

The Scottish Sports Council Trust Company – Meeting held on 15 May 2025 at 10:00, via Teams.

Company No. SC137068

Charity No. SC020175

Present

- **Mr Andrew Bain, Chair (“AB”)**
- **Ms Kirstie Hepburn, Director (“KH”)**
- **Mr Iain Houston, Director (“IH”)**
- **Ms Olivia Strong, Director (“OS”)**
- **Mr Ronan Welch, Director (“RW”)**

In attendance

- **Mr Mark Drummond, Head of Finance (“MD”)**
- **Mr Barry Fleeting, Head of Centre, Inverclyde National Sports Centre (“BF”)**
- **Mr Shaun Roberts, Principal, Glenmore Lodge (“SR”)**
- **Ms Rachel Steven, Director of Operations (“RS”)**
- **Miss Abi Wood, Secretariat & Legal Officer (“AW”)**

1. Apologies and Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

[AB TO INSERT APOLOGIES HERE]

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings (To approve minutes of the first meeting of 2025, held on 13 February 2025)

The minutes were approved without any objections.

THE BOARD APPROVED the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. Matters Arising

BF and RS discussed their action item related to the Commonwealth Games. Barry mentioned that he had followed up with the Commonwealth Games via email but had not received a response yet.

AW mentioned she would discuss governance review piece that she plans to discuss with AB and RS offline before the summer meeting.

5. Chair's Opening remark, including update from sportscotland Board (29 April 2025)

AB provided an update on the sportscotland board meeting held on 29 April 2025, focusing on the corporate plan, business plan and budget for the forthcoming year.

AB discussed the governing documents of the various subgroups and committees and mentioned the need to review the governance framework for the Trust Company. He explained the need to review the governance framework for the Trust Company, including the relationship with sportscotland and highlighted the importance of defining the role and purpose of the Trust Company Board and the Trust Company itself to maximize the benefits of having a charitable organization working on behalf of sportscotland. He explained him and RS come back to the board at the end of the calendar year to discuss potential changes and their implications.

6. Director of Operations update

RS provided an update on various matters and answered questions from the Boards:

- With regards to the Commonwealth Games, she highlighted the changes in the event's business model, including the number of sports and the use of multiple hotels instead of an athlete village. RS also highlighted that the ticketing for the Commonwealth Games will be commercial, with limited tickets available for public officials.
- RS mentioned that the sportscotland Chair and sportscotland CEO attended the Health and Sport Committee on 11 March 2025, where they answered questions on various topics related to sport.
- RS provided an update on the voluntary severance programme. She explained that BF's team at Inverclyde experienced minimal impact, while SR's team at Glenmore Lodge faced significant changes, including the departure of senior instructors.
- RS mentioned that Deloitte concluded a strategic workforce review, recommending reorganization to free up money and align skill sets with future needs.

For discussion

7. 2024/25 Annual Reports, including Q4 update:

7.1. Glenmore Lodge – Annual Report 2024/25 – Shaun Roberts

- SR explained that Glenmore Lodge faced the worst winter in 40 years, with poor snow conditions leading to a drop in bookings and a high number of cancellations.
- He stressed the need to adapt their business model, including changing communication with customers to reflect the variability of winter conditions and ensuring valuable training regardless of conditions.
- SR highlighted the operational challenges faced by instructors in delivering courses and the need to refresh terms and conditions to manage future variability. He emphasised discussed plans to change the mindset around winter conditions,

promoting a range of conditions from patchy snow to full winter, and ensuring sustainable business practices.

- He also mentioned that the Avalanche Service will be streamlined, reducing fixed investment and reacting more flexibly to actual conditions, as part of a broader strategy for long-term sustainability.

The Board complimented SR on the way the report was presented online and went on to discuss staff readiness to adapt to changing winter conditions and the evolving role of the centre. SR confirmed staff are fully on board with the new mindset, emphasizing the need to react to unpredictable winters rather than expect consistent snow. He highlighted sector-wide safety challenges and the centre's potential leadership role in promoting a different approach to winter activities. SR also stressed the importance of updating customer education to reflect current conditions, while remaining hopeful for better winters ahead.

THE BOARD NOTED the contents of the report.

