



**Leith St. Andrew's Trust
Annual Report and Accounts
For the year ended 30 Jun 2025
Charity Registration no. SC053426**



Legal Information

Charity name

Leith St. Andrew's Trust

Charity number

SC053426

Charity's principal address

36 Dalmeny Street, c/o Think Circus, Out of the Blue Drill Hall, EH6 8RG

Trustees

Alasdair Begg (appointed 19th June 2024)
Nina Ballantyne (appointed 19th June 2024)
John Hall (appointed 11th June 2024)
Matthew Jones (appointed 11th June 2024)
Daniel Perregaux (appointed 11th June 2024)

Governing document

Constitution

Trustee recruitment and appointment

John, Matthew and Daniel were founding trustees. Alasdair and Nina were appointed via election by members at a General Meeting. Trustees are appointed via election at an Annual General Meeting, General Meeting or via being co-opted by the board.



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Trustees' Report

Charitable purposes

The purposes of Leith St. Andrew's Trust are defined in our constitution:

- "the advancement of citizenship or community development",
- "the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science",
- "the advancement of public participation in sport",
- "the provision of recreational facilities, or the organisation of recreational activities, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities or activities are primarily intended"

We aim to achieve this by bringing the former Leith St. Andrew's parish church into community ownership and management, providing affordable and accessible space to local charities, community groups and social enterprises. In turn, these organisations will provide Leith with a wide range of activities, services and events to support the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of our community.

We are dedicated to protecting a cherished historic landmark in the heart of Leith, and giving the building new life.

But our vision extends beyond preserving a building; we will build on strong existing community foundations, envisioning a multi-purpose wellbeing, activity, and performance space. We will provide a place for local residents to come together, engage in beneficial activities, and celebrate cultures. We will safeguard our heritage and build a future where the historic church continues to be a well-used community hub.

Activities and achievements

Introduction

Leith St. Andrew's Trust was registered with OSCR (the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) on 11th June 2024. This in itself was a big and important step - founding volunteers agreed a constitution, a defined geographical community area for membership and recruited members.

As a charity we can apply for funding, recruit trustees and more clearly define our purpose as an organisation. Our community can also hold us to account better as charities have to be transparent and share their reports and accounts (like this!).



While we were still establishing the charity and setting up our bank account, we were able to raise funds by applying for grants through an intermediary - Think Circus SCIO. Think Circus is another local charity who supported the establishment of Leith St. Andrew's Trust. Their help meant we could raise £10,000 from the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) and £25,386 from National Lottery Heritage Fund (NHLF). Our initial membership drive raised just over £300. We also received consultancy support from Community Enterprise.

Alongside huge amounts of volunteer help, this money meant we could carry out:

- Feasibility research and planning to find out if our idea is possible,
- Community consultation and engagement to find out if people support our idea,
- Marketing and promotion to tell people about our idea!

Once we were registered as a charity and had our own bank account set up, we could then apply for funding in our own right - more on that later!

We have also had important milestones in our engagement with the Leith St. Andrew's Kirk Session, now amalgamated into LARCH (Leith and Restalrig Church) Kirk Session. These are the Elders of the Leith St. Andrew's congregation who will ultimately decide the future of the Leith St. Andrew's building.

We are overwhelmingly grateful for the huge amount of time, effort and support that volunteers and local community members have contributed in this first year (and in the preceding stages before that!). As trustees, we'd like to offer our sincerest thanks to everyone who has helped in any way, big or small. We couldn't have done it without you and your commitment to Leith's motto - to persevere!

Feasibility research

The Scottish Land Fund (SLF) Stage 2 is one of the few grants that can be spent on buying a building, so it's an important part of our fundraising plans for eventual purchase. However, it has strict rules. As well as making sure our ideas were going to work for Leith St. Andrew's Trust as an organisation and for our community, we wanted to build proof that the Scottish Land Fund would accept in future funding applications. This includes a business plan, lots of technical building surveys and architectural studies.

