UPHOLDING PUBLIC ACCESS

ScotWays

ANNUAL REPORT AND MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2026

ScotWays

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"The preservation, defence, restoration and acquisition, for the public benefit, of public rights of access in Scotland, including public rights of way, and related amenity."



George enacting the role of the Duke of Atholl during a ScotWays walk in 2007 to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Glen Tilt in 1847, the case which established the right of the public to sue for Declarator of the existence of a right of way

PHOTOGRAPH: © JO DOAKE

George Menzies (1943 – 2026)

WE are greatly saddened to report that George Menzies, our former Chairman and Honorary Vice-President, died on 18 April 2026. George had been a member of ScotWays since 1980 and was very generous with his time and legal expertise in support of our work.

Having become a Director of the Society in 2001, George rose rapidly through the ranks, as his extensive expertise and commitment deserved, to become Vice-Chair in 2002 and, in 2004, he succeeded Bruce Logan as Chairman. Although he retired from the board at our AGM in 2016, we were delighted that he consented to accept the role of Honorary Adviser, which meant that we continued to tap into his specialist knowledge and incisive legal insights.

We benefited hugely from his legal knowledge and his genial but always judicious chairing of board meetings and AGMs – even though he sometimes couldn't entirely conceal that his emotions were tied up with events at Murrayfield when body and mind were engaged in the Dewars Centre in Perth.

George's exceptional grasp of the law of access, particularly expressed in his role as our representative to the National Access Forum, and the astute legal understanding he brought to thorny issues such as Network Rail's attitude to public access over level crossings, earned much respect for him and, by association, for ScotWays.

His contribution to our work was not confined to academic matters as he was a keen hillwalker and was involved in surveying routes for a previous edition of *Scottish Hill Tracks*.

A packed memorial service was held at The Place, clubhouse for Edinburgh Accies where George spent many happy years involved in rugby, whether playing or supporting, as well as two spells as president of the club.

A wide range of warm tributes were paid to him and a great many fond memories shared. One of his clubmates there is quoted as saying: "An extraordinary character and a great man who you would always want nearby if you got in a spot of bother." It was obvious to the several ScotWays representatives present that his significant contribution to us was but one of his many and varied interests, all pursued with both enthusiasm and effectiveness.

We shall miss his specialist legal knowledge and expertise, which have been of so much value to ScotWays, just as much as we already miss him.

Signposting

WE have been continuing our work to replace and repair directional signposts as well as our heritage information plaques (See page 14).

The directional signs have importance beyond simply pointing the way. Among other things, they assert rights of way and encourage the public to continue to use them. This helps to protect the rights of way from loss through disuse. Our heritage information plaques help the public connect with the cultural heritage of the route that they are travelling.

Over the year 2025-26, we replaced 47 ScotWays signs that were missing or in need of repair, fully refurbished three historic signs, installed six additional signs and completed 49 further minor repairs.

Our ongoing signpost verification project continues; by the end of June we had 7,800 verified sign records and were ready to launch a new web map and reporting form to support volunteers checking the remaining 1,400 records in an efficient way.

PHOTOGRAPH: © ANDREW MOSS



Geoff Simpson putting the finishing touches to our restored 1960 fingerpost at Kinlochleven

PHOTOGRAPH: © GRAHAM CHAPMAN



Our 1952 sign in Glen Lethnot, refurbished and reinstalled

PHOTOGRAPH: © NEIL BIRCH



An example of the retrofit QR code stickers being added to existing Heritage Path interpretation plaques that are in serviceable condition, this one at the Braes of Glenbervie

PHOTOGRAPH: © NEIL BIRCH



A set of three replacement signs and a brand-new Heritage Paths interpretation plaque (with QR code) on the Cauldstane Slap in the Pentland Hills

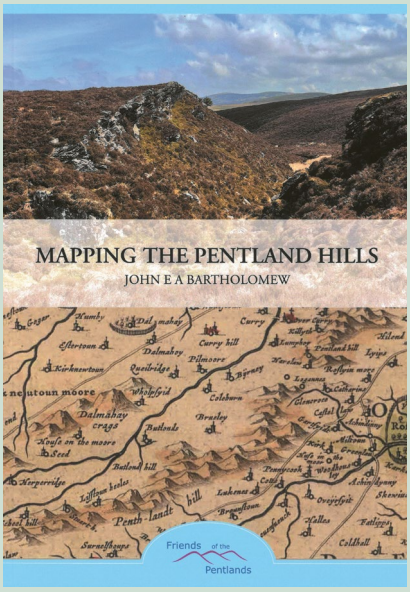
Mapping the Pentland Hills

By John E A Bartholomew

THIS delightful book charts the history of how the Pentland Hills have been depicted from around 1610 to the present day and is full of interesting nuggets of information. It is written with passion and a love of both the Pentlands and maps. Indeed, the author is uniquely qualified to do so, being part of the renowned map-making family and an enthusiastic admirer of the "hills of home", to quote Robert Louis Stevenson. Interestingly, the earliest maps of the Pentlands build on the work of a Scottish clergyman, Timothy Pont, whose maps were not published until 1654 (well after his death) and which led to Scotland and the Pentlands becoming, at the time, one of the best mapped areas in Europe.

