

**The Scottish Sports Council Trust Company – Meeting held on 25 August 2025 at
13:00 at Glenmore Lodge
Company No. SC137068
Charity No. SC020175**

Present

- **Andrew Bain, Chair (“AB”)**
- **Kirstie Hepburn, Director (“KH”)**
- **Iain Houston, Director (“IH”)**
- **Susie Sandilands, Director (“SS”)**
- **Raza Sadiq, Director (“RS”)**
- **Ronan Welch, Director (“RW”)**

In attendance

- **Forbes Dunlop, Chief Executive (“FD”)**
- **Mark Drummond, Head of Finance and Governance (“MD”)**
- **Barry Fleeting, Head of Centre, Inverclyde National Sports Centre (“BF”)**
- **Shaun Roberts, Principal, Glenmore Lodge (“SR”)**
- **Michael Law, Financial Controller (“ML”)**
- **Laura Cook, Executive Assistant (“LC”)**

1. Apologies and Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Olivia Strong.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings (To approve minutes of the first meeting of 2025, held on 15 May 2025)

The minutes were approved subject to the apologies being updated.

THE BOARD APPROVED the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. Matters Arising

BF provided the following updates:

- Point 1 will be actioned today.
- Point 2 MOU is on the agenda today.
- Point 3 Commonwealth Games attended the **sportscotland** Board meeting in June. BF following up with CGS who are aware of the centre however there's been no progress on any bookings. BF will remain in contact.
- Point 4/5 will be combined and taken forward by AB, MD, SR and BF. A meeting will be scheduled to look at longer term financial planning and will be brought back to the Board.
- Point 6 SR will bring back in November.
- Point 7 for noting. Intended that Kerry Lochrie will bring an update to the November meeting.
- Point 8 to be included in annual plan of Board business.

5. Chair's Opening remark, including update from **sportscotland** Board (24 June 2025)

AB updated that he has had individual meetings with each of the Board members, but is still to meet with KH. AB also noted that the Board are attempting to align with the **sportscotland** Board to create opportunities to influence decisions up to the **sportscotland** Board. AB will work with SR and BF to develop the Trust Board plan which will then go to the **sportscotland** Board if the Trust Board are comfortable.

AB provided an update on the **sportscotland** board meeting held on 24 June 2025 and highlighted that there were no specific Trust Company discussions but the Board did explore which tactics could be used if the budget increased. FD added that today's 17:00 session with the **sportscotland** Board will provide good context to help both Boards work together and help with this year's business planning process.

FD noted that during the June Board meeting Mark Cowan presented an update on the facilities audit. There was a discussion regarding the strategic workforce review as a number posts have now been removed from the organisation including some at Glenmore Lodge.

For approval

6. Annual Accounts for year ended 31 March 2025

7. WBG (formerly Wylie and Bisset) Audit Report for year ended 31 March 2025, including Letter of Representation for year ended 31 March 2025

MD presented an overview of the annual accounts and audit report. It was highlighted that accounts had been reviewed at agreed at the Trust Company Audit Committee in June, but that a significant revision had been identified thereafter.

IH noted that the auditors were happy with what was produced for Audit Committee and queried what was missed. MD responded that there was an issue around VAT as a specific methodology is used for the valuation of Inverclyde. The Group auditors challenged the use of this fundamental assumption, which had not previously been reviewed or discussed in detail.

AB thanked MD and the team for pulling together.

The Trust Board confirmed that they are happy to approve the accounts and annual statements.

8. Proposed Trust Company Board dates for 2026

AB reiterated that the Trust Company meetings will align with the **sportscotland** Board and proposed that meetings be held online with two per year to be in person at each of the National Centres, with the hope of increasing in person attendance. AB asked Board members for feedback on the approach.

RS noted that Mondays are not good for in person meetings but he can make other days. AB asked everyone to notify us of any commitments and we can try to accommodate them. IH highlighted that in person meetings are a must to support staff, be visible and show an active contribution. SS agreed that the proposal is good. RW agreed.

SS suggested that it is good for the **sportscotland** Board to engage and better understand the Trust Board. FD noted that four new Board members joined in April and will be early in developing their understanding. AB is keen to relook at the build of the Trust Board as the MoU allows for an increase in membership. Once the skills matrix has been reviewed and potentially consider additionality.

KH asked how long the term is? AB replied that it is four years but you can do two terms.

AB updated that discussions are ongoing with Olivia regarding her work commitments in Australia but she is still keen to support the Trust Board.

SR advocated for the Board coming together in person and highlighted that it is really important for Glenmore Lodge to feel like part of the wider **sportscotland** family and take advantage of the additional benefits of coming north. The Sports Minister attending could also help to drive agendas. AB noted that he visited Glenmore Lodge a few months ago and found it beneficial to get up to speed with how the Lodge works. If people want to visit out with Board cycle and learn more about the business get in touch with AB, SR or BF.

Approved.

9. Updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

MD introduced the paper which was discussed in February and taken to the **sportscotland** Board in April so we are bringing back the final version for sight.

