



Trustees Quarterly Report

December 2025

Our Values



KIND



INSPIRATIONAL



CHILD-CENTERED



COLLABORATIVE



AMBITIOUS

Chair's Statement



Welcome to our December 2025 Trustee Report. As we close the year, I am pleased to introduce this report, which reflects a period of strong progress, purposeful activity, and continued ambition across Craighalbert.

A significant development this quarter has been the appointment of Heather Gray as Craighalbert's new Chief Executive Officer. Following a robust recruitment process, the Board is confident that Heather brings the leadership and strategic insight required to guide the organisation into its next phase. Heather will take up her post in January 2026, allowing for a carefully planned transition and continuity of leadership.

We were delighted to host our second Annual Showcase Event on 30th October, welcoming professionals from across education, health, and the third sector. It was a pleasure to open our doors, share our work, and connect with partners who share our commitment to improving outcomes for children with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs. This year's theme, *"Breaking Barriers – A multidisciplinary approach to supporting children with complex communication, learning, health and care needs"*, ran strongly throughout the morning.

This term also saw the successful launch of Craighalbert Forest School, offering pupils rich outdoor learning experiences that support communication, sensory exploration, and engagement beyond the classroom. In addition, we were pleased to host the AAC Scotland Family Fun Day, welcoming families from across Scotland to explore communication supports, assistive technologies, and inclusive activities. We are also grateful to a volunteer team from William Grant, whose time and enthusiasm have made a valuable contribution to improving our environment.

As we look ahead, we do so with pride in what has been achieved and confidence in the strength of our community. I would like to wish everyone connected with Craighalbert a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

School Roll and Children

The school roll is currently 16 (16 FTE) children. 16 children are full time and 0 are part time.

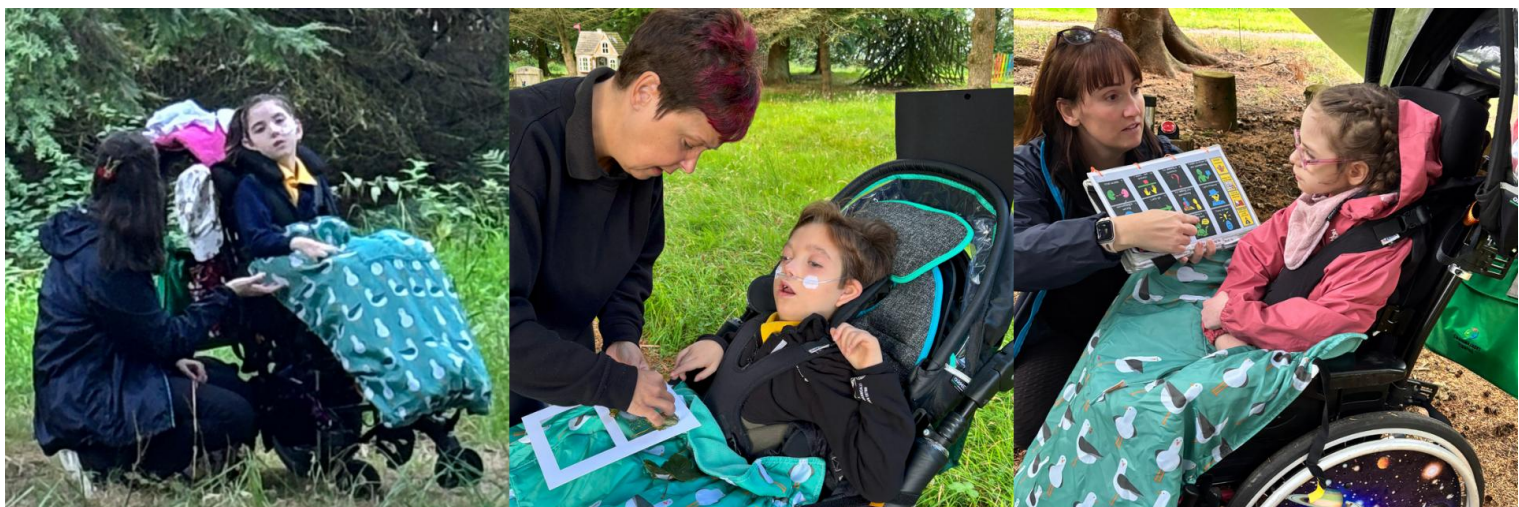


Activities

This quarter has been rich in learning experiences and wider-centre activities, reflecting the strength of our curriculum, our commitment to children's voices, and the increasing breadth of opportunities available to children and families.