The book moves smoothly through the strategic developments and needs of map-making for the state and then for military surveillance in the 17th and 18th centuries, the latter largely propelled by the Jacobite uprising of 1745. There is a feature on William Roy, whose work and map-making prowess eventually helped establish the Ordnance Survey. Roy's maps are often quoted as illustrating some of the earliest routes from one place to another; indeed they remain useful to ScotWays to this day when researching the history of routes.

Thereafter, the book charts the growth of map-making in Scotland in the 19th century through county maps and atlases, largely in response to increasing demand from visitors for maps.



It then highlights the dedicated work of the Ordnance Survey in Scotland from the 1830s. And, with the increasing demands for access to the countryside in the Victorian era (and the formation of what is now ScotWays in 1845), the book covers maps specifically made for leisure and science, including the development of layer colouring, pioneered by the Bartholomew maps.

Finally, it covers mapping developments over the last half century, including a Friends of the Pentlands map, and our own Scottish Hill Tracks map.

For someone wanting an entertaining and informative guide to mapping the Pentland Hills, this charming book is a must-read.

Copies are available through the ScotWays webshop at **scotways.com/shop**

Review by Tim Simons

Published by Friends of the Pentlands, 2026.
ISBN 978-0-9934-160-3-3



Pentland Hills covered in purple heather

PHOTOGRAPH: © NEIL BIRCH

Annual Report 2026

Summary of the year to 30 June 2026



Muir Road, Lammermuirs

PHOTOGRAPH: © RICHARD LLEWELLYN

Objectives

The charitable objective of the Society is "the preservation, defence, restoration and acquisition, for the public benefit, of public rights of access in Scotland, including public rights of way and related amenity".

Activities and achievements

The past year has been a successful one. Our finances are doing well and we are grateful for the bequests, other donations and grants that we have received. There has been steady demand for our paid solicitor enquiries service, which is a major source of our income. We have begun two long-term projects: to redevelop our free online Heritage Paths resource and to update our Catalogue of Rights of Way (CROW). Our work to defend access rights continues and we have also been working to increase our resilience and to engage more with the public.

The Directors would like to thank our excellent staff team for their hard work, their contributions of great ideas, problem-solving skills and enthusiasm, and their dedication to ScotWays' mission. We would also like to thank our volunteers, who are vital to our work, for the many hours they have generously contributed.

The board met for a planning day in February, where we shared our priorities as a board, ironed out management arrangements, discussed our ideas for the future direction of ScotWays and then used that discussion to inform a strategic planning session. In addition to our unchanged strategic objectives and our current work, the board agreed to focus on raising the profile of ScotWays, focusing our funds on supporting our projects and continuing our work to ensure all of our policies, documents and processes are kept up to date.

Protecting and promoting access rights

ScotWays staff have been hard at work to protect access rights for everyone in Scotland. These include rights enshrined by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 – which gives people in Scotland the right of responsible access – as well as protecting rights of way. The work we do is about more than just protecting people's right of access for recreational use. It has its roots in, and continues to be, a way to help make our society more equitable, healthier and socially cohesive – allowing outdoor access to all people, regardless of financial means. We have been working to achieve this by:

- Seeking to influence government and the law. Along with our Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance (SORA) partners, we attended as many political party conferences as practical. We informed politicians about access rights and access issues, including the growing problem of a lack of funding assigned to access authorities to enable them to meet their legal obligations to protect access. We also worked with SORA partners to produce a manifesto of proposals for the Scottish Parliament for 2026-31, including a £50 million Scottish Paths Fund and the long overdue review of access authority guidance.
- Collaborating with colleagues both at the National Access Forum (NAF) and via SORA on progressing issues of national relevance. Several of our team are also members of the Scottish Outdoor Access Network (SOAN).
- Working strategically on several national issues, a summary of which can be found on page 11.
- Our Enquiries Team responding to numerous consultations from the Scottish Government on a range of major, proposed renewable energy developments that have the potential to affect access rights and the amenity of access users. These include 18 wind farms and two solar farms. The team has also commented on the access implications of at least eight planning applications, notably for the proposed Center Parcs holiday village near Hawick and Balmullo Quarry extension at Lucklaw Hill, Fife.
- Continuing to provide our paid solicitor enquiries service, which forms a large part of our income. This income



Center Parcs consultation

PHOTOGRAPH: © KAREN LOWRIE

supports our other charitable aims, but the service itself also helps us meet our aim of protecting public access. The information provided to solicitors to be passed on to their clients includes where rights of way cross the property, so these can be protected, as well as general information about their duty and responsibilities as landowners under the Act. Over the years we have been receiving an increasing number of search requests and we are exploring ways to encourage this increase while keeping in mind the balance with staff capacity. We dealt with 1,315 searches in the year 2025/26, only slightly down on the record total of 1,334 the previous year. Our aim is to respond to at least 80% of the enquiries from solicitors within 10 working days, excluding any larger searches where a longer timescale has been agreed; we have managed to achieve over 90% for the past year.
- Responding to as many enquiries from the general public as capacity allows.
- Continuing to promote our book *The Law of Access to Land in Scotland*.
- Providing and keeping updated our free online resource about access, Ken.



