



Chair's remarks

ECAS NEWSLETTER

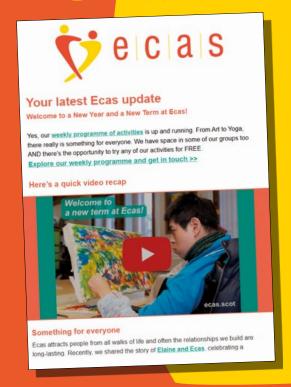
ne of the delights of being involved with Ecas is the wonderfully diverse range of people it attracts, all with different experiences and stories to tell. This variety brings a fantastic energy to what we do and helps us create the warm, welcoming and relaxing environment that we all love and appreciate.

As I approach my first year's tenure as Chair of the Ecas Board, I reflect on this and another busy year across the charity.

In June, our Ecas Art and Craft groups enjoyed their first post-covid trip to the National Gallery where our group learned much about Scottish art. No doubt, the experience helped inspire them when it came to our first creative collaboration – the Merry Ecas digital card! See page 12/13.

Volunteers are integral to the success of Ecas, with our volunteer befrienders and classroom assistants supporting the delivery of our services. See page 11 to discover how volunteering with the Ecas art group helped encourage a career change. Our volunteer befrienders are amazing too, giving their time to support isolated adults. We celebrated two befrienders by nominating them for Inspiring Volunteer Awards, see page 14.

Raising our profile is currently important for Ecas. Over the last year, we completed a website refresh and are already seeing the benefits. Thanks to Charlie, our Social Media Co-ordinator, the website is more user friendly and is attracting more visitors, thanks to improved search engine optimisation. Alongside, the launch of our



SIGN UP to our newsletter via ecas.scot

Ecas e-newsletter is helping promote and raise awareness for Ecas services. Please sign up and encourage others to do so!

This all comes at an important time. Edinburgh alone is seeing proposed spending cuts of more than £29 million across the third sector and health and social care. This may drive more demand and increased pressure on existing Ecas services so now, more than ever, we ask for your support to help us spread the word, so we can increase the impact of what we do.

In the meantime, thank you to our volunteers, Board, funders, staff and our many partners. Most of all, thank you to our wonderful service users.

Andrew Herberts, Chair

Chief Executive's report

The process of awarding Ecas grants means we don't often get to meet successful applicants or to see the personal impact of the funding. This made the opportunity to meet two of our 2024-25 Grant recipients and share their stories all the more special. See page 16.

This year, we've welcomed new team members. Alongside our new Befriending Assistant Rosa who joined us in January, (see page 15), we have new activity Group Leaders in both permanent and relief roles. All new staff have brought with them an abundance of new ideas and enthusiasm.

In February, award-winning author Kate Foster visited our Reading and Creative Writing Group, as part of the Scottish Book Trust's 'Live Literature' scheme, which brings reading and writing to the heart of communities, see page 6.

Frustratingly, our swimming hydrotherapy sessions have been suspended due to facilities issues. We hope these are resolved soon, as warm water therapy is so beneficial for those who have a physical disability. Research will be undertaken to review hydrotherapy provision in Edinburgh in the hope that an alternative venue can be secured.

Swimming remains on our timetable for now.

Ecas is committed to helping as many people as we can, so we are delighted to have the support of Aegon in doing so. The first year of our two-year charity partnership has concluded, with Aegon donating an impressive £36,395 to Ecas in January 2025! See page 22 for more information. We look forward to filling next year's report with lots of Aegon-inspired activity.

Many thanks to all those involved with Ecas for their support.

Ally Irvine, Chief Executive



Ally with Jim Ewing, Aegon's Chief Financial Officer



e've enjoyed welcoming new members to our Art Groups this year. There is such great energy in the room!

It's been a busy and productive time, with our artists showcasing their creativity. Working on all sorts of projects, the group use all sorts of media including acrylics, pencil drawing, charcoal, watercolours, oil pastels and paint pens.

