



WILLIAM GRANT FOUNDATION

Annual Review
2024

Large print version. Minimum type size 16 point

Contents

03: Introduction: Who we are

04: Chairman's message

06: CEO's introduction

07: Making a difference: Ten Years Of The William Grant Foundation

Flexible funding

Feedback rating

Funds for regranting

09: Our role and contribution

12: Our grant-making themes 2024

13: Our themes: Scottish Culture and Heritage

15: Our themes: Youth Opportunities

17: Our themes: Natural And Built Environment

19: Our themes: Health And Social Causes

21: Our themes: Strategic grants

23: Our themes: Employee-led Giving

24: Expenditure summary

25: About the William Grant Foundation

Introduction: Who we are

We are 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

It is my honour and privilege to share our progress over the past 12 months – our tenth year of operation.

Our core mission remains to provide financial support to not-for-profit organisations for the benefit of people living in Scotland. These organisations' leaders, staff and volunteers face increasing challenges, including rising costs, declining income from fundraising, trading and donations and growing demand for services.

We are proud to support their tireless work – not only in addressing disadvantage and meeting needs but also in fostering opportunities for people to thrive by:

- Empowering individuals and communities – providing support that enables people to shape their futures and reach their potential.
- Strengthening communities – building connections and growing vibrant, resilient places.
- Enriching environment and culture – promoting sustainability, creativity and the things that contribute to quality of life.

Alongside the work of our thematic giving groups, our management committee allocates additional strategic grants to initiatives addressing needs, gaps or opportunities identified through our research and networks.

These networks continue to expand and we're pleased to collaborate with other funders and agencies in Scotland so we can achieve more together.

Our highly professional Foundation staff team helps us navigate and understand our giving landscape, working with our growing family of volunteers, whom I thank for their time and commitment to our four thematic giving groups.

We are, of course, very fortunate and grateful to be able to distribute funds year after year thanks to the efforts of everyone at William Grant & Sons. Through them, the Foundation has a global reach, with the Company's employee-led giving activities channelling some of our funds to the causes they care about in their local communities worldwide.

As we mark this milestone year, we have launched a ten-year review. The aim is to refine our operations and, most importantly, to ensure we continue to try to provide "the right support to the right people at the right time".

Jon Cohen, Chairman

CEO's introduction

As well as ten years of grant-making by the William Grant Foundation, 2024 marked my tenth anniversary as its Chief Executive. It continues to be an enormous privilege to be involved in the Foundation's work, still developing and evolving as we enter our second decade.

This Annual Review illustrates the continuing breadth of our work. Yet over our first decade, we've refined our strategies under our various themes as we home in on the topics that inspire us most, or the approaches we believe can make the biggest difference.

These will continue to evolve under the stewardship of the family that governs our work, while remaining true to our values to think long term and act responsibly.

Our first Annual Review covered £1,700,000 in grants; last year, we committed more than £6,000,000. This growth is a testament to the success of the William Grant & Sons business and the hard work, skill and talent of its global workforce.

It's fitting that in addition to our funding of charities in Scotland where the Company is based, £3,400,000 of Foundation funds has been disbursed to date to good causes selected by our colleagues around the world in the communities where they live and work.

Over the past year, we've started sharing more about what we're doing and why – and what we're learning. In May 2024 we launched our website, where we now publish updates and insights and turn the spotlight onto some of our funded partners.

In 2025, we're reflecting on our first ten years to ensure we build on what we've achieved and maximise opportunities to improve. We welcome feedback and suggestions as we move into the decade ahead.

Nick Addington, Chief Executive Officer.

Making a difference: Ten Years Of The William Grant Foundation

Value of new grants awarded: £6,218,865 (2023: £4,715,781)
Including payments committed in future years.

Grant payments made this year: £4,757,760 (2023: £4,615,693)

129 new grants awarded to 117 organisations excluding donations <£2K and Employee-led Giving (2023: 92 grants to 83 organisations)

19% of grants awarded this year went to organisations we'd not funded before (2023: 20%); 81% were previous grantees

The median annual grant size was £22,650/year (2023: £24,300)

40% of grants awarded were for two or three years (2023:35%);
60% were single-year grants

62% of our funding relationships extend for 3 years or more
41% of our funding relationships extend for 5 years or more
(counting continuous repeat grants as well as multi-year commitments)

Flexible funding

72% of our grants could be used flexibly by the recipients:

35% of our grants were unrestricted for general use

17% were unrestricted but given because of a particular project or proposal

20% could be used flexibly by the recipient to support a broad area of its work

28% were to be used for a specific purpose.

Feedback rating

Our grantees completed 59 feedback surveys. When asked to rate the Foundation against a range of positive indicators, our average net promoter score was 74 (2023: 75).