ScotWays leaflets

Raising the profile of responsible public access

We have been continuing our work to provide the public with information regarding their rights and responsibilities as access users. An informed public is key to the protection of access rights, since people can't fight for their own rights if they don't know what they are. It is also vital that access users understand their responsibilities, so they know how to exercise their rights in a way that helps maintain a balance between the various interests of people using the land. We aim to provide information at various levels of detail to try to reach as many people as possible, including by:
- Distributing our *Brief Guide to Public Access in Scotland leaflet*, which gives an overview of rights and responsibilities and also includes information on rights of way. We received grants from NatureScot for both calendar years 2025 and 2026 towards distribution of nearly 50,000 copies of these leaflets over the two years.
- Working with our SORA partners on national campaigns.
- Promoting responsible access on our social media.
- Engaging in conversations with the public at mountain festivals and other public events.
- Giving talks about access rights and responsibilities at various events, including Mountain Aid's Skills for the Hills event in March.

Organisational resilience

We are working to ensure that ScotWays is run efficiently and professionally, that our staff are well-looked after and that our resources are protected. We have been doing this by:
- Digitising and securely storing our paper resources, including hiring an A0-size flatbed scanner to enable us to scan 925 old maps containing CROW data – you may have seen the picture of Information Officer Craig Reilly using it in our last newsletter.
- Continuing to reorganise our data according to our Records Management Plan, which increases our efficiency and the ease of finding information now, as well as increasing our resilience for the future.
- Following its February planning day, the board drawing up a new five-year Strategic Framework, now available on our website. This framework is supported by an in-depth, new five-year Strategic Plan, and the work stemming from this plan will continue to be organised and monitored using our Activity Tracker.
- Upgrading our photo library software to Piwigo, to improve storage and retrieval of photos, for business and archival purposes.
- Reviewing and updating all policies, documents and procedures, creating new ones where needed and designing a schedule for future reviews to ensure these remain up to date.
- Designing a business continuity plan.

Profile-raising, publications and publicity

Directors recognise the importance of working to raise ScotWays' profile. The more people who are aware of us and what we do, the more who can take advantage of the resources we offer. This can also help us to increase membership numbers, donations and gifts in wills. We have:
- Increased our communications capacity by extending the Administration and Communications Assistant position to full-time in autumn 2025, the additional hours all assigned to communications work.
- Increased the number of posts on our social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Bluesky), about access and about ScotWays' work, and have hugely increased our engagement.
- Increased the number of articles on our website about access topics, as well as interest pieces featuring Scottish Hill Tracks and/or Heritage Paths. This has been assisted by volunteers writing articles for us, and we are very grateful for their input.
- Designed and printed a new promotional leaflet about ScotWays, which is being distributed by volunteers.
- Continued to promote our *Scottish Hill Tracks* book. In addition to encouraging public recreational access, many of these routes are rights of way, and promoting them helps to keep the routes used and open.
- Hosted stalls at three public events – the Dundee Mountain Film Festival, the Fort William Mountain Festival and Mountain Aid's Skills for the Hills.
- Given talks at Skills for the Hills, and other events, about access rights, Scottish Hill Tracks, Heritage Paths and ScotWays in general.

Continued overleaf

Continued from previous



PHOTOGRAPH: JANET LAX

Volunteers

Volunteers contribute hugely to our work and we are very grateful for their time and dedication. Volunteers have been:

- Continuing to assist with checking the condition of signposts and surveying routes, when requested.
- Repairing, refurbishing and installing replacement signs all over Scotland.
- Distributing our leaflets.
- Helping regularly at the office with projects to consolidate and improve access to our records.
- Checking for updates and corrections needed to the Heritage Paths section of our website as part of the first stage of our project to update Heritage Paths (more details on page 14).
- Conducting pilot surveys as part of the project-design stage of our Heritage Paths and CROW surveying projects, to ensure our methodology and instructions are clear before we fully launch the projects.
- Supplying us with photos for our photo library.
- Writing articles for our website.
- Assisting with stalls at public events.
- Serving on Local Access Forums around Scotland.

Other major projects

Signposting: This continues to be an important part of our work and you can read more about what Neil Birch, our Access Officer (Outreach), and our team of volunteers have been doing on page 2.

Heritage Paths: We are working to update this resource on our website and, having completed the initial stage, we are now switching our attention to surveying and carrying out research in relation to the routes. More details on page 14.

CROW: As most of you will know, the Catalogue of Rights of Way is a major resource for ScotWays and we have initiated a rolling programme to keep it as up to date as possible. Read more about it on page 15.

