

Friends of Ben Rinnes: Trustees' Annual Report, 2025/2026

Charity title: Friends of Ben Rinnes.
Scottish Charity Number SC 034370.

The charity's address is c/o Rose Cottage, Milltown of Edinville, Aberlour AB38 9NB this being the home address of the current chairperson.

The trustees during the year May 2025/May 2026

Linda Mathieson	Chairperson/Treasurer (part year)
Darran Moss	Membership Secretary and Treasurer (part year)
Ella Grant	Trustee
Ged Connell	Trustee
Alan Edward	Trustee
Eric Grant	Trustee

Structure, governance, and management.

The Friends of Ben Rinnes (FoBR) is an unincorporated association of like-minded individuals who elect an executive committee (trustees) annually (in May) at an A.G.M. Under its constitution, membership of the executive is for three years, but on retiring, a member can be re-elected. The executive committee then appoint the office bearers from their number. They can also co-opt members to the executive. The committee meets on a regular basis throughout the year and uses email and WhatsApp to deal quickly with routine issues.

Constitutionally the committee is required to meet a minimum of twice each year. In 2025/26 the committee met four times.

Objectives and activities.

The purpose of the charity is to conserve and promote the landscape of Ben Rinnes and to encourage and support responsible recreational access to this hill.

In order to tackle the issue of erosion caused by increased popularity of the hill to walkers, the charity, in its early years raised funds for, and instigated, major path construction. It currently focuses on monitoring the condition of the path and provides annual ongoing basic maintenance through volunteers and more recently has engaged with a professional path contractor to deal with more technical repairs to the path.

FoBR meet as a group once a year at the AGM in May. This doubles as a social occasion with a speaker focusing on mountain, nature or environmental related topics.

Achievements

Membership: During 2025/26 we had 13 (including 4 family) life members, 5 Annual family members, 11 adult members and one junior individual member.

There are over 1.6k followers on FoBR Facebook page (14/05/26).

Path Maintenance: The annual path maintenance was completed the volunteers by November 2025.

Path Contractor: Owen Bass of Northern Conservation successfully complete the set of works identified for the 2024/25 season. This spurred the Friends to want to continue with the professional path works being done by Owen, so a bid to the EDF Power Solutions Dorenell Wind Farm Community Fund was submitted and was successful in securing a further 2 years funding for path works on Ben Rinnes for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Trig Point: The Unveiling was the highlight of the past year and took place on Saturday 18th April 2026. A hardy bunch of 25 walkers made up of members of the Friends, Jamie Aarons and supporters braved the wind and the hail to finally unveil the refurbished Ben Rinnes Trig Point. The date was very significant as it was also World Monument Day and the 90th Birthday of the Ordnance Survey's first trig point installation on the 18th April 1936 in Cold Ashby Northamptonshire.

Car Park Management/People Counters: The Committee have continued to monitor the car park to ensure it is fit for purpose. It has bedded in nicely and thankfully the rain garden areas have greened up nicely. The task now is to keep the gravel area clear of weeds and do regular litter picks.

After a period of not being reliable, the people counters at the start of the hill walk are now working successfully and quarterly updates are received from Moray Council on the numbers using the Ben Rinnes path. The counts for the period August to March 2026 were 13,354 but this doesn't distinguish between up and down passage, so this figure needs to be almost halved based on most users starting and finishing at the Ben Rinnes Car Park.

New Website and branding: The new website is now live www.friendsofbenrinnes.co.uk but online membership payments and donations are still to be activated. The new site is being kept simple so it will only have the necessary information about the membership, volunteering and obviously news and events to enable it to be kept up to date but it will be a useful source of information about the Friends of Ben Rinnes and its activities. The new branding was developed alongside the website to give us a new more modern look.

Financial arrangements

FoBR has two bank accounts. The first, (The Friends of Ben Rinnes) can be used for any aspect of the group's work. The second, (The Friends of Ben Rinnes Project Account) was the paths works account, but it has been dormant for a good number of years but is in the process of being reviewed.

No project is undertaken until the trustees have ascertained the costs and have assured funding is in place to meet these costs. The day to day administrative and running costs (membership information, meetings, educational leaflets, equipment purchase, website servicing and path contractor costs) are now covered by the first account.

Account reserves have remained stable over the last few years and comfortably meet the needs of the charity. Following the successful employment of a path contractor in 2024/25 the Committee applied and were successful in securing grant for further professional path works for 2025/26 and 2026/27 from the EDF Power Solutions Dorenell Wind Farm Community Fund. Total grant funding awarded is £22,000

The trustees receive no remuneration and only items bought to service FoBR are refunded (stationery, website services and travel mileage or gifts for speakers, catering at FoBR events etc).

The annual adult membership fee remains at £10.

Approved by the Trustees (30th June 2026) and signed on their behalf,

Linda Mathieson _____ Chairperson

Ella Grant _____ Trustee