

Fife Walking Club Newsletter

March 2026



Committee 2026

Chair	Barbara Fotheringham
Treasurer	Clare Darling
Secretary	Angela Drennan
Walks Convenor	Mike Livesey
Membership Secretary	Alison Stewart
Webmaster	David Thomson
Newsletter Editor	Karin Laurie
Committee Members:	Margaret Cumming, Leslie Drennan, Emma Hulme, Frankie Johnston, Lorna Thompson

Fife Walking Club is affiliated to HF Holidays

Welcome to the March newsletter!

For many years, this newsletter has been edited by Barbara, our chairperson, and she has done a wonderful job. She has now passed the reins to me, and I hope I can maintain her very high standards.

Our newsletter begins with a summary of the AGM.



Summary of the AGM

The 36th annual general meeting of the Fife Walking Club was held on Saturday 17th January 2026 at the Lomond Centre in Glenrothes.

A summary follows with the essentials included. If you would like to receive a full copy of the secretary's minute of the meeting, please contact Angela at fifewalkingclub@gmail.com

The thirty-two members in attendance were welcomed to the meeting; twelve had submitted their apologies.

Barbara (Chair) reported on another successful year with varied weekly walks, a week in Keswick and a 3-day break in Melrose. Barbara invited all members to consider leading a walk, whether a short, easy walk or a longer more challenging one.

Clare (Treasurer) circulated the final accounts for 2025, confirmed as accurate by independent examiner Andrew Kinnon. Clare proposed that we keep the membership fee the same as last year. An annual membership fee of £10 and a pro rata amount for anyone joining after June 2026.

Those present agreed that the balance at the end of 2025 would still allow us to keep our regular donations the same as last year. i.e. remaining at £800 in total, made up of:
Scottish Mountain Rescue £300
Scottish Air Ambulance £200
Fife Coast & Countryside Trust £150
Nat Trust for Scotland Footpath Fund £150
Clare finished with a reminder to anyone who is fortunate enough to book a holiday in 2026 with Ramble Worldwide (the new name for Ramblers Holidays), to mention you are a member of the Fife Walking Club. They will donate £20 per holiday per person to the Club, with no extra cost to your holiday.

In return for an advert once a year in the Newsletter, HF Holidays gives us £50 and 3rd party public liability insurance.

FIFE WALKING CLUB			
FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT: 31/12/2025			
Receipts	Expenditure		
Cash Brought Forward	£1,216.77	raffle books	
Membership	£620.00	Room Hire	£42.75
Guest walkers		Postage & Printing	£20.40
Donations	£37.00	Charities	£800.00
Ramblers Donation		Scotways	£40.00
HF Holidays donation	£50.00	Christmas Lunch	£802.46
Christmas lunch	£827.40	Website	£28.78
Christmas Donation		Speaker gift	£20.00
Christmas raffle	£344.00	Service Charges	£ 43.91
Total	£2,879.17	Total	£1,768.29
Balance	£1,076.88		

Membership Report

Our current total membership is 85, an increase of 2 from last year's 83.

Life 17

Ordinary 68

Since the last AGM 2 junior names were removed from the list, 8 members have left, 12 new members have joined, and 1 member qualified for life membership.

Emma (Facebook Administrator) reported that currently there are 213 friends, 21 of whom are members. This is an increase of 149 friends since last year. Emma refers potential friends to the website for joining details, if she reckons their interest is genuine.

Emma reminded us to send walk photos to her and to get in touch with her if there is something you think would be useful or interesting to add to Facebook. Barbara thanked Emma for the work she is doing.

Mike (Walks Convenor) reported on a good selection of varied walks throughout the year. The 3-month walks' programme is working well, so Mike has no plans to change that routine. Mike highlighted that he will take walk offerings at any time. You don't have to wait for the call.

Keswick week in April was successful, thanks once again to good weather and good walks submitted. We had the usual 2 walks (an easier and a harder) each day, Sunday to Friday, making 12 in total. We also had a very enjoyable 3-day mid-week break in September at Melrose, arranged by Bill & Alison. Many thanks to them. Keswick this year will be 18 – 25 April 2026. These are the 2 Saturdays, intended as the

travelling days. The walking days are Sunday 19 - Friday 24. Feel free to start sending Mike walks now.

There will not be a Melrose event this year. We're very grateful to Bill and Alison for all the organising and leading they have done, providing us with good walks over the last two years in the Melrose area.

