

The Scottish Sports Council Trust Company

Company No. SC137068 Charity No. SC020175

Meeting held on 12 February 2026 in Inverclyde National Centre

Business

1. Apologies and Welcome

Present

- Andrew Bain, Chair (“AB”)
- Iain Houstin, Vice Chair (“IH”)
- Kirstie Hepburn, Director (“KH”)
- Susan Sandilands (“SS”)
- Ronan Welch, Director (“RW”)

In Attendance

- Forbes Dunlop, Chief Executive (“FD”)
- Barry Fleeting, Head of Centre, Inverclyde National Sports Centre (“BF”)
- Shaun Roberts, Principal, Glenmore Lodge (“SR”)
- Mark Drummond, Head of Finance and Governance (“MD”)
- Abi Wood, Secretariat & Legal Officer (“AW”)

Apologies were noted from Raza Sadiq.

2. Declarations of Interest (taken at meeting)

None declared.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes of the meetings held on 13 November 2025 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

The Board reviewed matters arising:

- The Chair noted that confirmation of the second **sportscotland** Board representative remains ongoing, with an update expected in due course.
- A meeting in December took place regarding the budget and the Chair recorded his thanks to those in attendance.
- EDI feedback has been received from RS and circulated for information following the last meeting. Directors were invited to submit any further comments, which will be incorporated into the wider review.
- Work on the golf facility options appraisal is continuing: the facility remains open until 31 March and further developments will be reported in due course.

All other items carried forward.

5. Chair's Opening remarks, including update from sportscotland Board (9 December 2025)

The Chair highlighted the Scottish Government's draft budget announcement and the positive indication of additional funding for sport. While this was welcomed and recognised as reflecting sustained effort across the sector, it was noted that the budget remains subject to parliamentary approval and that there is no guaranteed impact for Trust Company funding.

FD, added that although the announcement is encouraging, messaging remains measured given the ongoing financial pressures facing local partners.

For approval

6. Inverclyde Indoor Tennis Centre - Barry Fleeting

BF presented a paper on the feasibility of developing an indoor tennis facility at the National Centre Inverclyde.

BF noted that Inverclyde has been identified as a possible location for an indoor tennis facility providing geographical coverage to an area identified within the TSIT Plan. The proposal would utilise the land of the training facility to deliver an accessible venue within proximity to the main building. The proposed funding model would involve National Lottery funding in partnership with the LTA. It was noted that progression would require ministerial approval to allow Lottery funding to be invested within the Trust Company and agreement that any LTA contribution would be provided as a grant rather than a loan.

BF asked the Board to agree that officers should progress towards a formal funding application.

The Board discussed the proposal, including use for indoor tennis and possibility of including Padel courts within the project. The board discussed possible implications for staffing and long-term financial sustainability. The Board recognised the strategic fit of the proposal and stressed the importance of ensuring that operational and community benefits could be delivered sustainably. The Board approved the recommendation.

The Board APPROVED the recommendation.

For Discussion

7. 2025-26 Quarter 3 Reports:

7.1. Trust Company Finance – Q3 2025-26 – Mark Drummond

MD provided an overview of the Trust Company's financial position.

MD explained that a reforecast was undertaken at Quarter 2, resetting the budget for the remainder of the year, with Quarter 3 performance now being measured against this updated position. A modest adverse variance was reported, with a projected yearend position of approximately £50k adverse, which is anticipated to remain broadly stable and not materially worsen or improve. It was noted that there is likely to be a level of capital underspend, largely due to longer lead times on some projects, and that officers continue to review whether any capital projects can realistically be delivered within the final quarter of the financial year. Given the wider uncertainty in the financial position, a cautious approach to capital investment is being taken. The Board noted that the paper provided a short update on Quarter 3 performance and an overview of the projected yearend position.

7.2. Glenmore Lodge – Q3 2025-26 – Shaun Roberts

SR highlighted the following key points from the paper:

- Business plan priorities for the year focus on maintaining budget delivery and business continuity during a period of reduced workforce capacity. A potential 2% adverse variance against the Q2 investment forecast was noted, reflecting pressures on salary costs following the pay award and increased use of freelance instructors. However, overall income performance remains positive with the net position is expected to be within 1% of forecast.
- Winter conditions have been particularly strong, with sustained demand across Glenmore Lodge services and high levels of avalanche forecasting activity since early December.
- Development activity during the year has been constrained due to voluntary severance and staff resignations; however, this has created opportunities to review and remodel workforce structures ahead of 2026 recruitment.
- An external agency has been appointed to undertake a website user experience (UX) review, with a refresh of the front end planned to improve customer journey and conversion to sales.
- The current quarter trading has been strong, with income exceeding expectations, particularly over the winter period.

