

EAST AYRSHIRE LEISURE TRUST - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 1810 HOURS WITHIN THE WALLACE CHAMBERS, JOHN DICKIE STREET, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors Clare Maitland; Iain Linton; Graham Boyd; Linda Mabon; and James Adams, Trustees; Jim Roberts; Rob Hannah; and Andy Wilson, Independent Trustees

ATTENDING: Anneke Freel, Chief Officer; Jackie Biggart, Director: Corporate Activities; Paul Mathieson, Director: Commercial Activities; and Carleen Fitzgerald, Development Officer: Organisational Administration, all East Ayrshire Leisure Trust

CHAIR: Clare Maitland

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. David Ross; Independent Trustee; Richard Grieveson, Depute Chief Executive, and Joe McLachlan, Director of Finance and Digital, East Ayrshire Council, ex officio Trustees; and Suzanne Clark, Director: Community Activities, East Ayrshire Leisure Trust

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. No declarations of interest were intimated.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 There were submitted and approved the minutes of the previous Board meeting held on 23 September 2025 (circulated).

MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

- 3.2 There were submitted and approved the minutes of the Special Board meeting held on 11 November 2025 (circulated).

MINUTES OF PERFORMANCE AND AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE OF 4 FEBRUARY 2026

- 3.3 There were submitted and noted the minutes of the Performance and Audit Sub-Committee meeting held on 4 February 2026 (circulated).

PERFORMANCE REPORT OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2025 (Q3)

4. There was submitted a report dated 9 February 2026 (circulated) by the Chief Officer which provided details of the Trust's performance for the period October to December 2025, the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year. With the transfer of additional services and extensive remodelling exercise, Trustees are asked to approve a revised reporting framework for the remainder of 2025/26. This will include a quarterly performance update, an Executive Management Priority Action Plan update, and a financial report.

The following was discussed:

- Attendance figures for Oct – Dec 2025 were 528,823, an increase of 8% compared to the same period in 2024/25.
- Performance aspirations continue to be monitored, the Strategic Vision and associated targets will be reviewed, with a new reporting framework brought to the Board in May.
- Risk Register reviewed with no additional risks.
- At 30 December 2025, the Trust was sitting at a breakeven financial position.
- Hospitality deficit due to service undergoing transfer and review, will be monitored closely.
- Debt identified for write off £12,074.69, will be kept under review.
- Reserves currently sitting at 3%, will add to if opportunity arises.
- Proposals to put Malky McCormick exhibition on tour to similar galleries across Scotland, currently working on business plan.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the East Ayrshire Leisure Performs report for the period October - December 2025.

CHARGES FOR SERVICES 2026/27

5. There was submitted a report dated 9 February 2026 (circulated) by the Chief Officer, that provides Trustees with proposals for the 2026/27 schedule of charges for their consideration.

During discussion on the report, the following was noted:

- New membership packages being introduced to integrate the Trust and Galleon. Pick & Mix package offers a flexible, build your own membership for customers.
- Staff memberships will increase from £5 to £10 per month, if they wish to add access to the Galleon it will be £20 per month.
- Wellbeing Suite - £10 per month will continue for certain conditions. Look to introduce Suites into other venues in near future.
- Harmonising charges between the Trust and Galleon. 5% increase to East Ayrshire Leisure charges while keeping Galleon equivalent charges frozen. Charges for children's activities across the Trust will also be aligned.
- Annanhill Golf Course has had significant investment and development over the past few years, membership will increase from £275 to £290.
- Review of Community spaces including charges will take place throughout 2026.
- Hospitality – minor increases proposed to reflect increases in products.
- Equipment hire business developed and will start offering to community groups etc. from April 2026.
- Galleon Admission charges – no longer charge for swim/hockey team for their competition events. Introduce 10% reduction year on year.
- School swimming – introduce free swimming lessons to all P5 with the help of Government funding. Chief Officer has requested to COSLA that Trust's receive funding direct so administered fairly and asked if there would be extra funding for school transport. Working with Visions to offer to schools in south area.
- Loyalty Promotions and Sponsorship to be developed, working with local businesses, building relationships and offering loyalty discounts etc.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the proposed charges; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

MEMBERSHIP PRESENTATION

6. Paul Mathieson took the meeting through a presentation outlining the proposed changes to memberships to integrate the Trust with the Galleon. Galleon currently using Gladstone, moving to Legend leisure management system in April.

Pick and mix model, personalised flexibility for customers to choose their base: Community; Gym; Swim; Bowls; Youth or Kids then have opportunity to add on ice skating, golf, Youth Theatre etc.

The following was raised:

- It was suggested that membership holders could get 10% discount in café's
- Early morning classes within the Galleon, 45min classes. The Chief Officer advised a review of fitness will be carried out in 2026 and brought to Board for approval.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

7. There was submitted a report dated 10 February 2026 (circulated) by the Chief Officer, that provides Trustees with proposals of operational updates for approval.