Susan has kindly offered to do a similar 3-day event. To allow folk to go ahead booking accommodation, the location and dates have been fixed:

- The location is Wooler in Northumberland
- The walking dates are Tuesday 8 – 10 September with possibly a short walk on the Friday morning. The programme will be published nearer the time.

Mike finished with a short safety reminder. Always make sure that a walk you intend to go on is suitable for your fitness level. If you aren't sure from the description, talk to the leader. This is especially important in Keswick, where some walks may not have been reced — now noted in the programme.

[David \(Webmaster\)](#) was unable to attend the meeting. He sent his report as follows: The number of new user visits to our website has reduced from last year and this may be the result of the very regular and informative walk updates from Mike Livesey our Walks Secretary. There is now no problem accessing our website using either Google or Microsoft Edge search engines. The website "About" page now contains an important Walk Guidance section which contains three guides, namely "Grading Guide", "Walkers Guide" and "Walk Leaders Guide". The "Walkers Guide" should be read by all members. The Walks' Programme page now contains the walk details for January, February and March 2026. Digital Fife, now a registered OSCR charity, continues to host our website at no cost to the club. Under the direction of the trustees, the charity also continues the free hosting of websites to over 125 community groups in Fife. David continues to serve as a trustee of this charity representing user groups in general and our group in particular.

Election of the Committee

During 2025 Brian had announced his intention to step down, after 14 years of service, 12 of them as Membership Secretary. Barbara expressed her sincere thanks for his many years of dedicated service. Alison Stewart, an existing committee member, has volunteered to take over Brian's position as Membership Secretary.

Barbara has been editing the Club's Newsletter since 2017 and feels it's time for fresh ideas. She is delighted that Karin Laurie has volunteered to take it on. Karin is an existing committee member.

Voting took place and your 2026 committee is –

Chair: - Barbara Fotheringham

Secretary: - Angela Drennan

Treasurer: - Clare Darling

Walks Convenor: - Mike Livesey

Membership Secretary: - Alison Stewart

Webmaster: - David Thomson

Other Committee Members:

Emma Hulme, Margaret Cumming, Frankie Johnston, Karin Laurie, Leslie Drennan

and Lorna Thompson. Emma Hulme will continue to look after Facebook and Karin Laurie will be the Newsletter editor and will be grateful to receive suggestions, photos, etc. for anything you think would interest our members.

In line with our constitution, full committee members are to be voted in at an AGM.

If anyone is interested in trying it out during 2026 as a co-opted member then get in touch with Barbara.

Fees Are Now Due

Most members have already paid their annual subscription now. If you have still to pay, the annual fee is £10. The bank charges the club for paying in cheques, so the preferred method of payment is by bank transfer, which is free. Details of the bank account are below:

Account name: FIFE WALKING CLUB

Sort Code: 80-16-84

Account Number: 00195346

Please remember to put your name as the reference.

Guest Speaker

After the meeting there was a very interesting talk by Vicky Turnbull, RSPB Estate Operations Manager for Loch Leven, Perth and Kinross.

As walkers we're all familiar with the RSPB Nature Reserve at Loch Leven, formerly known as Vane Farm. Vicky started with a bit of history, telling us the loch used to be much bigger. It was partially drained in the early 1800s to enable the canalisation of the River Leven. The site became part of the RSPB in 1967 and has evolved from historic farmland to the successful wildlife sanctuary and visitor centre it is today, with wetland areas, footpaths, viewing hides, a café and shop. There's even a live camera pointed at a squirrel feeding station. Vicky told us about some of the difficulties in maintaining wetlands, for example the soil is quite sandy and absorbs much of the water; the last two summers have been unusually dry so they've had to divert some of the loch's water; they use cattle grazing to keep the grass at an optimum height. She showed us some super photographs of lapwing with their long elegant crests, marsh tits on the reed beds, red squirrels in abundance and, of course, the pink footed geese for which the loch is famous. She also had some photos from the RSPB site at Loch of Kinnordy near Kirriemuir, where ospreys go to fish and can be seen resting on the deer fencing. She suggested that it might be a good area for us to explore as walkers.

Here is a link to the RSPB live cameras:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/tune-in-to-our-wildlife-camera-livestreams>



Brian Clark

We were all saddened to hear of the death of Brian Clark who died last month aged 80 of cancer. Brian was a stalwart of the club and will be sadly missed. Liz Greig and David Thomson have written the following tributes for the newsletter. Liz Greig writes of Brian below:

Brian was always considerate, very sincere and liked to help others. He was "A Gentleman" in the full sense of the term.

