

# William Grant Foundation

## Annual Review 2025

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# Who we are

We're a funder of good causes, connected to one of Scotland's leading family-owned businesses.

Our vision is of a Scotland where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Our ambition is to practise thoughtful philanthropy and to be valued as a partner, enabling change across the diverse themes we're passionate about.

We aim to contribute to positive change for the organisations we fund and partner with, for the various fields in which we work and for the field of grant-making and philanthropy.

# Chairman's message

Long-term thinking has always been a defining value of William Grant & Sons.

In that spirit, over the past year we reviewed the Foundation's first ten years to reflect on what has been achieved and to consider how it should develop in the years ahead.

With support from the [Institute for Voluntary Action Research \(IVAR\)](#), we examined the role the Foundation plays and the value it brings to the causes and communities we support, to the William Grant family and to the Company that funds our work.

The review confirmed that the Foundation has built a positive reputation as a supporter of Scottish charities and community organisations, while also providing meaningful opportunities for William Grant family members to participate in philanthropic work together. Their interest and support remain essential to the Foundation's vitality and effectiveness.

We were encouraged by the recognition of the Foundation's flexible and trust-based approach to funding, which is widely valued by the organisations we support.

At a time when many charities face increasing demand and financial uncertainty, maintaining strong and open relationships with our partners remains central to how we work.

Informed by the review, we have developed an internal plan to guide the Foundation into its second decade. The Management Committee and our capable and experienced staff team are now taking this work forward, to support both our external mission and our internal ways of working.

None of this would be possible without the commitment of William Grant & Sons and the efforts of its employees. Despite a challenging period for its industry, the Company continues to support the Foundation, enabling us to distribute significant funding each year to organisations across Scotland and charities championed by employees worldwide.

As we enter our second decade, we do so with a clearer understanding of the value the Foundation creates and the relationships that sustain it. By building on what we have established, we look forward to supporting communities for many years to come.

Jon Cohen  
Chairman  
William Grant Foundation

# CEO's introduction

One thing 2025 highlighted for us was the importance of listening. Our ten-year review gave us the chance to hear from many people connected to our work, and we're grateful to all who shared reflections and suggestions. Their insights encouraged us to stay focused on the role we can play in the decade ahead, captured in our Theory of Change on [page 11](#).

We listened closely to the organisations we support to understand the realities they face.

Rising costs, increased demand and stretched capacity remain common pressures. We also heard that honest relationships, clear communication and predictable funding help them plan and adapt.

These messages continue to inform our grantmaking. Two in five of our funding relationships run for five years or more, acknowledging the added value of long-term support. You'll find more stats about our work on [page 8](#).

For charities to respond effectively to the needs of the moment, they need to be strong and sustainable. But in focus groups with funded partners we heard that even with flexible, unrestricted funding, organisations can struggle to invest in their people, infrastructure and financial resilience. We'll pilot some approaches to better support this kind of organisational strengthening with our grantees in 2026. This will be an important area for learning in the year ahead.

Another theme in 2025 was the need for careful stewardship. After a spike in our grant-making budgets in recent years, we've been managing an expanded portfolio of relationships and a wider network of contacts but had less capacity to take on new

opportunities. We made deliberate choices about where we could be most useful and prioritised long-standing commitments that align with our core interests. This remains our approach as we move into 2026.

I'm grateful to the organisations we fund for their candour and insight, to our family-led giving groups for their care and commitment, and to colleagues across William Grant & Sons whose efforts enable our work. As we take forward the next phase of the Foundation's development, we'll continue listening and learning so we can contribute effectively to our vision of a thriving Scotland.

Nick Addington  
Chief Executive Officer  
William Grant Foundation

# 2025: Year in Numbers

Value of new grants awarded: £4,208,040  
Including payments committed in future years (2024:  
£6,218,865).

Grant payments made this year: £5,237,613  
(2024: £4,757,760).

95 new grants awarded to 87 organisations  
excluding donations <£2K and Employee-led Giving  
(2024: 129 grants to 117 organisations).

29% of grants awarded this year went to organisations we had  
not funded before (2024: 19%). 71% were previous grantees.

The median annual grant size was £20,000 / year  
(2024: £22,650).

71% single-year grants. 29% of grants were for two or three  
years (2024: 40% were for two or three years).

55% of our funding relationships extend for three years or  
more. 40% of our funding relationships extend for five years or  
more (counting continuous repeat grants as well as multi-year  
commitments).

