



FRISKIS ABERDEEN

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

Annual General Meeting Saturday 11th April 2026

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Chairperson's Report

Introduction

This is our 21st year as an Association of Friskis&Svettis and something to celebrate, especially following the challenges of recent years. Friskis Aberdeen's Committee has continued the work of last year in line with the Friskis&Svettis 2023-25 strategy focused on maintaining / growing membership, new Leader recruitment and encouraging volunteer engagement.

Friskis Aberdeen has continued to provide a range of fun, high-quality, low-cost exercise to our local communities in and outdoors. In addition, we have participated in a health and wellbeing festival; had a promotional stall at a community fayre and concluded a 6-month advertising package in the widely circulated Trend magazine. We provided warm-ups at Run Balmoral in April 2025 and again the weekend before the 2026 AGM – this is the 21st year of doing so. We've raised money for a range of charities; and launched the new Friskis Aberdeen website. Attendance at many classes is increasing (or remains consistent) and over 5% of our memberships so far this year are new. Our membership is split roughly 65% Aberdeen / 35% Moray.

There have been changes and challenges this year. Due to unforeseen circumstances Susan Rothnie had to stand back from the Chairperson's role. Jackie Richardson stepped down as a Leader early in 2025 due to ill-health. This left us with only 7 active Leaders, but there was no reduction in the number of exercise classes on offer (17 per week). Thanks to Rosey who took on Jackie's class at Ruthrieston Community Centre. Later in the year we were delighted that Fiona returned to being an active Leader and has since taken it over. Sadly, we said a fond farewell to Jenny Chapman in April, Jenny Angus in June and Allan Copland in July, all long-term members and active supporters of our Association.

Many people have volunteered their time and energy to help run Friskis Aberdeen. Volunteers are the heart of our unique exercise Association. The Election Committee has been active in encouraging the membership to step forward and help with the running of the Association, and it is encouraging to see some new names come forward to join Committees. Huge thanks to the Committee Members, Subs and Election Committee; to Pauline our past Chairperson for her wise counsel, to our Leaders both in Jympa and Viking Hiking; to Christine, Katie and Faye for maintaining our social media and to our members, who have continued to support Friskis Aberdeen.

Friskis Aberdeen 2025-26

The Committee

Susan Rothnie (Chairperson) / John Gregory (Interim Chairperson),
Christine Richardson, Elspeth Graham, Suzanne Turnbull, Mary Hill / Jan
Hosie (VH Rep) & Pauline Westwood (Part time)

Substitute Committee

Alastair McIntosh, Rosey Leiper, Joanna Ewen, Anne Bewick and Kevin Devine
(until September 2025)

Treasurer

John Gregory

Election Committee

Kenneth McAlpine (Convener), Dave Curry and Sheena Grant

Other Roles

There are a variety of other roles undertaken across the Association, including:

Viking Hiking Co-ordinator - Dave Willett

Website Manager - Katie Stott

Facebook Co-ordinator - Christine Richardson

X (Twitter) posts - Faye Simpson

Programme Check (LUF/Update) Record - Pauline Westwood

Publicity – The Committee

Education Officer – Pauline Westwood

Membership

Membership for 2025 is consistent at 379 (388 in 2024 and 361 in 2023).

Leaders

There are currently 8 Exercise Class Leaders (Christine, Faye, Fiona, Jackie, Katie, Mandy, Pauline & Rosey) who offer Jympa, Soft Jympa, Soft Jympa with Bands, Multi-training, Dans, and Coreflex classes across the week. There are also 11 VH Leaders (Alan, Andrew, Dave C, Dave W, Eva, Jackie, Joan, Kenneth, Mary, Ruth & Stewart) who offer fitness walks in Aberdeen and Buckie.

Leader Training 2025-26

Jill Reid has successfully applied for exercise Leader training in Sweden (see Education Report).

Kick Off

There was no Kick Off event during 2025. However, plans are afoot to have a special event this year to celebrate the 21st anniversary of joining Friskis&Svettis. Christine, Pauline and Rosey are coordinating this, and dates have been agreed for an autumn KO weekend - September 26-27th. Discussions are ongoing concerning Swedish attendees, preferably Leaders well known to Friskis Aberdeen that have visited over those 21 years. It is hoped that Jill Reid's licensing as a new leader will take place during the weekend, as well as the LUFing (appraisal) of any Leaders new programmes. The weekend's timetable would include a few masterclasses for the enjoyment of all interested members.