His Merchant Navy training of being smart, punctual and organised remained with him and he let us know when we were not following the correct procedure.

A great walker with several groups, he enjoyed the camaraderie and showed a good sense of humour. Long distance walks were fun when six of us did The West Highland Way, The Great Glen and Speyside Way. They were extended to a sight seeing and walking tour of Peru. Among other things, we dressed up as locals at Lake Titicaca and fished for piranhas on the Amazon as well as walking a part of the Inca trail. All good fun.

Brian's target for his 65th birthday was to climb Schiehallian. Five of us set off. Two members (unbeknown to each other) had a bottle of champagne and plastic glasses for celebration on the summit. There was great hilarity, and amusement from other walkers, when one of our company appeared with a white teatowel over his arm, waiter fashion, and popped the corks. The other walkers joined in. What a happy day.

Apart from serving as an active committee member of walking groups, Brian followed football matches, recording them if out walking. He really enjoyed nothing better after a walk than going home to watch a match with a glass of his own homemade beer. He also had a keen interest in classical music and regularly escorted ladies to the Usher Hall concerts. He was also a member of the Masons and enjoyed the fellowship there.

During his last few days, Brian said that he had had a good life and was blessed with the friendship of fellow walkers. He sent his best wishes to you all.

David also paid tribute to Brian as follows:

With the passing of Brian Clark, the members of Fife Walking Group and indeed all who knew Brian, have lost a true Gentleman. Brian, a retired mariner, loved walking in the great outdoors, regardless of whether it was an urban stroll with Bums off Seats or the challenge of the summits of Dreish and Mayar, the Angus Monros. For many years after a Club walk, Brian, in the company of a group of fellow walkers, would on the way home visit a local hostelry to enjoy a glass of beer and a blether – Brian was always good company! Brian's seamanship discipline made him an excellent and dependable committee member. He served as membership secretary for twelve years and at committee meetings always gave his valued opinion in a firm but polite manner. For Brian, as for all members who went to Keswick, this was the high point of the walking year. Brian conquered many of Lakeland's highest peaks, including Scafell Pike, Helvellyn, Skiddaw and Blencathra. After a hard day's walking Brian would meet up with fellow members for a meal, a postmortem on the day's walk and a beer. His three favourite hostelries were the Dog and Gun for Hungarian Goulash, the George Hotel for Cow Pie and the Bank Tavern for his favorite - a Lamb Shank! Keswick will never be the same without Brian!



Keswick Week and Wooler Break

Mike Livesey has asked that members confirm to him whether they intend to go to Keswick, and also whether they intend to attend the group meal on Thursday April 23 at 7pm at Asaya Thai restaurant in Keswick. Walkers should let Mike know even if they signed the list at the AGM. Mike will send Keswick information only to those who have contacted him at fifewalkingclub@gmail.com

We will need to preorder our meals at Asaya but the menu will be sent out nearer the time to all those who have confirmed to Mike that they will be attending.

Susan Laing has kindly arranged walking in Wooler from 8 – 10 September 2026. Some people have already booked accommodation at Riverside Holiday Park in Wooler (www.verdantleisure.co.uk), should you wish to be alongside other walkers from the group. More details regarding the Wooler break will follow later in the year but anyone interested in going should get in touch with Susan via the club's generic email address fifewalkingclub@gmail.com to make sure they receive relevant information. There is no commitment at this stage, and walkers can come for 1, 2 or all three days' walking.

Items for inclusion in future newsletters

Please let me know of anything you would like to see included in future newsletters. I can be contacted at fifewalkingclub@gmail.com

I am a keen reader and would love to hear book recommendations from members. My favourite book of late has been "Caledonian Road" by Andrew O'Hagan. It's a long read at 656 pages, but well worth the effort.

You may be interested to know...

Now that spring is here, we may be thinking about all the nest building that will be happening. If, like me, you feed the birds you might be surprised to know that the RSPB has stopped selling bird tables pending a study into the risk that feeding birds poses.

Jack Baddams, a BBC Winterwatch presenter has said that garden feeders were "fast food restaurants" spreading diseases such as avian flu, salmonella and trichomonosis which passed from pigeons to greenfinches in 2005 and has since halved their numbers.