Flexible funding:

63% of our grants could be used flexibly by the recipients:

34% were unrestricted for general use

18% were unrestricted but given in support of a particular project or proposal

11% could be used flexibly by the recipient to support a broad area of its work

37% were to be used for a specific purpose

Feedback rating:

Our grantees completed 50 feedback surveys. When asked to rate the Foundation against a range of positive indicators, our average net promoter score was 85 (2024: 74).

Funds for regranting:

Across all of our giving themes we've developed partnerships with other funders who share our interests. In some cases, we provide them with funds to distribute through their own grant-making programmes.

This amplifies our impact, accelerates our learning and enables us to benefit from their reach, scale and expertise.

In 2025, a total of £365,214 was paid to ten organisations to be regranting by them to other organisations or individuals.

This included funding to [Scottish Civic Trust](#) to pilot offering accessibility grants to support National Doors Open Day activities and a grant to [Sea-Changers](#) to top up their Innovation Fund, which backs bold new approaches to marine conservation.

We publish full details of all grants of £2,000 or more using the 360 Giving open data standard, so you can view them

alongside grants from more than 300 other funders on the GrantNav website. You can view our full [list for 2025](#) or click the links in the relevant sections of this report to see those relating to each theme.

# Our role and contribution

As an independent, flexible funder with diverse interests, we aim to play to our strengths to maximise the impact of our work. We're mindful that we are just one contributor to the change we seek and not the sole cause of it.

Our working theory of change helps us stay clear about where we can add value and offers a framework to reflect on how we're doing.

Our contribution is focused across three domains: for the organisations we fund, for the fields we work in and for philanthropy and grant-making.

Read more about our [theory of change](#).

Over the past year we've been exploring change across these three levels to help us understand where – and why – our support is enabling progress and where we could do better. Read more about how we're [paying closer attention to change](#).

For grantees and partners:

We've been learning about what becomes possible when partners have flexible funding. In this learning blog , we share key themes identified by grantees – including being more responsive, building trust and having more time and confidence to try new things.

Spotlight: 3D Families

[3D Families](#) supports families across Drumchapel, Glasgow, to give their children the best start in life. Under our Health and

Social Causes theme, we've been supporting the charity's work with multi-year, unrestricted funding, which means 3D Families can decide how it's used from year to year.

This flexibility has enabled the charity to develop [3D Futures](#), a training and consultancy offer that helps other communities build their own locally rooted family support.

With this type of funding being, in the team's words, "still an unusual thing to get", they felt a responsibility to use it well – planning carefully, strengthening the organisation and building something that could support families beyond Drumchapel.

Read 3D's spotlight story, [Part of the family](#).

For the fields in which we work:

Across our grant-making themes, we explore learning with grantees, share insights and foster connections to improve knowledge, practice and systems.

We continue to look for opportunities to step in early – supporting emerging thinking, offering encouragement and helping promising approaches gain traction. This includes supporting research that can test ideas and stimulate progress in a field.

Spotlight: Regen

Under our Natural and Built Environment theme, we've supported [Regen](#), an independent centre of energy expertise. Regen has been exploring how strengthening community capacity can underpin a fairer clean energy transition and the steps required to support this.

Their [Building Blocks](#) report sets out the conditions that underpin successful and inclusive community-led renewable energy projects.

It also offers practical recommendations for governments, local authorities and intermediaries to enable more places, particularly low-income and marginalised communities, to take part in and benefit from local energy initiatives.

Read Regen's spotlight story, [Building fairness into clean energy](#).

For grant-making and philanthropy:

Alongside our commitment to being an open and trusting grant-maker, we've been exploring how we can work in ways that contribute to regenerative outcomes.

This involves building relationships that are nourishing, reciprocal and consciously helping to create the conditions for people, organisations and wider systems to thrive.

Spotlight: Strengthening support beyond the grant

We've learned that charities often need tailored support to invest in themselves – particularly their people, systems and leadership – even when they receive flexible funding.

We're piloting the use of [additional bursary grants](#) to support our funded partners to do this and we've been sharing what we're learning with other funders in conversations about what helpful support to strengthen organisations can look like in practice.

In 2025, we began participating in a new Funders Plus Forum, where several Scottish funders meet quarterly to learn from

each other and explore opportunities to collaborate on, simplify and enhance the additional support we offer the organisations we fund.

These conversations help us all avoid duplication and better understand where our actions can genuinely help without unintentionally creating pressure or complexity.

