

THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF 88TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN BELL'S SPORTS CENTRE, PERTH
on Saturday 4 November 2017, at 2.00pm

1 PRESENT

Office Bearers: Mrs H Russell (*Chairman*)

Honorary President (& Past Chairman): Mrs J Martin

Past Chairmen: Mrs L Gaul, Mr A Gray, Mr J Healy, Mr S Adam

In Attendance: Mr A Kellett (Chairman Elect), Mr W Cant (Treasurer), Mr M Brown (Convenor, Education & Training), Mr A Lingnau (Convenor, Membership Services), Ms A McArthur (Convenor, Youth Services)

164 delegates were present, representing 147 branches and holding 338 votes.

2 APOLOGIES

Past Chairmen – Ruth Beattie, Irene Bennett and John Wilkinson.

Branches - Burlington (Ontario), Exeter, The Hague, Houston, Manchester, Tucson and Vancouver

3 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Mrs Russell welcomed all delegates and observers to the Annual General Meeting, and extended a special welcome to members who would receive the Society's Scroll of Honour, acknowledging their contribution to the work of the Society. As there were no matters being voted on which the Board considered contentious, voting would be by a show of hands. If a vote was obviously conclusive, she would declare a result, but in the event of doubt a paper back-up system would be brought into play. Mrs Russell then read the message received from Her Majesty The Queen.

4 MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIETY'S PATRON, QUEEN ELIZABETH II

"Please convey my thanks to the Management Board and members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society for their loyal greetings, sent on the occasion of their 88th Annual General Meeting, which is being held as part of their Annual Conference Weekend from 3-5 November in Perth.

As your Patron, I was interested to know that members of the Society from across the United Kingdom and further afield will be attending this year's event. Your thoughtfulness in writing was much appreciated and in return I send my warm good wishes to you all for a successful and enjoyable programme."

Signed: Elizabeth R

5 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SOCIETY'S SCROLL OF HONOUR RECIPIENTS

Presentation of the Scrolls of Honour would take place that evening, prior to the Ball. Mr Kellett announced the names of those to be honoured (*nominating branch/committee in brackets*):

- Roy Bain (Helensburgh & District)
- Liz Donaldson (Washington DC)
- Marilyn Healy (Membership Services Committee)
- Anne Kennedy (Sydney)

6 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 5th NOVEMBER 2016

The motion "To confirm the adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of 5th November 2016" was proposed by Clive Warren-Smith (Bristol), seconded by Richard Austin (Headquarters), and **was approved**.

7 SOCIETY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mrs Russell was pleased to present a short report on RSCDS activities during the last year and to look forward briefly to next year. Many delegates and members had attended the Open Forum that morning and heard about progress with parts of the business plan which branches can most easily engage in and support. She was very heartened to hear the good ideas from branches and affiliated groups. Another particularly important aspect of forward planning was finances; the Honorary Treasurer would discuss that shortly but

his efforts, and those of Coates Crescent staff, had resulted in a significantly better situation with regard to central costs and she thanked them.

8 Priorities identified by branches included improving the website and reviewing the teaching qualification. Progress on the website was good, as reported by Anselm Lingnau, Convenor of Membership Services, that morning. The basic structure was mapped out and a range of different users identified. With regard to teacher training, some adjustments had been made to the current syllabus, and the design of a new, alternative qualification was well under way, with contributions from people in the different regions of the world.

9 The ceilidh that took place the previous night was a new initiative. A Ceilidh Working Group was trying to set up more outward-facing events for the community, and that involved trying to engage families and particularly young people in ceilidh dancing. RSCDS had run ceilidhs at the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow for a few years now and would do so again in February 2018. It was also hoped to run a ceilidh, with the help of Glasgow Branch, on 22nd April in Òran Mór, a prestigious venue in Glasgow.

10 This year, RSCDS collaborated with Harper Collins publishers to produce a little book of Scottish dances – some old, some new, some different and all very enjoyable. It was hoped to identify more of this kind of partnership and other opportunities would be sought.

11 Winter School in Pitlochry was very well attended. Spring Fling and Spring Fringe in Bonn were highly successful, attracting a record 302 dancers. Summer School this year had 696 attendees, compared with 633 last year. She thanked and congratulated the organisers of all these events.

12 Before turning to the future, Mrs Russell wished to answer two questions that Aad Boode (Delft Branch) had asked at the 2014 AGM. She had replied personally to him on these matters but, for the record, they involved Teachers' Associations, which took many shapes and forms across the world. All the Teachers' Associations who wished to be were now represented on the RSCDS website, and the status of Teachers' Associations with regard to representation at the AGM was now consistent.

13 Looking to the future, RSCDS had an opportunity to engage with the Scottish government in their current Culture Conversation, which was their attempt to form a culture strategy for Scotland. She urged branches and affiliated groups to take the opportunity to submit their views. The necessary link, together with discussion packs, would be circulated to enable branches and groups to do this. Scottish culture had an impact far beyond Scotland so wherever people danced, it was important to convince politicians that nurturing the tradition in the wider community in Scotland and elsewhere was an essential goal.

14 Gillian Wilson, the previous Executive Officer, had left for another post at the end of March. It had taken some time to select and appoint the right person for the job, but she was now delighted to welcome Chris Milne to the post. Mrs Russell thanked Andrew Kellett, the rest of the Trustees, and above all the staff at 12 Coates Crescent for their support and diligence during the seven months of operating without an Executive Officer. She also thanked fellow members of the RSCDS for their continued commitment to Scottish country dance and their support of the Society.