A major highlight this period has been the school achieving UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Silver Award, recognising the Centre's sustained commitment to embedding children's rights across all aspects of school life. This award reflects the strength of our ethos, the quality of relationships, and the meaningful ways pupils are supported to express their views through AAC. Work is already beginning as we progress towards the Gold Award over the next three years.

We launched Craighalbert Forest School, with sessions running three days per week to ensure every class can participate. Children have explored seasonal changes, taken part in sensory-rich learning activities, and engaged with stories supported by switches, props, and alternative pencils for writing. Activities have included nature hunts, nest-building challenges, and experiencing the sights and sounds of a real fire (with safety systems in place), all contributing to outdoor learning, communication, and environmental awareness. The programme has been very well received, with pupils benefiting from increased engagement, motivation, and opportunities to generalise skills beyond the classroom.



This year's Halloween celebration, themed "*The Greatest Showman*" and chosen by the Pupil Council, was a highly successful whole-school event. With strong support from the Parent Council, the hall was transformed into a circus-themed space with accessible games, sensory experiences, and inclusive activities. The event further highlighted the children's increasing confidence in communicating choices and contributing to decision-making through AAC.



Halloween celebrations

Our Pupil Council has been highly active. Members used AAC to evaluate their Forest School experiences and are now gathering class-wide views to help shape the upcoming Christmas themed Safari Park trip. Their contributions continue to influence decision-making at school level and demonstrate the value of embedding AAC as the foundation for pupil voice.

This period has also seen continued innovation in how pupils access learning, creativity, and physical activity, underpinned by our commitment to removing barriers and promoting wellbeing. Pupils have been using eyegaze technology to explore music-making through GarageBand, enabling them to compose, experiment, and express preferences in meaningful ways. These sessions have powerfully reinforced pupil voice in practice; when provided with the right tools, children often make choices that reflect their own interests and motivations, sometimes taking learning in directions different from those originally planned by staff. This responsiveness to pupil-led learning is a key strength of our approach.



Using eyegaze to explore music through GarageBand

Supporting physical health and wellbeing remains a priority, with a clear focus on enabling participation in line with government guidance on physical activity for children with disabilities. The Centre has both a small and a large Innowalk, which are used regularly to enhance pupils' physical health while simultaneously supporting engagement and learning within the classroom environment.



Pupils using the Innowalk Pro

Hydrotherapy continues to play a vital role in supporting both wellbeing and development. While sessions are enjoyable and highly motivating, they also provide significant therapeutic benefits, allowing pupils to move more freely, build strength, relax, and work towards personalised learning and developmental goals. Above all, the hydrotherapy pool is a space where pupils feel happy, confident, and secure, reinforcing the strong link between emotional wellbeing, physical health, and readiness to learn.



Enjoying time in our hydrotherapy pool

This period has also been an exceptionally busy and vibrant time across the Centre as we prepared for a wide range of Christmas activities. Planning has been underway for our Annual Christmas Light Switch On event, alongside producing our Christmas film, class parties, and festive trips designed to ensure all pupils can participate in and enjoy seasonal celebrations in inclusive and meaningful ways. These activities are carefully planned to reflect children's voices, accessibility, and sensory needs, and form an important part of building community, shared experiences, and positive memories for children and families. Full details and reflections on these events will be shared in our next update.

Issue 8 of the Craighalbert Courier, is now available to view on our website www.craighalbert.org.uk/newsletter This is a termly newsletter providing an overview of the children's achievements over the term, showcasing what they have been doing and what is planned for the upcoming term.

Parent Council

Our work with parents and carers continues to evolve, with several meaningful developments this term. The Parent Council has agreed to fundraise for an outdoor covered play area. Following a successful Forest School trial during Term 1—and plans to resume sessions from March—a covered space would enable us to offer this valuable learning experience throughout the year.

Children's views on Forest School, gathered through the Pupil Council, are displayed on the Pupil Council Information Board in the Atrium.

Parents have shared that, while review meetings are essential, they can feel intimidating due to the number of professionals present. They advised that a more informal annual parents' evening would be welcomed. We are now in the process of organising this for Term 3 to ensure families feel comfortable and supported in discussing their child's progress.

The Parent Council will shortly begin the process of rewriting their constitution and will re-advertise for new office bearers. At the most recent meeting in November, discussions also explored widening Parent Council membership to include EIP parents to ensure broader representation and engagement.

Key Updates

On 4th October, we were pleased to host the AAC Scotland Family Fun Day at Craighalbert. Families from across Scotland attended to explore a wide range of communication supports, assistive technologies, and interactive learning experiences. Activities included Drive Deck demonstrations, Bookbug storytelling, arts and crafts, Tin Can Alley, dancing, and DJ sessions. This event showcased the Centre's expertise in AAC and Assistive Tech and strengthened connections with families and partner organisations.



