

SHARING
LIGHT, LIFE
AND GOD'S
LOVE IN
TODAY
SCOTLAND





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# FROM THE **CEO & CHAIR**



We want to share the story of our year at SU Scotland, bringing light, life and God's love to children and young people across Scotland.

It is so encouraging to be able look back on what God has done through the ministry of Scripture Union Scotland over the past year and see the lives of thousands of children and young people impacted for good.

This year has seen growth across all our activities, reflecting huge interest from children, young people, families and teachers for our Bible-centred programmes. It is also a testimony to the quality of what volunteers and staff deliver.

✓ We've heard continual stories of individuals and whole groups of young people responding in faith to the Bible and the good news of God's love for them.

- ✓ Our focus on growing numbers of SU Groups in schools has had a big impact.
- ✓ We've launched a package of digital youth ministry projects, including gaming-based groups and residentials to connect with young people in person and online.
- ✓ We've also seen exceptional levels of interest in our young leader development programmes and responded by creating more capacity in the 2024 programme.
- ✓ Our focus on developing Ministry at the Margins has led to the appointment of our first Additional Support Needs specialist role in recognition of the fast-growing proportion of Scotland's children for whom this is a part of their lived experience.
- ✓ We've moved office base in Glasgow to a new hub facility in the East End of the city.
- ✓ Our centres and sites saw very positive developments including the introduction of timber cabins at

Kingscross on Arran, development of the 'Big Shed' at Gowanbank and installation of a climbing wall at Lendrick Muir.

Huge thanks to everyone who serves, gives and prays in any way, large or small. Your contribution is what makes SU Scotland's ministry with children and young people right across Scotland possible. Thank you for your part in this!

-Robin MacLellan, CEO (above left) & Stephen Bell, Chair (above right)

### **FROM 2% TO 5%**

In 2019 we were connecting with around 2% of Scotland's 702,000 young people. Our goal was to grow to reach 5% by August 2024. We are delighted to share that we have achieved that. Read on for more highlights from a busy year of growth.

All annual statistics relate to the academic year to the end of August 2024.



# **SCHOOLS &** LOCAL MINISTRIES

SU Scotland's vision is to see every child and young person in Scotland exploring the Bible and responding to the significance of Jesus and school is an important place where we can connect.

### **SCHOOLS**

SU Groups in schools were impacted by the pandemic, but it has been exciting to see groups gradually resuming and entirely new groups starting.

- ✓ There were 255 SU Groups running by June 2023 and 332 by June 2024. (In 2019/20, there were 436 SU Groups, so we are still working to re-establish groups as well as start new ones.)
- ✓ Christmas and Easter provide important moments for schools to focus on the real

meaning of the Christian faith, and this year we shared with almost 17,000 pupils.

- ✔ Bible Alive and Walk through the Bible programmes were delivered in around 75 schools to 3,531 pupils.
- √ 64% of schools across scotland are registered with Pray for Schools Scotland.
- ✓ Over **4,500** pupils visited our centres for a schools residential.

### **LOCAL MINISTRIES**

This year, National Ministries became known as Local Ministries.

- ✓ Our team is made up of 22 Regional Workers and 25 Associate Workers (from 13 Associate Worker projects and 2 local youth projects) working in local communities.
- ✓ There are over **2,500** schools in Scotland: 360 high school clusters with associated primaries. Our vision is to develop our local ministries around these clusters.

Just imagine the potential of 360 local ministry communities across Scotland, each formed around a high school cluster, populated with church partnerships, volunteers, youth organisations, Christian parents and teachers, prayer supporters and pupil leaders.'

-Zonya Bewick, Director of Local Ministries





### **SU HOLIDAYS**

SU Holidays are all about fun, building friendships and creating a place where young people can explore faith for themselves.

