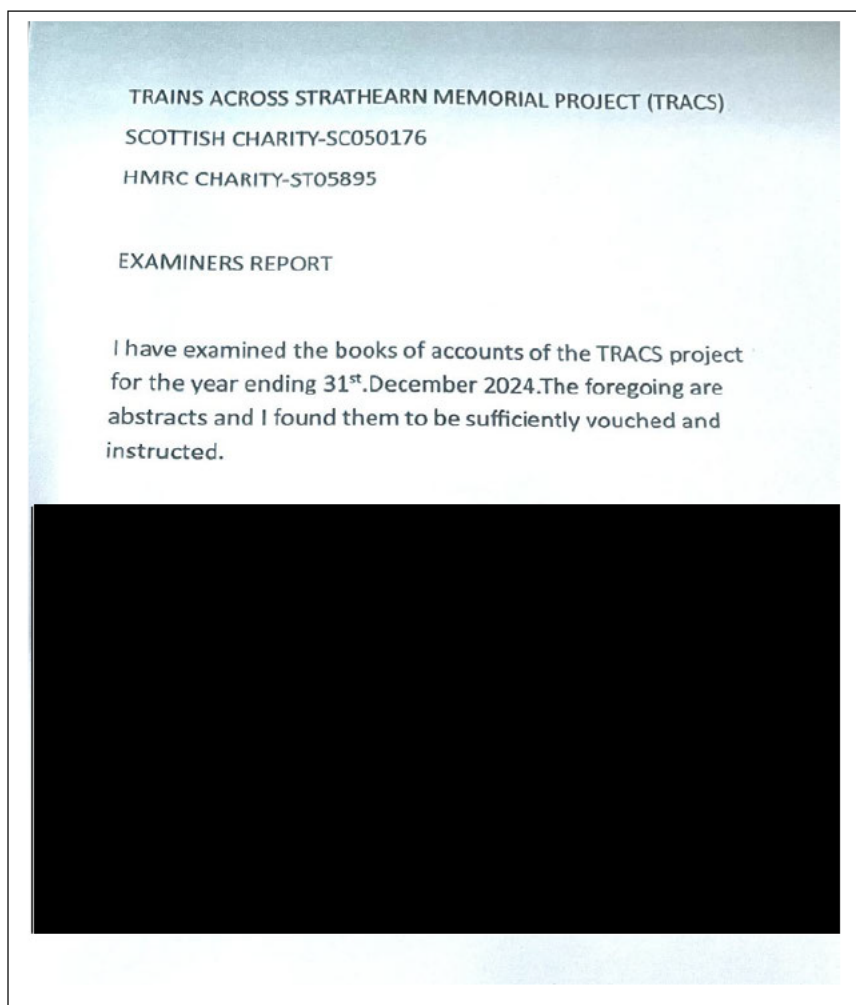
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2024—31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2024

CASH BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD FROM 31 <sup>st</sup> DEC.2023	£1900.00
<u>INCOME FROM DONATIONS 01/01/24-31/12/24</u>	£2375.00
	<u>£4275.00</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE 01/01/24-31/12/24 (administration)</u>	£126.00
CASH BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 <sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2024	£4149.00

WE HAVE NO OUTSTANDING EXPENDITURE

THESE ACCOUNTS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY OUR INDEPENDENT EXAMINER





### Donated facilities and services

The Trains Across Strathearn (TrAcS) Memorial Project would like to thank the Scottish Railway Preservation Society and its volunteers for looking after the TrAcS signal and its components, which have been placed into secure storage for us, and to the volunteers from TrAcS who have given their time to travel from Crieff to Bo'ness and to carry out work on the signal.

TrAcS would like to place on record the hospitality we have received from the Meadow Inn, Burrell Street, Crieff, which is where we hold our monthly meetings and we have found the staff very friendly and accommodating, with no charge made. As a means of recompense, 5 members of our group booked in for a Christmas meal with the Meadow Inn, so it was a nice social event, as well as a feeling of us giving something back for all the kindness over the year.

Also a big thank you to ██████████ of Gourlay Events for storing our section of old rail over the year.

## Future plans

Over the coming year, TrAcS aims to make a start in earnest on the conservation and restoration of the signal by contacting the required trades people to have the work carried out. We will continue fund-raising, and approach possible funders, especially once an idea has been acquired of the work and costs involved, to meet these costs as they arise.

██████████ at Bo'ness has said that if any members of the TrAcS Project would like to get involved hands-on, so long as we liaise through him, we can go to Bo'ness and work on the signal – occasionally alongside members of the signalling squad - removing, cleaning and preparing the signal parts ready for reassembly later.

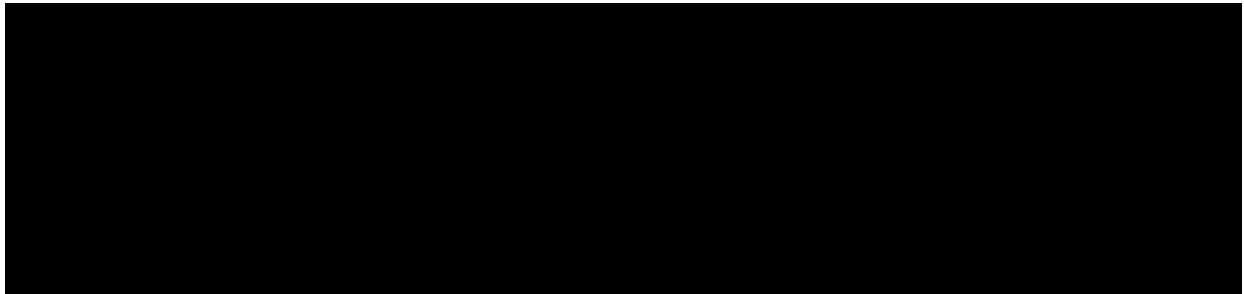
Meanwhile it is also hoped that ideas can be processed as to what the accompanying information panels could look like – what size, what information and photographs are desired, and what types of finish are required to withstand the various environmental conditions.

Other longer term activity suggestions for TrAcS have been made, including working in partnership with the Loch Earn Railway Path Project in interpreting the newly restored section of old railway between Comrie and Lochearnhead. This may include compiling and help in distributing leaflets for interpretive purposes, and/or creating information panels or other suitable interpretive features. This will be with a view to increasing peoples learning along these newly restored sections of the old local railway lines of Strathearn.

The TrAcS Project will continue to seek attendance at community events for fund-raising and to generally raise the profile of the Project.

## Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:



Designation

Chairman

Date

11<sup>th</sup> March 2025



TRAINS ACROSS STRATHEARN (TRACS) MEMORIAL PROJECT

SCOTTISH CHARITY SC050176 : HMRC CHARITY ST05895

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD 1<sup>st</sup>.JANUARY 2024—31<sup>st</sup>.DECEMBER  
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TRAINS ACROSS STRATHEARN MEMORIAL PROJECT (TRACS)

SCOTTISH CHARITY-SC050176

HMRC CHARITY-ST05895

#### EXAMINERS REPORT

I have examined the books of accounts of the TRACS project for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup>.December 2024.The foregoing are abstracts and I found them to be sufficiently vouched and instructed.

