THE STAIR SOCIETY
REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

THE STAIR SOCIETY


## THE STAIR SOCIETY

## REPORT OF THE OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

The Office Bearers and Members of Council, who are trustees for the purposes of charity law, have pleasure in submitting their Eighty-Seventh Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2022.

## Objectives and Activities

The Society was instituted in 1934, its primary objective being to encourage the study and advance the knowledge of the history of Scots Law especially by the publication of original documents and by the reprinting and editing of works of sufficient rarity or importance.

## Achievements and Performance

In furtherance of its charitable objectives, the principal activities of the Society involve the publication of literary work relating to the history of Scots Law. Details of these activities undertaken during the year under review are contained in the Literary Director's report on page 5. Again, in furtherance of these objectives, the Society has pursued and implemented during the year in review arrangements to make certain of its publications available on "Open access" on digital platforms.

## Financial Review

During the year, the Society received income of $£ 12,489$ (2021: $£ 13,399$ ) from its investment portfolio and $£ 12,905$ (2021: $£ 10,753$ ) from its charitable activities comprising subscriptions, and copyright royalties. From this, publications and distribution costs of $£ 5,308$ (2021: $£ 13,716$ ) were paid together with investment management fees of $£ 6,368$ (2021: $£ 5,512$ ), governance and support costs of $£ 15,393$ (2021: $£ 14,511$ ) and bank charges of $£ 95$ (2021: $£ 84$ ). As the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated restricted attendance at the AGM in 2021 the usual post AGM Members' lunch was not held and as the guest lecturer gave his lecture remotely, there were no members' contributions to lunch and once again minimal expenses relating to the AGM.

## Plans for the Future

The Society intends to continue its publications programme and its annual lecture. However, the closure of libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic delayed finalisation of the manuscript for the projected volume for 2021 to July 2022, and the COVID-19 pandemic again resulted in the Annual Lecture being given remotely. The Society is grateful to Professor Orazio Condorelli from the University of Catania who also agreed to his lecture entitled "Customs, Litigation and Papal decretals" being recorded and it is also available on YouTube. As Council reported last year, the effects of COVID-19 are likely to be felt for some time, and in particular although the capital value of the Society's portfolio has recovered earlier losses, income has been slow to recover. During the year in review Council contracted for the redevelopment of the Society's website and this work is now in hand. It is hoped that the new site can be launched in late 2022 and that it will have enhanced member functions, as well as addressing some of the problems which have beset the site lately due to obsolescent programs.

## Structure, Governance and Management

The management of the affairs and funds of the Society is vested in a Council which may consist of a President, Vice President, a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, not more than ten ordinary elected members, and up to three members co-opted by the Council.

The Office Bearers and Members of Council who served during the period are stated on page 1. During the year the Literary Director received an honorarium of $£ 1,500(2021: £ 1,500)$ and the secretary and treasurer received an honorarium of $£ 1,500$ (2021: $£ 1,500$ ). The Publicity and Engagement manager received an honorarium of $£ 375$ in the prior year. The position of Publicity and Engagement Manager remained vacant throughout the period pending completion of the proposed new website.

Lady Wolffe, Professor MacQueen, Professor Ford, and Mr Burnside are all willing to continue in office and Council will therefore propose their re-election as President, Vice President, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council respectively.

THE STAIR SOCIETY

## REPORT OF THE OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL (cont'd)

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

## Structure, Governance and Management (cont'd)

By rotation, Dr Dot Reid and Professor Andrew Steven fall due to retire from Council on 31 March 2023. Thanks are expressed to them for their respective contributions over their terms as members of Council and lately as members of the Website Working Group. It is proposed that Professor Gillian Black and Dr Leslie Dodd be elected to fill these vacancies on Council. Each has indicated their willingness to serve if elected. Professor Black holds the chair of Scots Private Law at Edinburgh University and is a part time Commissioner at the Scottish Law Commission. She is Linlithgow Pursuivant Extraordinary. Dr Leslie Dodd, who is currently working on his edition of Craig's Jus Feudale, has recently joined Stirling University as lecturer in Scots law from Edinburgh Napier University where he was lecturer in private law.