- √ 1,900 young people enjoyed an SU Holiday in 2024, with seven weeks of residential holidays.
- ✓ Weekend residentials throughout the year meant about 1,350 spaces filled.
- ✓ We are delighted to see a return to pre-Covid levels of delivery after several challenging years.
- ✓ All young people are welcome at SU Holidays. The Holidays Sponsorship Fund provides support to enable where funding is a challenge. There were 185 supported in 2023 and 331 in 2024.

All our events are led by enthusiastic teams of volunteers who give their time, contribute to costs and dedicate themselves to ensuring young people have a fabulous experience.

'During the camp, I ended up having a conversation with one of the campers who had kept coming back for five consecutive years. His words struck a chord with me when I asked what kept bringing him back. He said that the camp felt like a "safe haven" from the pressures and constraints of home and school. It really made me realise just how crucial our presence as volunteers was in creating this sanctuary."

'The activities at our event enable the young people to discover and explore the varied habitats of Arran. We met up with the Arran Mountain Rescue Team and Coastguard at their bases—a great way to enagage with the local community. At our Daily Bread and

-Ver-se Abudar, Volunteer

Campfire sessions, we explored the themes of mountain top encounters in the Bible. On the final night we had a worship session on the beach—an amazing opportunity to worship God in his creation.'

-Rachel Luxton. Team Leader Island Eco Adventure





# **YOUNG LEADERS**

Our training events for young people have been hugely popular. So many young people wanted to take part in Basecamp-our leadership training designed for young people age 16 and above-that we organised an extra event to accomodate more participants.

- ✓ 110 young people took part in leadership training and volunteered during the summer, with a review weekend in August.
- ✓ 4 young people joined our Gap Year programme, contributing to ministry in Scotland and went on a mission trip to Hungary.
- ✓ Equip Pupil Leader training supported 35 young people to run SU Groups.

✓ Equip events created places for 452 young people to meet one another monthly and talk about their faith.

### ONE JOURNEY OF FAITH

Emily\* got to know the SU Scotland Associate Worker in her school through the one-toone support that was offered. She started to attend the SU Group at her high school and found out about Connect in the City, a week-long event for young people.

She had such a great week at the event that she wanted to join an SU Holiday but couldn't afford it. Through sponsorship support, she was able to attend an SU Holiday where she made the decision to follow Jesus.

She continues to attend an SU Group, has completed Equip Pupil Leader Training, takes part in the Pupil Leader Connect Group and has connected with a local church youth group. At Christmas time, Emily volunteered

with a local team to deliver a workshop at her old primary school. In the future she hopes to continue further education, and she is also interested in Gap Year opportunities. Emily's is just one of many faith journeys that we hear about.

'Right now, our young leaders are looking for deeper connection with God, new opportunities for service, and to take part in mission.'

-David Clipston Young Leaders' Development Co-ordinator



\*name changed for privacy



## **COMMUNITY-BASED MISSIONS**

Missions, holiday clubs and other local events are lighting up communities across Scotland.

In 2024 there were **31** community-based Missions across Scotland with over 1,200 children.

Our aim is to grow the number of missions, partnering with local churches and building new teams.

### **NEW LEADERS & EVENTS**

Our Missional and Residential Leadership course is creating a place for new Team Leaders to develop the skills they need to start events in communities across Scotland.

New leaders mean new mission events can start in towns and cities across Scotland. wherever there are opportunities to work in partnership with local churches.

Three Task Groups were set up with volunteers meeting together to pray, plan and create mission opportunities in their local areas. This approach is helping SU Scotland identify more local mission opportunities in towns and villages where we haven't worked before.

#### **GROWTH HIGHLIGHTS**

✓ The Wheel Trust in Glasgow ran Connect in the City, a week-long activity day camp for local young people. With a holiday club style of programme in the morning and trips, games and activities in the afternoons, the event aimed to include every child, whatever their needs.

✓ The Elie And Earlsferry Festival of Life was a new and creative form of mission, looking for contemporary and relevant ways to tell others about God's love in this beautiful holiday location. They gave away cakes, prayed, played, made films, picked litter, wrote stories, painted, juggled, putted and shared the love of Jesus.