Funds for regranting

Across all our giving themes we have 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 2024, a total of £604,025 was awarded to nine organisations to be regranting by them to other organisations or individuals.

This included our continuing partnership with the Architectural Heritage Fund to support community-led historic building projects and the Dewar Arts Awards for talented individuals in the arts and creative fields.

2024 was our tenth year of grant-making.

Since 2015, we've disbursed £33 million.

375 Scottish organisations supported (excluding Employee-led Giving donations).

Value of grants made in William Grant & Sons' local communities in Moray, Lanarkshire and South Ayrshire: £6,500,000.

Value of grants made elsewhere in Scotland: £23,100,000.

Value of Employee-led Giving grants in the UK and around the world: £3,400,000.

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 see our role and contribution on three levels: supporting the organisations we fund, enhancing the fields in which we work and influencing grant-making and philanthropy.

For the organisations we fund and partner with:

We take a regenerative approach to our funding relationships, providing flexible funding in an open and trusting way to help organisations become more resilient, adaptable and effective.

Spotlight: Enabling local regeneration

Development Trusts are locally led, community-owned organisations focused on economic, environmental and social regeneration. Under our Natural and Built Environment theme, we have worked with several that have been redeveloping heritage buildings for community benefit.

For example, when the Isle of Kerrera Development Trust in Argyll transformed its old school into a community centre, our unrestricted funding acted as a revolving resource, allowing them to tackle each phase with confidence.

When other funding was later secured, our grant was repurposed or reinvested to sustain progress.

Similarly, at Portgordon Community Trust in Moray, our support is funding a second staff member, freeing up capacity for long-term planning and future investment.

For the fields in which we work

We are outward-looking, collaborative and willing to take risks. By sharing knowledge and fostering connections, we contribute to improved knowledge, practice and systems.

Spotlight: Strengthening coastal conservation in Scotland

In addition to making direct grants to local conservation groups, we support Fauna & Flora International's management of the Coastal Communities Network (CCN).

This is a coalition of grassroots organisations working to protect and enhance Scotland's coastal and marine environments. CCN provides coordination, training and resources to connect, upskill and empower local groups.

Data collected by volunteers has been crucial in monitoring Scotland's coastal health and CCN strengthens this effort, promoting engagement, advancing sustainable conservation practices and helping secure long-term investment.

For grant-making and philanthropy

We share our approach to funding with our peers and are committed to continuous learning and improvement to help make philanthropy more open, trust-based and effective.

Spotlight: Facilitating collaborative safeguarding practices

Everyone has the right to be safe and protected when engaging with us and the organisations we support.

Recognising the importance of strong safeguarding practices, we initiated an informal network for Scottish funders to share insights and challenges.

This idea emerged from our participation in NSPCC safeguarding training, when we saw the value of ongoing dialogue. What began as a conversation among a few funders has grown into a collaborative space for learning and problem-solving.

Our facilitation has been intentionally light-touch, fostering peer-led discussions while strengthening our own safeguarding policies. As the network matures, members are taking ownership, ensuring continued progress and shared responsibility.

Open and trusting with IVAR

We have joined more than 100 trusts and foundations in committing to being an Open and Trusting grant-maker as part of a campaign run by IVAR, the Institute for Voluntary Action Research. Read about our commitments on our website.

Our grant-making themes 2024

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:

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

Although these general themes represent our long-term scope, we have 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 2024 on the following pages. The value of new grants awarded in the year were as follows:

Value of new grants awarded

Total: £6,218,865 (129)

25 grants: Health and Social Causes: £1,713,980

28 grants: Youth Opportunities: £1,374,296

39 grants: Scottish Culture and Heritage: £1,331,081

23 grants: Natural and Built Environment: £1,129,143

Employee-led Giving: £465,348

5 grants: Strategic grants: £160,000

9 grants: Other donations: £45,017

Our themes: Scottish Culture and Heritage

Our grant-making in this area is among the Foundation's most diverse. In 2024, we awarded 39 grants to organisations ranging from local arts centres to national institutions, all aimed at fostering an inclusive, thriving cultural scene rooted in Scotland's heritage.

When it comes to making a career in the arts and crafts, not everyone has the same opportunity to fulfil their potential. Several of our grants support initiatives that help emerging artists and craftspeople develop their careers, helping foster a more diverse cultural workforce.

This year, we renewed our partnership with Dewar Arts Awards and extended support for the Scottish Book Trust New Writers Awards and Glasgow Film Festival's New Talent Mentorship scheme. These programs provide funding, mentorship and opportunities for the next generation of Scottish talent.