We appointed Akiko Kobayashi & LeeBoyd as our architectural partners after a competitive tendering process. They have developed architectural plans and costings for a three-phased renovation of the building to maximise its potential as a multi-use space, in consultation with existing and prospective tenants. They've also advised us on



what surveys we need to do to find any risks or problems and understand any future costs. This year, thanks to the AHF and NLHF grants, we commissioned a Building Condition survey and Measured survey, which have now been completed

We were also delighted when a PhD student (and trained architect), who works locally, asked if they could use us as a case study in their work on accessibility in heritage buildings. The PhD student is in liaison with LeeBoyd and will be producing some guidance on how we can best balance accessibility needs with preserving historical character and value. This is another example of how rich our community is and the brilliant opportunities for local collaboration that continue to emerge.

Jim Bennett and Susan Oak were appointed as business consultants, following another competitive tendering process and developed the first draft of our five year business plan. This detailed business plan is informed by extensive community consultation, Community Enterprise's Accelerate programme and advice from local Community Asset Transfer projects, Development Trust Association Scotland and Community Ownership Support Service.

They carried out in-depth costings, risk analysis and cash flow projections, and we are confident that we have developed a viable business model that:

- meets local need and demand,
- matches our ethical and community-driven values,
- retains current tenants of the building,
- charges affordable rent for nonprofits and social impact organisations.

This business plan was the basis of our first official presentation to the Leith St. Andrew's Kirk Session in September 2024, and is a huge strength for future funding applications.

Community Consultation and Engagement

LSAT has undertaken considerable consultation and engagement, and will continue to do so. So far, we have:

- Engaged with over 400 local residents and businesses for feedback on the project
- Recruited a skilled and dedicated group of trustees, members and volunteers
- Networked with 30+ local organisations to build strong partnerships including current and prospective building users, other local community venues and local charities and social enterprises.
- Received 394 survey results from the community with 98% in support of proposed use. We've included some quotes from this survey below.



“I'd strongly support the space remaining a community hub particularly for disadvantaged groups.”

“I've always walked past it and wanted to go in, the location is great and i would like to see it open up for the good of local people.”

- Ran a stall at Leith Gala Day 2024, engaging 200 local residents, including 150 survey responses (8th June was technically three days before our OSCR registration was approved, but we'd filed the paperwork!).
- 40+ volunteering sign-ups over the year
- Held an open Day in August 2024, including stalls and activities from current and prospective user groups, with 50-100 visitors over the day, including many who'd never been inside the building before.

A grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) supported a history project including a public exhibition. We commissioned a local community historian to carry out archival research and oral history interviews culminating with six days of exhibition and panel events, attracting more than 190 visitors. This felt like a real highlight of the year, and a fitting tribute to the history of the Leith St. Andrew's building to date. Some of the feedback we received from our visitor survey is below.

“I feel a great deal more informed. It was clear that a lot of research had gone into the exhibition, which combined community historical as well as personal stories.”

“I didn't know much about the church and its rich history. It was great to hear from the volunteers and be able to read about locals over the years.”

“Each of the panelists offered an important and complementary perspective on the role Leith St Andrews has played in the community to date, and the convener did an excellent job of weaving together their contributions.”

Marketing and promotion

This work ran alongside our community consultation and engagement activities. In our first year, Leith St. Andrew's Trust volunteers:

- Developed brand colours, feel, logo and strapline
- Built a refreshed website that's seen 8.9k unique visitors since September 2024.
- Grew our social media channels to over 500 followers
- Designed flyers and posters distributed to dozens of local businesses
- Establish an email list of 50+ subscribers, volunteers and members



Funding

This year we successfully applied to Scottish Land Fund Stage 2 for £10,000 to go towards the remaining development work required. This is the first successful application made in our own right and is very exciting! It also means we are eligible to apply for Scottish Land Fund Stage 2, which could contribute significant capital to our bid offer for the building.