'A highlight for me was seeing young leaders who have taken part in activities as young people, then volunteered on a team, now stepping up and taking on new challenges.'

-Bruce Lockhart Missions Development Manager



### **MAGNITUDE**

The impact of Magnitude on young people includes many stories of transformed lives, renewed faith and spiritual growth.

In the run up to the event itself, we held 12 regional worship nights from Orkney to Ayr and many places in between. Magnitude worship nights are continuing to provide local opportunities for young people to join lively and relevant worship through the year.

And then, the annual event at Lendrick Muir... a joyful festival in late July with worship, seminars, camping, activities, fun, prayer and time to explore faith. For over 1,000 young people, Magnitude is a highlight moment in the middle of summer.

'Magnitude really deepened my faithit changed my life. The event has given me the strength I need to share with people about the good news of Jesus and, in particular, one of my friends who has had a rough few years now attends my church and youth group. I have been able to share my faith with many more of my friends too. I have been able to make lots of new connections and bring people to know the love of Jesus.'

-Young person

'It felt like God reminded me of the joy in life, as, before Magnitude, I was pretty down and felt as if the world was against me. Now I see that God is always with me, and that he will fight for me!'

–Young person

'It was an incredible privilege to pray with some of my young people during and after the main gatherings. God was on the move, and we saw increased faith and a desire to live lives that glorify God and seek to grow his kingdom.'

-Youth worker



# I WILL SING OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD



### **CENTRES**

Our centres and campsites are places for young people to come and have fun, enjoy outdoor activities, make friends, try new things and discover more about the Christian faith.

### **OPEN YEAR ROUND**

Our residential centres at Lendrick Muir. Alltnacriche and Gowanbank are open seven days a week, year round. A highlight is seeing a return to pre-Covid levels of busyness... and sometimes even beyond!

#### **PLACES TO THRIVE**

We continue to make our centres and campsites welcoming for all our SU Scotland events, increasing the reach of what we do, supporting the focus of the organisational strategy, and enabling the residential ministry of many of our colleagues and volunteers.

### **TERM TIME**

School residentials and day visits continue as a key component of termtime ministry. This year, we have experienced continued growth with a shift towards residential programmes as the recovery from COVID continued. Over 3,650 pupils from 116 school groups participated in residentials, along with more than 500 students attending day visits during the academic year.

We continue to be grateful to those who directly support our school bursary fund, which is seeing increased demand, with over 200 pupils who attended a residential benefiting from financial support and over £20,000 being disbursed over the course of the academic year.

Schools are incredibly grateful to us for making these residential programmes accessible. This support is in addition to the discounts we give to schools from

priority communities, or with a focus on Additional Support Needs, as we look to embed what we do and how we serve those at the margins. We know from schools the big difference this makes to the lives of the children and young people who participate.

School residentials have high educational value as well as ministry value, and we continue to engage with the Cross Party Group at the Scottish Parliament looking at Outdoor Residentials, providing evidence to MSPs. We are hugely grateful for the many extra miles gone by our staff teams and volunteers.

### **DEVELOPING OUR CAMPSITES**

Both Kingscross on Arran and Scoughall in East Lothian now offer accommodation in cabins rather than under canvas. They are in use during the warmer months of April-October.



### **DIGITAL**

We are connecting with young people by creating high-quality digital content and by developing connections through social media and gaming.

## DEVELOPING DIGITAL RESOURCES

- ✓ We have continued to expand our Creative Team to help facilitate the creation of high-quality Bible content for schools, SU activities and online.
- ✓ Our Bible Shorts series was launched at the start of June—a collection of short films exploring Bible themes for individuals, SU Groups and churches. Each episode on YouTube is rooted in the Bible and has discussion starters to help young people explore.

