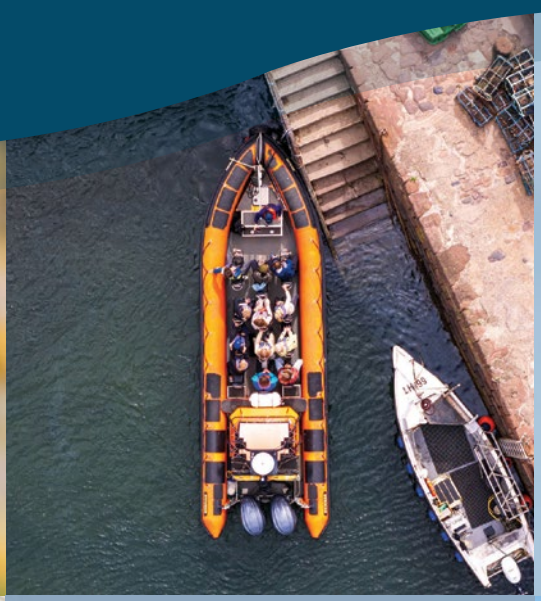
Annual Review 2025/26

Registered Scottish Charity No. SC025837













SAVE SEABIRDS RESTORE SEAS INSPIRE CHANGE

Scottish Seabird Centre

FOREWORD

In May 2025 we marked the 25th anniversary of the Scottish Seabird Centre. Since opening our doors at the turn of the millennium, our visitor centre, boat trips and discovery experience have grown to become a major visitor attraction, introducing millions to the extraordinary natural wonders of the Firth of Forth. At the same time, our charity has developed into an important force for seabird conservation in the Firth of Forth and, increasingly further afield, and environmental education, with over 60,000 children and young people having benefited from our education programme.

There have, of course, been many bumps on the road. Covid in particular posed an existential threat to our operating model. But we take great courage from having successfully navigated this and other challenges thanks to the support for our charity from partners, funders and the local community.

This annual report provides a snapshot of the important work the Scottish Seabird Centre now does - for people and nature, for our local community and for Scotland. Our 25th year celebrations focused on this impact and the volunteers, staff and others who have helped make it happen. But as well as a moment of celebration, reaching this milestone provided an important prompt for reflection on our future direction.

Throughout the year staff and trustees worked hard to review our progress as a charity, identify the challenges and opportunities we face, and develop a refreshed vision and plan for the future. Our volunteers and members also contributed their thoughts, and out of this process came our new strategic plan for 2026 – 2031, Saving seabirds, restoring seas, inspiring change.

I'm grateful to the many people who contributed to this plan and the thinking behind it. Thanks to them, we have been able to set out an ambitious but achievable agenda for our three programmes of work: conservation, learning, and the inspiring experiences we provide our visitors with. Funding our ambitions is a critical component of this plan, and in addition to working with existing funders to ensure we are meeting each other's needs and offering both value and impact, we are clear on the value we place on our members and growing our membership. In 2025-26 we relaunched our membership scheme to ensure our members feel part of something special and get clear sight on the impact they are helping us have, and we are delighted that as a result many new members joined us over the year.

Our vision is for Scotland's seas and coasts to be alive with wildlife, celebrated and protected by all. We believe that we are uniquely placed to work with partners and funders across Scotland and the UK to deliver this goal, and look forward to another 25 years of growing our impact on people and nature.

Harry Huyton
CEO

60,000+

children and young people have benefited from our education programme





2025/26 IN REVIEW

Conservation

Conserving seabird islands

In partnership with the landowners, we continued to lead in the management of Craigleith, the Lamb, and Bass Rock, and supported the RSPB in the management of Fidra through our SOS Puffin project. We are grateful to the landowners for their collaboration and support in ensuring the good health of the seabird colonies on these islands, including Sir Hew Dalrymple, Uri Geller, and the RSPB.

Monitoring and conservation science

The Scottish Seabird Centre aims to be a hub for seabird conservation science, working with partners to better understand seabirds, the pressures they face and conservation responses. Key outputs included the Northern Gannet census on Bass Rock, which achieved 100% coverage for the first time and estimated a total population of 52,459 Apparently Occupied Sites, approximately a third lower than the last census prior to avian flu; productivity monitoring of the same population also suggested that breeding success may have declined. The conservation team supported other research on the Bass, including a study of breeding success for birds known to have survived avian flu, and led research on habitat management on Craigleith in partnership with SRUC.

