

WIGTOWN BOWLING CLUB

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

Scottish Charity Number: SC052591

Legal Form: Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

Date of Charity Registration: 5 June 2023

Principal Address

Wigtown Bowling Club
The Square
Wigtown
Newton Stewart
Wigtownshire
DG8 9EH

Main Operating Area: Dumfries and Galloway

1. About Wigtown Bowling Club

Wigtown Bowling Club was established in **1830** and is one of the oldest bowling clubs in Scotland. For almost two centuries, the Club has provided opportunities for bowling, recreation, friendship and social interaction for generations of people in Wigtown and the surrounding area.

The Club was originally established within the Square's historic "**plantation**" area, which had been enclosed as a public garden in the early nineteenth century. Over time, this central area of Wigtown became increasingly associated with recreational use, including bowls and tennis, with the bowling green becoming a distinctive and enduring feature of the town.

Today, the green continues to occupy its prominent position in the heart of Wigtown. Its longevity and continued use make Wigtown Bowling Club not only an important sporting organisation but also part of the historic and social fabric of the town.

Wigtown Bowling Club became a registered Scottish charity and Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) on **5 June 2023**, allowing the Club to build upon its long history while protecting and developing its sporting and community role for future generations.

The Club has approximately **50 members**, representing a broad range of ages, backgrounds and abilities. Its impact, however, extends considerably beyond its membership through open tournaments, visiting bowling clubs, community events, fundraising activities and use of the clubhouse by other organisations, groups and members of the public.

Wigtown is a small rural community within Dumfries and Galloway. Rural communities can experience particular challenges associated with geographical isolation, limited public transport and fewer opportunities for regular organised social and recreational activity than may be available in larger population centres.

Accessible and affordable community organisations such as Wigtown Bowling Club therefore have an important role to play. The Club provides somewhere for people to meet regularly, develop and maintain friendships, participate in physical activity, volunteer and remain connected with their community.

For many people, particularly older residents, those living alone and people who may otherwise have limited opportunities for regular social interaction, participation in Club activities can provide an important source of

companionship, activity and social contact.

2. Charitable Aims and Purposes

As set out in the Club's SCIO constitution, Wigtown Bowling Club operates on a non-profit basis and seeks to:

- advance public participation in bowls as a sport;
- provide bowls-related recreational facilities and organise recreational activities with the aim of improving quality of life;
- promote, establish, operate and support schemes and projects with wholly charitable purposes for the benefit of the community;
- provide coaching and instruction as necessary;
- foster relationships with other outdoor bowling clubs; and
- undertake other purposes reasonably analogous to the preceding charitable aims.

The Club may also affiliate with appropriate organisations and organise games and competitions on behalf of its members in furtherance of these purposes.

These objectives underpin the work of Wigtown Bowling Club and the Trustees seek to ensure that public benefit, inclusion and participation remain at the centre of the Club's activities and decision-making.

3. Membership, Inclusion and Participation

Wigtown Bowling Club is proud to provide a welcoming environment where people of different ages and abilities can participate together.

With approximately **50 members**, the Club represents a significant social and recreational organisation within a relatively small rural community.

The Club encourages participation by younger people as well as older and more experienced bowlers. Particular encouragement is given to **junior and under-25 players**, helping to introduce younger generations to the sport and supporting the long-term future of bowling within the area.

The Club also welcomes people with disabilities. Members who require assistance are able to attend with carers and participate in and enjoy both bowling and the social life surrounding the sport.

Bowls has the particular advantage of being a sport in which different generations and abilities can participate alongside one another. This creates opportunities for friendship, informal mentoring and social interaction between people who may otherwise have relatively little opportunity to meet.

The Trustees consider this inclusive and intergenerational aspect of the Club to be an important part of its charitable and community benefit.

4. Activities and Achievements During 2025

During 2025, Wigtown Bowling Club continued to provide a varied programme of sporting, recreational, community, social and fundraising activities.

The activities of the Club are made possible largely through the commitment of its members, Trustees, volunteers, supporters, sponsors and local businesses.

Three Annual Open Bowling Tournaments

The Club's three annual open tournaments, held during **June, July and August**, continued to be highlights of the bowling season.

These popular events attract bowlers from Wigtown and clubs throughout the surrounding area and can attract up to **36 pairs** at each event.

Participants pay an entry fee of £10 per pair, with additional fundraising through refreshments and raffles. Local sponsorship also enables the Club to provide prize money while helping to keep participation affordable.

The tournaments provide benefits beyond fundraising. They bring visiting players and supporters into Wigtown, strengthen relationships between bowling clubs and encourage healthy sporting competition within a friendly environment.

They are also important social occasions for members and supporters, including those who may no longer bowl regularly but remain involved in Club life.

Volunteers are essential to their success, helping with catering, refreshments, raffles, organisation and preparation of the green.

Tuesday and Friday Social Bowling and Sweeps

Regular Tuesday and Friday social bowling sessions and member sweeps continued throughout the bowling season.

These provide an informal alternative to competitive tournaments and enable experienced and less experienced bowlers to participate together.