AAC Scotland Family Fun Day at Craighalbert

On Thursday 30th October, we were delighted to welcome professionals from across education, health, and the third sector to Craighalbert for our 2nd Annual Showcase Event. It was our pleasure to open our doors, share our work, and connect with individuals and organisations equally committed to improving outcomes for children with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs.

This year's theme "Breaking Barriers: A multidisciplinary approach to supporting children with complex communication, learning, health, and care needs" shone throughout the morning as speakers, staff, parents, and attendees came together to explore how we can collectively ensure that every child is heard, understood, and enabled to achieve their full potential.

We were honoured to welcome Judith Turbyne, Chief Executive of Children in Scotland, as our keynote speaker. Judith spoke powerfully about the importance of children's rights, ensuring every child's voice is heard, and the role of early, specialist, and family-centred support in realising those rights.

Our own highly skilled team also took to the stage, providing an in-depth look at our Early Intervention Programme, nursery, primary, and secondary provision. Their presentations illustrated how holistic, collaborative practice is embedded in all that we do, from supporting children to develop their earliest communication skills to ensuring young people have the tools they need to thrive.

One of the most impactful moments of the morning came from two of our parents, who spoke passionately and openly about their personal journeys. They highlighted the real-life difference Craighalbert has made for their children and families, sharing the challenges they have faced and the progress they have seen through tailored support, specialist approaches, and genuine partnership.

We were also privileged to hear from an AAC user, who shared his experience of learning in a mainstream school. His contribution was a powerful reminder of the importance of nurturing each child's voice as early as possible, removing barriers to communication, and listening to what children and young people want to express. His story reinforced why access to communication support is fundamental, not optional.



Our work continues to gain recognition at local and national levels, with key developments including:

- A developing partnership with the University of Strathclyde, leading to both an upcoming student placement and the delivery of a guest lecture by the school.
- Early collaborative engagement with the Complex Needs Network sub-group focused on ASN/complex needs professional learning. This has potential to position the school and Centre more prominently within national professional learning and research discussions.
- Active representation within the national Curriculum Improvement Cycle review, including participation in four national meetings and the sub collaboration group, Personal Achievement Development. A further in-person national meeting is scheduled for 12 December which Shona will attend.

We have also seen increased requests from local authority colleagues seeking specialist support, particularly in communication approaches, assistive technology, and lesson planning for complex needs. Since early October, three formal requests have been received. All referrers noted the National Complex Needs Network as their initial point of contact, followed by further engagement with our website.

Professional Development and Representation

Staff have actively participated in a variety of conferences, events and training including:

Joanna represented Craighalbert in London at the APCP Conference, “Inspiring Excellence, Improving Outcomes for Every Child,” 3rd-4th October, further strengthening our visibility and engagement at national professional forums.

Alicia attended the CP Scotland Annual Conference on 8th October, where we also hosted a stall to raise awareness of our services and engage with professionals and families.

Staff development and training

This quarter, the Operational Management Team participated in DISC Management Training and a revisioning-our-objectives session.

Both sessions were designed to strengthen team development, enhance working relationships, and support more effective collaborative practice.

Dearbhla, Kimberley, and Tina attended the *Communication Matters* Conference, enhancing their knowledge of AAC and best practices to support children with complex communication needs.

Shona represented Craighalbert at the GTC Conference, gaining insights into national developments in teaching and professional standards.

Tina attended the CALL Scotland Makers Day, exploring the use of 3D printing to create switches and bespoke adaptations, an area with promising potential for improving access and participation for our pupils.

4 members of staff successfully completed Pool Plant training, ensuring we maintain strong operational knowledge and compliance within our hydrotherapy provision.



Pool Plant Training

Barbara-Ann successfully completed a Sleep Training course in Birmingham, further expanding our internal expertise in an important area of child and family support.

External Training Delivered

During this quarter, we delivered a manual handling training session for parents and carers in partnership with PAMIS, supporting families to develop safe and practical skills that benefit their children's care and daily routines.

Staffing

New Starts & Recruitment



Erin
Teacher

In September, we were delighted to welcome Erin to the team as our new Teacher. Erin will be working with our senior pupils in the Oak Room and brings valuable experience across both teaching and healthcare. Her combined skill set strengthens our multidisciplinary approach and will be a significant asset in supporting the learning, wellbeing, and individual needs of our senior pupils.