Preserving and showcasing Scotland's cultural heritage is another priority. In 2024 we continued supporting both the Tim Stead Trust and Bernat Klein Foundation, building on previous grants that have helped them transition from start-ups to established organisations. Their work is ensuring wider engagement with the late Tim Stead's environmentally conscious craftsmanship and Bernat Klein's pioneering 20th-century textile designs.

Traditional music remains a strong focus, particularly in fostering young talent. We funded Hands Up for Trad's Edinburgh Youth Gaitherin, Fèisean nan Gàidheal's Gaelic arts tuition and maintained support for multiple initiatives encouraging young people to take up the bagpipes!

Festivals are vital to Scotland's cultural vibrancy and we continue to support a line-up of events we believe offer something distinctive to artists and audiences, including the Push the Boat Out poetry festival in Edinburgh, Piping Live! in Glasgow, and Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival, which is Scotland's largest rural performing arts event.

Find full details of all grants made under this theme in 2024 on the GrantNav website.

Our themes: Youth Opportunities

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

We fund a range of support that reaches children and young people at all ages and stages and we've continued to maintain long-term relationships with many organisations – some of which have been with us from the outset of the Foundation, ten years ago.

These sustained partnerships help create more resilient and confident organisations that can plan ahead, adapt to changing needs and provide consistent support to young people.

Working in this way means that we have limited capacity to fund new initiatives. But having long-term relationships in each community strengthens our local knowledge and lays the groundwork for when we do have the capacity to make new grants. We value insights from our partners to identify promising organisations making a difference. When we consistently hear that a group is having a real impact – whether through referrals, collaborations or direct feedback from young people – we take notice and store that intelligence for when opportunities arise.

In 2024 this led us to support two new organisations: Reeltime Music, which helps young people in North Lanarkshire develop confidence and employability through songwriting, performance and the creative industries, and Carrick Rugby Football Club in South Ayrshire, which provides inclusive, high-quality rugby coaching to build trust, essential skills and wellbeing.

Both offer young people a space to explore their talents and ambitions, particularly those who may not thrive in traditional education settings or who face significant barriers to reaching their potential.

With the support of these organisations, we're confident that the next generation of Scotland's musicians, performers and rugby stars are finding their feet. Watch this space!

Find full details of all 28 grants made under this theme in 2024 on the GrantNav website.

Our themes: Natural And Built Environment

In 2024, we continued delivering support across our four distinct environmental themes: Warm Homes, Environmental Sector Infrastructure, Community Assets and Marine and Freshwater.

Our approach is to fund work that drives change in different ways and at different scales, from practice to research and from grassroots initiatives to national and strategic efforts, building impact cumulatively within these themes.

At a national level, we renewed funding for the cross-sector Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG), allowing it to continue providing independent, expert support to those in the Scottish Government tasked with delivering on Scotland's climate change commitments.

Within the warm homes strand, our grant to Regen – a not-for-profit organisation working to provide independent, evidence-led insight and advice on energy systems – is enabling its team to engage underrepresented and excluded voices in shaping Scotland's transition to net zero. At the same time, it seeks to ensure that all communities can share in the benefits from initiatives such as renewable energy.

To fill a key gap in marine research, we extended our funding for Edinburgh Napier University to investigate the factors affecting Scotland's once-thriving herring populations. The findings will contribute to marine habitat management and wider biodiversity recovery efforts in Scotland's waters.

Meanwhile, our ongoing partnership with the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) continues to underpin early-stage community-led heritage projects, by distributing funding on our behalf through its Tailored Support Fund. The partnership ensures these projects have access to both our funding and expert guidance from AHF's knowledgeable team.

Further reflecting our approach of funding at different scales, we

supported the emerging charity Young Sea Changers Scotland. Our match funding helped them unlock larger grants, allowing them to establish their model for empowering young people (ages 16 to 24) to engage in marine policy matters and develop skills for roles in the sector – nurturing the next generation of marine leaders.

Find full details of all 23 grants made under this theme in 2024 on the GrantNav website.

Our themes: Health And Social Causes

Our work in this area focuses on two key themes.

Living well with long-term or life-limiting conditions

Staying connected – to people and activities we enjoy – is vital for resilience and wellbeing, especially for those with chronic health conditions.

In 2024, we renewed multi-year commitments to the Sporting Memories Foundation and Ayr United Football Academy, supporting their work bringing people together to “reminisce, replay and reconnect” through the power of sport and physical activity.

Additional grants to WHALE Arts (Edinburgh) and Centrestage (Kilmarnock) are helping to sustain arts and wellbeing programmes.

A new grant to the Heart Dementia Meeting Centre (Newhaven) is helping us to learn about the community-based Meeting Centre model, offering person-centred dementia care.