- ✓ In May we filmed our new curriculum resource *Explore Christmas* in Aberdeenshire. Featuring Nathan and Maria, two young hosts, alongside volunteer presenters and custom-made animation, *Explore Christmas* will explore 'the promise', 'the surprise' and 'the Light' of Christmas for school children in P5–P7.
- ✓ Other digital series in production include a Bible overview for secondary SU Groups and our new series from Shine Films entitled *Friend*.

#### **DIGITAL YOUTH WORK**

In autumn 2023, an online video gaming group launched for secondary-aged young people, creating a Tuesday night club where SU Scotland volunteers and young people can connect to share their passion for gaming and an interest in exploring the Bible.

Andrew Stothard, Digital Youth Work Lead, says, 'Gaming is a personal passion of mine.

Many young people share that enthusiasm, so we can help make it a point of connection rather than isolation. Exploring the Bible with young people in this context is such a privilege. We can bring conversation about the Bible into the games themselves.'





## MINISTRY AT THE MARGINS

God's favour towards those at the margins is clear in Scripture. We are actively pursuing the same, moving Ministry at the Margins from being something we do, to increasingly becoming who we are.



- ✓ SU Scotland has identified priority communities, priority schools and priority young people across the country, giving specific attention to:
- Relative poverty
   25% of young people in Scotland live in relative poverty. This is projected to rise to 38% by 2030.
- Refugees/asylum seekers
- Additional Support Needs (ASN)
   37% of young people in Scotland have a noted ASN. One local authority recently quoted 50% of young people in their secondary schools as having an ASN.
- Affected by family imprisonment 20,000 young people in Scotland have a parent in prison on any given day.
- Care-experienced young people 9,959 young people in Scotland were in care in 2022.
- Minority ethnic groups



- **7** Motiv8 Holidays with **121** priority young people attending
- **529** priority young people attending mainstream SU Holidays and Weekends
- 10 SU Missions in priority communities with 438 children attending
- **26** SU Groups in priority schools
- 21 young people, 16 adults (and 1 baby!) attending a Ukrainian refugee family holiday
- **20** young people affected by family imprisonment attended SU Holidays
- **21** priority young people attended Training and Discipleship events

First specialist appointed as ASN Development Coordinator



### INTERNATIONAL

As the war continues in Ukraine, we continue to support Open Bible through prayer and giving.

Scottish supporters have been in the majority at weekly Thursday online prayer gatherings, organised by SU International and led by Oksana Khimich, to pray for Ukraine and further afield. This prayer support has meant a great deal to them.

Unable to resume Gap Year Mission trips to Ukraine, for the past two years we have equipped SU Hungary with a team. So, in July 2024 a team of five plus Team Leader flew from Edinburgh to Budapest.

The team were able to work with a church in a community outside Budapest to deliver an English language speaking day camp to children and teenagers. The team rose to the challenge of teaching the young people

songs, Bible stories, memory verses and even some English. One participant said, 'We had fun, we managed to do what we were asked to do, and we really enjoyed the experience.'

We continue to develop our relationship with SU Hungary and look forward to future visits. Our connections with SU movements elsewhere in the world enrich the work we do here in Scotland, providing important opportunities for our young people.

### INTERNATIONAL **FUNDRAISING**

Lots of imagination was used to raise almost £5,000 during SU Scotland events for the 'Get a Kid to Camp Rwanda' appeal—the focus of the 2023 International Project.

The 2024 appeal is focusing on a restricted country, where a full summer of SU activities has just taken place, and we look forward to sending support later in the year.

### **SU GLOBAL WEEK OF PRAYER**

SU Scotland marked the SU Global Week of Prayer from 6-10 November 2023 with 3 online prayer gatherings. Prayers were offered for the work of Scripture Union in Ukraine, Rwanda, Hungary and some restricted countries. These sessions provided an opportunity for supporters to unite in reflecting on the challenges and opportunities faced by our global mission.

