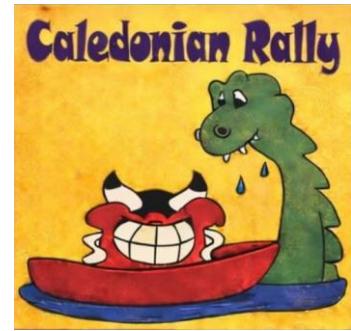




HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS REGIONAL SCOUT COUNCIL

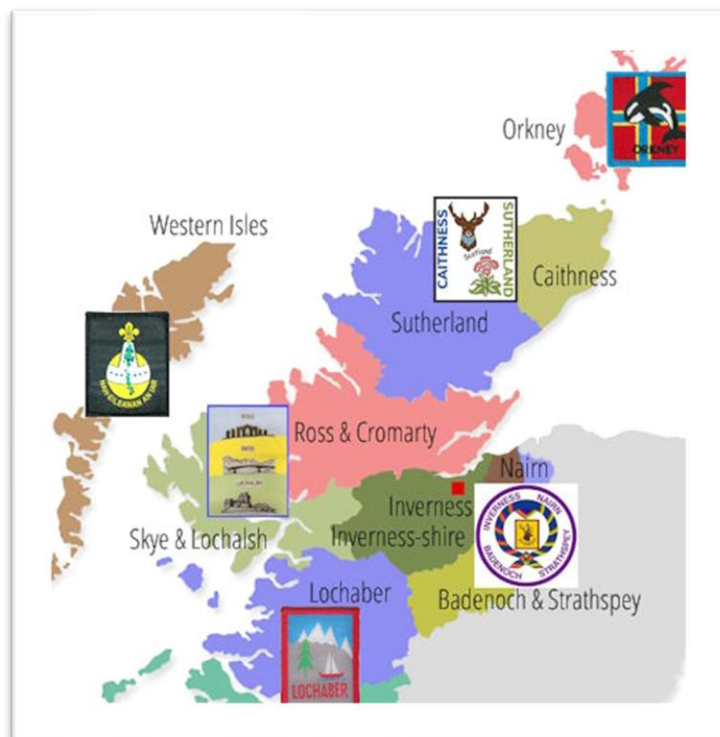


Registered
Charity
SC039358

TRUSTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025 to 2026



Scouting in Highlands and Islands



The Region, led by the Region Lead Volunteer supports delivery of exciting and adventurous Scouting, providing skills for life for young people aged 4 – 24 and supports the committed volunteers in delivering Scouting across the Highlands, Western Isles and Orkney.

It stretches from Orkney to Ballachulish, Grantown-on-Spey to the Western Isles, a geography the size of the

Country of Belgium, one third of the land mass of Scotland and includes some 20 populated Islands.

The Region is subdivided into six Districts: each being led by a District Lead Volunteer and a local Leadership Team seen in map above.

- Caithness and Sutherland.
- Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch, and Strathspey.
- Lochaber.
- Orkney.
- Ross, Skye and Lochalsh.
- Western Isles.

Districts deliver local Scouting through the various Scout Groups and Sections within their geographical boundaries.

Place to belong: Our Strategy

The Highlands & Islands Region Scout Council will aim to promote the Scout Association new Strategy 'Place to Belong' introduced in 2025.

To turn strategy into delivery, there will be three three-year plans. These will take us on a journey through nine-years of the strategy.

The path ahead: Shaping the next three years.

The first of the plans will give focus areas for our movement over the next three years: Programme, Volunteering and Support.

Programme.

- Delivering an adventurous and inclusive Programme.
- To safely deliver a fun, relevant, and inclusive Programmed for all.

Volunteering

- Supporting our volunteers.
- To improve volunteering, making sure our people feel valued, supported, and motivated.

How young people shaped the strategy.

The UK Youth Team led the UK Youth Forum 2025 to make sure young people's voices shaped our strategy. Through local self-led activities and four in-person events held during March and April 2025, young people shared ideas, aspirations, and concerns for the future, building on the 'Skills for Life' strategy and advancing our commitment to youth-shaped Scouting.



Structure, governance and management.