Each participant works on their own projects inspired by their interests. Some have been working on a piece over time, which gives them the opportunity to really develop their skills in their chosen medium. It's exciting to see their creativity and confidence grow!

Gill Cockburn and Erin Rhode

Art Group Leaders

RUTHS

'I would recommend art at Ecas very much to anybody, I've been coming for a long time and I really do enjoy it LEE-ANN

Art

WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS 1-3PM Online and in person **Ecas, Norton Park**



n our two Craft groups, we've been exploring a whole range of new creative skills, developing confidence along the way. It's been great to welcome new people too, each bringing different experience and chat.

We've been making everything from collages to woven artworks, monoprints, dream catchers and our very own instruments!

Our sessions are participant-centred, so everyone works on their individual projects inspired by their interests. This results in a fun and thriving creative environment, full of interesting ideas to share with each other!

We've also been exploring Chair Yoga at the start of some sessions, to ease into making.

Gill Cockburn and Erin Rhode

Craft Group Leaders



'I love it, it makes me feel happy. I'm glad I tried something different.'

KIRSTEN

Craft

THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS 10.30AM-12.30PM Online and in person





t's been another great year for the group.

Members continue to read widely and push the creative boundaries, with poems and stories encompassing everything from a nice pair of baffies to ballet-dancing pigs.

Edinburgh author Kate Foster came to Ecas and thrilled us with extracts from her award-winning novel The Maiden, which retells the story of the White Lady of Corstorphine. We were also treated to Kate's very first reading from her latest book, The Mourning Necklace.

Our collaboration with other Ecas groups produced an inspired collection of work for the digital Christmas card – including a psychotic Santa and a mellifluous acrostic.

John Mackay

Reading and Creative Writing Group Leader

Kate visiting Ecas

'It is a nice, happy group – a great, expert teacher with lots of knowledge.'

BARBARA

'I like writing my stories, it helps me read as well. I get to practice my reading. On Fridays I like to draw my stories, it makes them come to life.'

LEE-ANN

Reading and Creative Writing

THURSDAYS 1-3PM Ecas, Norton Park

Music for Fundamental Superior Fundamental Superior

This year the Music for Fun class had the pleasure of welcoming new members, introducing new instruments and exploring new ways of having fun with music!

Ecas purchased three new musical keyboards, increasing the number and variety of instruments. The keyboards are small and light enough to fit comfortably on laps or wheelchair trays.

The year has also seen many playful games of musical free-association, a "breakfast" theme leading to talk of songs "Lady Marmalade", "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and "Toast"!

Members contributed to audio files used for the Creative Collaboration, as can be heard on the website.

Akin Fatunmbi

Music for Fun Group Leader

'Music's fantastic. Akin's a great music teacher, it's very enjoyable.'

CHRIS

'Akin's fantastic, so is all the team.'

KEVIN

"I just LOVE it!"

Music for Fun

FRIDAYS 2-3.30PM
The Out of the Blue Drill Hall,
Dalmeny Street



Seated Tai Chi

his year the group are exploring adapting the Tai Chi movements allowing everyone to engage 'as they are'. This enables a slightly challenging move to be met with ease and naturalness.

Tai Chi and the Chi Kung offers many benefits including:

- Improved Flexibility
- Stress Relief
- Mental Clarity
- Emotional Balance

Ann Richards

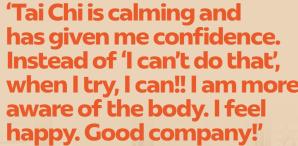
Seated Tai Chi Group Leader

'The Tai Chi movements help relax the body and mind. I feel happy being with others practicing together. It feels like a family.'

'Just Do It'

RACHAEL

RACHEL







Chair Yoga

or the chair yoga group, the social aspect is important. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive. We catch up with our news, there is lots of fun and joy.