The money will pay for a Building Valuation Survey and CCTV Drainage Survey. The former will make sure we pay a fair market price for the building, and represents a key tool for our purchase agreement negotiations with the Church of Scotland. The latter will help us to have a complete picture of the building condition and inform our cost management strategy. While we have commissioned surveys to assess the feasibility of the building management and phased renovation proposals, we are yet to assess the drainage systems and required work that may be needed in future. This will protect the interests of LSAT and the building.

We also have grant applications pending with the Benzie's Foundation, the Weir Foundation, and First Port. Once we have a lease agreed, we will be able to apply for another grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund as well. These funds will help cover our initial set-up and running costs for beginning the lease, before we can generate income from building users. These funds will also be used to continue architectural development work. LeeBoyd are on board to continue as our architectural partner and develop an outline specification to support costings, and detailed visualisations of our proposals suitable for wider community and user consultation, further enabling deeper engagement around long-term renovation plans.

Last, but not least, we aim to fund a Building Manager role - as detailed above, we are currently negotiating an interim 12 month lease period to take us up to the provisional purchase date of the building. This will necessitate day-to-day management of the building, including managing tenancy agreements, and arranging for repairs and maintenance. As this will be a much more intensive period and a stretch for our current volunteer team, we wish to create a staff role to support these activities.

As mentioned, we secured over £300 in fees from our first membership drive and look forward to significantly increasing that over the coming year.

Engagement with Leith St. Andrew's (LSA), and then LARCH Kirk Session

We presented our first five year business plan to the LSA Kirk Session in September 2024, after which they agreed to award us preferred bidder status and agree an interim



lease while we raised the funds for purchase! Gaining the trust and support of the church elders was a huge endorsement.

However, as the congregation was due to merge with that of Restalrig St. Margaret's and Pilrig St. Paul's at the end of the year, this approval had to be given again by the new amalgamated LARCH Kirk Session in 2025. In March we received news that the new LARCH Kirk Session had given the go ahead to the Church of Scotland Law Department to begin the process of drawing up a lease.

This process is complex and involves different layers of approval. The Kirk Session, the local Property Committee and the Law Department of the Church of Scotland itself all have to sign off on various documents, and have different requirements we need to satisfy.

In June, following a few months of discussion and negotiation, LARCH told us that they had given their approval to a draft Heads of Terms document, which is the first step in drawing up a lease. The current terms state a rental amount of £24,000 per annum, a significant discount as compared to market rates, recognising the short nature of the lease and the limited other use that could be made of the building currently.

This has now gone to the local Property Committee to consider and we are in the process of appointing a solicitor to finalise the document with the Church of Scotland's Law Department. This lease will allow us to trial the proposed use and minimise disruption to current tenants.

From the initial impetus and efforts of a few individuals, LSAT has continued to make tangible progress, and reaching this stage is a significant milestone.

Galvanised by a shared vision, LSAT has formalised its structure and governance and achieved measurable community endorsement. In this densely populated area, the impact of a community-owned space can be exponential. Our Trustees understand the challenge of owning and managing a building, and represent a promising future for this important historic resource at a time when community spaces are becoming scarce, yet ever more needed.

Lessons

As trustees, we're incredibly grateful to all the volunteers who have dedicated enthusiasm, time, energy, skills and other resources to our mission. We believe that Leith St. Andrew's Trust members and volunteers should be really proud of what we



have managed to achieve in our first year of operation. We have learned a lot in that time as well and we wanted to note some of the things that we can do better in future, or that we just understand better now.

Leith St. Andrew's Trust is a pioneer. We don't yet know of any other locally-vested church building in Scotland that has been sold to a community buyer in the way we're aiming for. The Scottish Land Fund has discussed using our approach as an exemplar to other community groups trying to do this in future. This means that we, alongside LARCH Kirk Session and the Church of Scotland, are kind of doing everything for the first time - there's no real precedent or established process, particularly when you add the complexity of a short-term interim lease.