Approved.

10. Trust Company Risk Register biannual review

MD introduced the risk register which is reviewed every six months at an operational level where modest updates have been made and the planned actions for next year are still live. The refreshed review has not been updated but the risks and controls won't change as they are substantively where they should be but we will take the opportunity

to review the wording and formatting for the next meeting. There has been no significant change in scoring to alert Boards attention to and we have a stable environment.

KH commented that the papers did not contain track changes. MD will circulate the track change version to the whole Board. BF noted that most of changes will be planned actions which have now been implemented.

SS asked about the review of the self-assurance position. SR answered that it is a continuation. MD added that Scott Lindsay, ARC Chair, would like to continue to see if he can do anything. The cost of seeking bespoke insurance may be prohibitive and in the event of payouts it is allowable to pay out from the general fund, and they recognise that is the position that we are in. SS so we are doing our due diligence.

KH questioned where weather issues are covered, for example a mild winter being a risk for business at Glenmore Lodge? SR responded that this is not currently included in the risk register as the onus lies with the Lodge to cover this within the business plan because there should never be an assumption that the weather will be on side. BF added that we do mention adverse weather which would impact operations but this is the opposite and some of the actions are still relevant like tracking expenditures. As long as there is comfort in the way we manage finance monthly and quarterly then hopefully that offers some reassurance.

SS asked if a risk should be included regarding climate change? It is commendable that is included in the business plan but as it becomes harder to predict should it be considered a risk? SR answered that this is also relevant for the avalanche service. IH agreed with BF that the risk is mitigated and addressed at every opportunity. RW noted that other SGBs have done some more scenario planning from things that happen regularly to things that might happen. BF commented that similar exercises are completed around business continuity which look at scenarios and build upon lessons learned like cyber-attacks but we will check if we cover all eventualities. Equally we have circumstances like storms that are unforeseen but in most circumstances, we feel like we are well prepared.

For Discussion

11. 2025-26 Quarter 1 Reports:

11.1 Trust Company Finance - Q1 2025-26 – Mark Drummond/Michael Law

MD noted that it is early in the year in terms of a detailed review and re-forecast but the end of quarter one gives some indicators to the operating position. There are both adverse and favourable movements across both sites and income and expenditure categories. Some of which are timing variances and others are real. The full Q2 reforecast exercise shall better inform the likely range of potential out-trun against budget.

KH queried if redundancy payments have been factored in. MD answered that they are already accounted for in the last financial year.

KH asked why Glenmore Lodge appears more severe in the operating costs graphs and why have we managed to cut costs at Inverclyde so significantly. MD responded that Glenmore Lodge spikey nature is due to seasonal volumes and month on month volumes which is visible in the Q1 pack management information. In terms of operating

costs at Inverclyde, the difference between income and expenditure where income has improved that net expenditure has improved. BF added that during the first quarter we make the assumption there will be a salary increase factored in between 3% to 5% but because that hasn't been made yet it looks favourable until that agreement has been made. SR also noted that from a Lodge perspective we would have to look at each month to see what is underlying but it could be the timing of projects.

AB summarised that the general message is that things don't look great but it is only quarter one and the general management is there, and we have room to improve.

11.2 Glenmore Lodge – Q1 2025-26 – Shaun Roberts

SR presented on the expenditure and income tracker and explained issues around Ecommerce as organic traffic to the website stimulated by pay per click have declined significantly but our marketing colleagues have investigated this and upskilled themselves. We have now learned that online AI overview is a competitor and we need to make changes but organic traffic is now back up as we have audited our marketing plan and ecommerce with some experts. We have an ongoing consultancy with a marketing specialist and a specialist in ecommerce. We are going to retender our online agency support to ensure that they cover all the required elements. We have a good relationship with our customers and there is demand out there. We have also learned the importance of refreshing product information as it will not be shared if it is old. But we are trying to achieve growth while building the foundations for growth. Whilst we are concerned, we have the levers to manage this and the ambition to improve against budget in Q2 and are looking at further gapping of salaries. We will look across all budget lines to see where we can make savings and the ambition is to land on the investment line.

IH noted that the Lodge offers 200 products and asked what is the newest produce that has been brought to delivery? SR replied that we have a lot of new elements around trying to attract casual tourist throughput, such as a guided walk to Ben MacDui. SR we have also explored trying to do Christmas festive things but turned around to our core competence to host an autumn walking festival.

SS commented that it is good to hear the mention of AI as the reason for a drop in organic referrals as it wasn't in the report. SS also mentioned that it's important to ensure the company who wins the tender looks at SCO and AEO. SR noted that time is required to work through the plan and implement it. SS commented that the approach sounds slow and the industry is moving really fast and suggested putting an emphasis on who you are tendering to and ensuring they have the right skills. IH added that everyone must be struggling with this. SS suggested running searches on google and see what comes through on the AI overview. AB requested that SR take some of points on board when going through tendering process. RS suggested that AI be used to help tender for the product. SR acknowledged the Board Members recommendations for the content of our new tender process.