Throughout the practice, we focus on calmness and effortless effort. We include breath work, looking for space in the body, followed by 'tense and relax.' We scan from head to toe, then enjoy a variety of sequences with sound (mantras) based on yoga tradition. The postures are adapted so we can do them together with grace and sincerity.

Then more relaxation with encouragement to sigh and yawn, before thanking ourselves for the practice. We leave smiling!

'Om shanti.'

Kerry Cooper and Sheila Donnelly Yoga Group Leaders

'The exercise is really good for me. It's really sociable and I miss it when the class is not on.'

ANNE

'The movement is enough that I can feel my body working, but not so much that it triggers PEM (post-exertional malaise).'

'I find Yoga a very happy and useful tool mentally and physically and wish I had learnt it earlier in life. We motivate each other to the best of our abilities.'

Chair Yoga

TUESDAYS 1.15-3PM Pentland Community Centre, Oxgangs Brae

lan and Ecas lan, in his Positive Mental Attitude T-s

Mental Attitude T-shirt

e love welcoming new people to our weekly groups. In summer 2024, lan joined our Art Group on a Friday. He had always had an interest in Art, but hadn't created art since childhood.

Joining any new group can be daunting and at Ecas, we are sensitive to this. Everyone we welcome takes each session at their own pace, working and creating in a way that feels comfortable.

When lan joined the group, he kept himself to himself. He preferred to wear his headphones and focus on his art. Inspired by memories of his childhood art teacher, he was interested in drawing Roman ruins.

As you can see, lan is naturally a gifted artist!

After a few months of coming along to the Art group,

soon followed by the Craft group, lan stopped wearing his headphones. He started to listen to the conversations and music around him. He also started to ask Erin the group leader questions about art.

Soon these questions became longer chats and, by October, Ian told Erin that he really felt his personal and creative confidence was developing.





Interested in attending an activity?

Il Ecas activities are fully accessible and are led by fully trained staff. No previous experience is necessary and all materials are provided. Some activities are also available online via Zoom.

You can try our activities for FREE for two weeks, and then it's only £2.30 per session!

For those who meet our set criteria, participants can apply for a grant to assist with transport costs to and from their activity. The activities timetable can be found on the back page of this report.

For further information, please contact 07500 221 618, email hello@ecas.scot or visit ecas.scot



Hannah and Ecas

An enlightening volunteering experience

Hannah started volunteering with Ecas as our Art Assistant in November 2024. We asked her to share her Ecas story. We also asked her why she would recommend volunteering with Ecas.

'The experience and confidence I gained during my time with Ecas really gave me what I needed in making the decision to pursue my career as an art teacher. I will be starting my training this coming September which is super exciting, and I accredit my time with Ecas in pushing my confidence enough to pursue this line of work.'

Read more about Hannah and Ecas ecas.scot/hannah-and-ecas



Variety is the spice

eing part of what we do makes people smile, and laughter is often the common thread that runs through all that we do.

Whether it's being a member of one of our popular weekly activities, enjoying the many benefits of our befriending service, or out and about on one of our trips, Ecas is all about being together, in good company.

Over the course of 2024-25 we had the opportunity to enjoy our time together. Here are a couple of highlights.

Ecas visits the National Galleries of Scotland

In June 2024, our Ecas trip to The National Galleries of Scotland brought our art and craft groups together. It was a hugely enjoyable afternoon with an eclectic mix of Ecas service users, all exploring and being inspired by Scotland's art collection.

We really enjoyed our guided tours of the Scottish art now on display, including masterpieces by Nasmyth, Playfair and Landseer. A real highlight was the opportunity to see and learn about The Three Graces by Canova too.

Here's just a wee taste of what we enjoyed...

For the full story including a video of our visit: ecas.scot/national-galleries-of-scotland





Our first Creative Collaboration

n December 2024, we combined the great variety of voices, creativity and experience of our Reading and Creative Writing, Art, Craft and Music groups in our first creative collaboration.