Bobby
Facilities Officer

In October, we were delighted to welcome Bobby to the team as our new Facilities Officer. Since joining Craighalbert, Bobby has spent time getting to know the staff team and familiarising himself with the building and our extensive grounds. His proactive approach and commitment to maintaining a safe, welcoming, and well-managed environment will make him a valuable asset to the Centre, and we are very pleased to have him on board.

Funding

During this quarter, we have raised a total of £2,931.54 through a combination of community fundraising and individual donations.

Laura Moffat completed the Great Scottish Half Marathon on Sunday 5th October to raise funds for Craighalbert.

Our pupils made a special banner to cheer Laura along in her race, and she certainly did them proud, completing the half marathon and raising an amazing £1,405.

We were delighted to have Laura visit Craighalbert to meet some of our pupils, show off her well-earned medal, and take some lovely photos together with the banner the children had made for her.



Laura Moffat fundraising for Craighalbert

The Men's Acoustic Club Croy raised £360 for the Centre. In addition, we received several individual donations totalling £118.75.

Every donation we receive makes a real difference to the Centre. The generosity of our supporters helps us to continue providing vital early intervention programmes for children aged 0-5 years, while also enabling us to deliver additional activities and opportunities that enrich the lives of our pupils.

Donations also allow us to open our doors to the wider community, supporting events such as our Christmas Extravaganza and other family-focused activities that bring people together. We are truly grateful for every penny raised, as it directly supports our work with children and families, helping us to create meaningful experiences and lasting impact.

Early Intervention

Music Space

We continue to work closely with Nordoff & Robbins to develop our Music Space Programme.

On Saturday 8th November, our Occupational Therapist Laura joined Music Therapist Janet and one of our EIP parents on stage at the Scottish Music Awards at the Barrowlands, where the parent spoke about their experience and the benefits of Music Space sessions for their child and family.



Attending the Scottish Music Awards

Water Space

Our partnership with Turtle Tots continues to strengthen through the development of our Water Space Programme. The Turtle Tots swim instructor plays a key role in supporting families during sessions and helps parents progress to wider Turtle Tots classes out with Craighalbert, expanding opportunities for families to access inclusive swimming activities.

Play Space

2 of our highly skilled learning, care and therapy practitioners (LCTPs) continue to lead on delivery of Water and Play Space sessions, with the wider learning team having oversight of the 3 sessions August-October focussed on early and sensory motor learning and the occupational therapy team having oversight of the current block, introducing assistive technology to enhance play and movement experiences. Speech and language therapy team oversight of sessions January-March 2026 with a focus on embedding early access to AAC/PODD in sessions and developing parental competence to support the children's emerging skills.

Partnerships

We are continuing our partnership with GCU, with two students currently completing research focused on the Music Space: “An exploration of parents’ and caregivers’ experiences of the joint music therapy and occupational therapy sessions for children with complex motor impairments.” The students are now in the final weeks of their dissertation, and we look forward to supporting them as they complete this important work.



Partners in Advocacy are currently experiencing a service gap following the withdrawal of our allocated advocate. PiA are attempting to recruit a replacement; if unsuccessful, we will explore alternative routes to independently capture out children and young people’s voices and represent them to key decision-makers.

Our partnership with Ian Nisbet continues to provide valuable sessions for parents and staff on the placement request process. This has increased parental understanding, challenged misconceptions, and strengthened staff confidence when preparing for and attending tribunals.

We were delighted to welcome a volunteer team from William Grant & Sons, who supported the Centre by repainting several spaces and offices. Their contribution has significantly improved our environment, and we are grateful for their professionalism, teamwork, and enthusiasm.



William Grant Volunteers at Craighalbert

Feedback

The Team continues to receive strong informal positive feedback from parents and partners.



New Trustees

We are delighted to welcome Jim Watson to our Board of Trustees. Jim recently retired following a distinguished career spanning more than three decades in senior leadership roles, bringing with him a depth of experience and strategic insight that will be of significant value to Craighalbert.

Jim held a number of senior positions within Scottish Enterprise, including Director of Innovation and Director of Business Growth. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated strong leadership in strategy development, organisational growth, partnership working, and innovation. His experience of working at a national level, alongside public, private, and third-sector partners, will further strengthen the Board's capacity to support Craighalbert's strategic ambitions.

We are delighted to welcome Jim to the Board and look forward to the contribution he will make in supporting the continued development and sustainability of the Centre.

Lesley Anne Vannan

Chair, The Scottish Centre for Children with Motor Impairments



Craighalbert Centre

Enabling Children to Achieve

Our Values



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