We also continue supporting unpaid carers through repeat grants to Carers Trust Scotland and the Connecting Carers Wellbeing Service, which provides both group and one-to-one support in the Highlands.

Our geographic reach expanded further with a new grant to Lorn & Oban Healthy Options, supporting recovery and healthy lifestyles in Argyll. Meanwhile, our continued support for Maggie’s extends to all eight of the charity’s Scottish centres, which reached 36% of people diagnosed with cancer in Scotland in 2024.

Supporting families in the early years

The earliest moments of life, even before birth, leave a lasting impact. For babies, the strength and quality of the relationships around them lay the groundwork for a happy, secure and healthy future.

However, these formative years can be challenging, especially for families facing issues such as poverty, trauma or poor mental health. In 2024, we continued funding community-based charities such as 3D Drumchapel (Glasgow) and the Cottage Family Centre (Kirkcaldy), which offer relationship-based support to any family needing this, tailored to their unique needs, goals and context.

This kind of work remains the focus of our grant-making under this theme and we're learning about the features of good holistic family support and how we can better play our role as a funder to promote this.

We also recognise the importance of mental health in the early years – both that of new mothers and the way that relationships between infants and their caregivers have a formative impact on children's mental health.

During 2024, we made grants to both Aberlour and Nurture the Borders for their direct work with parents and families to promote good mental health during pregnancy and early parenthood, and to Parent-Infant Foundation for their strategic work in Scotland.

Find full details of all 25 grants made under this theme in 2024 on the GrantNav website.

Our themes: 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.

Homeless Network Scotland: No Wrong Door

Our grant: £40,000 per year for two years

People experiencing homelessness, poverty and trauma can have complex, interconnected needs that are poorly met by siloed public services. Working in four places in Scotland, the No Wrong Door action learning partnership is testing out how to create cross-sector, integrated services that reduce the burden on people having to navigate multiple systems, leading to better and more sustainable outcomes. Our grant is helping with the practical costs for key charity partners in each location.

Community Enterprise: Crisis Recovery Service

Our grant: £35,000

With rising costs and a challenging funding and trading environment, many Scottish charities and social enterprises face uncertainty. This service connects organisations to expert advice to help them understand their options, adapt or manage closures, when necessary. Our grant is helping Community Enterprise handle enquiries and connect organisations in difficulty to the support they need.

SCVO: Growing Climate Confidence

Our grant: £25,000

Helping third-sector organisations address climate change, this initiative provides online resources, training and expert guidance. Our grant, alongside other funders, supports programme coordination to help organisations reduce emissions, build resilience and engage their communities.

Regenerative Futures Fund: Monitoring, evaluation and learning plan

Our grant: £15,000

This innovative fund – hosted by Foundation Scotland – is pooling resources from multiple funders to provide long-term flexible support to community groups tackling poverty and climate justice in Edinburgh.

Having supported the development of the initiative, our latest grant is helping ensure that the fund is set up to maximise the learning opportunities when it launches in 2025.

Find full details of all our 2024 strategic grants and miscellaneous donations over £2,000 on the GrantNav website.

Our themes: 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.

Matched Giving:

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

Matched Giving

Total donated: £150,173 (2023: £131,721)

225 employees supported 166 charities

Health and wellbeing and children and young people are the most popular causes supported by employees. Humanitarian relief work and hospices also received a lot of support. In 2024, donations to match volunteer time were up 24% from the previous year.

Local Giving

Total donated: £315,175 (2023: £267,735)

In 2024, Local Giving donations increased by 18%, reflecting William Grant & Sons' growing reach as a global business. Donations were made to charities in 21 global locations and regions across six continents, including France and China for the first time.

Expenditure summary

Grants and donations paid

Scottish Culture and Heritage	£1,032,203
Health and Social Causes	£1,030,592
Youth Opportunities	£956,987
Natural and Built Environment	£929,119
Employee-led Giving	£393,893
Strategic grants	£374,849
Other donations	£40,117

Total grants and donations

£4,757,760
(2023: £4,615,693)

Foundation running costs

Salaries, staff training and expenses	£267,685
Giving groups expenses, training and governance costs	£12,362
IT and admin costs	£14,218
Memberships and subscriptions	£7,983
Charities Aid Foundation – payroll giving fees and donor services	£7,944
Communications	£4,629
Consultancy	£1,350
Total running costs	£316,171

(2023: £296,060)

Total expenditure

£5,073,931
(2023: £4,911,753)

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 to manage and direct these donations in 2014, since when it has donated more than £30 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.com

Our website is www.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.

Address:

William Grant Foundation
Phoenix Crescent
Strathclyde Business Park
Bellshill ML4 3AN

Connect with us on LinkedIn