# Our grant-making themes 2025

Operationally, we divide our grant-making into several strands. Four of these reflect different aspects of our broad mission and are focused exclusively in Scotland:

- Natural and Built Environment
- Health and Social Causes
- Scottish Culture and Heritage
- Youth Opportunities.

Although these general themes represent our long-term scope, we've developed specific areas of interest within them to give more focus to our work. These continue to evolve as we learn more about how and where we can make the biggest difference.

A further strand, Employee-led Giving, is delivered in partnership with William Grant & Sons and supports causes chosen by the Company's employees in the UK and around the world.

Each year, we also make a small number of strategic grants to initiatives that cut across our themes, respond to current events, or which promote a stronger civil society and voluntary sector.

You can learn more about our grant-making under each of these strands in 2025 on the following pages. The value of new grants awarded in the year were as follows:

Value of new grants awarded: £4,208,040

|                               | Amount awarded | Number of grants of £2k+ |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Health and Social Causes      | £840,440       | 14                       |
| Youth Opportunities           | £808,107       | 17                       |
| Scottish Culture and Heritage | £977,207       | 35                       |
| Natural and Built Heritage    | £762,802       | 16                       |
| Employee-led Giving           | £529,159       |                          |
| Strategic Grants              | £245,100       | 6                        |
| Other donations               | £45,225        | 7                        |

# Scottish Culture and Heritage

We support a wide variety of culture and heritage activity because we want Scotland to have a flourishing and inclusive cultural life – rooted in its past, looking to the future and delivering benefits for communities.

Across this large and varied portfolio, a recurring thread is support for initiatives that bring together diverse groups to create new work.

In 2025, we renewed partnerships with [Alchemy Film & Arts](#), [The Cumnock Tryst](#) and [The Glasgow Barons](#). Each enables local people to collaborate with visiting creatives and to share a platform with them – resulting in original work that reflects, strengthens and celebrates local identity.

Being part of a place is also central to the [Sculpture House Collective's](#) model in Ferguslie Park, Paisley. They deliver a programme of activities for local residents and welcome them into their 'front room', making creative practice part of everyday community life.

Preserving and sharing heritage at risk remains another important theme. [Heritage Crafts](#) supports makers facing financial barriers and keeps endangered crafts alive. This includes marionette making – a skill sustained by [Vision Mechanics](#) through training and performance. We also supported [Braw Clan](#) to tour their Scots language performances across Clydesdale and help more theatre-makers work confidently in Scots.

Drawing on the past to inspire the future, we were pleased to support a new permanent artwork in Glasgow Cathedral. [Aproxima Arts](#) installed a contemporary mosaic artwork within

an ancient well once used by some of the city's earliest inhabitants – an intervention designed to prompt reflection, connection and hope.

Taken together, these projects reflect our core aim: to safeguard Scotland's cultural inheritance while enabling new voices, new skills and new ideas to emerge. By supporting both tradition and innovation, we hope to contribute to a cultural landscape that is confident, diverse and exciting.

Learning blog: [Read our reflections](#) on how inclusive creative activities can also result in the most engaging work.

Find full details of all 35 grants made under this theme in 2025 on the [GrantNav website](#).

# Youth Opportunities

This strand of our giving continues to support young people in communities near William Grant & Sons locations: Dufftown in Moray, Bellshill and Cumbernauld in Lanarkshire, and Girvan and Carrick in South Ayrshire.

In 2025, we renewed funding relationships with several organisations across these areas, continuing to enable a broad range of provision for children and young people at different life stages and facing varied challenges.

Our approach focuses on providing flexible funding to key local organisations. This allows them to adapt and strengthen their impact for young people while building organisational resilience. Examples include:

In Girvan and Carrick, we renewed support for [Project Search](#) to help this partnership initiative evolve its approach to supporting young adults with learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder to get ready for work and careers.

[Girvan Youth Trust](#), which set up Project Search with local partners seven years ago, wanted to improve how it works for young people today. We've continued to provide flexible funding as they review who the project works with and how best to introduce young people to working life.

In Moray, we continued funding for [Aberlour Youthpoint Moray](#), which works closely with young people to overcome difficulties and improve relationships at home, at school and in their communities. As much of the funding they receive is restricted to crisis intervention, our support is allowing the service to work with young people earlier, before issues escalate.

In Lanarkshire, [COVEY](#) continues to make strong use of our unrestricted funding – investing in core capacity, making

efficiencies to become more responsive to young people, leveraging match funding and developing its Young Ambassadors to strengthen youth voice and influence.