### **GLOBAL GATHERING**

Over 300 people from 100 different countries attended the 2024 Global Gathering in Kuala Lumpur. Representing Scotland at the event were Robin MacLellan, Stephen Bell, Jackie Ringan and Hannah Steeds. This was a special moment to connect with SU movements from diverse contexts across the world.



### **PRAYER**

Dependence on God and deepening relationships are two of our key values. We are thankful to God for our prayer supporters, many of whom pray daily using the Prayer Diary.



### PRAYER WARRIOR **HIGHLIGHTS**

- 6,000+ supporters received the Prayer Diary by post; 4,500+ supporters received it by email.
- 250+ subscribed to daily prayer points by email providing valuable support, especially for events.
- 70+ subscribed to daily prayer points through the Prayer Mate app.
- 364 subscribed to a monthly prayer update, doubling recent figures.
- SU Scotland's Day of Prayer web page had 503 visits in the month of January; supporters and staff prayed together at 9 online events and 9 in-person events.
- A Youth Day of Prayer event delivered by Gap Year and Student Exec. helping young people connect.

- Between August 2023 and August 2024, 35 people registered to pray for 113 schools with Pray for Schools Scotland, 42 of which had no one previously registered as praying and 5 of which were priority schools.
- 369 churches registered for Back to School with God in the whole of 2023: from January-August 2024, there were 644! Integral to this is prayer for children, young people and schools.

1,360 SUPPORTERS **ARE PRAYING FOR 1,682** SCHOOLS, COVERING **64%** OF **SCOTTISH SCHOOLS** 



### **VOLUNTEERS**

Almost **2,500** volunteers are lighting up Scotland. Our story of growth is the story of our volunteers.

Volunteers are a hugely important part of SU Scotland. Without volunteers, SU Scotland couldn't do it! It is so encouraging to see volunteer numbers built back up to where they were before the pandemic. Surprisingly, the database is telling us that the number of people who completed their volunteer accreditation by 31 August for the 2018–19 season is exactly the same as the number for the 2023–24 season, **2,409**.

We are so grateful to each and every person. Volunteers contribute time, energy, effort and commitment to make everything we do possible—working hard, making a difference for children and young people. Because of volunteers, we've started new

SU Groups, delivered SU Holidays and Missions, made a Magnitude Festival happen, welcomed school groups to our centres and more.

