

APPENDIX 1

OSCr

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date				Period end date			
	Day	Month	Year		Day	Month	Year
From	01	April	2025	To	31	March	2026

Reference and administration details

Charity name
Other names charity is known by
Registered charity number
Charity's principal address
(Contact address)

Stonehaven Tolbooth Association

Tolbooth Museum

SC043279

36 Forest Park

Stonehaven

Aberdeenshire

Postcode AB39 2GF

Names of the charity trustees on date of approval of Trustees' Annual Report

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Cressida Coates	Chair		
2	Andrew Newton	Secretary		
3	Dennis Collie	Treasurer		
4	Louise Coates	Joint Curator		
5	Tony Dodd		17/09/2025 -	
6	Clare Thomas			
7	Mary Sutcliffe			
8	Douglas Cusine			
9	Gordon Ritchie			
10	Lindsay Richardson	Joint Curator		
11	Neil Smith			
12	Lorna Collie		17/09/2025 -	
13				
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15				
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17				
18				
19				
20				

Reference and administration details

Names of all other charity trustees during the period, if any, (for example, those who resigned part way through the financial period)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year
Liz Ritchie	01/04/2025 – 17/09/2025

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document	The Tolbooth Association is an incorporated body having charitable status under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. The governing document is a constitution based on the Burness template and ratified by OSCR on 6 th July 2012.
Trustee recruitment and appointment	Trustees are appointed by members at the Annual General Meeting.

Objectives and activities

Charitable purposes	B – the advancement of education G – the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science
Summary of the main activities in relation to these objects	B. During the year under review we hosted two visits from Babes in the Wood Nursery, 30 pupils from Aberdeen City p7/S1 Transition Unit. In addition we welcomed back the Elphinstone Institute which is the department of Aberdeen University dedicated to the promotion and celebration of NE Scotland culture. G. We had an agreement with Globus Bus Tours whereby twice a week during the summer season we hosted visits from overseas tourists – this year the bus tours contributed 1,277 visitors. Apart from the overseas visitors we also hosted visits from a number of community groups: Drumlithie Women's Institute, St Margaret's Church and Gray's School of Art. We also participated in the annual Open Doors Days event (462 visitors) although sadly the annual Harbour Festival was cancelled at short notice due to inclement weather. Additionally the museum ran a number of events for the benefit of the local community. For example, demonstrations on lace making, two children's art workshops, Creative Writing, Halloween Tales and Story Telling (the latter during the annual Folk Festival). The museum also hosted 50 representatives from the Aberdeen University Cultural Conference. We also welcomed Prof. Walter Stephen, former Chair of the Sir Patrick Geddes Memorial Trust, who was seeking more information concerning Patrick's work in Stonehaven. We celebrated the refurbishment of the Inner Courtyard by holding an Open Day which was attended by 138 individuals and went on to hold folk singing, a live display of unusual animals and a 'wedding shoot', all in the Courtyard. Other planned events had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

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Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the financial period

We try to compare our footfall with that of the other museums working under the umbrella of Aberdeenshire Museum Services (AMS) in order to ascertain whether our service matches the expected standard. Unfortunately the AMS data is only available by calendar year, not the financial year, but data shows that in 2025 the Stonehaven Tolbooth museum hosted 17,799 visitors out of a total for AMS of 33,335. Thus Stonehaven Tolbooth museum contributed 53.4% of all visitors. Considering that the other museums are operated by full-time Aberdeenshire council employees we are extremely proud that our museum is the flag bearer of free-to-enter heritage attractions in North East Scotland. This would not be achieved without our dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer membership.

The long and protracted discussions with Aberdeenshire Council over the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the Tolbooth building continued past the re-arranged scheduled completion date of 31st May 2025. The Council wished to make some repairs to the building before handing the property over and believed that planning permission etc. was not required despite advice to the contrary from STA; the subsequent need to apply for planning permission, listed building consent and building warrant created a further eight month delay but on 25th March 2026 we finally took ownership of the ground floor of the building and the two courtyards. To state that the transfer has been difficult is an understatement. Whilst we were waiting for the torturous process to be completed STA obtained a grant to renovate the Outer Courtyard and this project was completed before winter set in.

The STA continued to operate the Clock Tower on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council until 29th December at no cost to the latter. We did this as a good will gesture in supporting the local community but unfortunately problems over insurance, maintenance of the property and unauthorised usage by third parties resulted in STA terminating the agreement.

This report ends on a slightly low note. The exceptional bad winter, which started in November and lasted until March, severely curtailed visitor numbers. The museum was also closed from 16th February until 18th April in order to permit the Council undertake the desired repairs (see above). However, we still managed a slight financial surplus.

Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

We took ownership of the ground floor and the curtilage on 25th March and immediately we had to review our financial policies. We have created a Sinking Fund of £50,000 which is ring fenced for any repairs etc. that require to be carried out in the medium to long term on the Grade A listed building. Whenever possible this fund will be added to on an annual basis. In addition we have created a Reserve Fund (also ring fenced) of £20,000 which will be used for any unexpected financial demands in the short-term; again we hope to augment this Fund on an annual basis.

At the end of this financial year the STA is left with an unrestricted sum of £65,000 available in the general account for all expected annual running costs.

Details of any deficit	None
Donated facilities and services (if any)	Aberdeenshire Council ceased paying for electricity, rates, fire safety, building insurance, water and ongoing maintenance on 25 th March 2026.

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Other optional information

Not Applicable

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Andrew William Newton	
Position (e.g. Chair)	Secretary	
Date	23/09/2026	