Learning blog: [Read more](#) about how our place-based approach helps us build long-term relationships with youth organisations that can adapt as their work evolves.

Find full details of all 17 grants made under this theme in 2025 on the [GrantNav website](#).

# Natural and Built Environment

In 2025, our environmental grant-making continued to cover our four sub-themes: Warm Homes, Environmental Sector Infrastructure, Community Assets, and Marine and Freshwater.

One clear thread this year was advocacy aimed at shaping policy in the lead-up to the Scottish Parliament election in May 2026.

In this significant year, we spent time engaging with key partners already active in this kind of advocacy work. This included the [Existing Homes Alliance](#), supported through our Warm Homes theme, which has been preparing to influence the forthcoming Heat in Buildings (Scotland) Bill. This landmark Bill will address the linked issues of home decarbonisation, energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

We also awarded a new grant to [Changeworks](#) to explore the advice given to social housing tenants when their homes are fitted with low-carbon technologies. Their research aims to make the case for better support for residents to optimise the benefits of large-scale retrofit programmes.

The Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill introduced early in the year became a major focus for several of our grantees under our Marine and Freshwater theme. We renewed multi-year core funding to the [Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust](#), whose proposed amendments to the Bill were recognised in Parliament.

We also continued our support to [Young Sea Changers Scotland](#), who ensured young people's voices, views and asks were heard during the Bill's development – empowering the next generation of marine policy influencers.

Learning blog: [Read more](#) about what we're learning from Scotland's community-led marine conservation sector and why collaboration, connections and capacity matter.

Find full details of all 16 grants made under this theme in 2025 on the [GrantNav website](#).

# Health and Social Causes

Our work in this area continues to focus on two key themes.

Supporting families in their children's early years:

The right support for families during pregnancy and the first years of life can make a lifelong difference to their children's wellbeing.

In 2025, we continued to back organisations offering holistic support to families. We made new grants to five [Home-Start charities](#) across Scotland – in Edinburgh, Glasgow South, East Highland, Lorn and Orkney (via Home-Start Caithness) – reflecting a mix of large and small organisations in both rural and urban contexts.

Recognising the additional challenges experienced by migrant and ethnically diverse families, we supported the expansion of [Multi-Cultural Family Base's](#) antenatal work in Edinburgh. This programme helps families to navigate maternity services and offers emotional, practical and birth support.

At a strategic level, we renewed our commitment to the [Parent-Infant Foundation's](#) work with parent-infant mental health teams across Scotland, alongside its coordination of the [Speak Up for Babies](#) campaign ahead of the 2026 Scottish election.

Living well with long-term or life-limiting conditions:

A strong community of support is central to helping people with long-term conditions to live well.

The chance to connect with peers and friends and share in wellbeing-boosting activities is something people get at both the Beacon Club at [Space @ Broomhouse](#) and the Compass Project at [Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust](#). Importantly, both also provide support for unpaid carers, too. Early intervention is crucial in preventing declining wellbeing. With our support, [Lorn & Oban Healthy Options](#) introduced a new education and exercise programme for people newly diagnosed or needing early help to manage long-term conditions.

[Glasgow Disability Alliance](#) provides support and advice by and for disabled people, as well as campaigning for wider inclusion and equity. Our grant will help towards the practical costs of getting involved so that more people can participate in its activities.

Learning blog: [Read more](#) about insights from our funded partners on how early intervention and cross-sector collaboration helps to protect wellbeing and empower people.

Find full details of all 14 grants made under this theme in 2025 on the [GrantNav website](#).

# Strategic grants

Although most of our grant-making is guided by our interests in the topics described in the preceding pages, we continue to support a limited number of other initiatives.

Mostly, these reflect cross-cutting themes of strategic relevance to our vision and our interest in a thriving civil society.

During 2025, we made six such awards, including:

## [The Kiltwalk](#)

The Kiltwalk is Scotland's largest mass-participation fundraising event.

Walkers can tackle routes of different lengths across Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh to raise money for any cause they choose. It gives any charity a simple, fun and safe way to engage supporters and raise vital funds.

In 2025, we partnered with The Kiltwalk's principal backer, The Hunter Foundation, to help the event grow. A second day was added to the Glasgow Kiltwalk, keeping entry costs low and opening up fundraising opportunities to charities of all kinds, across the country.

2025 was the Kiltwalk's biggest year to date: across all the events, 38,000 walkers raised a total of £8.35 million for 1,841 different charities!