Jack Baddams maintains that feeders are "unnatural, an unlimited source of food that can concentrate many different species in a single spot."

We await the outcome of the RSPB study.

For the future...

Climate Action Fife was giving away fruit trees in February and March with the aim of every garden in Fife having a fruit tree. Whilst this has finished for this year, watch out for this initiative again in 2027. You can read about it on their website:

<https://www.climateactionfife.org.uk/project/s/climate-friendly-gardens/fruit-trees/>

Traveller's Tales

Do you have any interesting traveller's tales for future editions? I was in New Zealand over Christmas and New Year and just loved seeing albatross. Their 10 feet wing span was phenomenal. Travelling 13000 miles to see them was worth it.



We also had albatross following our cruise ship which is a good omen.

Donations

Fife Walking Club donated to several charities in 2025 and we've received thank yous for these donations which are shown at the end of the newsletter. We also gave a £40 donation to the RSPB following their excellent talk at the AGM.

Scottish Mountain Rescue £300
Scottish Charity Air Ambulance £200
Fife Coast & countryside £150
National Trust footpaths £150

Thank you letters

From Scotland Mountain Rescue

Dear Clare,

Thank you so much for your brilliant continued support, with your kind donation of £300. I can confirm that we have received this into our bank account on 28th January 2026.

Please pass on our sincere thanks to all of your membership. It's lovely to hear that our service can provide reassurance on your adventures, and we wish you another year of happy and safe exploration amongst Scotland's wild and beautiful landscapes.

On behalf of all of our 26 volunteer Mountain Rescue Teams and everyone who takes pleasure in the Scottish outdoors, a huge thank you to everyone involved in donating such a generous amount.

This level of support makes a real difference in powering our teams to reunite families with their loved ones and save lives across Scotland's mountains, hills and outdoor spaces. Our teams couldn't do what they do without the generosity and commitment of people like you.

Thank you once again for being part of our wider team of lifesavers, and very best wishes to you and your members.

Kind regards,
Charlotte Wood
Administration Support
Scottish Mountain Rescue



From Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance

Dear Clare,

Thank you to everyone at Fife Walking Club for your donation of £200.00 to Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance. With your support, our air ambulance crew can reach more people across Scotland when they need help. People like Harris, who suffered a traumatic leg injury during a water sports accident. "What if SCAA and her expert crew hadn't been there that day? I sometimes torture myself with that thought and I vow to do something in the future to raise funds and support the charity that was so crucial to my rescue." Harris

With your support, SCAA's aircraft saw that Harris received vital intravenous antibiotics and limb-saving surgery in time. SCAA is 100% funded by the people of Scotland, for the people of Scotland. That makes you an essential part of our crew - thank you again for your generous gift which will help

to fly us into the future.

Yours sincerely,
Ann McLaughlan
Community Fundraiser

And from National Trust Footpaths



Dear Clare,

Thank you to all at the Fife Walking Club for your generous donation of £ 150.00 to our Footpath Fund. Your support means so much to us as we celebrate 25 years of protecting and maintaining Scotland's footpaths.

Thanks to donors like you, we've restored hundreds of miles of trails over the past quarter - century, working alongside dedicated volunteers to ensure that the paths that criss - cross our stunning landscapes are well - maintained.

Footpaths are vital to protecting our fragile ecosystems, guiding walkers safely across sometimes challenging terrain while preserving the natural beauty and biodiversity that make Scotland so special. Due to increasing foot traffic over recent years and the ongoing challenges posed by climate change, your contribution is helping us safeguard these paths for future generations.

Your generosity directly supports essential conservation efforts such as repairing erosion scars on Ben Lomond, establishing new routes at Mar Lodge Estate following storm damage, and ensuring the long - term care of over 275 miles of trails across Scotland – that's the equivalent of walking from Edinburgh to Inverness and back!

As we mark this milestone anniversary, we look ahead with determination to continue our vital work. With a goal to raise £250,000, we're setting the foundation for the next five years of footpath restoration and conservation. Thanks to you, we're one step closer to achieving this.

On behalf of our charity and everyone who treasures Scotland's outdoors, thank you for your invaluable support. I hope you have the chance to traverse one of our trails soon. You can walk with pride knowing you've played a crucial role in their preservation.

With best wishes,
Bob Brown
Upland Path Manager
National Trust for Scotland

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