Council was shocked by the tragic passing of Stephen O'Rourke QC in December 2021after being elected to Council with effect from 1 April 2022. In his place Council has co-opted Sheriff Kenneth Campbell, and he will be nominated for election at the forthcoming AGM. Kenneth Campbell called to the Bar in 1996 and took silk in 2011. He had a varied civil practice before being appointed a Sheriff at Edinburgh in 2020. He has previously served on Council

## COVID-19

With the relaxation of restrictions caused by the pandemic, Council has once again met face to face, and arrangements are in hand for the Society's AGM and Annual Lecture to be held in person with the usual option of a buffet lunch. Details will be sent separately to members.

## Responsibilities of Office Bearers and Members of Council

The Office Bearers and Members of Council are responsible for preparing the Report of the Office Bearers and Members of Council and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Scotland requires the Office Bearers and Members of Council to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Office Bearers and Members of Council are required to:
select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS102);
make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;

- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Office Bearers and Members of the Council are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the provisions of the charity's constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## Membership

At 30 September 2022, the membership roll contained the names of 332 members, being 224 Individuals, 82 Corporate Members and 26 Concessions (as at 30 September 2021; 368 members, being 244 Individuals, 90 Corporate Members and 34 Concessions).

A number of members failed to implement payment of the increased subscription and are being pursued for the additional amount. It would be appreciated if members could advise their bank of the new rate or amend their Standing Order appropriately, as chasing these arrears has an adverse effect on the Society's administration costs.

## THE STAIR SOCIETY

## REPORT OF THE OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL (cont'd)

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

## Basis of Preparation

The Office Bearers and Members of the Council are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulation 2006 (as amended) and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published in October 2019.

## Reserves Policy

As at 31 March 2022 the Society had unrestricted funds of $£ 652,233$ (2021: $£ 634,367$ ). The Society adopts a cautious and prudent approach to reserves. As the assets of the Society are held in a readily realisable form the Society therefore do not consider it necessary to maintain specific reserves. Furthermore, the Society prefers not to encroach on the unrestricted reserves to fund ordinary working expenses but is willing to do so if necessary to fulfil its objectives.

## Risk Management

The principal risks faced by the Society lie in the performance of investments. The Society considers variability of investment returns to constitute the Society's major financial risk. This is mitigated by retaining expert investment managers and having a diversified investment portfolio.

## Investment Policy

The Investment Policy of the Society is to maximise the overall rate of return on investments, with a balance between income and capital growth and with a medium risk profile. The Society is a long term investor and, on the advice of its professional investment managers, continues to hold a mixed portfolio of equities, bonds, cash and other investments designed to provide a level of stable income and the possibility of investment gains.

## Grant Making Policy

As reported last year, the Council formally ceased to operate a scholarship programme, believing that the funding landscape in universities was completely different from the time that the programme had been initiated. The Society remains open to funding research by way of scholarships on application, but as indicated above (see "Plans for the Future") the outlook for being able to do so is not promising, given the significant drop in projected income, and the solid future publishing programme outlined in the Literary Director's Report.

On Behalf of the Office Bearers and Members of Council on $\qquad$


## Alistair Burrow

Secretary \& Treasurer

## THE STAIR SOCIETY

## LITERARY DIRECTORS REPORT 2022

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

As planned, the edition of Regiam Maiestatem edited by Dr John R. Davies with Professor Alice Taylor was distributed to members as Volume 68 in summer 2022. It followed the publication of Miscellany Eight as Volume 67 in autumn 2020. Publication of Regiam Maiestatem was rescheduled from autumn 2021, having experienced delay caused by circumstances arising from the covid-19 pandemic. It should be noted that in turn this has caused some delay in commencing the production of the succeeding Volume 69.

Volume 69 is to be the Compendium of the Laws of Scotland by David Chalmers of Ormond, edited by Winifred Coutts, Julian Goodare and Andrew R. C. Simpson. Completed in 1566 and dedicated to Queen Mary, this work is the first comprehensive survey of Scots law ever written. It has never been published before, but a manuscript of the book survives in the British Library. This edition reproduces Chalmers' entire text, and adds an editorial commentary to each of his 1,595 individual chapters, preceded by a comprehensive editorial introduction. Copyediting is well underway and it will be published in the first half of 2023.