A small entry fee is collected, creating a modest prize depending upon attendance. However, the principal benefits are participation, enjoyment and social interaction.

Members have a regular opportunity to leave their homes, meet friends, enjoy fresh air and physical activity and maintain their bowling skills.

For newer players, the sessions provide a relaxed environment in which to develop confidence and learn from more experienced members.

The Trustees consider these regular sessions particularly valuable in maintaining friendships and helping to reduce loneliness and social isolation.

Catering and Refreshments

Catering and refreshments continued to provide an important source of fundraising during 2025.

Members and volunteers provide refreshments, home baking and food during tournaments and other Club activities.

This also creates volunteering opportunities for members and supporters who may not wish or be able to bowl but who still want to participate actively in Club life.

Funds generated contribute towards maintaining and operating the clubhouse, green and facilities and help the charity continue to provide affordable sporting, recreational and social opportunities.

Wigtown Book Festival

Wigtown is internationally recognised as **Scotland's National Book Town**, and the annual Wigtown Book Festival is one of the most important events in the town's calendar.

Wigtown Bowling Club continued to contribute to the festival through its popular catering and soup kitchen activities, providing homemade soup, sandwiches, cakes and refreshments to visitors.

Demand is traditionally extremely strong, with queues forming during busy periods.

The Book Festival provides an important fundraising opportunity while allowing the Club to contribute directly to a major community event.

It also brings many people who might never otherwise enter a bowling clubhouse through our doors and demonstrates that Wigtown Bowling Club is a community facility as well as a sporting organisation.

Annual Prize Bingo - County Buildings

The Club's **Annual Prize Bingo** was held at the **County Buildings in Wigtown during 2025** and continued to be a popular community fundraising and social event.

The bingo welcomes Club members and non-members alike and provides an enjoyable and affordable opportunity for people to come together socially.

Prizes are generously donated by members, supporters, sponsors and local businesses, helping the Club maximise the funds raised.

The event reaches people who may not ordinarily participate in bowls and helps strengthen relationships between the Club and the wider Wigtown community.

Clubhouse Refurbishment and Community Funding

During 2025, Wigtown Bowling Club was grateful to receive funding from a local community organisation to support improvements to the clubhouse.

The funding enabled the Club, with the support of members and volunteers, to undertake refurbishment and redecoration of the clubhouse in preparation for the new bowling season.

The clubhouse was refreshed and painted, improving the appearance and condition of the facilities and creating a more welcoming environment for members, visiting bowlers, community groups and other visitors to the Club.

This investment was particularly valuable to a small, volunteer-led rural charity and demonstrates the benefit of working in partnership with other organisations within the local community.

The Trustees are extremely grateful for the funding received and to everyone who contributed their time and effort to completing the work.

Community Use of the Clubhouse

The Club seeks to ensure that its facilities provide benefit beyond its bowling membership.

The clubhouse is made available, where practical, to local organisations, community groups and private groups in return for an appropriate donation.

The facilities can be particularly useful during busy periods such as the Wigtown Book Festival and Christmas.

This provides an additional affordable venue within a rural community where suitable meeting and gathering spaces can be limited.

Donations received also contribute towards the cost of maintaining and operating the building.

Junior and Younger Bowlers

The Club continued to encourage younger people to participate in bowls.

Junior players and bowlers under the age of 25 are welcomed and encouraged to develop their skills alongside established members.

Encouraging younger generations is important both for the sustainability of Wigtown Bowling Club and the future of outdoor bowling in rural communities.

It also creates opportunities for skills, knowledge and experience to be shared between generations.

Links with Other Bowling Clubs

Wigtown Bowling Club maintains positive relationships with bowling clubs throughout the surrounding area.

Visiting players participate in tournaments and other activities at Wigtown, while Wigtown members have opportunities to participate in events elsewhere.

These relationships help sustain a wider bowling community across Dumfries and Galloway and create opportunities for friendship, participation and healthy competition.

Local Sponsorship and Support

Wigtown Bowling Club is fortunate to receive strong support from local businesses, sponsors and individual supporters.

Sponsorship contributes towards tournament prize money and other costs and helps the Club keep its activities attractive and affordable.

The Trustees are extremely grateful to every business, sponsor, member and supporter who contributed financially, donated prizes or goods, provided assistance or volunteered during 2025.

5. Volunteers

Wigtown Bowling Club could not operate successfully without the considerable contribution made by its volunteers.

Trustees, members and supporters give their time throughout the year to maintaining the green and premises, organising competitions, preparing food and refreshments, running raffles, fundraising, administration and welcoming visiting players and members of the public.

Much of this work takes place behind the scenes and is provided voluntarily and without payment.

Volunteering itself provides public benefit by giving people opportunities to remain active, develop friendships and contribute positively to community life, including individuals who may no longer participate regularly in bowls.

The Trustees wish to formally record their appreciation for everyone who volunteered for Wigtown Bowling Club during 2025.

6. Public Benefit and Community Impact

The Trustees believe that Wigtown Bowling Club continues to provide clear public benefit.

Although bowls remains at the heart of the charity, its contribution extends considerably beyond participation in sport.