Restoring our seas

As a community hub for the Restoration Forth partnership, we delivered a range of seagrass planting and monitoring sessions at our trial sites in the Firth of Forth, and worked with project partners to develop a proposal for the next phase of this innovative partnership project, which we aim to take forward in 2026-27.

810

beach cleaners

Beach cleaning & plastic pollution

We led 42 beach cleans on the East Lothian coast with 460 participants and removing over 600kg of rubbish. We also supported over 350 people to carry out self-led beach cleans, and with support from Safe Deposit Scotland installed a new "community action station" in our visitor centre to enable more visitors to do a beach clean and take other actions for nature.



A voice for seabirds

The Scottish Seabird Centre led calls for the proposed Berwick Bank offshore windfarm to be cancelled, successfully mobilising over 14,000 people behind our campaign, supported calls for effective management measures to be introduced in Marine Protected Areas to protect seabirds, prey species and their habitats, and contributed to the public and parliamentary debate around living in harmony with urban gull populations.

14,000

people took action for seabirds

Communicating conservation

Communicating the importance of nature conservation and showcasing our own work in the national media is an important component of our wider work to inspire change. Over 2025 we secured over 100 pieces of media across the year, including on all the main broadcasters and covering a range of stories from our Berwick Bank campaign to the natural wonders of Bass Rock and Orca sightings in Scotland's seas. Our social media impressions and followers grew over the year, allowing us to reach new audiences across Scotland and the UK and to engage them with our campaign work.

Learning

Schools and outdoor education

Environmental education and inspiring children and young people to learn about and care for nature is at the core of our charity's objectives. Yet for the first half of 2025/26 our formal education programme operated on a limited basis following the loss of long-term funding for this vital work. However, thanks to a number of funders including the Hamish and Doris Crichton Charitable Trust, funding was secured later in the financial year and the programme and its impact is growing once again. In spite of these challenges, in 2025/26 the Scottish Seabird Centre team delivered 22 school workshops to over a 800 children. We also provided outdoor education experiences to over 150 children from Brownies, Cubs or Rainbow clubs, including activities such as rockpooling and wildlife walks.

Inclusive and accessible nature

We delivered outdoor events and activities for a range of groups who otherwise struggle to access nature, including Young Carers, SCORE Scotland, Beach Wheelchairs, Chinese community link and LINKNET, and our outreach team participated in community events and festivals, including the Ocean Advocate Summit, Wee Green Festival, Dundee Science Festival; Fisherrow Harbour Festival, and Green Futures Festival.

Nature and wellbeing

Our partnership with mental health charity Changes continued to deepen, with the team running 7 sessions including wellbeing walks, seaside mindfulness sessions, sea-themed art sessions and wildlife walks. These activities are all aimed to boost mental health and build deeper connections to the marine environment.

Nature science shows and storytelling

Over 1000 people attended our live shows in 2025/26, and a new live science show was developed on the theme of rewilding, for performance in 2026/27.

Experience

Over 2025/26 we welcomed 180,000 visitors to the Scottish Seabird Centre, where our visitor experience team showcased Scotland's marine environment and wildlife to members and visitors from local, UK and international destinations. 17,500

180,000

visitors

17,500

passengers on our wildlife boat trips

people took part in a guided boat trip, learning about and experiencing the extraordinary seabird colonies in the Firth of Forth. This was our strongest ever performance, and we are grateful to Seafari, our boats partner, and our guides and skippers for helping make this happen. 13,000 people also visited our Discovery Experience, 89% of visitors rating their visit positively and 91% saying they were inspired to take action for the marine environment (1200 respondents). To further enhance the experience on offer in the centre a new Virtual Reality exhibit and a series of talks and guided wildlife watching sessions were trialled for roll-out in 2026/27.

91%

of visitors inspired to take action for the environment

Assets and sustainability

We aim to reduce our emissions to net-zero by 2040 and to pioneer and demonstrate climate and nature positive solutions to our visitors and supporters. Thanks to support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and East Lothian Council we were able to deliver a suit of energy efficiency projects in 2025-26 that together reduced our Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions by over 8.5 tCO_2e to 57.5 tCO_2e/year, a ~13% reduction, and reduced running cost by over £5,000.

13%

reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions

Projects included recommissioning out of order solar PV and solar thermal systems, replacing lighting in the visitor centre, delivering a switch off campaign, and adjusting heating controls and set points. These projects were delivered as part of a first phase of a capital investment plan for the centre, which aims to modernise and improve the resilience of our assets, improve our sustainability, and enhance the experience we offer.