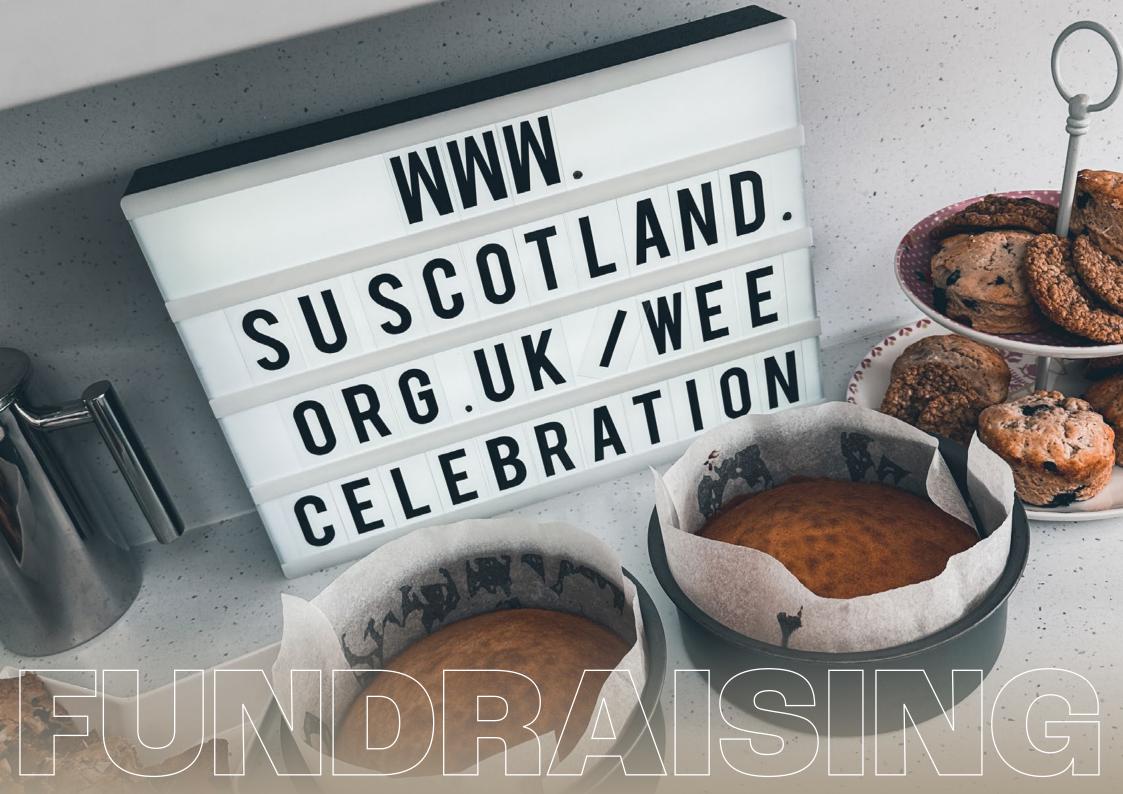
One area to highlight this year is the development of volunteer training, as we benefit from opportunities both online and in person. This year over 300 people have attended national training for cooks, minibus drivers, activities, first aiders, working with young people with additional support needs and Bible Alive. This is in addition to regional training events, Magnitude team training, centre training and the training that Team Leaders deliver at their event. Equipping volunteers and developing skills and confidence continues to be a priority, and it is encouraging to see the uptake and engagement of volunteers.

It is appropriate to leave the last word to a volunteer. Her feedback highlights the impact of SU Scotland volunteers in the lives of young people.



'I'm so thankful for the brilliant team that blessed and cared for the young people I brought, even through some tricky moments. The children loved it, and their enthusiasm has encouraged other children to join the SU Group next year and attend camps in future.'

-SU Scotland volunteer



### **FUNDRAISING**

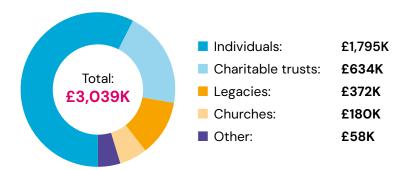
A massive thank you to all the individuals, churches, trusts and other organisations who support SU Scotland and make our ministry possible.

We are especially grateful to our supporters because we are all feeling, in some way, the impact of the cost-of-living increases. As our ministry costs also increase, your support is more important than ever. We are thankful to God for his provision through you. We also remember with deep gratitude those who kindly left a gift to SU Scotland in their will.

We launched several new fundraising initiatives this year, most notably the re-launch of the Wee Celebration, helping supporters to raise money through hosting their own fundraising events. To find out how you can get involved, visit suscotland.org.uk/fundraise.

### TOTAL DONATION INCOME—YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2024 (£'000)

**INCLUDES GIFT AID** 



### TOTAL APPEAL INCOME RAISED (£'000)

**INCLUDES GIFT AID** 

Holiday Sponsorship appeal 2023: £124K Christmas appeal: £46K Alltnacriche development appeal: £180K £350K Total:

#### **HOW WE FUNDRAISE RESPONSIBLY...**

Fundraising activities follow the guidelines issued by the Chartered Institute of Fundraising, which include standards to protect vulnerable people during fundraising activities. SU Scotland applies principles so that appeals to supporters, applications to trusts and related fundraising activities are legal, open, honest, respectful and accountable. No official complaints were received during the year, and SU Scotland did not appoint any third-party professional or commercial fundraisers. Where possible, guidelines are issued to individual volunteer fundraisers to ensure their activities (for example sponsored events or bake sales) are carried out safely and appropriately.