Highlands and Islands Regional Scout Council is a Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) registered Charity, Number 039358. The charity's governing documents are those of The Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter, which in turn gives authority to the Bye Laws of the Association and The Policy Organisation and Rules (POR) of The Scout Association. The charity is a trust established under its rules which are common to all Scouts. It is constituted as an educational charity. The Highlands and Islands Regional Scout Council and Trustee Board are governed by a constitution which was last updated in August 2024.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

The Group Trustee Board is a team of Volunteer who work together, as Trustees, to make sure the Scouts is run safely and legally. At the heart of their role is a focus on strategy, performance, and assurance. As per POR when recruiting volunteers to the trustee board eligibility checks will be conducted to check that they are not on any of the following registers:

- Individual Insolvency Register.
- Register of disqualifications.
- Record of removed persons.

Region Trustee Board

Region Chair	Robert Beharie
Region Lead Volunteer*	Ryan MacLennan
Region Youth Lead*	Ryan Macintyre
Region Treasurer	Craig Walker
Cally Rally Treasurer	If role not held by Region Treasurer.
Trustee	Katrina Donaldson
Trustee	Donna-Claire Hunter

*Ex-officio Member

Region Chair's Report

Robert Beharie - Region Chair

Over the past year, has seen the promotion of the new “Strategy to 2035 – A Place to Belong”. The strategy has been shaped by the views and contributions of more than 28,000 people, including significant input from the UK Youth Forum. Its key aims include creating a more inclusive environment, supporting mental wellbeing, and giving young people a greater voice and role in shaping the future of Scouting.



It was great to be able to meet, chat and socialise with Trustees from all over the Region who attended the Spark meeting to explore the new strategy in February at Badaguish. Much was discussed and friendships strengthened.

Safeguarding has also remained a major area of focus, with The Scout Association continuing to review and strengthen its procedures. In February, the Charity Commission for England and Wales issued a 'Regulatory Advice Note'. This required all volunteers within the Region to consider their responsibilities as Trustees and confirm that they had read and understood the referenced guidance. The Region Trustees coordinated this process, with the necessary work being completed in May. Changes have also been introduced affecting Local Trustee Boards, with the previous “Scrutineer” arrangements being replaced by formally appointed Independent Examiners or Auditors.

Significant changes have happened over the last couple of years regarding the management and overall operation of local Scouts and this has seen an increasing workload on our current number of volunteers.

Most Scout Council parents see our ongoing programme and activities as a beneficial way to gain essential strategic life skills where the academic education system is unable. Our volunteers recognise this and are willing to give a significant amount their time in this honorable aim, so going forward we will be looking for, both an increase in adult volunteers at groups throughout the Region and evaluate administration methods to make procedures easier, to help Trustees that may be feeling a strain on their resources.

Progress has continued with the Safe Scouting Premises Annual Audit, which is an important part of ensuring that Scouting facilities remain safe and meet the required standards. We have been working with a number of Groups with premises across the Region which have undertaken improvements to their Scout Halls, helping to address regulatory requirements while also maintaining and enhancing the facilities available to our members.

Amendments were made to the Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land (RCI) to reflect changes in volunteer membership and roles across the Region.

The Region Trustees were also pleased to support the Cally Rally Team by providing financial guarantees that enabled significant investment in equipment. This investment is expected to bring considerable improvements to the camp facilities and enhancements to the event for future years.

During the year, the Region Trustees also held a Levy Consultation, giving volunteers the opportunity to express their views on how region funding should be prioritized. One of the clearest outcomes was the importance of maintaining financial support and funding support available to our volunteers and youth members.

Several good service awards were presented to Region Leadership Team members with congratulations to Jenny Steven and Shirley Wright on having have been awarded the Silver Acorn Award.

Robert Beharie

Highlands & Islands Scout Association Region Chair

Region Lead Volunteer's Report

Ryan MacLennan - Region Lead Volunteer

As we reflect on the past year, we have also marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Scouting with the launch of our Strategy to 2035, "A Place to Belong". While our previous Skills for Life strategy has now concluded, the values and ambitions that underpinned it remain central to everything we do. Developing young people with the skills, confidence, and resilience they need for life continues to be at the heart of Scouting.