Within a rural community such as Wigtown, opportunities for regular social contact, affordable recreation and organised physical activity can be more limited than in larger population centres.

Through its activities, the Club provides opportunities for people to:

- participate in regular physical activity;
- establish and maintain friendships;
- reduce loneliness and social isolation;
- participate across different ages and abilities;
- volunteer and contribute to their community;
- develop sporting skills and confidence;
- participate in intergenerational activities;
- enjoy affordable social and recreational events;
- meet people from neighbouring communities; and
- access a community venue for gatherings and activities.

The Club's approximately **50 members represent only part of its overall reach.**

Visiting bowlers, spectators, Book Festival visitors, bingo participants, community groups, sponsors, supporters and people attending fundraising and social events considerably increase the number of people benefiting from the charity.

Wigtown Bowling Club is therefore not simply a sporting organisation. The Trustees consider it an **important social, recreational and community asset within rural Wigtown**.

7. Community Asset Transfer and Future Development

Wigtown Bowling Club has been part of Wigtown since **1830**, and the Trustees recognise the importance of protecting this heritage for future generations.

The **Community Asset Transfer process with Dumfries and Galloway Council**, which had already been under discussion for a number of years, continued to progress during 2025.

The Trustees regard the proposed transfer as an important opportunity to secure the long-term future of Wigtown Bowling Club and protect an historic sporting and community facility for future generations.

Greater control of the premises would provide the Club with improved opportunities to seek external funding, plan future investment and improve the clubhouse and facilities so that they can better meet the needs of members and the wider community.

The Trustees particularly recognise the importance of creating facilities which are comfortable, sustainable, welcoming and, wherever practicable, accessible to people of different ages and abilities.

Although the Community Asset Transfer had not been completed by the end of the 2025 reporting period, discussions remained ongoing and the Trustees continued to work towards a positive outcome.

8. Financial Review

The Trustees continued to manage the charity's resources carefully throughout 2025.

Income was generated from membership and bowling activities, tournament entry fees, fundraising events, catering and refreshments, raffles, donations, community use of the clubhouse, sponsorship and other appropriate sources.

Funds raised are applied in furtherance of the charitable purposes of Wigtown Bowling Club, including maintaining and operating the bowling green, clubhouse and facilities and providing sporting, recreational, social and community activities.

The Club also benefits considerably from donated prizes and goods, sponsorship and volunteer time, all of which enable the charity to achieve considerably more with the financial resources available to it.

The Trustees seek to maintain reasonable reserves to provide for routine operating and maintenance costs and to help meet unexpected expenditure or repairs, recognising the costs associated with maintaining the Club's premises and bowling facilities.

Full financial information for the year ended **31 December 2025** is contained within the charity's annual accounts submitted to OSCR.

9. Structure, Governance and Management

Wigtown Bowling Club is a **Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)** registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator under charity number **SC052591**.

The charity is governed in accordance with its SCIO constitution.

Charity Trustees are appointed in accordance with the constitution and are responsible collectively for the governance, management and strategic direction of the charity and for ensuring that its activities and resources are used in furtherance of its charitable purposes.

Day-to-day Club activities are supported by members and volunteers.

Trustees Serving During the Year Ended 31 December 2025

Molly Hanson-Steel - Trustee/Secretary

Martin Gummersell - Trustee

Changes Following the Year End

Martin Gummersell ceased to be a charity trustee in February 2026. Subsequent changes to the Trustee body took place following the end of the reporting period.

Trustees at the Date of Approval of this Report

Molly Hanson-Steel - Trustee/Secretary

Allison Scott - Trustee

Hazel Matthews - Trustee

10. Looking Forward

The Trustees remain committed to protecting and developing Wigtown Bowling Club for future generations.

Priorities include encouraging participation in bowls, supporting junior and younger players, maintaining an inclusive environment, supporting existing members and continuing to develop the Club's wider community role.

The Club will seek opportunities to improve its facilities, strengthen relationships with other organisations, attract funding and sponsorship and maintain the long-term sustainability of this historic community asset.

Progressing the Community Asset Transfer remains an important part of the Club's longer-term ambitions.

The continued support of members, volunteers, sponsors, local businesses and the wider community gives the Trustees confidence that a Club established in **1830** can continue to play an important part in the life of Wigtown for generations to come.

11. Trustees' Declaration and Approval

The Trustees believe that this report provides a fair and comprehensive account of the activities and achievements of Wigtown Bowling Club for the year ended **31 December 2025** and demonstrates how those activities further the charitable purposes of the organisation and provide public benefit.

This Trustees' Annual Report was approved by the charity trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Molly Hanson-Steel

Trustee/Secretary

Signed: Molly Hanson-Steel

Date: 1 September 2026

Acknowledgement

The Trustees of Wigtown Bowling Club wish to record their sincere thanks to **all members, volunteers, sponsors, local businesses, visiting bowling clubs, supporters and members of the wider community** who supported the Club during 2025.

Their generosity, time, enthusiasm and continued support enable Wigtown Bowling Club to remain an active, inclusive and valued part of community life in Wigtown and help ensure that this historic Club can continue to benefit future generations.