In terms of future volumes, the Literary Director is in possession of sufficient material to plan a further Miscellany. It is also planned to produce a further volume in the translation of Craig's Jus Feudale made by Dr Leslie Dod to complement the publication of Book 1 as Volume 64.

The Literary Director would like to thank Mr Lawrie Law, for continued and invaluable support in managing the production of the Society's publications, and Mr Ivor Normand, for his meticulous and exhaustive work as copy editor and proof reader.


Mark Godfrey
Literary Director

## THE STAIR SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2022



All activities relate to continuing activities.
All funds are unrestricted.

THE STAIR SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET

## As at 31 March 2022



Approved and authorised for issue by the Office Bearers and signed on their behalf by:


## Professor J Ford <br> Chairman of Council <br> Edinburgh



## THE STAIR SOCIETY

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

## 1. Accounting Policies

Basis of accounting and assessment of going concern
The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these financial statements. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

The Society constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.
The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have assessed the Society's ability to continue as a going concern and have reasonable expectation that the Society has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing these financial statements. The most significant areas of uncertainty that affect the carrying value of assets held by the Society are the level of investment return and the performance of investment markets.

## Funds structure

Unrestricted income funds comprise those funds which the Society is free to use for any purpose in furtherance of their charitable objectives. Unrestricted funds include designated funds where the Society, at their discretion, have created a fund for a specific purpose.

## Income recognition

All income is recognised once the Society has entitlement to the income, there is sufficient certainty of receipt and so it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income from subscriptions, contributions towards AGM lunch and copyright royalties are recognised when the Society is satisfied there is entitlement to the income, it is probable that it will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank. Dividends are recognised once the dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the dividend due.

## Expenditure recognition

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Society to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses, including support costs and governance costs, are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the Society and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These costs include costs related to independent examination together with an apportionment of support costs.

## Costs of raising funds

Costs of raising funds relate to investment management costs.

## Charitable activities

Costs of charitable activities include publications and distribution costs, bursaries made, support costs and governance costs.

## Taxation

As a charity, the Society is exempt from corporation tax on income and gains applied to charitable purposes.

## Irrecoverable VAT

The Society is not registered for VAT and expenditure is therefore stated gross of irrecoverable VAT.

## Fixed asset investments

Investments are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their market value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. The statement of financial activities includes the net gains and losses arising on revaluation and disposals throughout the year.

## THE STAIR SOCIETY

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting Policies (contd.)

Fixed asset investments (continued)
The Society does not acquire or use put options, derivatives or other complex financial instruments.
The main financial risk faced by the Society is that of volatility in equity markets and investment markets due to wider economic conditions, the attitude of investors to investment risk and changes in sentiment concerning equities and within particular sectors or sub sectors.

## Realised gains and losses

All gains and losses are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities as they arise. Realised gains and losses on investments are calculated as the difference between sales proceeds and their opening carrying value or their purchase value if acquired after the first day of the financial year. Unrealised gains and losses are calculated as the difference between the fair value at the end and their carrying value. Realised and unrealised investment gains and losses are combined in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Debtors
Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due. Accrued income is valued at the amount due net of any discounts due.

Cash at bank and in hand
Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Creditors and provisions
Creditors and provisions are recognised where the Society has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

## Financial instruments

The Society only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind which qualify as basic financial instruments, Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at the settlement value.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline 2. \& Investment income \& 2022

¢ \& 2021 <br>

\hline \& | Dividends |
| :--- |
| Interest receivable | \& \[

$$
\begin{array}{r}
12,456 \\
33
\end{array}
$$

\] \& \[

$$
\begin{array}{r}
13,312 \\
87
\end{array}
$$
\] <br>

\hline \& \& 12,489 \& 13,399 <br>
\hline 3. \& Charitable activities \& $\underline{2022}$ \& ${ }^{2021}$ <br>