Our new strategy builds on this foundation, placing an even greater emphasis on helping more young people find a place to belong, empowering them through adventure, teamwork and shared values, and enabling them to make a positive difference in the world.

At the same time, it is encouraging to see the positive impact of the changes introduced through Scouting's Transformation programme. The team-based volunteering model and Trustee Board structure are now becoming firmly established across the Region, creating greater flexibility, improving support for volunteers, and helping us build sustainable foundations for the future. While there is always more work to do, the commitment, adaptability and resilience shown by volunteers across Highlands & Islands continues to be outstanding.

Our regional Support, Volunteering Development and Programme Teams have continued to develop throughout the year and are making a significant contribution to the planning and delivery of Scouting across the Region. Working alongside the Region Leadership Team, these volunteers have helped strengthen collaboration between Districts and ensure that young people remain at the heart of everything we do.

Safety and Safeguarding continue to be our highest priorities. Throughout the year, volunteers have remained committed to maintaining their learning and ensuring compliance with mandatory training requirements. The culture of safety within Scouting has never been more important, and I would like to thank our Group and District Lead Volunteers for their continued support in helping members keep their learning up to date. Together, we are ensuring that every young person and adult can enjoy Scouting in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment.

The Region Youth Team has continued to grow and flourish, providing more opportunities for young people to shape decisions and influence the future of Scouting across Highlands & Islands. Their enthusiasm, creativity and leadership have been evident throughout the year, demonstrating the real impact of youth-shaped Scouting in action.

Membership across the Region now stands at 1,448 young people and 772 adult volunteers. This represents a decrease of 124 youth members compared with 2025 and an increase of 186 adults.

While the increase in adult numbers is positive, it is important to recognise that much of this change reflects the implementation of updated PVG requirements in Scotland. A wider range of volunteers are now required to be recorded as adult members, including parent helpers undertaking regulated roles and Young Leaders aged 16 and over. These changes provide a more accurate reflection of the many individuals who contribute their time and energy to Scouting across our communities.

Despite the reduction in youth membership, our volunteers continue to deliver an exciting and varied programme of activities. Camps, expeditions, adventurous activities, community projects, and international opportunities have provided countless experiences that help young people develop skills for life. Growing youth membership remains a key priority, and we will continue to support Groups and Districts in providing accessible, high-quality Scouting opportunities across the Highlands and Islands.

One of the highlights of the year was the continued success of The Cally Rally at its new home at the Moy Games site. Building on the success of its 50th anniversary celebrations, the event once again brought together Scouts, Explorers, leaders and supporters from across Scotland for a fantastic weekend of adventure, friendship, and fun. The dedication of the Cally Rally Support Team deserves special recognition for delivering another outstanding event.

This summer saw members from across the Region participate in the Scottish International Patrol Jamborette at Blair Atholl, with around one thousand Scouts from around the world in what will undoubtedly be remembered as a life-changing experience. The event highlighted the absolute best of international Scouting and provided participants with unforgettable opportunities to develop friendships, confidence, and leadership skills. Our patrols made us proud with two of our patrols winning their respective Subcamp pennants for having the highest inspection scores!

Preparations are also continuing for the 27th World Scout Jamboree in Poland in 2027, and we look forward to supporting our young people and volunteers as they embark on this exciting adventure. International experiences such as these broaden horizons, strengthen global friendships, and create memories that last a lifetime.

As we look ahead, we are excited by the opportunities presented through the next phase of Scouting's strategy. By continuing to focus on providing excellent volunteer experience, delivering adventurous and inclusive programmes, and ensuring meaningful youth involvement at every level, we will ensure that Scouting across Highlands & Islands remains strong, relevant, and accessible for future generations.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to every volunteer across our Region.

Whether you help run weekly meetings, support camps and events, serve on a Trustee Board, or contribute behind the scenes, your dedication makes Scouting possible. The time, energy and care you invest in supporting young people is truly invaluable. Thank you for all that you do and for the difference you continue to make every day. Together, we are creating opportunities for young people to belong, grow, thrive, and gain skills for life.