# WE ARE SO GRATEFUL

Our supporters in the year to March 2024 include the following trusts and organisations:

- The Aitchison Trust (SCIO)
- Ardbarron Trust Limited
- Benefact Trust
- Black Family Trust
- Caring and Sharing (SCIO)
- Challenge Trust
- The Cruden Trust
- Door Trust
- Dr Guthrie's Association
- Durris Charitable Trust
- Esther Hennell Charitable Trust
- Ferndean Trust
- The Haldane Trust
- Hillfield Trust
- Hope Trust
- Inverclyde Trust
- J & C Fleming Charitable Trust
- Jennifer's Trust
- JW Laing Trust
- Kenneth Barge Memorial Trust
- Kilravock Christian Trust
- Larsen Charitable Trust

- Levering Charitable Trust
- Life Trust Limited
- Manna House Trust
- Margaret Douglas Trust
- Mary Brown Memorial Trust
- Micah Fund
- Meadowgreen Foundation
- Netherdale Trust
- Paterson Family Foundation
- Petty Trust
- Roy Miller Charitable Trust
- Scott Thomson Charitable Trust
- Shalimar Trust
- Souter Charitable Trust
- South Bristol Outreach Trust
- Sporos Trust
- Tabeel Trust
- Tillyloss Trust
- The Vardy Foundation
- Wilson Distributors Charitable Trust
- YouthLink Scotland



## FINANCIAL **UPDATE**

The finances for the year to 31 March 2024 reflected the ongoing growth and recovery of our ministry.

There was a net deficit for the year of £294k, funded from donations and legacies received in earlier years. Our unrestricted fund balances at the end of the year were healthy, with enough held to cover just over four months' worth of budgeted costs.

Donation income from individuals, churches and trusts grew in the year, although legacy gifts were lower than the exceptional high of the previous year. Income from our residentials and centres increased due to a combination of increased activity and price rises to help cover inflationary cost increases.

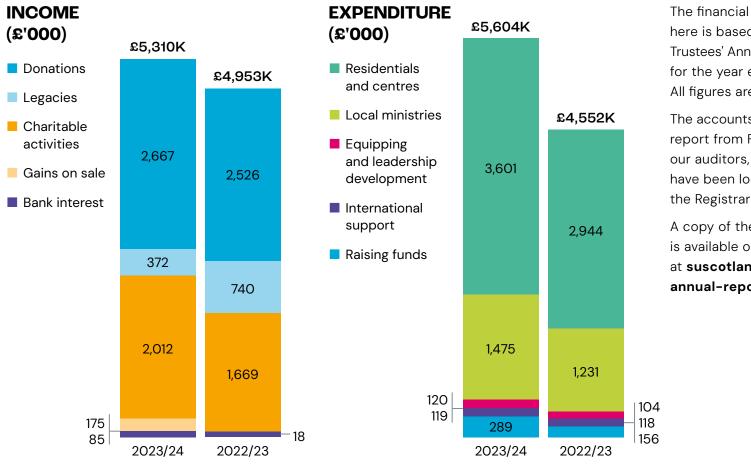
Costs increased over the year as our new ministry areas, Digital and Ministry

at the Margins, were established, and due to inflationary cost increases across the organisation. We also invested in maintenance and improvements at our centres and campsites, new IT platforms and in expanding the fundraising team.

Looking ahead, we continue to work towards increasing our regular income to support the costs of our growing ministry and staff team, while carefully managing costs.



# FINANCIAL DETAILS



The financial information presented here is based on figures from the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024. All figures are rounded.

The accounts received an unqualified report from Forvis Mazars LLP, our auditors, and signed copies have been lodged with OSCR and the Registrar of Companies.

A copy of the full document is available on our website at suscotland.org.uk/about-us/annual-report-and-accounts.