Finances

We are very happy to report that we recorded a considerable surplus this year, which was a great achievement and testament to the hard work of all involved. We are extremely grateful for all subscriptions, donations and gifts in wills. A summary of our finances for the year can be found on pages 8 and 9, or for those wanting more detail, the full accounts are available on our website at **scotways.com/annual-accounts-reports**

Plans for the future

During 2026-27 we aim, in addition to our access information work, to:

- Continue work on our Heritage Paths updating project.
- Complete the distribution of our 28,000 *Brief Guide to Public Access* leaflets and work to distribute our new leaflet promoting ScotWays.
- Launch our CROW resurveying project.
- Set up our new volunteer portal.
- Continue with our work to ensure all policies and documents are reviewed and ScotWays is running efficiently.
- Finalise our business continuity plan and further investigate cyber risk and how best to mitigate that.
- Continue to update Ken, our information database on access law.
- Complete the Signpost Verification Project, consolidating all our signpost records into a single register and validating all records with a field survey.
- Replace 50 signs that are damaged or missing and complete a further 50 minor repairs.
- Host stalls at the Dundee Mountain Film and Fort William Mountain Festivals, as well as investigating other opportunities for public engagement.
- Recruit and engage more volunteers for our Heritage Paths and CROW projects.

ScotWays people

We are very sad to report the death of our Honorary Vice President George Menzies, who passed away in April, and we are grateful for his long service to the Society. A tribute to him appears on the front cover of this newsletter.

There have been changes to our staff team and to our board of directors during the year. Our Administration and Communications Assistant, Finley Jackson, left us at the end of March, but we are very pleased to have recruited Linnea Sjögren in his place. Linnea started work with ScotWays in May and has already proved a valuable addition to our team. She introduces herself on page 14.

We were also pleased to welcome TV presenter Paul Murton as our Honorary President after his election at last year's AGM and look forward to further collaboration with him. He has already written an article for *The Scots Magazine* about some of our Heritage Paths.

We welcomed Brian Humphries and Greg Quinn to the board at the AGM in November 2025, as well as co-opting Don Milton in April 2026.

Katharine Taylor, who stood down as chair last year, has now reached the end of her maximum term and retires at this year's AGM. Rachel Taylor took over as Chair and Tim Simons was appointed as Vice Chair at the December 2025 board meeting.

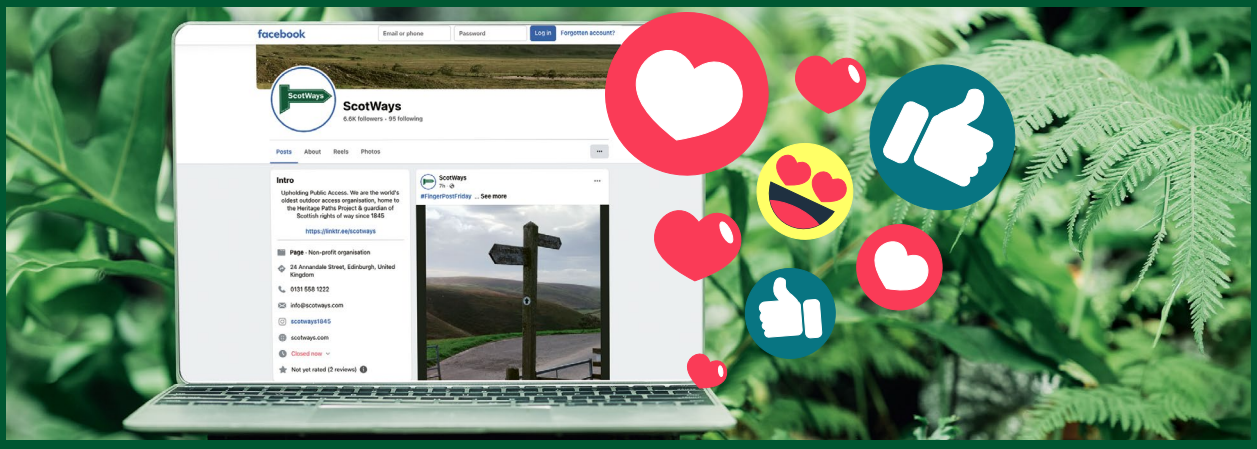
David Dixon served on the board from 2011-2020 and, after the required break from board duties, returned to the board in 2023. He has now completed his three-year term and will be retiring from the board at the 2026 AGM. We wish to thank Katharine and David wholeheartedly for their many years of service. We are busy recruiting replacements for them.

Social media statistics

We've increased our Bluesky following by **13%**

We've increased our Instagram following by **69%**

We've increased our Facebook following by **135%**



Changes to our constitution

THE document which governs the running and organisation of ScotWays is our Articles of Association. Many of the provisions are long-standing but we revisit it periodically to ensure it is fit for purpose as times change. The last change was to accommodate online meetings when COVID-19 hit, something certainly not envisaged when our Articles were first drafted.

Directors have been reviewing the Articles over recent months and, after discussions with our solicitors, are proposing a Special Resolution for members' approval at the AGM this year, making a few changes. The first change, which makes a significant difference to the length of the document if not, we trust, to the running of the Society, is to clause 8, where 27 sub clauses attempting to be exhaustive in setting out what we can or cannot do are replaced by one sentence: "The company has the power to do anything which is calculated to further its purposes or is conducive or incidental to doing so."

The directors have been discussing the possibility of offering membership by monthly subscription paid by Direct Debit. Our existing Articles give directors power to lapse someone's membership if they have not paid their subscription for two years, but that is clearly not workable where payment is in monthly instalments, so Article 24 has been amended to facilitate that.

