

	<b>Trustees Annual Report</b>
	<b>2024 - 2025</b>

**Charitable purposes**

Stonehaven Folk Festival is a SCIO registered on 15 January 2020. It is governed by a constitution adopted in 2020, and subsequently amended in 2024 and 2025.

Stonehaven Folk Festival’s (SFF) purposes are to promote, maintain, improve and advance education particularly by promoting and encouraging the study, practice and knowledge of the arts, especially folk music.

**Main activities**

In relation to these objects, SFF organises and promotes a festival of traditional and contemporary music each year during July in and around Stonehaven, as well as a ceilidh each Hogmanay. From time to time, as decided by the board of trustees, it may award scholarships, sponsor or otherwise support individuals or organisations in the community, in the furtherance of its purposes.

Through these activities, SFF aims to promote the appreciation and preservation of folk music; encourage youth participation in, and attendance at, the festival; promote new talent; and encourage active participation in musical activities.

**Organisation**

SFF’s affairs are managed by a board of trustees recruited from amongst existing members. Trustees are either elected at the AGM, or co-opted by the existing board at other times during the year.

The success of the festival is due, in no small part, to the success of the board of trustees who have proved themselves, once again, to be a very effective management team helping to ensure that the organisation of the festival runs smoothly, whilst dealing with changing conditions, missed flights, frantic bus bookings and much, much more.

The board of trustees are developing a set of policies and procedures to enhance the organisation and to ensure the safety of all those who attend festival. The SFF social media presence has been much improved over the last two years, and the short films produced by one of the trustees are increasingly being recognised for their clarity and strong production values. Ultimately, the organisation is run by volunteers. Without them, the Stonehaven Folk Festival would not happen. Their contributions have ensured the success of the festival and the organisation’s achievements in meeting its purposes.



## Summary of the main achievements of the charity during 2024 – 2025

The line up for the 2025 festival continued to emphasise its commitment to bringing high quality acts to Stonehaven, as well as highlighting local talent. The workshop programme demonstrated one of the ways that we promote learning and understanding of traditional music and song.



The programme featured a fantastic line-up including Mánran, The Henry Girls, Ally Forsyth, Old Blind Dogs, Tom Campbell Trio, Ellie Beaton, Fiddlers Bid, Fell Line, Pete MacCallum as well as El Pony Pisador all the way from Spain! The latter's journey to the festival was not without its challenges as their late arrival into Edinburgh airport meant that they missed their train to Stonehaven. They were re-

booked on to the Ember Bus and two hours later disgorged on to the side of the A90 at Fordoun where a mini-bus met them and brought them on to the Town Hall. It was well worth it as their performance at the closing concert was the highlight of the festival!



In addition to the main concerts, there were 53 fringe events over the weekend, including 22 workshops, 16 sessions and 15 other events. As part of the festival's commitment to retaining musical culture, the Tradition Bearers Concert welcomed stalwarts from across the UK including Paddy Buchanan (Scotland), Susie Kelly (Scotland), Rosie Upton (England) and Denis McGonigle (Ireland). 2025 marked the first Stonehaven Bothy Ballad Competition, which was run in conjunction with TMSA, and replaced the Falkland Competition, which has been hosted in Stonehaven for the last few years. There were 17 entries, and the winner of the brand-new cup was Paddy Buchanan.



Another new event in 2025 was the children's Scottish poetry and music recital that was run in conjunction with the Burns Club who were very happy with the inaugural event and are working hard to encourage more participation in 2026. The free Concert in the Square is always a big draw over the weekend and in 2025 was blessed with fantastic weather. Normally relying on a marquee, the event became an open-air concert as temperatures soared!

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## **Financial position**

Financially, 2024 – 25 saw the festival achieve a stable base from which to continue this championing of folk music for the foreseeable future and the statement of accounts bears this out. Our finance model is such that we are not currently dependent on outside organisations to keep us afloat. The planned development of sponsorship packages will only enhance the festival's financial stability and help it to achieve its educational aspirations. A copy of the accounts for 2024 – 2025 are available separately.

Stonehaven Folk Festival's policy is to hold reserves to: meet contractual obligations if the festival is cancelled at short notice, provide financial resilience against unforeseen events such as extreme weather or public health emergencies, and to support continuity of charitable activities and protect the charity's reputation.

SFF's aim is always to break even and to create a small surplus to reinvest to maintain the ongoing development of the organisation. In 2024 - 25 the festival generated a surplus. Meanwhile the festival did not receive any donated facilities or services during 2024 - 25.

Dave Bliss

Chair

May 2026