With thanks,



Ryan MacLennan
Region Lead Volunteer

Region Leadership Team

Region Lead Volunteer	Ryan MacLennan
Region Youth Lead	Ryan Macintyre
Region Chair	Robert Beharie
Cally Rally Camp Chief	Douglas Munro
Region Safety Adviser	Donna-Claire Hunter

District Lead Volunteer (Caithness and Sutherland)	Gary Stronach
District Lead Volunteer (Lochaber) and Region Lead for Young Leaders	Jenny Steven
District Lead Volunteer (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch, and Strathspey)	Paul Whitefoot
District Lead Volunteer (Ross, Skye, and Lochalsh)	Ryan MacLennon (Acting)

District Lead Volunteer (Orkney) and Region Team Leader Support	Katrina Donaldson
District Lead Volunteer (Western Isles)	Jane Bain

Region Team Leader Programme	Anja Johnston
Target Support Team Lead	Sean Sessions
Region Lead for Network	Eva O'Neill
Manager of the Activity Permits Scheme	Mark Grant
Duke of Edinburgh Lead	Paul Whitefoot
Visit Abroad Recommender	Jo Busby

Region Team Leader Volunteer Development	Craig Walker
Lead for First Response Learning	Shirley Wright
Lead for Awards and Recognition	Anna Mowat

Region Network Report

Eva O'Neill – Region Lead for Network

The highland hangout saw 30 networkers come from all over Scotland to the highlands, lots of fun, fire, some of walking, and network rounders to keep us all entertained.



International Report

Jo Busby – Scotland Regional Advisor - International



Highlands & Islands – Connecting Scouts with the world.

This year has been much quieter on the international front than last year. There have been no visiting foreign scouts requesting accommodation in Highlands & Islands.

Three patrols from Highlands & Islands attended the international camp at Blair Atholl and two patrols won their subcamp pennant for the highest inspection score. Well done to them. Thanks, must also go to the leaders from Highlands & Islands who volunteered in roles before, during and after Blair Atholl, making it all possible for young people.

There was just one international trip from the Highlands & Islands. Three leaders and eleven Scouts from 11th Inverness attended the Spejdernes Lejr Jamboree in Denmark. All went well and the video showed everyone having an enjoyable time. Thanks to the leaders concerned for making this trip a reality for the Scouts.

I look forward to our next international year in Scouting in anticipation of more international trips.

Cally Rally Report

Douglas Munro – Cally Rally Camp Chief

October 2025 marked our third year at the Moy site, which once again provided an excellent venue for delivering a highly successful camp. The digital registration process, now established over the last few years, continued to operate effectively and efficiently. Overall registration numbers were higher than the previous year, although, as in previous years, some cancellations occurred in the period leading up to the event.



This year also saw the appointment of a new Land Activities Coordinator, who invested a considerable amount of time and effort into expanding and refreshing the activity programme. New activities included circus skills, an incident hike and an escape room, alongside established favourites such as Mop Hockey and Laser Tag. We were also delighted to welcome BASC, who provided a range of outdoor pursuits, including clay pigeon shooting.

The evening entertainment programme was once again a major highlight for our young people. Friday evening featured a lively disco alongside the traditional campfires, while Saturday night saw the much-anticipated return of the ceilidh in the main marquee. The enthusiasm and participation of our young people made for a fantastic atmosphere throughout the evening. As an added bonus, participants were treated to a spectacular display of the Northern Lights during the ceilidh, creating a truly memorable experience for all involved.

The success of Cally Rally is only possible through the dedication, commitment and hard work of the camp's Core Team of volunteers. We are pleased that the team has agreed to deliver the event again in 2026.

However, the camp continues to require a significant amount of work both in preparation and during the breakdown of the site following the event. While there was a modest increase this year in the number of volunteers supporting the Core Team and assisting with site breakdown on Sunday, this remains an area where additional support is needed. The team continues to explore ways of strengthening the Site Services function, including the possibility of developing a wider support team involving Scout Network members.

Feedback received throughout the weekend, together with online comments and messages following the event, was overwhelmingly positive. This was further reinforced through the formal post-event survey, with 81% of respondents indicating that they intend to return to Cally Rally next year. This strong level of satisfaction reflects the quality of the programme, the dedication of our volunteers and the continued appeal of the event to young people across the Region.