Other changes are largely housekeeping, at the recommendation of the solicitors reviewing the document: a clause setting out transitional provisions for when the director's term was amended a number of years ago has been deleted as no longer required. The size of the quorum needed for a directors' meeting has been amended to a percentage rather than a specific number of directors.

The new section added enables directors to take decisions in writing or by email, so that not all decisions need to await the next board meeting. We do, of course, still have to ensure such decisions are carefully recorded, just as they would be if taken at a board meeting.

Directors request that you, the members, will give these changes your approval.

The formal notice of AGM which sets out in detail the proposed Special Resolution to make these changes is enclosed with this newsletter. You can see the new draft Articles as well as the current version on our website at **scotways.com/annual-accounts-reports** or by contacting the office for a copy of either or both documents.

If you have any questions on the proposed changes, it would be helpful to know of them prior to the AGM in case any further investigation is required in order to provide an answer. Please therefore send them to the office in writing, either email to **info@scotways.com** or by post so that we can address them either directly or at the AGM.

Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)

for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2026 £	Total 2025 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	1	**118,142**	**15,705**	**133,847**	156,629
Charitable activities		**198,587**	**0**	**198,587**	207,841
Investments		**10,160**	**0**	**10,160**	8,469
Total income		**326,889**	**15,705**	**342,594**	372,939
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		**–2,603**	**0**	**–2,603**	–2,830
Charitable activities		**–282,953**	**–7,332**	**–290,285**	–259,797
Total expenditure		**–285,556**	**–7,332**	**–292,888**	–262,627
Realised gains on investments		3,417	0	3,417	177
Unrealised gains on investments		45,841	0	45,841	9,997
Net (expenditure)/income		**90,591**	**8,373**	**98,964**	120,486
Transfers between funds		–6,160	6,160	0	0
Net movement in funds		**84,431**	**14,533**	**98,964**	120,486
Funds brought forward at 1 July 2025		**594,981**	**9,947**	**604,928**	484,422
Funds carried forward at 30 June 2026		**679,412**	**24,480**	**703,892**	604,908

Balance sheet as at 30 June 2026

	2026 £	2026 £	2025 £	2025 £
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		103,765		103,898
Investments at valuation		347,695		251,304
		451,460		355,202
Current assets				
Stock	3,808		4,092	
Debtors	35,622		77,424	
Cash in bank and at hand	244,510		201,029	
	283,940		282,545	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	–31,508		–32,819	
Net current assets		252,432		249,726
Total assets less current liabilities		703,892		604,928
Reserves				
Unrestricted funds				
– General reserve	539,451		448,305	
– Designated funds	139,961		146,676	
		679,412		594,981
Restricted funds		24,480		9,947
		703,892		604,928

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 15 September 2026.
Fiona Dick, Director

Note:

1. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2026 £	Total 2025 £
Annual subscriptions	18,164	–	18,164	17,542
Life subscriptions	1,681	–	1,681	2,920
Corporate subscriptions	2,881	–	2,881	3,136
Local authority subscriptions	7,700	–	7,700	7,350
Donations	11,139	14,930	26,069	27,536
Bequests and legacies	71,115	–	71,115	89,125
Gift Aid	5,462	775	6,237	9,020
	118,142	15,705	133,847	156,629

Independent Examiner's Statement to the Trustees of The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society

I have examined the summarised accounts of The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society set out on pages 8 to 9.

This report is made to the directors, as a body, in accordance with the terms of my engagement dated 21 April 2021. My work has been undertaken to enable me to report as set out below and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the directors, as a body, for my work or for this report.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and the independent examiner

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised accounts in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the charities SORP.

My responsibility is to report to you on the consistency of the summarised financial statements within the Annual Report with the full annual financial statements.

This statement has been prepared for and only for the charity's Trustees as a body and for no other purpose. I do not accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this statement is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by my prior consent in writing.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion in the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

The summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements of The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society for the year ended 30 June 2026.

Kevin Cattanach CA
15 September 2026

Summary financial statements

THE summarised accounts set out on page 8 and 9 are not the statutory accounts but comprise an extract of the information in the full accounts. The full accounts were approved by the board on 15 September 2026 and the Independent Examiner's report on the full accounts raised no concerns.

Copies of the full report and accounts can be obtained from the Registered Office: 24 Annandale Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4AN or from our website, www.scotways.com

The full Accounts will be submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator in the near future.

Rachel Taylor, Chair
15 September 2026



Attending party conference with SORA partners, Ramblers and BHSS

Current access issues

Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance (SORA) manifesto

Ahead of May's Scottish Parliament election, ScotWays worked with SORA partners to promote our joint manifesto – *Active in the Outdoors: for health, economy and environment.* We are very pleased that one of its key asks, a Scottish Paths Fund, was adopted by both the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Greens and we look forward to this coming to fruition.

Under-funded access authorities

We continue to highlight the lack of funding assigned to access authorities, which creates difficulty in meeting their legal obligations towards public access, while better publicising the resources we can offer them.