The Board discussed the reduction in staffing capacity with SR. RW asked whether appropriate succession planning was in place. SR advised that, while recent departures had been challenging, Glenmore Lodge remained resilient. He highlighted the strength of longstanding freelance arrangements and confirmed that work is underway to review future workforce requirements, including engagement with governing bodies to inform competencies for planned 2026 recruitment. He noted that the revised workforce model aims to improve sustainability and cost control rather than replace senior roles on a like-for-like basis.

SS and KH queried the proposed website refresh and how this differed to previous digital work. SR clarified that earlier activity had focused on digital sales and marketing, whereas the current phase concentrates on improving the UX (user experience) of the website. He advised that external expertise had identified the need for a simpler, sales-focused site that would improve conversion rates.

The Board also discussed the potential implications of the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill. SR advised that Glenmore Lodge is well positioned to respond to opportunities arising from the Bill, particularly in relation to direct delivery to schools and teacher training, subject to funding and sector capacity.

7.3. Inverclyde – Q3 2025-26 – Barry Fleeting

BF presented the Q3 update for the National Centre Inverclyde, highlighting key variances from business as usual and drawing attention to the supporting data pack.

BF noted the following key points:

- November and December were quieter than forecast, largely due to the cancellation of two repeat bookings in December due to strategic changes within those organisations.

- Inverclyde has achieved recognition through the UK Sport Elite Training Environments Project, confirming its status as an elite training environment following a peer assessment process. Assessors provided strong feedback on the quality of athlete support and the partnership approach at Inverclyde. Formal accreditation is expected in Spring 2026. BF explained that the accreditation process required significant staff time and effort but demonstrated that Inverclyde exceeds the required criteria.
- Early discussions are underway with other governing bodies to attract new business.
- The closure of the Golf Training Centre has been confirmed for 31 March 2026.
- Work is progressing to implement a new leisure management system.
- The fitness leadership structure has been reviewed, and a revised Fitness Coordinator role has been filled.

The Board welcomed the recognition Inverclyde received via the UK Sport Elite Training Environments Project and discussed how Inverclyde should recognise and promote its status as an elite training environment. BF advised that accreditation places Inverclyde prominently on the UK sport map and no comparable accredited facility exists elsewhere in Scotland. He highlighted the importance of leveraging this status to strengthen relationships with governing bodies and support future business development.

The Board NOTED the contents of the reports.

8. Business Planning Process – Mark Drummond

MD presented the draft Trust Company Business Plan for 2026/27 and outlined the refreshed approach to business planning and reporting.

MD explains that the sportscotland Board wanted to strengthen the connection between the Sport for Life strategy, the Annual Plan and in year reporting. The new business planning introduces a clearer multiyear perspective alongside annual planning, intended to improve understanding of progress against agreed objectives and to address challenges previously experienced in articulating delivery at the appropriate level. He explained that the business plan is expected to continue to evolve ahead of submission in April.

He highlighted the complexity of presenting the two National Centres, each with distinct business models and areas of impact, within a single Trust Company view. The draft material seeks to bring this together into a consolidated, multiyear narrative for submission to the sportscotland Board, supported by an example annual priorities and goals template at operational level.

The Board discussed the draft business plan. AB advised that written comments were received prior to the meeting from RS and read out a summary of those comments. The Board discussed these observations, which highlighted the importance of ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion considerations are meaningfully embedded within the planning framework and supported by clear accountability as the process develops. It was noted that this feedback would be useful to inform future stages of the planning process.

FD explained that the revised approach aims to bridge a recognised gap between the high level Sport for Life strategy and more detailed quarterly reporting. He explained that the introduction of two to five year thematic overviews is intended to support this, with further work required to define annual actions and monitoring frameworks that sit beneath the strategic view.

Board members welcomed the overall approach. IH commented on the benefits of a more longitudinal planning framework to support forward planning beyond annual budget cycles. SS emphasised the importance of ensuring that Trust Company investment and impact are clearly articulated and easily understood by the sportscotland Board, noting that consistency across the organisation would be key. The Board recognised the need to balance strategic oversight with operational delivery and the importance of developing indicators that support effective governance without drawing the Board into daytoday management.

The Board NOTED the contents of the report.

ACTION: to circulate RS comments on the proposal.