ASS ASPERTANT OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY

Inspired by the time of year, each other and our great group leaders, we created our first Digital Merry Ecas Card. Full of festive cheer, it featured our own artworks and crafts, and original work performed by our talented writers. The four minute video was accompanied by a fantastic festive jingle specially composed by our Music for Fun group.

Alongside, we created a six minute video featuring the full readings of the creative writing group. We were so delighted with this project, it's inspired us to think about future collaborations to bring us together and celebrate who we are.

Enjoy our videos on our Ecas YouTube channel: youtube.com/@ecasscot1990

Befriending

cas operates a befriending service for physically disabled adults who live in Edinburgh and would like some extra company. Our befriending service provides friendship and companionship for socially isolated people.

All our befrienders are volunteers and we match people based on shared interests and personalities. We always ensure there is some common ground as a starting point, to help the friendship flourish!

For more details, visit:

ecas.scot/befriending



'I don't get a lot of support, so the befriender has been really comforting.'

KAREN

'The last couple years I had been feeling pretty isolated, so meeting up and spending time with a new friend has been really good.'

RHEANAN

Award-winning Befriending Volunteers

In May 2024, Ecas was delighted to announce that two of our Befriending Volunteers won 2024 Inspiring Volunteer Awards.

At Ecas, we have many volunteers who we celebrate every day of the year. For this year's awards, we wanted to thank Elizabeth and lan who, between them, have been with Ecas for over 10 years. We thank them for sharing their Ecas stories with us.



VISIT ECAS.SCOT/NEWS for the full stories



Returning to Befriending – meet Aoibheann

Befriending with Ecas is a rewarding and valuable way to make a meaningful difference. So much so, our volunteers often return.

Aoibheann (pictured here with Lynn) is a great example of a volunteer returning to befriending. We asked her to share her Befriending story.



'There's a comfort in knowing that Ecas supports both the client and the volunteer and are there if you need them, with a personal touch.'

AOIBHEANN

VISIT ecas.scot for the full story

Meet Rosa our Befriending Assistant

In early 2025, we welcomed Rosa to the Ecas Befriending team.

We asked Rosa if she would be happy to share a little about herself and we are so grateful she did. As her inspiring story reveals, Rosa brings a wealth of experience, humanity and a wonderful perspective to her role as Befriending Assistant.



Live in Edinburgh and interested in being an Ecas Befriender?

Get in touch with Ecas today to find out more!

Speak with Sam on 07825 305 376 or email sam@ecas.scot

Visit ecas.scot/befriending for more information.

Ecas Grants Fund

Ecas grants are for physically disabled adults and children, living in Edinburgh and Lothian. Grants are available to meet the costs of items or services which you can't access through welfare benefits and other sources.



Over the year, Ecas awarded £41,833 to 33 applicants covering a range of items and services. We are delighted to share two Ecas Grant stories to help demonstrate the positive impact this great service has on people's lives.

Ecas awarded £41,833 to 33 applicants

READ Logan's Ecas story:

ecas.scot/logan-and-ecas





gloom. The challenges are real — both emotionally and practically - and it's easy to feel as though doors are closing all around you.

After a long journey through illness, hospital stays, and care home transitions, Ken had become increasingly isolated. While his spirit remained strong, the physical challenges of getting out and about were growing harder.

Manual wheelchair outings were exhausting and limited, almost becoming impossible, and arranging accessible transport was a constant logistical (and financial) hurdle.

Towards the end of 2024, an Ecas grant to cover a powerpack and transport costs helped Ken reclaim his freedom. His daughters Rebecca and Gemma were keen to share their father's Ecas story.

possible. It just takes a little more support, a bit of extra planning, and access to the right equipment or transport.

That all changed when Ecas stepped in.

READ Ken's Ecas story:

ecas.scot/ken-and-ecas/

Examples of Grants

Ecas disability grants have been awarded for many things including:

- larger household items such as washing machines, fridge freezers, cookers,
- furniture and carpets
- IT equipment such as laptops and iPads
- power-packs retrofitted to manual wheelchairs
- student fees, sheds and holidays!

