Minutes of the meeting of the TSI Board, 21st October 2025, Teams

Present – Nicola Porciani (NP), Alison Gildea (AG), Luke Winter (LW), Hilary Pearce (HP), Takki Sulaiman (TS) - CEO, Lauren Martin (LM) - Business Manager

Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Nicola Hackett.

3.Declaration Of Interests

TS mentioned a possible DOI link with MM and Fyne Homes/Futures following Fyne Futures closure that TSI was keeping an eye on.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and agreed as accurate by all present. Agenda to include correct dates. NP advised that the proposed AGM date was not suitable so it was agreed that a poll would be sent out to obtain new date.

It was decided that item 5.2 would be taken early as Mark McRae, Audit manager was in attendance.

5.2 Audit report (Mark McRae)
TS introduced Agenda Item 5.2 and invited Mark McRae to present the draft audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Mark McRae confirmed that the external audit had resulted in a fully satisfactory, unqualified (clean) audit opinion. The accounts were presented as a true and accurate representation of the organisation's financial position and demonstrated continued sound financial stewardship.

It was noted that total income had increased during the year, primarily due to new grant funding and expanded restricted project activity. While there had been a rise in costs, particularly in relation to staff costs and National Insurance increases, the organisation had managed expenditure effectively and maintained strong financial control.

The accounts reflected a net surplus for the year, with unrestricted free reserves of £266,799. The overall financial position was described as stable and sound at this stage. HP commented that the accounts provided reassurance and a sound financial basis for the development of the forthcoming five-year plan (2026–2031). She reiterated that the accounts represented a true and accurate position of the organisation and were sound for the present time.

TS noted that the £175,000 designated reserve for strategy had rolled forward within the accounts. However, this figure would reduce in the next financial year following Board decisions arising from the strategy consultation outcomes.

LW thanked HP for her reassurance regarding the financial position.

Mark McRae thanked LM for her support throughout the audit process and acknowledged the smooth provision of documentation and responses during the audit.

The Board agreed to approve the draft audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 and to authorise submission to OSCR and Companies House following formal approval at the AGM.

5.3 Management Accounts

TS presented the Q2 Management Accounts for the six months to 30 September 2025.

The accounts showed a deficit of £27,557, which was £6,908 better than the budgeted position. Income was slightly ahead of forecast, driven by additional grant administration income and stronger performance across rental and other income streams. Expenditure remained broadly aligned with plan, with some project timing variances and higher direct costs balanced by controlled overhead spend.

Cash balances remained strong and reserves stood at £529,889, maintaining a healthy and sustainable financial position at mid-year.

HP noted that the accounts were in line with where the organisation would reasonably expect to be at this point in the financial year and described the position as reasonable.

The Board noted the Q2 Management Accounts and the continued monitoring and reforecasting of the 2025–2026 budget.

5.1 CEO Report

TS presented the CEO Report covering the period from 21 July to 17 October 2025.

Updates were provided on national TSI Scotland Network activity, including publication of a summary manifesto ahead of the 2026 Scottish Parliamentary elections and ongoing engagement with senior political figures regarding third sector resilience and public service reform. Preparations for the national TSI conference at the end of October were reported as progressing well, with strong attendance expected and ABTSI involved in programme development and delivery.

TS highlighted continued partnership work through the Poverty Alliance’s Taking Action on Rural Poverty project and engagement with the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs.

Locally, discussions have taken place with Argyll and Bute Council regarding potential duplication of funding platforms. A presentation was delivered to Councillors advocating collaboration and efficient use of public resources, and further correspondence with the Council is planned.

The joint engagement event with the HSCP on commissioning and prevention (13 November) was noted, alongside the ongoing TSI mid-year review with the Third Sector Unit.

Operational updates included continued exploration of a collaborative HR support offer with sector partners, with a development day scheduled for November and a further paper to be considered under Item 6.2.

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (Years 5 and 6) reference panel met in October, resulting in 19 organisations receiving full two-year funding and 44 of 71 applicants receiving some level of support. The process forms part of the government's multi-year fairer funding pilot.

The Board noted the forthcoming retirement of the Helensburgh and Lomond TSSA, with recruitment to commence shortly. NP offered to be on the recruitment panel.

An update was provided on the Strategy Review 2026–2031 (Community Voices), includingthe live survey, planned focus groups and forthcoming strategic advisory group meetings.

The Board noted the report.

5.4 Business Management Report

LM presented the Business Management Report covering Q2 (July–September 2025).

Events activity over the summer period was intentionally lighter, with three events delivered and steady engagement levels maintained. Forward bookings for October–December are progressing, with strong uptake for smaller in-person sessions and targeted communications planned to increase conversion for larger online events.

At the Inveraray Hub, works are largely complete and the EICR certificate is now on file. Minor outstanding items remain before requesting Building Standards re-assessment. Internet connectivity improvements have been identified as a priority for the next quarter.

ABCAN Round 6 has been completed, with twelve organisations awarded a total of £11,004. Preparatory work is underway to scope a potential pre-Christmas round.

Planning for VOY 2026 is progressing well, with venue secured, suppliers being confirmed and sponsorship approaches commencing.

A review of the Trustee Code of Conduct and Redundancy Policy has been completed to reflect current Scottish legislation. Work on a Risk Management policy is underway for consideration in January.