7.2. Inverclyde – Annual Report 2024/25 – Barry Fleeting

- BF provided an overview of Inverclyde's quarter four performance, highlighting the high occupancy and successful events hosted during the period.
- BF reported a strong Q4 for Inverclyde, describing it as one of the busiest quarters to date in terms of income and footfall. March saw record room occupancy. 93 groups across 13 sports, including 49 school groups with 25 of them visiting for the first time during Q4.
- Major events included the Judo Scottish Open, Table Tennis Scotland national championships, Scottish Volleyball semi-finals, and the World Wheelchair Curling Championships came to Inverclyde. The latter brought international teams to the site for three weeks, drawn by the centre's accessibility.
- Despite the partial closure of the fitness suite for flooring upgrades, the programme ended with 722 members. The investment improved safety and refreshed the space with new equipment.
- BF noted some storm-related disruption, including temporary closure and the loss of around 40 trees with all access roads blocked.
- Looking across the year, BF highlighted year-on-year growth in occupancy and income, with strong engagement from schools, clubs, and governing bodies. Bed occupancy hit record levels, and early signs for the new year were also positive.

The Board discussed the content of BF's report. They ask BF about what make Inverclyde so successful. BF explained that while events like curling have boosted recent income, such opportunities won't always reoccur. IH asked about how Inverclyde proactively attract events that may be coming to Scotland. BF confirmed Inverclyde work directly with sports to secure bookings by relying on strong relationships and the facility's reputation. KH inquired about ongoing support for disadvantaged school groups. BF noted funding has decreased year and will likely reduce further next year, limiting direct work, but emphasised the social value and potential to increase capacity if resources improve.

THE BOARD NOTED the contents of the report.

8. National Centres Business and Financial Plans for 2025/26:

8.1. Glenmore Lodge – Business and Financial Plan for 2025/26 – Shaun Roberts

SR presented the Glenmore Lodge business plan, key points included:

- SR explained the strategic focus at Glenmore Lodge remains on growth, particularly increasing income and output. SR stressed the importance of developing a more flexible business to support long-term sustainability.
- Financially, the plan aims to safely deliver the budget while flattening the growth in expenditure whilst driving up income. SR explained there was a clear ambition to shift from seasonal spikes toward consistent year-round performance, with new business initiatives helping to build that momentum.
- Throughput is central to future success. It reflects activity across training, schools, events, and hospitality. Getting the mix, volume, and pricing right will underpin income and create the scale needed for a sustainable model. A 60% occupancy target has been set for Glenmore Lodge. This would exceed previous highs. The team is confident, although SR acknowledged the stretch.
- On the customer side, there's renewed effort to bring in people who have not visited to Glenmore Lodge before or are new to outdoor activity. This is being done through intro-level courses and improving the online booking journey.
- Internally, the focus is on how things get done and “unpicking” manual processes. There is intent to explore smarter ways of working, including potential digital transformation and external support. With senior staff moving on, the aim is to reshape roles and systems to better support delivery and development.

The board discussed SR's presentation. OS raised a suggestion about using micro-influencers to support outreach and diversify Glenmore Lodge's audience. She and noted potential of social media and experience-based marketing to reach new demographics. SR confirmed that influencer engagement had been used and would continue as part of their communications strategy.

Further discussion touched on staffing and resourcing. IH inquired about staffing and changing in staff. SR outlined that he is losing some senior staff and are now looking at more efficient ways to staffing and how to administer and resource this such as internal opportunities and short-term contracts, with external recruitment to be discussed with RS and sportscotland HR.

RW expressed interest in website performance insights, especially after nearly a year of operation. SR shared early learnings and stronger-than-expected Airbnb performance. SR agreed to provide a fuller digital insight report at a future meeting.

THE BOARD NOTED the contents of the report

ACTION: SR to provide update on website insights/analytics

8.2. Inverclyde – Business and Financial Plan for 2025/26 – Barry Fleeting Review of Trust Company

BF presented the business plan, key points included:

- Customer mix remains a key operational challenge, balancing governing bodies (now on a two-year booking window) with schools, clubs and internal users, with priority given to governing bodies. He noted an emphasis is on improving insight into group diversity, to better reflect the centre's inclusive value.
- Staff support and development continue, including progress with the SAMH charter.
- Energy use is under review. Inverclyde is in a strong place but further improvements and opportunities are being explored.

- Financially, the aim is to avoid surprises, monitor performance monthly, and improve on the budgeted position. While income has grown, managing costs (especially salaries, NI, catering, and cleaning) remains a challenge. Focus remains on reducing reliance on investment and increasing income generation.
- The budget mirrors last year's, with continued growth as the goal. At eight years old, the centre's high standard is maintained, though asset condition is increasingly a factor. Growth remains the priority, with ongoing work to strengthen position.