9. Draft Budget 2026/27 - Mark Drummond

MD presented the initial draft Trust Company Budget for 2026/27 and invited the Board to take the paper as read. He outlined that the proposed budget reflects a challenging financial context, with a requirement for increased sportscotland investment to meet projected operating costs across the two National Centres. MD highlighted that the budget position reflects a number of fluctuations across income streams, including the confirmed closure of the Golf Training Centre, resulting in a reduction in income which is partially offset by growth and resilience in other areas across both centres. He noted that the most significant cost pressures relate to payroll, driven by the cumulative impact of pay awards, the re-setting of employer pension contributions and wider inflationary pressures. MD drew attention to the proposal within the paper to mitigate a modest element of the increased investment requirement through a reduction in the assumed capital budget provision. He advised that this has been included as a placeholder to help manage the overall funding ask, while noting that capital investment remains critical to the long-term sustainability of the Trust Company estate and that reductions in capital expenditure may have future implications for maintenance and asset condition.

9.1. Glenmore Lodge 2026/27 draft budget (presentation) - Shaun Roberts

SR presented the Glenmore Lodge draft budget for 2026/27, setting it in the context of longer-term trends and recent performance. He noted that the budget reflects a challenging year and includes additional investment. SR advised that the budget forecasts a 6% increase in income, which he considered achievable, with stronger growth expected in conference and events.

He explained that expenditure pressures are primarily driven by salary and freelance costs, with opportunities identified for savings through phased recruitment, internal appointments and workforce restructuring. He highlighted that capital requirements are modest and focused on essential maintenance and operational resilience and emphasised that longer-term sustainability will depend on workforce planning and cost control.

Further detail on business plan objectives and delivery priorities will be brought to the Board at the May meeting.

9.2. Inverclyde 2026/27 draft budget (presentation) - Barry Fleeting

BF presented the Inverclyde draft budget for 2026/27, outlining the strategic priorities and budget assumptions set out in the accompanying Board slides. He highlighted a continued focus on sustaining income, supporting the workforce, addressing capital priorities identified through the condition survey, and maintaining strong engagement with governing bodies.

BF advised that the budget assumes modest price increases, broadly stable business levels, a reduced staff complement, and increased salary costs reflecting the pay award and employer pension changes. He noted that income growth is modest, with reductions associated with the closure of the Golf Training Centre partially offset by stable or increased income across other areas, including schools, fitness and community use.

On expenditure, BF explained that salary costs remain the main driver of growth, while non salary costs were broadly stable. He highlighted planned capital investment focused on essential maintenance, replacement of end-of-life assets and longer-term estate projects to support operational sustainability.

The Board discussed the content of the report and presentations.

The Board acknowledged the challenge of balancing rising costs, particularly staffing, with expectations around financial sustainability and service quality. In response to questions put by the Board, it was confirmed that budgets have been prepared based on operating as efficiently as possible. There was continued focus on workforce restructuring, internal recruitment and cost control. It was noted that salary costs remain a driver of increased expenditure across the Trust Company and **sportscotland** as whole, reflecting pay award applied consistently across **sportscotland**, and that there is limited scope to mitigate these costs without impacting service delivery.

The Board discussed the use of capital budgets as a potential lever in a flat-funding scenario, however, they recognised that the age and condition of both National Centres estates would limit the extent to which capital investment can be reduced without reducing operational function or limiting maintenance.

AB summarised the Board's position as recognising that additional resources are required to maintain current service levels and quality, and that the request for increased investment is justified. He emphasised that while scrutiny and prioritisation will continue, there is limited scope to reduce delivery without compromising outcomes, given that staffing costs represent the majority of expenditure and capital investment is essential to maintaining a safe and operational estate.

The Board NOTED the contents of the draft budget.

Action: AB to present the Trust Board's position to the sportscotland Board.

For Noting

10. Assurance Review of Inverclyde – Key Financial Controls

The Board NOTED the contents of the assurance review.

Other

11. Any other business

MD advised that the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee is anticipated to take place around May/June and further details will be circulated in due course.

12. sportscotland Board

sportscotland Board on 23/24 February.

13. Date of next meeting: Thursday 14 May, 10:00 via Teams

Actions

Ref	Owner	Action	Progress
1	AB	To confirm second sportscotland Board representative	February / March 2026
2	AB	Circulate comments on business plan	February / March 2026
3	AB	To support the draft Trust Company budget at sportscotland board	February 2026
4	Trust Company Directors	Biannual review of risk register	May 2026
5	KL	Biannual data protection/information governance report	May 2026