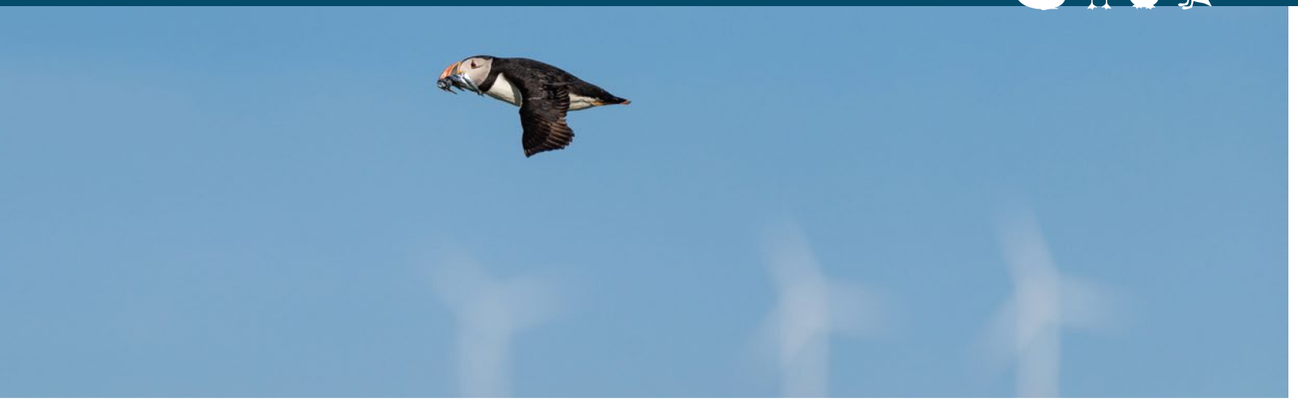
Our members

Our members are vital to the charity's success, providing regular and unrestricted income for our charitable work and strengthening our ability to act for seabirds and the natural environment. A new campaign was launched in 2025 to encourage more people to join the charity, and over the year our membership grew to 1808, up from 1563 in January 2025 (16%).

Our volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of the Charity and are integral to our successes. Volunteers participate in a wide range of activities, including our conservation projects, beach cleaning, education, and visitor and community engagement. The Scottish Seabird Centre Volunteer Group, chaired by Alex Hutchinson, also ran several events across the year to raise funds for our charitable activities and these were well attended by members of the local community, and made a generous donation to support the development of our new VR exhibit in the Discovery Experience.

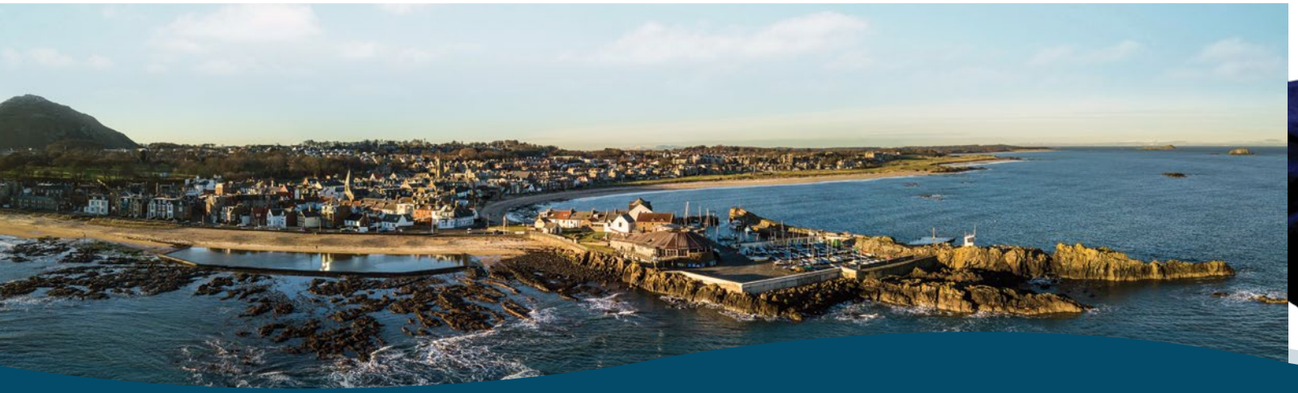












SUMMARISED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The following summary of our financial information for 2025/26 has been compiled using the full audited financial statements, a copy of which may be obtained on request from Scottish Seabird Centre or from Companies House. Our financial year ended on 31 January 2026.