Network Rail

ScotWays continues to publicise the principles set out in a new Memorandum of Understanding on level crossings to help ensure that, in future, appropriate public access across the railway at specific locations is both safely managed and safeguarded.

PHOTOGRAPH: © RICHARD BARRON



Dalwhinnie level crossing


Radical Road

PHOTOGRAPH: © RICHARD BARRON

Radical Road

The planning application by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) for this iconic route's partial re-opening received consent too late for the associated works to be completed ahead of the James Hutton tercentenary in June. Instead, the Holyrood Park Ranger Service provided a programme of (excellent) tours to facilitate public access during the celebratory fortnight. Subsequently, there was a significant fire immediately below the Radical Road, but we have since heard from HES that the Radical Road has now partially reopened.

Calanais Stones

The charging regime at Calanais on the Isle of Lewis commenced this summer. Discussions are ongoing with Scottish Government and NatureScot, and via NAF, regarding the legal basis for this method of managing public access in order to ensure that the legal basis for HES's actions is better communicated and understood.

Glen Lyon

ScotWays was pleased to support Ramblers Scotland's petition which sought to resolve the long-standing access issues reported at Glen Lyon's North Chesthill Estate, as it is our view that this particular landowner has not been meeting their duty under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The estate is home to four popular Munros and has long tried to restrict responsible public access during the deer stalking season.

AGM arrangements



AGM 2025

PHOTOGRAPH: KAREN LOWRIE

THE Society's **Annual General Meeting** will be held on Saturday **21 November 2026** at 2.30pm. The formal notice of the Annual General Meeting accompanies this newsletter. Before the formal business, there will be a talk at 1.45pm by cartographer and author John E A Bartholomew entitled 'The Bartholomew Family of Mapmakers – From Edinburgh to the World'.

Like last year, the AGM will be held at The **British Horse Society**, Suite A3, Stirling Agricultural Centre, Stirling FK9 4RN. The entrance is between the Clyde Vet Group and Angling Active and there is plenty of parking on site. We have added to the booking form questions as to whether you are able to offer a lift to anyone coming from your direction, or whether you would be interested in having a lift. We will try to put attendees in touch with each other to make arrangements.

If you prefer to travel by public transport, you can catch either bus 59 for Callander or X10A for Glasgow from Stirling bus station, both for seven stops to Dobbies Garden World, after which there is a walk of about 10 minutes north east on a pavement alongside the A84, taking the first exit on the roundabout. Plan your journey on www.travelinescotland.com

For anyone intending to get to the AGM by bike from Stirling train station, the link below takes you to a map indicating a suggested route. It bypasses almost all of the A84 and takes you along a path by the River Forth. On reaching to the A84, there is a pavement alongside the road, or one can cross the A84 and then follow Chalmerston Road via the historic Drip bridge to the roundabout next to the venue. **bit.ly/4zsTbLI**

An informal sandwich lunch will be available at 12.30 to those who have pre-booked. There will be a charge of £8 (inc. VAT) per head for lunch to cover costs (There is no charge for any other aspect of the day). To facilitate catering, please pre-book by Monday 16 November.

If you are unable to join us in person, join us online: you'll be able to take part and submit questions through the chat function.

Whether you intend to come in person, including for lunch, or attend the AGM online, please **register**. You can do this through our website at **www.scotways.com/agm** Here you will find full details about the AGM, along with copies of the minutes of the 2025 AGM, and the accounts to 30 June 2026.

If you are unable to book online, please complete the booking form enclosed with this mailing, and send it to the ScotWays office, enclosing a cheque payable to 'ScotWays' for any lunches required. We are also happy to send out meeting papers in advance if you are unable to download them from our website.

Annual General Meeting 2026

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 21 November 2026 at 2:30pm
at The British Horse Society, Suite A3, Stirling Agricultural Centre, Stirling, FK9 4RN.

At 1.45pm, prior to the formal business, cartographer and author John E A Bartholomew will give a talk entitled 'The Bartholomew Family of Mapmakers – From Edinburgh to the World'.

FORMAL BUSINESS

1. Apologies
2. To approve the Minutes of the AGM on 22 November 2025
3. To receive the Report of the Directors
4. To receive the Annual Accounts
5. To re-appoint the Directors:
   - Tim Simons
6. To appoint the Directors
   The Directors recommend the appointment of:
   - Don Milton
   - Ilona Turnbull
7. To appoint the Independent Examiner of the Accounts
8. To consider and, if thought fit, to agree a Special Resolution to amend the Articles of Association (full details on a separate sheet)
9. ScotWays in action – what we've been doing, what we plan to do and how you can get involved
10. AOCB

Directors and staff 2026

Hon. President: Paul Murton
Hon. Vice-President: Bob Aitken

Directors:
Rachel Taylor (Chair) (Dumbarton)
Tim Simons (Vice Chair) (Edinburgh)
Lindsay Anderson (Edinburgh)
Fiona Dick (Edinburgh)
David Dixon (East Lothian)
Brian Humphries (Lanarkshire)
Chris Huntley (Lanarkshire)
Greg Quinn (Aberdeenshire)
Don Milton (West Dunbartonshire)
Katharine Taylor (Edinburgh)

Staff:
National Secretary and Treasurer:
Alison Riddell
Senior Access Officer:
Eleisha Fahy
Access Officers:
Neil Feggans
Karen Lowrie
Johanna Babbs
Acess Officer (Outreach):
Neil Birch
Information Officer:
Craig Reilly
Administration and Communications Assistant:
Linnea Sjögren

Honorary Advisor: John Mackay

New directors

Two directors are standing for election at the AGM this year. Don Milton was co-opted by the board during the year but is standing for election by the members at the AGM, while Ilona Turnbull is hoping to join the board for the first time. Both introduce themselves here.