## [Community Enterprise: Community Land Bank development](#)

This project is exploring a practical model for a Scotland-wide mechanism that can quickly buy and hold land or buildings in

which communities have an interest, so they are not lost to private buyers before communities can act to acquire them.

By securing such assets temporarily and transferring them once a community has a plan and funding in place, it would help enable projects such as affordable housing, local enterprise and environmental restoration.

The research will define how a land bank could work – its purpose, structure, financing and criteria for acquisition and disposal – using Scottish experience and international examples to create a viable, community-led model that keeps strategic assets available for public benefit.

Find full details of all our 2025 strategic grants and miscellaneous donations over £2,000 [here](#).

# Employee-led Giving

In addition to its grant-making in Scotland, the Foundation makes funds available to support the charitable activities of William Grant & Sons employees wherever they are in the world.

The Company operates two main schemes which are supported by the Foundation:

## Local Giving:

William Grant & Sons Company locations are allocated a budget for making donations to local charities. A committee of employees at each site decides which causes to support.

Total donated: £369,034 (2024: £315,175).

In 2025, Local Giving donations increased by 17%, reflecting William Grant & Sons' growing reach as a global business.

Donations were made to charities in 25 global locations and regions across six continents, including Norway and Ukraine for the first time.

## Matched Giving:

A matching donation is made to double the money raised or donated by individual employees for their own chosen charities. We also make a donation to match every hour an employee volunteers in their own time.

Total donated: £152,125 (2024: £150,173).

215 employees supported over 200 charities.

Health and wellbeing and children and young people are the most popular causes supported by employees. Hospices also received a lot of support.

In 2025, donations to match volunteer time more than doubled from the previous year.

William Grant & Sons employees in South Africa volunteered with [CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa](#), an organisation advocating for the health and wellbeing of children and teenagers with cancer.

The team painted a hopscotch area, baked muffins for the children and used their Local Giving budget to donate an oxygen machine to the oncology team.

# Expenditure summary

## Grants and donations paid

|                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Health and Social Causes      | £1,242,740         |
| Youth Opportunities           | £1,068,844         |
| Scottish Culture and Heritage | £1,045,115         |
| Natural and Built Environment | £1,028,181         |
| Employee-led Giving           | £578,208           |
| Strategic grants              | £226,600           |
| Other donations               | £47,925            |
| Total grants and donations    | £5,237,613         |
|                               | (2024: £4,757,760) |

## Foundation running costs

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Salaries, staff training and expenses                             | £318,434         |
| Giving groups expenses, training and governance costs             | £18,532          |
| Consultancy   | £16,742          |
| Charities Aid Foundation – payroll giving fees and donor services | £8,736           |
| Memberships and subscriptions                                     | £8,644           |
| IT and admin costs  | £8,584           |
| Communications  | £4,978           |
| Total running costs   | £384,650         |
|   | (2024: £316,171) |

Total expenditure

£5,622,263

(2024: £5,073,931)

# About the William Grant Foundation

Our vision: A Scotland where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Established in 1887, William Grant & Sons is an independent family-owned distiller with a global reach and deep Scottish roots.

The Company has committed to set aside at least 1% of pre-tax profits generated each year for donations to charitable causes. The William Grant families established the William Grant Foundation in 2014 to manage and direct these donations, since when it has donated more than £38 million.

The Foundation funds organisations and initiatives that remove barriers to opportunity and tackle disadvantage in Scotland. It also aims to nurture people's strengths and talents and to sustain and enhance Scotland's culture, heritage and environment.

Additionally, the Foundation provides funding to support causes chosen by William Grant & Sons employees in the UK and around the world through the Company's Employee-led Giving schemes.

The Foundation's work is facilitated and supported by a small staff team based at William Grant & Sons' offices in Bellshill, Lanarkshire in Scotland.

As a family-owned business, William Grant & Sons has always taken a long-term view to support its people, its communities

and its business. The William Grant Foundation is building on a long history of philanthropy by the Company and reflects an enduring commitment to helping Scotland thrive.

You can contact the Foundation at [foundation@wgrant](mailto:foundation@wgrant)

Visit our website at [williamgrantfoundation.org.uk](http://williamgrantfoundation.org.uk)

The Foundation is not a registered charity. It is an unincorporated association providing governance and direction for the grant-making of William Grant & Sons Ltd, registered in Scotland with company number 131772. Registered office: The Glenfiddich Distillery, Dufftown, Banffshire, AB55 4DH.

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