We understand that there's some things that money can buy which can make a big difference to quality of life.

To find out more, visit: ecas.scot/grants



Finance Report

In the financial year, the total value of the portfolio has decreased by £138,547 to £4,426,051. Headline investment income has increased from £174,475 in 2024 to £184,726 in the current year.

Donations and legacies have increased from £7,819 in 2024 to £37,944 in the current year. The first year of a two-year charity partnership with Aegon has concluded, with Aegon donating a magnificent £36,395.04 to Ecas in January 2025. The Board created a new Designated Fund in February 2025 with no restrictions called the Aegon Fund to enable these funds to be ringfenced and expended beyond the 2024/25 financial year.

Ecas could not achieve what it does without the support of the trusts, companies and individuals that make donations, provide gifts or services in kind and help us in so many ways. Ecas is most grateful for your support and hope it can continue.

I would like to thank our investment managers, David Boswell and Allan Cameron, and auditors AAB led by Tony Sinclair for their help and governance. I would also like to thank all members of the F&PC and Board.

Scott Alexander Chair

Finance and Personnel Committee

Scott Alexander – Chair Catherine Dowell, John Dunn, Andrew Herberts, Caroline Loudon, Alice McIntosh.

Accounts

Summary Financial Statement

The financial information set out in this Summarised Financial Statement is only a summary of information derived from the charity's annual accounts. It does not contain additional information derived from the trustees' annual report. It does not contain sufficient information to allow as full an understanding of the results and state of affairs of the charity as would be provided by the full annual accounts and report.

Anyone requiring more detailed information can obtain a full copy of the charity's annual accounts and trustees' annual report by emailing **ally@ecas.scot**

Independent Auditors' Statement to the members of Ecas Limited

We have examined the summary financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and the auditor

The trustees (who also act as directors of the charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the summary financial statement in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law. Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement with the full annual financial statements, and its compliance with the relevant requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and the regulations made thereunder.

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/3 issued by the Auditing Practices Board. Our report on the company's full annual financial statements describes the basis of our opinion on those financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual accounts of Ecas Limited for the year ended 31 March 2025.

French Duncan LLP trading as AAB Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors

81 George Street Edinburgh EH2 3ES

Statement of Trustees

The auditor has issued unqualified reports on the full annual accounts and on the consistency of the trustees' annual report with those annual accounts. Their report on the full annual accounts contained no statement under sections 498(2) or 498(3) of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 8th July 2025 and signed on their behalf, by: Andrew Herberts



Accounts

Statement of Financial Activities

(Incorporating Income and Expenditure Account) For the year ended 31 March 2025

The state of the s	213 84 475
	84 475
	475
Investments 184,726 184,726 174,4	591
TOTAL INCOME 227,992 186,5	
EXPENDITURE ON:	
Raising funds 26,037 26,037 25,3	364
Charitable activities 310,648 310,648 317,5	577
TOTAL EXPENDITURE 336,685 342,9	941
NET EXPENDITURE BEFORE (108,693) (108,693) (156,38) NET (LOSSES)/GAINS ON INVESTMENTS	350)
Net (losses)/gains on investments (19,791) (19,791) 221,9	931
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS (128,484) (128,484) 65,5	581
Reconciliation of funds:	
Total funds brought forward 4,602,504 4,602,504 4,536,9	923
Net movement in funds (128,484) (128,484) 65,5	581
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD 4,474,020 4,474,020 4,602,5	504

Balance Sheet

As at 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	221	929
Investments	4,426,051	4,564,598
TOTAL	4,426,272	4,565,527
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	13,008	12,838
Cash at bank and in hand	63,032	51,059
TOTAL	76,040	63,897
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(28,292)	(26,920)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	47,748	36,977
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	4,474,020	4,602,504
CHARITY FUNDS		
Unrestricted funds	4,474,020	4,602,504
TOTAL FUNDS	4,474,020	4,602,504

Fundraising



A huge thank you to everyone at Aegon, with special thanks to the Edinburgh branch of the Aegon Charity Committee, for donating £36,395 in the first year of a two-year partnership. Over the year, Aegon organised a vast number of fundraising initiatives; from sponsored walks, to quizzes, to a Strictly Come Dancing themed event!