Don Milton OBE

Professionally a Chartered Engineer, I spent 36 years in the Royal Navy. A wide range of posts included Cabinet liaison and briefing of Ministers in Whitehall, project and contract management of multimillion pound contracts, assessment of tenders for MoD contracts and mentoring and training staff. I also achieved a couple of Fellowships and an OBE for services to engineering.

I currently undertake consultancy work, largely in the safety domain as an independent safety assessor.

Growing up north of Inverness, I was lucky to attend a school that promoted a wide range of outdoor activities, with an emphasis on how to behave responsibly in all activities.

To repay some of the enjoyment that I have experienced in the Scottish mountains and hills, as a volunteer I have been a member and Convenor/Chair of two Local Access Forums from inception, working with access users, land owners and local authorities.

I was Convenor of the National Access Forum, which included engagement with Scottish Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers, similarly working with them as a member of the National Forestry Stakeholder Group. As Chair of the BHS Scotland Access Committee, as well as monitoring the situation in Scotland, I also keep up to date with the challenges being faced in England by those seeking to maintain rights of way.



Ilona Turnbull

I am a qualified lawyer and governance professional with extensive experience supporting boards and committees in the financial services and not-for-profit sectors. I am currently an Assistant Company Secretary at Standard Life, where I advise trustee boards and governance committees on regulatory compliance, board effectiveness, risk oversight and good governance practices.

A long-standing advocate for Scotland's outdoors, I served as the Director for HR, Governance and Equalities of Mountaineering Scotland from November 2020 to November 2026, contributing to the organisation's governance, policy development and strategic oversight. During my time on the board, I supported initiatives aimed at promoting safe participation in mountaineering and hillwalking, strengthening organisational governance and ensuring that access, conservation and member interests remained at the heart of decision-making.

I have a particular interest in helping voluntary organisations develop clear, practical governance arrangements that enable them to deliver their objectives effectively. I am passionate about protecting and enhancing public access to Scotland's mountains, hills and countryside, and would be delighted to support ScotWays in its work to safeguard and promote Scotland's network of paths and access rights. Scotland's world-leading right to roam access legislation is a direct result of ScotWays' active custodianship of those access rights.

In my spare time, I can be found wandering Scotland's hills as I work my way towards a Full House, having been the first Australian to complete the Munros, Corbetts and Donalds.

Continued overleaf

Continued from previous

New Administration and Communications Assistant



Linnea Sjögren

I'm Linnea, the new Administration and Communications Assistant. I recently joined ScotWays with a range of experience working in communications and project support for charities such as WWF and Living Streets Scotland.

I hold an MA in Sustainable Development and Social Anthropology from the University of St Andrews and also have a background in horticulture and garden design. As a student, I spent a lot of time exploring the beautiful Fife and Angus coastline – which, in turn, inspired my dissertation on the importance of access to nature for health and wellbeing in Scotland.

Having grown up in Sweden, where the right to roam ('Allemansrätten') is an integral part of life, I spent the first part of my life outside, foraging and exploring the Swedish wilderness on horseback. I come from a long line of foresters and my family is currently maintaining just over 100 acres of mixed forest in the south-west of Sweden.

For a long time, I took my right to access nature as a given, but I have become increasingly aware that such is not always the case, and not for everyone. I am thus excited to contribute to ScotWays' important work protecting access rights in Scotland – for the benefit of all.

Heritage Paths

We have been hard at work over the past year preparing for the launch of major surveying projects. If you haven't already explored our Heritage Paths resource, you can find it on our website: **www.scotways.com/heritage-paths**

Heritage Paths features more than 400 historic routes throughout Scotland! This special resource not only promotes and protects these ancient routes through encouraging continued use but also can help people to have a deeper experience, through an understanding of their history.

We completed the initial stage of our Heritage Paths updating project last autumn, which was partly funded by a Scottish Mountaineering Trust (SMT) grant. This included major improvements to the Heritage Paths website to improve user experience and to enable staff to update website data more easily.

We received a second grant from the SMT in October 2025 towards a further, 30-month project to update the resource and, after many months of fine-tuning project plans and surveying and reporting guidance for volunteers, we were excited to launch this at the start of July 2026.

Volunteers are currently undertaking on-the-ground surveys for 200 routes that pass through hilly and mountainous areas (almost half the total Heritage Paths), checking our data, reporting on issues and providing photos. The research phase will be ready to launch soon, and volunteers will be asked to investigate the history of routes where our current information is sparse. Plans also include replacing and adding new direction and heritage interpretation signs on some of the routes.