# **CHARITY INFORMATION**

#### **COMPANY SECRETARY**

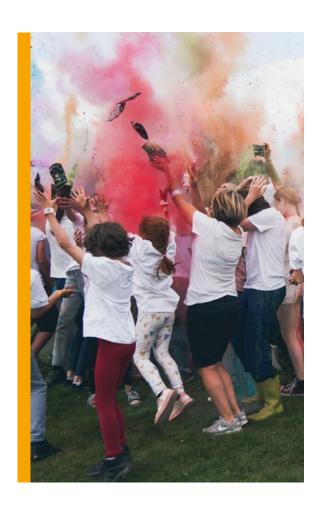
Robin MacLellan

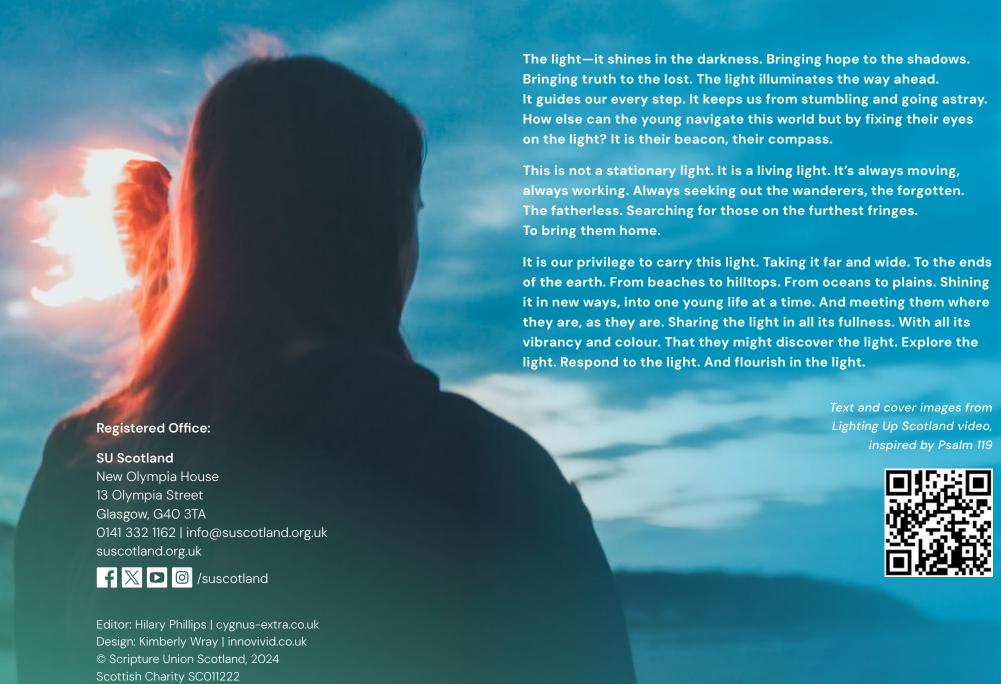
### **EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

- Robin MacLellan
   CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
- Paul Bayton
  DIRECTOR OF CENTRES
- Jackie Ringan
  DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND HOLIDAYS
- Mike Kurtyka
   CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER
   (from Aug. 2023)
- Jenny Hamill
   CREATIVE DIRECTOR
   (from Sept. 2023)
- Zonya Bewick
   DIRECTOR OF LOCAL MINISTRIES
   (appointed Sept. 2023)
- Dave Rickards
   DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL MINISTRIES
   (resigned Aug. 2023)

#### **TRUSTEES**

- Angus Allan
- Stephen Bell CHAIR (from Aug. 2023)
- Rosie Bowker VICE CHAIR (retired Aug. 2024)
- Martyn Link
   VICE CHAIR (from Sept. 2024)
- Dr Audrey Chalmers
- Pamela Fulton
- Dr Heather Haywood
- Jonathan Innes
  TREASURER
- Christine Murison (retired Aug. 2024)
- Rev Cara Wightman
- Paul Johnston NEW MEMBER (joined Aug. 2023)
- Charlene Petersen
   NEW MEMBER (joined Aug. 2023)





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