	2025/26 £	2024/25 £
Income		
Admissions (incl. Gift Aid donation)	129,561	19,744
Other Discovery Experience Income	1,111	1,013
Membership (incl Gift Aid donation)	46,290	39,828
Catering and hospitality	571,941	506,436
Retail	317,991	283,173
Fundraising	619,339	409,132
Boat income	633,965	449,885
Other income	102,291	594,410
	2,422,489	**2,303,621**
Purchases	**321,671**	**288,354**
Expenditure		
Salaries, wages and contract staff	980,259	884,044
Catering expenditure	11,912	14,335
Education	691	2,820
Administration	227,333	191,575
Insurance	59,765	56,974
Utilities	63,309	105,626
Marketing	32,944	36,860
Membership expenses	1,014	231
Fundraising resources	6,992	11,110
Discovery Experience	15,405	14,232
Boat trips	478,363	360,098
Professional fees	13,237	18,204
Other expenditure	1,768	305,357
Bad debt write off	-	-
Non-recoverable VAT	6,553	5,317
Bank charges	25,848	19,302
	1,925,393	**2,026,085**
Group net surplus/(deficit) before depreciation and capital grants	175,425	(10,818)
Capital grants received	61,925	8,565
Depreciation	(136,413)	(135,810)
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	**100,937**	**(138,063)**
Capital expenditure	58,330	8,565

The Discovery Experience was closed 02/2024 - 10/2024 as a result of a flood. This means that admissions income was greatly reduced and income from our insurance claim is shown in "other income".



WITH THANKS

The trustees would like to thank all our volunteers, members and supporters, including individuals, charitable trusts and foundations, public bodies and corporate organisations who have supported our work.

In 2025/26, these included:

AEB Charitable Trust

Awards for All

Boutique Capital Partners

Cirrus Logic International UK

Cruden Foundation

CWP Energy

DWF Foundation

Enterprise Holdings Foundation

GC Gibson Charitable Trust

Go Fibre

Hamish and Doris Crichton Charitable Trust

Horace and Helen Gillman Trusts

Hugh Fraser Foundation

Inch Cape Construction Fund

James T Howat Charitable Trust

John Ellerman Foundation

KPE4 Charitable Trust

Marjorie Coote Animal Charity Trust

Mrs JB Woods Charitable Trust

New Park Educational Trust

North Berwick Trust

Opticron

Ramble Worldwide

Outdoor Trust

Restoration Forth

Robert Barr's Charitable Trust

Safe Deposits Scotland Community Fund

Sea-Changers

Sea-Changers Scottish Learning Fund

Siemens Energy

Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund

Swire Charitable Trust

TD Paton Charitable Trust

The Britford Bridge Trust

The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

The Hamamelis Trust

The J & JR Wilson Trust

The National Lottery Heritage Fund,

The Nineveh Charitable Trust

The Orcome Trust

The Slater Foundation

Treasure Charitable Trust

UKSPF Shared Prosperity Fund

SSC Volunteers

SSC Crafters

and the **William Grant Foundation.**

We are also extremely grateful to the many individuals who support us through our online appeals through Justgiving, the Big Give Green Match Fund and our Winter Appeal.

Many more individuals and groups have supported us financially, as well as through their time, expertise and gifts in kind for which we are extremely grateful.

We are also particularly grateful to the Scottish Seabird Centre Volunteer Group, chaired by Alex Hutchinson in 2025/26, and to all of our volunteers who have contributed their time and expertise to our work.

Trustees and Key Management

Trustees

Trustees continue to ensure that the Charity is well governed and brings skills and expertise aligned with the strategic direction.

S D Housden (Chair)

C Arnold
(resigned 14 August 2025)

S Breslin
(resigned 29 January 2026)

K Kjaerside

H McFarlane

D Paterson

N Stoddart

P Taylor
(resigned 20 May 2026)

T Quinn

R McCracken

A Richardson
(joined 14 August 2025)

A Connelly
(joined 13 November 2025)

C Hancox
(joined 20 May 2026)

Key Management

Harry Huyton
Chief Executive

Helen McDonald
Chief Operating Officer

Emily Burton
Conservation Manager
(Appointed April 2026)

Jess Thompson
Marketing and Communications Manager

Dora Roden
Project Manager
(Resigned April 2026)

Florence Gygax
Partnership Development Manager
(Resigned July 2025)

Fiona Unsworth
HR and Business Support Officer
(Resigned April 2026)

Frances Hill
Finance and Business Support Officer

Image credits

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