<https://www.cally-rally.org.uk/>

52nd Cally Rally will be held on 16th - 18th October 2026.

Region Volunteer Development Report

Craig Walker

Region Team Leader Volunteer Development

Another year of Scouting seems to have flown past and we have continued to see tremendous commitment and dedication of the 700 or so adult volunteers who deliver Scouting directly with our young people, keep groups, districts and the region safe, financially supported and able to run as Trustees, or give their time to support specific events from activities in weekly sections, nights away, expeditions for Duke of Edinburgh, co-ordinating international events like Blair Atholl and planning and delivering the Caledonian Rally. Scouting simply could not give the young people these experiences and opportunities without this commitment and hard work. Thank you.



Across the Region, we continue to face challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers and this is likely to remain an ongoing challenge for us over coming years.

In a year of continuing change and development in Scouting Learning, the focus remains ensuring that new volunteers have positive welcome meetings and complete their joining journeys and mandatory training within timescales and all volunteers are complainant with mandatory safety, safeguarding and first response learning every three years. Whilst we have done well, we need to keep a continued focus on this, so we don't lose volunteers through suspension for not having completed mandatory learning on time.

Looking forward 2026/27 will see significant further changes for Scout learning, with new branching out learning being launched to support volunteer skills and to support wood badge achievement.

Alongside this we are expecting to see change to how learning is delivered with a new approach and new roles for learning and a continued focus on Growing Roots Learning for new volunteers and compliance for mandatory learning for all volunteers. To support this, we will be looking for a Region Lead for Growing Roots Learning to work with volunteers and provide further support for District Lead Volunteers in this area,

I want to end my update with a personal thanks to the Region Volunteer development team, a small but very committed team supporting first response and awards and delivering first response learning. Thank you for all you do.

First Response Learning

Shirley Wright
Region Lead for First Response Learning



Has been a challenging time for First Response in the last year, not only geographically but being able to have the right equipment for the learning across the Region. Thanks to SHQ development funding and funding from the Region we have been able to equip the region learning team with CPR manikins, trainer AED's as well as the normal bandages and dressings. Thanks to SHQ and the Region for this funding.

Scouting has implemented a new, updated First Response Learning program this year, and we have been able to increase our first response trainer numbers.

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/firstaidlearning>

First Response learning courses for 2026/27 is as follows:

First Response courses are open to adult volunteers, young leaders to cover their Module K and other explorers (explorers and young leaders must be 16 or over)

Date	Location
Saturday, 19 September 2026	Caithness, 2 nd Thurso
Saturday 19 September (Cally Rally Team only) - FULL	MF Training, 32 Harbour Road IV1 1UF
Sunday, 20 September 2026	Dalneigh, Inverness
Sunday, 20 September 2026	Lochaber TBC
Sunday, 3 October 2026	Caithness, 1 st Thurso
Saturday, 10 October 2026	Ross, Skye & Lochalsh TBC
Saturday, 17 October 2026	Dalneigh, Inverness
Saturday 24 October 2026	Scout Hall, Stornoway
Saturday, 21 November 2026	Caithness, 1 st Wick
Saturday, 21 November 2026	Ross, Skye & Lochalsh TBC
Sunday, 22 November 2026	Dalneigh, Inverness
Sunday, 22 November 2026	Lochaber TBC
Saturday, 16th January 2027	Ross, Skye & Lochalsh TBC
Saturday, 30th January 2027	Ross, Skye & Lochalsh TBC
Saturday, 30 January 2027	Dalneigh, Inverness
Saturday, 20 February 2027	Caithness, 2 nd Thurso
Sunday, 21 February 2027	Dalneigh, Inverness
Saturday, 27th February	Ross, Skye & Lochalsh TBC

Saturday 6 March 2027	Scout Hall, Stornoway
Saturday, 26 March 2027	Caithness, 1st Thurso
Saturday, 27 March 2027	Dalneigh, Inverness
Sunday, 18 April 2027	Dalneigh, Inverness
Saturday, 29 May 2027	Dalneigh, Inverness
Sunday, 20 June 2027	Dalneigh, Inverness

Awards and Recognition

Anna Mowat

Region Lead for Awards and Recognition

The Region continues to see growing numbers Chief Scout Commendation, Award for Merit, Silver Acorn, and Silver Wolf awards being presented, which is fantastic to see.