Brand refresh work across key platforms is progressing, with updated logos completed for Volunteer Argyll & Bute and the Funding Platform. Work continues on ABCD, after which assets will be rolled out alongside a promotional plan.

The annual audit was completed smoothly with no issues identified. Final accounts will be presented at the AGM in December.

An update was provided on the “Community Voices” strategy survey, which has shown strong early engagement. Social media and email performance remained steady and fully organic, with improved click-through rates noted across recent campaigns. The upcoming Winter Seminars campaign will aim to drive further registrations and visibility.

The Board noted the report.

6.1 Policy Review – Trustee Code of Conduct and Redundancy Policy

LM presented the annual review of the Trustee Code of Conduct and Redundancy Policy for approval.

It was noted that both policies had been reviewed against current legislation and good practice as at October 2025. The amendments were minor and clarificatory in nature, with no changes to core duties or processes.

The Trustee Code of Conduct had been updated to incorporate the Nolan Principles at the outset, strengthen safeguarding and conflict of interest provisions, clarify expectations regarding gifts and hospitality, and align governance language with the organisation’s flat structure.

The Redundancy Policy included clarification of collective consultation thresholds and HR1 notification requirements, confirmation of statutory redundancy pay calculations in line with the current week’s pay cap, and strengthened wording around objective, non-discriminatory selection criteria and protected periods.

HP noted that, in relation to the Redundancy Policy, the organisation’s Reserves Policy should align with potential redundancy liabilities and should continue to be considered in that context.

The Board approved both the updated Trustee Code of Conduct and the Redundancy Policy. LM confirmed that trustees would be asked to re-sign the updated Code and that both policies would be published and incorporated into induction materials.

6.2 Shared Services Cooperative Pilot Proposal

TS presented the cover report outlining ongoing discussions regarding the development of a national Shared Services Cooperative model for the third and social enterprise sector.

The proposal seeks to explore a democratically governed, asset-locked cooperative providing shared or jointly procured services including HR, ICT, performance management, legal, insurance and business planning support. No financial commitment is required at this stage.

MM commented that there was no harm in having the conversation at this exploratory stage.

HP expressed some surprise that shared services had not been implemented previously, noting that the opportunity appeared obvious. TS responded that collaboration remains key and that awareness of existing services and infrastructure is essential to avoid duplication and ensure equitable access.

Concerns were raised regarding Fyne Homes and Fyne Futures, particularly around public assets and asset lock provisions within constitutions. It was noted that approximately ten staff and management are concerned about potential implications. *MM declared an interest and did not contribute further to the discussion.*

LW noted awareness of the implications as a resident on the island, commenting that closure of services would have significant impact on local communities and could worsen people's lives.

The Chair indicated support for continued engagement and was content for TSI to move forward at this exploratory stage.

It was agreed that the CEO's time is the only cost at present. Further findings from the upcoming meeting and workshop will be brought to the next Board meeting, and HR involvement will be required as discussions progress.

The Board endorsed continued participation in the exploratory phase and requested an update at the next meeting.

7.1 Review of Day Care Services in Argyll and Bute (Draft)

TS presented the cover report and key findings from the draft Review of Day Care Services in Argyll and Bute.

AG commented that, while the topic was important, there appeared to be gaps and inconsistencies within the draft report. AG queried how the report defined "older adults" and "day care", and sought clarity on what activity was being categorised as support versus prevention. AG also questioned the relevance of examples such as a menopause café within a day care / older adults context, and what age group this was intended to relate to.

AG further noted that one of the case studies referenced assumptions around people over a certain age being deemed "frail", stating this was not correct, and raised concern that there were holes, gaps and potential mistruths that required attention before the report could be relied upon or shared externally.

The Board noted the report and the comments raised and agreed it should not be progressed for external sharing until the draft had been reviewed and any inaccuracies addressed.

7.2 Review of Children and Families Preventative Services

TS presented the cover report summarising Phase 1 of the Preventative Services Mapping Review for Children and Families in Argyll and Bute.

NP queried the proposed next steps. TS advised that the draft report requires further review to ensure accuracy before wider dissemination. It was noted that the findings should be shared with the Children's Strategic Group, recognising that progressing change may be beneficial but could carry cost implications for partners.

NP asked whether key stakeholders had been fully consulted, suggesting that broader stakeholder engagement would add weight and credibility to the report's conclusions. TS acknowledged the need to reconnect with key partners and indicated that engagement via the Participation Board may be appropriate.

NP offered support with stakeholder engagement if required.

The Board noted the report and the need for further review and engagement prior to progressing to Phase 2.

AOCB

NP extended best wishes to the TSI for hosting the upcoming TSI Scotland Conference, noting it as a positive opportunity for the organisation, and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Actions

Action Item	Description	Responsible Person	Status (RAG)
1	Submit approved audited accounts to OSCR and Companies House following AGM approval.	LM	Green
2	Trustees to re-sign updated Trustee Code of Conduct and publish revised policies.	LM	Green
3	Bring update on Shared Services Cooperative discussions, including outcomes of workshop and HR implications.	TS	Green
4	Review and amend Day Care Services report to address identified gaps, definitions and inaccuracies before any external circulation.	TS	Green
5	Review Children and Families Preventative Services report for accuracy and reconnect with key stakeholders (potentially via Participation Board).	TS	Green