\hline \& Subscriptions Copyright royalties Donations \& $$
\begin{array}{r}
10,679 \\
2,187 \\
39
\end{array}
$$ \& 9,766

987 <br>
\hline \& \& 12,905 \& 10,753 <br>
\hline 4. \& Raising funds \& 2022
$£$ \& 2021 <br>
\hline \& Investment management fees \& 6,368 \& 5,512 <br>
\hline
\end{tabular}

## THE STAIR SOCIETY

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022


## THE STAIR SOCIETY

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022


All investments are carried at their market value. Investment in equities and fixed interest securities are all traded in quoted public market, primarily the London Stock Exchange. Holdings in common investment funds, unit trusts and open-ended investment companies are at the bid value. Asset sales and purchases are recognised at the date of trade at costs (that is their transaction value).

The length of time that investments are held can be seen as a risk and the Society is comfortable investing for the long term. It is using the services of professional investment managers, aimed to make superior returns compared to earning interest from holding cash at a bank. The Society has instructed the professional investment managers to take the view that the investment time horizon for the investment portfolio is to be held for the longer term, having been advised by them that historic studies of quoted financial instruments have shown that volatility in any particular 5 year period will normally be corrected, likely to result in steady returns over the long term.

The Society is exposed to liquidity risk, credit risk or other market risks e.g. interest rate or currency risk as some of the investments held may fall or rise in line with markets. The professional investment managers have advised that they take these into consideration in their investment decisions. The Society's investment portfolio has a functional currency of Pounds Sterling while some of its investments are held in foreign currencies. As a result, it may be subject to foreign currency exchange risk due to exchange rate movements. To manage this foreign exchange risk the investment managers have advised that they can use certain financial instruments to minimise exposure to exchange rate movements. The Society's investment portfolio may be exposed to interest rate risk by way of the fixed rate investments that it holds. The investment managers have advised that to manage this risk, the investment portfolio can use interest rate derivatives to minimise exposure to interest rate movements. Liquidity risk is the risk that the Society may encounter in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities that are settled by delivering cash or other financial assets. The Society's policy with regard to liquidity risk is to limit short-term borrowings and, if necessary, maintain a backstop facility from its bankers. Credit risk refers to the risk that a counterparty will default on its contractual obligations resulting in financial loss to the Society's investment holdings. The Society's investment managers have advised that its investment portfolio has minimal exposure to counterparty contractual obligations due to the nature of its investment holdings.

All investments in the current and prior year are held within unrestricted funds.

## THE STAIR SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (cont'd)

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

## 9. Debtors

| $2022$ | 2021 |
| :---: | :---: |
| 375 | 363 |
| 136 | 129 |
| 2,065 | 781 |
| - | 7,271 |
| 9,189 | - |
| 11,765 | 8,544 |
| 2022 | 2021 |
| £ | £ |
| 11,875 | 10,729 |
| 1,260 | 1,188 |
| 2,400 | 1,650 |
| 1,615 | 1,476 |
| 17,150 | 15,043 |

## 11. Staff

The Society has no paid employees. The Literary Director, the Publicity and Engagement Manager and the Secretary \& Treasurer, each receive an honorarium, the level of which is set annually by the Council. The Literary Director received an honorarium of $£ 1,500(2021: £ 1,500)$, the Publicity and Engagement Manager did not receive an honorarium as the position is vacant (2021: $£ 375$ ), and the Secretary \& Treasurer received an honorarium of $£ 1,500(2021: £ 1,500)$.
12. Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions, except as disclosed in Note 11, in the current or prior year.

## REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

## TO THE MEMBERS OF COUNCIL OF THE STAIR SOCIETY

I report on the financial statements of the Society for the year ended 31 March 2022 as set out on pages 6 to 12.

## Respective responsibilities of members of council and independent examiner

The Members of Council as the charity trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (a) to (c) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the financial statements as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

## Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Society and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the financial statements.

## Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements;

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44 (1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations; and
- to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations;
have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Elima Hobnall<br>Emma Marshall, CA<br>Independent Examiner<br>Geoghegans<br>Chartered Accountants<br>6 St Colme Street<br>Edinburgh<br>EH3 6AD