Operational Plan 2026-27

The operational plan is in a separate Appendix 1.

John Gregory

Viking Hiking

Viking Hiking has had another successful year running weekly walks at Hazlehead Thursday – Sunday at 10 am. Numbers have been consistent with Thursday and Friday groups mainly attended by those who prefer a faster more challenging walk and the weekend groups tending to be slightly more leisurely but still providing a good workout. Members also enjoyed the social aspect of the walks.

In addition, regular, longer monthly walks have been offered with good participation. The beautiful summer weather this year added to the pleasure participants gained from outings to various locations including an informative walk around the Peterculter area, Crathie to Ballater over the hills, Bridge of Potarch to Kincardine O'Neil, Castle Fraser and Loch Muick. Longer walks tend to be around 10 miles in length depending on the terrain and time of year but always give excellent opportunities to engage with the natural environment and fellow participants.

Viking Hiking ran two successful Christmas lunches which were well attended at the Deeside Golf Club and the Atholl Hotel. Summer celebrations included an outing to Stonehaven with a walk up to Dunnottar Castle followed by lunch overlooking the harbour.

Leaders all have current first aid certificates with seven Leaders gaining certificates this year at a course run by Adventure Aberdeen.

We now have Viking Hiking beanies and backpacks to promote Viking Hiking, and these have been well received by members.

Viking Hiking would like to thank all the Leaders for their continued support and commitment both for the regular weekly walks, the longer walks which they need to recce and lead, and for organising the extra events and training.

Mary Hill

The VH group in Buckie led by Joan Mair also continues to go well. This year it has grown from strength to strength, adding some new recruits. Unfortunately, we've also lost a few staunch members due to ill health.

Education Report

New Leader

We are very happy to report that Jill Reid, one of our members, has successfully applied to go forward for exercise Leader training in Boson, Sweden. Jill has been attending exercise classes regularly since discovering Friskis through our advertising campaign in Trend magazine last year. She will attend the first stage of training this March to gain the skills to guide safe and enjoyable exercise sessions and will complete Jympa training in May. Jympa is Friskis&Svettis' original exercise programme that focuses on accessible, fun training routines suitable for a wide range of fitness levels. In September 2026, we will host a Kick-Off event here in Aberdeen where Jill's Jympa programme will be assessed for her license. This is positive news for Friskis Aberdeen as it is the first time in 8 years that we have had someone come forward for Leader training. This will enhance our provision of exercise classes, and we hope will inspire other members to support our mission of improving health and wellbeing in the community. If you are interested in following in Jill's footsteps, or in helping the Association in any other way, please chat with one of your exercise Leaders.

First Aid Training

Since last year, Friskis Aberdeen fund up to £90 towards emergency First Aid training. Exercise and Viking Hiking Leaders can choose training from a range of providers, with some getting access through their employment. Several Leaders have opted for the courses provided by Sport Aberdeen. For details see <https://www.sportaberdeen.co.uk/community-sport/training-and-education>. To claim the first aid training funding contact the Treasurer via aberdeen@friskissvettis.co.uk.

FriskisAkademin

All Friskis exercise Leaders have access to a range of digital training and inspirational materials, to enable them to keep up to date and develop their new exercise programmes. At the beginning of the year this was moved to a new platform called FriskisAkademin for improved stability and functionality. Leaders can log into it in the same way as they did for Coursio, the discontinued platform. There are lots of useful videos which are a great source of new ideas. Leaders are encouraged to regularly explore new videos and share their favourites with others.

Speakap

Speakap, the new internal communication channel was rolled out throughout Friskis in the summer of 2025. It enables exercise Leaders and functionaries to easily contact colleagues in other Associations and join Interest groups where you can exchange ideas and information. This replaces Workplace which was discontinued by Meta.

Friskis Go

Friskis Go is an exercise App that gives you access to lots of Friskis classes and exercises. It is great for times when you can't get to a class, have a spare 15 minutes for some stretches, or need a 5-minute timeout from sitting at your desk. It is a good source of inspiration for the exercise Leaders. Even if you don't speak Swedish, the clear demonstrations make it easy to follow along with each exercise. It is free for all Friskis Aberdeen members. You can download the app from your usual App store and members will be sent a code to log in.