This upland-focused project will continue through 2027 and into 2028. The project team are choosing routes for inclusion that were not fully surveyed between 2020 and 2024 for the sixth edition of *Scottish Hill Tracks*, or where we have few photos, or knowledge that something has changed, and we are adding additional routes of historical interest in hilly and mountainous areas too.

By mid-September we had chosen 150 routes out of a target 200 and, of these, 23 have been surveyed and a further 41 have been assigned to volunteers to survey. The information and photos that surveyors and researchers provide will be noted against overlapping recorded rights of way in CROW and will also enable us to update our records of signs and bridges. We will also use the data to update Heritage Path route descriptions and heritage interpretation, information totally free on our website.

One innovation has been adding unique QR codes to our existing, replacement and new Heritage Path interpretation plaques: when a member of the public scans one of these with their smartphone, they'll see the route description and more details about the route's history right there in the field. We hope this will help, along with the improvements to the website itself, bring a new audience to the wealth of information available in Heritage Paths.



Kirkmichael to Ballinluig Drove Road

PHOTOGRAPH: © VOLUNTEER DAVID

If you're interested in helping with this project, please look at **www.scotways.com/volunteer** for details.

The remaining ~250 Heritage Paths in lowland areas are not being forgotten. We intend to work up another project to resurvey these over the following few years.

CROW

ScotWays holds Scotland's only national database of rights of way, and this autumn we will launch a long-term route surveying programme in an effort to keep these records as up to date as possible. Our goal is to have volunteers resurvey all of the recorded routes (nearly 10,000!) by 2035 and to put a rolling programme in place for the foreseeable future.

This ambitious project has required extensive planning and testing. After pilot surveys were completed by volunteers, it became apparent that major web development would be needed, and we are excited to be launching our new online volunteer portal this autumn as well (more details below). The CROW surveying work is vitally important, as CROW is used by access authorities as well as in searches conducted by our enquiries team and updating CROW will increase efficiency for them.

Software development:

We had hoped to move CROW from the current CAMS Desktop system to the newer CAMS Pro a few years ago, but due to delays in the development of the software, we have decided to remain with our current version of CAMS in the meantime and have instead gained increased access to the data within CROW. Increased access has enabled us to commission an independent developer to create the software we need to run our projects efficiently and effectively.

This is a major investment, but one that will very much pay off. The software will include a new online volunteer portal, where registered volunteers can sign up to survey routes, submit survey reports and access updated surveying guidance and other resources. Behind the scenes, the development will allow automation of parts of the administrative work involved in coordinating surveys, generation of route-specific information for surveyors and archiving of photos and reports. Increased automation will enable our staff to focus on supporting volunteers and updating our records following completion of each survey. This new portal will provide an improved experience for volunteers and staff alike.

ScotWays merchandise

We now have a range of ScotWays branded clothing available through our online Teemill shop. The products range from hoodies and T-shirts to tote bags and mugs – printed on-demand and delivered directly by the manufacturer. The products are GOTS and OEKO-TEX certified and produced in compliance with SA8000 and the Fairtrade textile standard. Tote bags, neck tubes, note cards and pin-badges will also be available for direct purchase at our AGM.

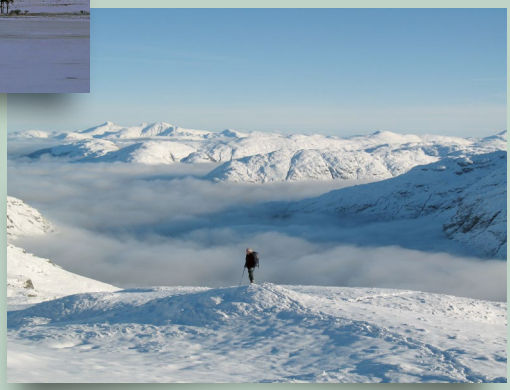




£6 for a mixed pack of eight with envelopes.

Inverlochlarig Glen by Peter Ritchie

An Teallach from Loch Droma by Nick Williams



Christmas cards

Our Christmas card selection this year features two stunning photographs by Nick Williams and Peter Ritchie. Containing the message 'Season's Greetings', these snow-clad mountain views will soon get you into the holiday spirit. This year we have decided to produce mixed packs containing four A6 cards of each of the two designs, plus envelopes, for £6. Purchase the cards directly from our website or submit an order form by post (enclosed with this mailing). You will also be able to buy them at the AGM without incurring P+P charges.

ScotWays – The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society

Founded in 1845, ScotWays upholds and promotes public access rights in Scotland. We are widely recognised as experts in the law and practice of access and advise on access problems, provide information and training, and maintain a vast database about routes in Scotland. Our recognisable green and white signs are on routes across Scotland. We are home to the Heritage Paths Project, a unique archive of Scotland's old paths and roads.

We do not receive any public funds for our core activities. As a result, we are proudly independent and flexible in what we can do, but must also raise enough money to survive. We couldn't operate without volunteers, who help us by researching path history and keeping our records accurate, representing us on local access forums, surveying and repairing signposts and inspecting paths.

How could you help us?
www.scotways.com/support-us

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