We do, however, need to be better at making nominations for awards. 5 years of volunteering is a significant and exceptional contribution worth formal recognition. Remember average volunteering is about 12 months, so remember 5 years not just 50 years!

We need to keep the push of recognising volunteers for their exceptional contributions whether that is 5 years or over 50 years, in these challenging times, appreciating and thanking volunteers is more important than ever.



Districts

Further information can be found on each District OSCR on the website of the Office of the Scottish Charity Register <https://www.oscr.org.uk/>, where they are registered charities.

Caithness and Sutherland

Gary Stronach, District Lead Volunteer.

C&S District is still operating at a reasonable level with a general increase in Beaver numbers across the 3 main Groups albeit we had to close one rural colony due to a lack of youth members. Numbers in other sections have ebbed & flowed in line with school rolls but all sections have remained open. There were weekend camps for scout/cub sections along with several combined Beaver sleepovers. Our District Explorers along with other older scouts had an "overseas" camp to Northern Ireland in July 2025 and enjoyed a full range of activities at the Crawfordsburn NI Scout Campsite. This experience helped the 3 Explorers who successfully passed the WSJ selection as well as the 2 who made the cut for the Blair Atholl Jamborette in July 2026.

<https://www.facebook.com/scoutscaithnesssutherland>

Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch, and Strathspey – SC041542

Paul Whitefoot, District Lead Volunteer

Another positive year for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey District Scouts, with the district's eight Groups and five Explorer sections continuing to deliver strong programmes, including international camps, outdoor activities, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, local and national events, and the successful Inverness Monopoly Run.

Youth membership increased by nearly 6%, helped by the launch of a new Squirrel Drey at Aird and growth in Cubs and Explorers, although Beavers and Scouts declined, partly due to the closure of the Strathglass Scout section caused by a lack of adult volunteers.

Adult membership also increased, with 156 adult section volunteers and 278 adults overall, though the figures should be treated cautiously as the new Membership system settles.

Recruitment remains the key challenge, with around 400 young people on waiting lists. The year saw strong youth leadership, continued development of the Youth Team, 38 Top Awards and 14 Good Service Awards.

<https://www.facebook.com/scoutsinverness>

<https://scoutsinverness.org.uk/>

Lochaber

Jenny Steven, Lochaber, District Lead Volunteer

We held a highly successful District Camp in September 2025 with all groups participating. Another is planned for 11th - 13th September 2026. Insha Campsite has been busy with DoE groups from London, Outward Bound, Venture Trust, Scout Groups from everywhere and Guides using the facilities.

All groups are going well, especially Mallaig & Morar which has all 4 sections running successfully. Kilmallie sadly only has Scouts and Explorers, but their numbers are healthy. Kilmallie will lose their hall after 50 years as the Church of Scotland are selling the building and this has not helped the group. They will use the local Community Hall across the street.

<https://www.lochaberscouts.co.uk/>

Orkney – SC0033345

Katrina Donaldson, District Lead Volunteer

<https://www.facebook.com/orkneyscouts>

@orkneydistrictscouts - <https://www.instagram.com/orkneydistrictscouts>

Ross, Skye, and Lochalsh – SC038366

Ryan MacLennan, Acting District Lead Volunteer

October 2025 - We're delighted to share two interim appointments for Ross, Skye & Lochalsh Scouts:

- Kath Allan was appointed to the role of District Lead Volunteer, regrettably she has since then had to step down.
- Adam Cowan has been appointed Support Team Leader

<https://www.ross-skye-lochalsh-scouts.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/RSLScouts/>

Western Isles – SC021124

Jane Bain, District Lead Volunteer.

https://www.hiscouts.org.uk/spage-local_scouting-western_isles.html

<https://www.facebook.com/scoutswesternisles>

Declaration



Robert Beharie

Highlands & Islands Region Scout Council Chair