Pauline Westwood

Social Media Report

Facebook

Our followers on Facebook are continuing to grow, and we now have nearly 1100. Remember Social Media is the best way for us to share information about news, events, class photos, Viking hiking walks and fundraising. It is particularly useful for notifying members of any last-minute class changes or cancellations. Liking, commenting and sharing posts is vital to help us spread the word about Friskis Aberdeen and bring in new members. Content is key so please send any photos, or video clips to Christine. Video clips are particularly popular! You can also help us by sharing our posts. Every 'like' or comment on our social media pages really helps.

<http://facebook.com/fsaberdeen>
@friskisaberdeen
www.instagram.com/friskisaberdeen

Christine Richardson

X

Friskis continues with its presence on X. It tends to be a different audience to Facebook and I'm hopeful we have attracted some new faces at our classes. Please tell your friends, family and colleagues to look us up and start following us to keep spreading the word.

<https://twitter.com/FriskisAberdeen>

Faye Simpson

Website Migration

I'm pleased to report that in May 2025, we successfully migrated our website to www.friskis.com, with Aberdeen's dedicated area now available at www.friskis.com/en/aberdeen.

The new Content Management System (CMS) has made updating our content significantly easier and more efficient. However, to ensure continuity, we need to address our current reliance on a single person for website updates. We also continue to depend on members to provide content and information for the site.

We'd welcome volunteers interested in learning the CMS or contributing content to help distribute this responsibility more widely.

Katie Stott

International News

As you read above, Friskis Aberdeen's new website is up and running and is simpler than the previous one. Riks, the Friskis&Svettis headquarters prepare all the core pages for European Associations in English, an improvement compared to our old website which was written in Swedish and translated using AI. Search engine optimisation now enables people searching for "fitness" or "exercise" classes to find us more readily. If any members have any expertise in websites and have some time to help the Association to manage the site, Katie would love to hear from you.

At last years (2025) AGM Riks increased the affiliation fee from 80 to 100 SEK per member. This amounts to about £8.50 (out of our £20 membership fee) per member. Because of the strengthening of the pound against the Swedish Krona over the last 5-6 years, this is roughly the same as when the fee was last increased to 80 SEK in 2020.

2025 saw the last year of the Riks Friskis&Svettis 2023-25 Strategy. The new 3-year strategy for 2026-28 was discussed and agreed at an Extraordinary General Meeting held in December. Here is an executive summary.

Friskis&Svettis aims to grow from over 500,000 members to 750,000 by 2028, guided by two strategic priorities:

1. **Strengthen the Organisation:** Improve efficiency, reduce vulnerability, and future-proof operations through shared processes, financial stability, and digitalisation.
2. **Accelerate Growth:** Expand membership, modernise facilities, and deepen societal engagement to attract new groups and retain existing members.

The strategy emphasises Friskis&Svettis' core purpose – making high-quality, enjoyable training accessible to all – and its values of inclusivity, engagement, and innovation. Clear goals include achieving a members satisfaction index above 85%, annual membership growth of 6%, reducing churn below 25%, and establishing new facilities and partnerships. Progress will be monitored through systematic follow-up and key activities at both local and national levels.

We are encouraged to think about how we want the future to look for Friskis Aberdeen. During 2026 your Committee will consider what is relevant and refine / define our development plans for the future.

The Friskis Sweden AGM was held 14-15th March 2026.

Finally, to Rosey. While on a skiing holiday in Norway during January she led exercise classes in Oslo and Lillehammer where she met up with old friends including one or two leaders who have visited Aberdeen for past Kick Off events. Thank you Rosey, for being such a great ambassador for Friskis Aberdeen.

Conclusion

As another year passes by, please join me in thanking all the volunteers - various Committee colleagues and exercise & VH Leaders - for their support. It is important to remember and celebrate our role in improving the health and wellbeing of our members. Members are encouraged to come forward to help our cause in any way you can – it is very rewarding. We have demonstrated resilience over the years since the pandemic and should be confident that Friskis Aberdeen will continue to thrive.