Commenting on workforce, SR highlighted that a number of people from Glenmore Lodge have left through voluntary severance who were in training roles, but we still have a Chief Instructor who is focusing on the quality of delivery and health and safety. There is a well defined business group around this and capacity has been brought over from the administration team to help in this space and the operation remains resilient at this time of development. The urgency is now around how we do this, and we might report that we need to source money to bring in additional external capacity and expertise.

11.3 Inverclyde – Q1 2025-26 – Barry Fleeting

BF updated that most metrics are up apart from schools and education, but we anticipate it will be a good year.

BF noted that Inverclyde is in good shape for Q1 but July wasn't great, although things are hugely positive across all parts of business. Fourteen different sports groups are represented and they include a wide range of sports. Boccia UK are now working with Loughborough who are developing a performance hub sport for parasport, they have been one of the biggest users since opening this is disappointing, but they will still use the centre.

BF updated that bookings have been made by 38 schools, 33 of which were previous customers and there is representation from 12 LAs across Scotland. Two staff members in the coaching team finished in June and we are changing how we contract them by moving to a school term time contract. We have seen good progress from members who have been in the team.

BF highlighted that the fitness suite refurb has been completed and demand has increased.

BF updated that Cumbrae was taken to auction last week and has been successfully sold for £390,000, the buyer now has 20 working days to conclude the sale. Plans are in place to meet with the buyer and find out what their intentions are for the property. IH asked if there is any reputational risk? BF responded that there is but we have a responsibility to look after public money and assets and after four years of going through CAT and eight bids this was the best solution. AB highlighted that Cumbrae is no longer part of the Trust Company and BF added that the team at Inverclyde have continued to maintain the building. Two lease agreements need to be transferred across but there is nothing to suggest they will be an issue. Lots of support is being given from the legal team and the finance team.

12. Trust Company Capital Planning Update – Mark Drummond

MD introduced the paper which is an update of the initial budget allocation and have been approved by the **sportscotland** Board. Further calculations have been carried out focusing on what is realistic in the year, there is still some headroom and an update in terms of where the projects are.

SS commented that the approach makes sense but queried why some small projects cost more than £50,000. MD answered that this is because we recognised that we couldn't afford everything so a review of prioritisation still to needs be done and we might need to look at the centres individually. If one is generating a greater return, then they may be able to reinvest locally. BF added that we would prioritise based on what would have the most impact.

Board supported progressing with four 'Priority / approved' projects as well as the three projects with strong 'Health & Safety' rationale. Board also noted work was on-going on the cost-benefit review of the two remaining priority capital projects.

MD highlighted that the sale of Cumbrae doesn't generate more income as it goes back to the Government.

For Noting

13. Approved internal audit APM (Audit Planning Memorandum) - Inverclyde Key Financial Controls (Q2)

Noted.

14. Public Liability insurance for sportscotland National Centres – 2025

Noted.

Other

Any other business

15. KH requested an update on the litigations. MD noted that they have two historic claims had now been settled. We retain a watching brief on any emerging issues.

KH asked for an update on the staff members that were involved in the crash. SR noted that we are supporting staff and exploring return to work options with occupational health support where possible.

RS noted that during a meeting last year Maureen Campbell mentioned that **sportscotland** were developing an equality monitoring plan and asked for an update on what this means for the national centres? FD noted that this is built into the annual EDI report which both national centres feed in to, more details can be shared with the Trust Board as we are always striving for richer information.

IH thanked the team for the quality of report and acknowledged the challenges. And delighted to hear staff are on the mend.

SR highlighted that he has been supporting the Crown Office as an expert witness around the 2023 fatalities in Glen Coe and the recent FAI reported by BBC Scotland.

BF noted that some context on National Centres has been provided and asked if it is of value or if the Board would like to see something different. Feedback to be given to BF.

AB thanked everyone for attending.

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

- **sportscotland** Audit and Risk Committee on 16 September
- **sportscotland** Board on 26 August and 28 October

17. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 13 November online via Teams.

Ref	Owner	Action	Progress
1	Chair, MD, BF, SR	To review Trust Company Governance document, business planning process and board reporting framework.	February 2026
2	Shaun Roberts	Provide update on website insights/analytics	November 2025
3	Kerry Lochrie	Biannual data protection/information governance report.	November 2025
4	Trust Company Directors	Biannual review of the risk register	February 2026
5	Chair, Kirstie Hepburn	Meeting to be scheduled	November 2025
6	Chair	Skills matrix to be reviewed and additional Board membership to be considered.	February 2026
7	Trust Company Directors	Contact AB, BF or SR to arrange a trip to either national centre if desired	November 2025
8	Mark Drummond	Circulate track changes version of risk register to all Board members	September 2025
9	Barry Fleeting, Shaun Roberts	Check if all eventualities are covered in the risk register	Ongoing
10	Forbes Dunlop	EDI report information to be shared with Board members	November 2025