We didn't think this would be an easy or quick process, but we did originally think it would be quite linear, with each step neatly leading to the next one, like an old school platform video game. Instead, we've found that it's more like an open world adventure game. Sometimes we couldn't make progress in one direction so we had to go back or choose a different path to focus on for a while. Sometimes we needed different equipment or skills so we recruited new team mates.

Now we know that we need to have lots of different strands of work active at the same time. This has been difficult to manage at points, and occasionally frustrating. However, it also means we can keep making progress in some areas even if other areas stall because of factors outside our control. We can use this to our advantage in future, and be ready to prioritise different types of work at different times, depending on what else is happening.

We also had lots of brilliant volunteers in our first year, but many of them stepped down or back after a few months. Sometimes this was because their personal circumstances had changed, but sometimes this was because the volunteering arrangement wasn't as well structured, supported or sustainable as it could be. This is something we really want to improve in our second year and beyond. We tended to overestimate volunteer capacity and underestimate the length of time required for things like consultee responses. In future, we hope to plan using longer timeframes and either significantly increase the number of volunteers working on individual projects and tasks or decrease the complexity and scale of those projects and tasks. Our volunteers are brilliant, and deserve the best possible experience. We want to make it easy and fun to volunteer.

Our demographic surveying showed that non-white people and disabled people were under-represented among survey respondents and that we can do more as an organisation to understand why that is and how to ensure future events are more



inclusive. This may include further investment in accessibility measures and partnerships with local BME led organisations.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nina Ballantyne', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Nina Ballantyne
Trustee

25th august 2025

Financial Statements

Reserves Policy for Leith St. Andrew's Trust SC053426

Leith St. Andrew's Trust does not yet hold meaningful reserves, as we don't yet have any ongoing liabilities or costs. However, as we move closer to an initial interim lease, and later purchase of the Leith St. Andrew's building, it is our intention to build reserves up to at least three months' unrestricted expenditure.

As such, trustees will regularly review reserves, using the Reserves Policy. A risk-based approach will be used to calculate an optimal amount of reserves that looks at reliability of income, costs for re-organisation of activities, and specific liabilities. Amounts are included for risks we are aware of as well as contingencies to allow Leith St. Andrew's Trust to cope with unexpected costs and opportunities. We principally hold reserves to:

- protect the continuity of Leith St. Andrew's Trust's work against uncertain future income streams
- provide the capital needed to finance investment in operations
- provide funds to replace assets
- to cover for specific liabilities and identifiable risks
- to allow Leith St. Andrew's Trust to respond to unexpected opportunities that can further mission
- to allow Leith St. Andrew's Trust to meet contractual obligations.

The Reserves Policy is reviewed quarterly as part of our internal financial control systems and an optimal reserve level should be set at the next review. As at 30 June 2025, the level of Free Reserves (total general unrestricted funds, less tangible assets



and excluding defined benefit pension obligations and long-term commitments) stands at £25.83.

Leith St. Andrew's Trust has designated reserves of £0 and restricted reserves of £10,000. This sum was awarded before 30th June 2024 (see fundraising section above) but has not yet been drawn down so will appear in next year's accounts. Restricted reserves relate to income to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by funders and therefore do not form part of general reserves.

The Reserves Policy is reviewed quarterly as part of our internal financial control systems.

Document version control

Version number	Change or update	Author or owner	Date
1.0	First version	Nina Ballantyne	24/8/2025

Donated services and facilities

As well as volunteer time across a range of tasks, we've also benefitted from some very generous donations of specific items and services. Our logo was designed by a local artist for free, local musicians have donated their services and PA equipment to use at our events, and local businesses and social enterprises have loaned us the use of signage and other event equipment. The Leith St. Andrew's Kirk Session themselves have also been incredibly generous offering us free use of the building for our first Open Date in August 2024, and the use of AV equipment for the exhibition series of events earlier this year. Capital Concert Band have let us use their flooring to help level out stage space in the main sanctuary.

Independent Examiner's Report

See Annex 1

Receipts and Payments Accounts

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Statement of Balances

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