During discussion on the report, the following was noted:

- 5 museums operated by the Trust: Dick Institute incl. library; Dean Castle, Burns House Museum, the Baird Institute and the Family History Service at the Burns Monument Centre.
- After analysing the public survey, extending the opening hours within these venues will meet the needs of our communities. Staff are assisting in designing the proposals.
- Family History service will relocate to the Dick Institute to be more accessible to the community. Proposals for the vacant space within Burns Monument Centre being discussed, a café would be a good option.
- Discussions ongoing to connect East Ayrshire into Alloway, North Ayrshire, Dumfries & Galloways to operate a Burns tour. Opening our venues 7 days a week will help to facilitate this.
- Linda Mabon attended the opening of the Baird Institute Audio Trail, praising the school children and Trust staff who were involved, and encouraged Trustees to attend.
- The Trust are in discussions with GlasgowLife to promote our venues within Airport etc.
- Recruitment Fair taking place on Wednesday 4 March to help promote a number of vacant posts and to appoint new Trustees and Independent Chair.
- Trust will introduce internally designed assessment centre which will be developed for the Trust's senior and middle management roles.
- Charity of choice will now be replaced with an apprentice investment programme, any funds raised will go towards this initiative.
- 'Two Roberts' exhibition exploring the lives and works of Robert MacBryde and Robert Colquhoun will be held in September 2026, £12,000 from Museum Galleries Tax Refund funds to be approved to help fund this.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the proposed changes to opening hours;
- (ii) to note the Recruitment Plan;
- (iii) to approve the proposals for Charity of Choice to be replaced with an apprenticeship investment programme;
- (iv) to approve the allocation from MGTR of £12,000 for the Two Roberts exhibition in September 2026; and
- (v) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

TRANSFER OF ADDITIONAL SERVICES FROM EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

8. There was submitted a report dated 10 February 2026 (circulated) by the Chief Officer, that provides Trustees with information regarding East Ayrshire Council's review of Greener Communities and to approve recommendations made by the Council on 29 January 2026 for the transfer of Greener Communities, East Ayrshire Woodlands and aspects of Facility and Property Management to East Ayrshire Leisure. Trustees are also asked to approve an outline structure for a new Estates Management Service to sit within the Commercial Directorate of the Trust.

During discussion of the report, the following was noted:

- Greener Communities proposed to transfer from the Council to Trust on 1 April 2027. The Trust will work in a transitional year, with a new Estates team integrating the Trust's existing Estates team. Strategic Lead: Estates will be appointed and will work with staff teams on training etc. Standards document will be created, review of equipment, check staff bases fit for purpose etc. Reassure health & Safety standards and Risk Assessments etc. are all in place.
- Minor repairs and maintenance of properties will be managed by the Strategic Lead: Facility Management.
- New team added to Community Pathways to deliver the Community Safety and Engagement
- Creation of Greenspace Assistants, general maintenance within parks and engage with public to encourage more activity back in greenspaces.
- Trust and Ayrshire Roads Alliance work on behavioural change to encourage people to walk/cycle.
- Skills development for students etc. will continue to grow. Commercial opportunity, building business plan.
- Action Plan – Chief Officer to provide monthly updates to Trustees on the progress made with working towards transfer of Greener Communities.
- Trustees expressed comfort that the Trust will deliver with the confidence and support shown from the Chief Officer and team.
- A Trust Members' portal will be introduced to log any enquiries.

It was agreed:-

- (i) Note the current challenges facing Greener Communities and the complexities relating to service delivery and people, finance and performance;
- (ii) Note the opportunities to create a more efficient, effective and economic operating model in partnership with East Ayrshire Leisure Trust (EALT) in order to improve the

services and to allow for a re-profiling of resource resulting in direct increased investment in core Civic Pride, Public Realm and Community Safety and Enforcement activities;

- (iii) Approve the transfer within the following service areas subject to employee, trade union and stakeholder engagement - Greener Communities and Facilities and Property Management;
- (iv) Approve the transfer of Bereavement Services to EALT noting the potential opportunities for further commercial activities within this service;
- (v) Approve the transfer of Business Support services relating to Greener Communities to EALT with the appropriate resource transferring accordingly;
- (vi) Approve the TUPE transfer an indicative 104.85 FTE in relation to Greener Communities, East Ayrshire Woodlands, and Facilities Management to East Ayrshire Leisure Trust;
- (vii) Remit EALT Chief Officer to work with the Depute Chief Executive and Chief Governance Officer of EAC to review the EALT SLA to take account of change in scope of services noted and to bring back to Council and EALT Board for approval and agreement in September 2026;
- (viii) Remit the EALT Chief Officer to work with the Head of Facility and Property Management in EAC to review the property portfolio to determine which facilities should be included within the EALT SLA, and to bring back to Council and EALT Board for approval and agreement in September 2026;
- (ix) Approve the outline structure for a new Estates Management service and appropriate support services;
- (x) Note the following timescales: EALT will take responsibility of whole sites and properties from October 2026, East Ayrshire Woodlands on 1 April 2026 and Greener Communities will transfer from EAC to EALT on 1 April 2027; and
- (xi) to otherwise note the content of the report

The Board noted the proposals for the transfer of services and agreed, in principle, to proceed with the transfer and the recommendations, subject to the satisfactory completion of all due-diligence processes. The Board further resolved that, should any material risks, barriers, or other substantive 'show-stoppers' be identified prior to the final transfer date, the Board reserves the right to review and, if necessary, reverse or amend this decision.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

9. An independent bookstore, the Book Nook in Stewarton is moving into the Stewarton Area Centre, Library and will be working with our staff on community engagement.

Unison have issued a Notice of Dispute with the Trust in relation to the new operating model. The Chief Officer will circulate the mitigation measures put in place for staff who are affected to Trustees.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.** Performance & Audit Sub-Committee – 12 May 2026
- Trading Subsidiary – 12 May 2026
- East Ayrshire Leisure Board of Trustees – 26 May 2026

The meeting terminated at 20.10 hours.