The board discussed BF's presentation. AB asked balancing between essential maintenance with the needs of customers. BF explained that the timing of the fitness facility upgrades was chosen based on occupancy trends, aiming to carry out upgrades during quieter periods such as Christmas when there's less residential business. He noted that while such decisions are never exact, they are made by closely reviewing booking patterns and prioritising minimal disruption. BF also explained that although fitness space usage was low during that period, servicing residential groups always remains a logistical challenge. BF reiterated that while full site closures are not anticipated, future upgrades will continue require careful planning around fluctuating demand and occupancy pressures.

THE BOARD NOTED the contents of the report

9. Capital planning for 2025/26 – Mark Drummond

MD explained that the sportscotland Audit & Risk Committee now holds an expanded remit for financial management across sportscotland, including oversight of capital investment and associated expectations around return on investment. This brings additional scrutiny to capital spend within the Trust.

A full capital plan was initially expected at this stage; however, condition surveys National Centres have only recently been received and require further review against local priorities.

An approved capital budget of £775k is in place for 2024/25, but proposed project priorities currently exceed this envelope. A process of rationalisation and prioritisation will follow. Historic capital spend has varied significantly (from £400k during COVID (2020/21) to £1.2m in 2022/23).

MD invited the Board to provide strategic guidance on how best to align limited capital with the Trust's medium-term and long-term objectives.

AB opened the discussion on the capital planning update by noting the need for greater scrutiny from board members of the Trust Company over capital proposals. AB noted that the Trust Company bring a lot of value to the discussions in validating project priorities, particularly in distinguishing between essential maintenance and development opportunities with expected returns on investment. He noted that resources may be limited so there is importance of ensuring these resources are used efficiently. AB suggested incorporating a board-level review earlier in the planning cycle.

IH echoed AB's sentiments, querying the depth of business cases behind project proposals such as alternative accommodation options. SR confirmed that each proposal is currently accompanied by a one-page summary linking it to the business plan. He added that this serves as a first step before deeper analysis is undertaken.

KH supported the idea of adding simple risk-versus-opportunity scoring to provide clearer context for decision-making. OS and RW also agreement with these points and the board overall welcomed greater transparency on how capital projects are evaluated.

RS explained the importance of having a longer-term view, building a five-year CapEx plan that supports both infrastructure maintenance and business development, particularly in digital transformation. She and MD agreed to return with a planning and reporting process which can thereafter be reviewed annually and approved in Q3 or Q4 of each year.

THE BOARD NOTED the contents of the report

For Noting

10. Full year Trust Company Management Accounts 2024/25

11. Environmental Sustainability and the National Centres (sportscotland Board paper – April 2025)

RS provided an update on the environmental sustainability plan, mentioning the need to measure carbon emissions and develop initiatives to reduce the overall carbon footprint.

THE BOARD NOTED the contents of the report

12. Risk Appetite Update (sportscotland Board paper – December 2024)

THE BOARD NOTED the contents of the report

Other

Any other business

13. Confirm any items for reporting to sportscotland Boards and Committees:

- sportscotland Audit and Risk Committee on 20 May
- sportscotland Board on 24 June

14. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 25 August @Glenmore Lodge.

| Ref | Owner | Action | Progress |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Chair, Rachel Steven | Organise a joint session for the Trust Company and Sport Scotland boards to enhance engagement and understanding of the Trust Company's work. | August 2025 |
| 2 | Mark Drummond, Barry Fleeting | Update the Trust Company MOU to reflect changes to wording. | August 2025 |
| 3 | Rachel Steven, Barry Fleeting | Follow up with the Commonwealth Games project team to explore opportunities for Inverclyde to support the event. | May/August 2025 |

| Ref | Owner | Action | Progress |
|-----|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 4 | Trust Company Directors | To commission further modelling exercises to ensure transparency and provide confidence in the Trust Company's medium-term financial projections for the sportscotland Board. | May/August 2025 |
| 5 | Chair, Rachel Steven, Abi Wood | To review Trust Company governance document to provide further direction regarding financial planning. | August/November 2025 |
| 6 | Shaun Roberts | Provide update on website insights/analytics | August/November 2025 |
| 7 | Kerry Lochrie | Biannual data protection/information governance report. | November 2025 |
| 8 | Trust Company Directors | Biannual review of the risk register | November 2025 |