



Calton Hill Conservation Trust

**Calton Hill Conservation Trust  
Special Members' Meeting  
Saturday, 1 November 2025, 14.00  
Scottish Chamber Orchestra, 4 Royal Terrace EH7 5AB**

## **Agenda**

1. Introduction (Chair)

2. Proposal to adopt Six Policy Objectives to guide the Trust (Chair)

2.1. Support sustainable visitor access that protects the hill's unique character and heritage, and ensures it remains an attractive and rewarding destination, both for the sake of the hill itself and the wider tourism economy.

2.2. Restore the physical condition of the hill and maintain it in a good state.

2.3. Improve on-site information for both locals and visitors.

2.4. Make the hill more accessible to all including the less able.

2.5. Protect the hill as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, so we have a more beautiful natural environment with better quality and variety of wildlife, based on the encouragement of native species of flora and fauna.

2.6. Establish a nature reserve on the western side of the hill.

The Six Policy Objectives would reinforce Clause 6 (Purposes) in the constitution:

*6. The organisation's purposes are:*

*6.1. To promote and encourage the conservation, preservation, protection and improvement of the area known as Calton Hill, Edinburgh....*

*6.2. To inform the public of the significance of the area, its history and environment, and its future sustainability, with the intention of encouraging a responsible attitude towards the area's amenity and attractions;*

*6.3. To promote and encourage enjoyment and a responsible use of the area by a wide range of people and organisations, including those who live and work in the locality.*

If agreed, the objectives would be included in Standing Orders.

3. Erosion Emergency (Chair)

4. Proposed increase in membership fees to £25, if agreed to be included in Standing Orders (Treasurer)

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5. Access barrier and disabled access issues (Vice Chair)
6. Open discussion about the hill and the work of the Trust (Chair)
7. Any other business (Chair)

Simon Holledge, Chair  
Susan Poupard, Vice Chair  
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Calton Hill Conservation Trust

## SPECIAL MEMBERS MEETING, 1 NOVEMBER 2025 PROPOSAL TO INCREASE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

### **Background**

The current annual membership fee for the Calton Hill Conservation Trust (CHCT) is £10 per person, set when the organisation was founded as the Friends of Calton Hill in early 2024.

Since then, CHCT has developed rapidly into a formally constituted charity with an ambitious programme of conservation and public engagement. In partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council, Inspiring Scotland, Edinburgh World Heritage, Edinburgh University and others, we have delivered walks, talks, volunteer days and heritage, archaeology and biodiversity projects.

Most project costs are met by external grants. Membership income covers our core running costs – website, communications, marketing, insurance, equipment and volunteer expenses – and provides the flexible funds to seize new opportunities.

### **Why the fee needs to change**

#### **1. The fee has not changed since 2024**

£10 was suitable when we were new and informal. With a stronger public profile, higher standards and a wider range of activities, our running costs have grown and will continue to grow.

#### **2. We need a firmer base for running costs**

Grants fund projects, not operations – items like improved branding and signage, volunteer tools, insurance and publicity. A modest increase would let CHCT become better resourced and more visible, making our charitable work more effective.

#### **3. Our events rely on experts who currently work for free**

Our walks and talks are led by professional geologists, ecologists, historians or architects. We would like to offer small honoraria or travel expenses as a matter of fairness and professionalism.

#### **4. Collecting £10 is time-consuming**

Processing small payments, reminders and renewals takes considerable volunteer time. A higher fee simplifies administration and makes each transaction efficient.

#### **5. The benefits clearly outweigh the cost**

Members enjoy a year-round programme of free walks, talks and volunteering, which we would intend to maintain. Comparable experiences elsewhere often cost £5–£10 per event. Attending only a few activities easily justifies the proposed £25 fee.

## 6. People value what they pay for

Research by the MemberWise Network and NCVO shows that higher fees can increase perceived value and engagement: “members associate fee levels with organisational credibility and benefit.” Charging more encourages members to see their subscription as genuine support for a valued cause.

## 7. Membership losses after increases are usually small

MemberWise benchmarking (2022) found that organisations typically lose under 10% of members after moderate rises, especially when the reasons are explained clearly. Numbers often recover within a year.

## 8. Flexibility to respond to opportunities

Unrestricted income lets us act quickly – matching a grant, supporting a partner project or commissioning expert input – which is increasingly important as we work with funders and the Council.

## Benchmarking

Comparable organisations charge substantially higher fees for similar benefits:

Organisation	Fee (individual)	Summary of benefits
Water of Leith Conservation Trust	£36	Guided walks, talks, newsletters, supports river conservation
Glasgow City Heritage Trust – Friends	£35	Free entry to talks, members-only events, shop discounts
Old Edinburgh Club	£30	Annual journal, talks, visits
Edinburgh World Heritage – Friends	£30	Priority invites to lectures/tours, supports conservation
Cockburn Association	from £25	Civic campaigns, lectures, Doors Open Day
Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland	£45	Lectures, casework news, heritage events
Scottish Wildlife Trust	£48	Magazine, events, reserves, supports wildlife programmes

These organisations operate at a similar or slightly larger scale, with similar membership benefits (talks, walks, publications, involvement in conservation).

A CHCT fee of £25 per person would remain below most peers, while signalling that we are a credible and established conservation charity.

## Possible impacts

- Some members may not wish to renew at the higher rate. Evidence from other organisations suggests that losses are usually small and short-term.
- To reduce barriers, we could introduce a “Supporter” rate of £15 (for those on low incomes) and a new Household Membership at £35, recognising that many members join as couples or households.
- We will make clear that fees directly support the running of CHCT and enable us to continue offering most events free of charge.
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**Recommendation**

That members approve an increase in the annual membership fee from £10 to £25, with a Household Membership at £35 and a Low Income Supporters' Rate of £15 effective from Date tbc (or at next renewal).

Calton Hill Conservation Trust, 1 November 2025



## **Calton Hill Conservation Trust**

### **Standing Orders/Draft**

#### 1. Interpretation

These Standing Orders shall be read in conjunction with the Constitution of the Calton Hill Conservation Trust. If there is any conflict of meaning or wording, the Constitution shall prevail.

#### 2. Six Policy Objectives of the Calton Hill Conservation Trust:

The Trust undertake to:

- 2.1. Support sustainable visitor access that protects the hill's unique character and heritage, and ensures it remains an attractive and rewarding destination, both for the sake of the hill itself and the wider tourism economy.
- 2.2. Restore the physical condition of the hill and maintain it in a good state.
- 2.3. Improve on-site information for both locals and visitors.
- 2.4. Make the hill more accessible to all including the less abled.
- 2.5. Protect the hill as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, so we have a more beautiful natural environment with better quality and variety of wildlife, based on the encouragement of native species of flora and fauna.
- 2.6. Establish a nature reserve on the western side of the hill.

#### 3. Subscription

The annual subscription for the financial year 2025-2026, and thereafter until further notice, shall be fixed at £xx per member.

#### 4. Adoption of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders were adopted at the 1 November 2025 Members meeting of the Calton Hill Conservation Trust.