"We've had the pleasure of partnering with Ecas over the last year or so, and that time has been invaluable. Spending time and building strong relationships with our charity partners helps us understand how to support them in the most meaningful ways.

Working with Ecas has given our colleagues at Aegon real insight into the vital work they do in our local community, and we've been proud to champion their cause through our fundraising efforts."

JENNIFER KEYS, ON BEHALF OF THE AEGON CHARITY COMMITTEE

The Ecas Board has ring-fenced the donation, with planning underway on the first initiative of delivering a programme of fun, accessible outings for our service users. We look forward to reporting on these next year!

Ally with Jennifer Keys



Fundraise for Ecas

hatever you do for us, and whatever you raise, whether it's £5 or £50, we are thankful for every penny. Do get in touch if you'd like to discuss your fundraising ideas. Or simply link your fundraising to our JustGiving page www.justgiving.com/charity/ecaslimited

We are most grateful to: Aegon, Kirsten Anderson, Bank of Scotland, Marion Blake, Norman Cockburn, David Edward, John Hunter, Barbara Stewart, Colin Stewart, Anne Wilson and Jane Wilson. Thanks are also extended to many Ecas service users for their generosity in making general donations.

Ecas criteria for service users



cas follows the EHRC guideline that: "You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection."

However, please remember that Ecas only provides support to people who have a physical disability. For more details, visit **ecas.scot/about**

The Ecas team



Honorary President:

The Countess of Rosebery

Vice-Presidents:

W Graham Monteith, Gavin Strang

Board of Directors

Andrew Herberts (Chair), Ian Jubb (Vice Chair), Scott Alexander, Dale Davies, John Dunn, Joanne King, Jennifer Learmonth, Robin McKendrick, Ashleigh De Verteuil.

Permanent Staff

Ally Irvine, Chief Executive and Company Secretary

Liz Jarvis, Administrator

Sam Collins, Befriending Manager

Rosa Hardt, Befriending Assistant

Charlie Halliday, Marketing and Communications

Gill Cockburn, Erin Rhode, Art Group and Craft Group Leaders

Kerry Cooper and Sheila Donnelly, Yoga Group Leaders

Akin Fatunmbi, Music for Fun Group Leader

John Mackay, Reading and Creative Writing Group Leader

Ann Richards, Seated Tai Chi Group Leader

Aoife McGrath, Swimming Group Leader. Robyn Turnbull, Lifeguard.

Activities Timetable

For information, please contact 07500 221618 or hello@ecas.scot The programme does change occasionally, so please check with the office for the latest details.

TUESDAYS

Seated Tai Chi 1.15-3.15pm Norton Park Online and in person

Chair Yoga 1.15-3pm Pentland Community Centre

WEDNESDAYS...

Art 1-3pm Norton Park Online and in person

Swimming 6.45-8.30pm Oaklands School Hydrotherapy Pool

THURSDAYS

Craft 10.30am-12.30pm Norton Park Online and in person

Reading and 1-3pm Norton Park Online and in person

Creative Writing

FRIDAYS

Craft 10.30am-12.30pm Norton Park Online and in person

Art 1-3pm Norton Park Online and in person

Music for Fun 2-3.30pm Out of the Blue Drill Hall

ENGAGE WITH ECASPlease follow us!

@EcasScot @@EcasScot

₩@EcasScot @ecasscot1990

SIGN UP to our newsletter via ecas.scot

Registered Office: Ecas, Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY Telephone: **07500 221 618** Email: **hello@ecas.scot** Website: **ecas.scot**