15 TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Bill Cant, Treasurer, presented his report.

16 First and foremost, Mr Cant wished to place on record his thanks to the staff of 12 Coates Crescent, in particular Finance Manager Sandra Parish, and Cécile Hascoët, who had done an excellent job in controlling costs over the year and continually seeking ways to improve the efficiency and reporting of the organisation, especially since the departure of the Executive Officer. He was also grateful for the help and guidance of the Finance & Governance Panel. At last year's AGM, he had made an appeal for new members to refresh the Panel; following numerous expressions of interest, Lizzie Conder, Linda Harley and John Gibson had been appointed over the course of the year.

17 This year's results, showing a surplus for the year to 31st March 2017 of £28,000, were significantly better than the previous year and also better than the budget. The full Trustees' Report and Financial Statements was a 37-page document, which had been available on the Society's website since August. As the previous year, a shorter summary version, dealing with just the financial numbers, had been produced. However, he

recommended members to view the full document, which detailed the charity's performance, activities and achievements in the year.

18 Within the summary version, the one-page schedule headed Detailed Statement of Financial Activities was what he would address shortly. The first line of the statement showed that the improved result was not the result of donations and legacies. As a charity, RSCDS was always very pleased to receive donations and legacies, which were used for the long-term development of the Society, but they were not depended upon as a source of income. The investment income of the Society was up, reflecting good levels of dividends from the Standard Life Wealth funds, where most investments were held.

19 Two years ago, the AGM passed a motion to increase the subscription by £2, and this year's accounts were the first to reflect that increase and, combined with rigorous pursuit of branches by Headquarters, this showed a £20,000 increase in income. It was reassuring to note that very few paying members had been lost as a result of the increase, only 108 in the year. Given that there were 158 branches, it was clear, and heartening, that some of these branches must be growing.

20 Income from Summer School 2016 was down slightly, partly because there had been a couple of large groups in 2015, but more importantly, expenses at £244,000 were down as a result of tighter control. Winter School showed a significant increase in income while expenses were understandably up, but the overall benefit was a significant increase. Overall, the performance of these two events improved the result by £40,000. Mr Cant could not emphasise enough the importance of a successful Summer School to the financial wellbeing of the Society, accounting for almost half the gross income. Sales of CDs, music and books were down year on year, reflecting use of new technology as people increasingly downloaded music rather than purchasing a CD.

21 Income from regular activities thus totalled £842,000, compared with £836,000 the previous year. In the 2016 column, the "other income" figure was basically the transfer from the Unincorporated Association to the Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG).

22 With regard to expenditure, direct costs of Summer School and Winter School had already been mentioned, costs of sales were down in line with reduced sales, and there were savings in Examinations and Training. Further down, there was a further reduction in the cost of the Magazine, and less spent on Special Events and Marketing. Support costs and Governance showed an overall increase of £25,000 compared to the previous year. Staff costs were broadly in line with the previous year, while more was spent on IT support. The cost of accounting support fell, as Sandra Parish took more work in-house. The increase in Miscellaneous Expenses was largely VAT-related; the Society's VAT position was reviewed and it was believed that there may be a further exposure to VAT, so a provision was made while the situation was fully reviewed and finalised. Governance costs showed an overall reduction, with audit costs of 2016 relating to work in relation to the conversion to a CLG.

23 The surplus for the year was therefore £28,671, compared to the deficit of £14,722 the previous year. It was another big step in the right direction, but the Society had to continue to work to ensure a surplus of income over expenditure was achieved on a regular basis.

24 Mr Cant had concentrated on the revenue account, but he now wished to briefly address the final page of the summary, the Balance Sheet. He explained a little about some of the funds that the charity used to manage its expenses: the General Fund was where most of the expenses, eg Summer School, went through; the Jean Milligan Memorial Fund (JMMF) promoted the aims of the Society and provided grants; the Development Fund was primarily money that had been bequeathed to the Society and was used for longer-term development.

25 Under Fixed Assets, intangible assets represented the last of remaining software which was written off during the year. Next year there would be an asset of some of the cost of the new website being developed, which would again be depreciated over time. Tangible Assets include the building at 12 Coates Crescent, while the investments represent the General Fund and the JMM Fund. The Current Assets represent the stock, debtors, money in a deposit account and cash in the bank. The reason for the large amount of cash in the bank was that at 31st March, most people had paid for Summer School attendance. Listed under creditors, further down, were Summer School prepayments, which would be paid out to St Andrews University and others in due course.

26 Overall, the Society had total net assets of £1.7 million. Looking briefly forward, the first six months of the next financial year would reflect 2017 Summer School, where the good numbers already alluded to had produced a higher income than Summer School 2016, resulting in a slightly higher surplus before overheads. In a separate effort to grow income, the possibility of letting out two basement rooms at 12 Coates Crescent, which were seriously underused at present, was being actively pursued. There would necessarily be some expenditure on refurbishment and replacement storage but anticipated rental should provide a useful additional income.

27 In summary, the year to 31st March 2017 was a year when everything went well and there were no disasters. Not all years would be like this, however Mr Cant believed that the finances were moving in a positive direction and work would continue to ensure that this improvement was built upon and sustained.

28 Chris Ronald (New Jersey) commended the Treasurer and all those, especially Headquarters staff, who were responsible for controlling costs as well as they had done in the last year.

29 Aad Boode (Hawaii Branch) thanked Mrs Russell for her earlier comment regarding Teachers' Associations. He asked for clarification that the three Teachers' Associations mentioned in the Trustees' Report – TAC, TAS and ATA – were all affiliated to the Society in accordance with the Rules & Procedures, Article 20. Mrs Russell committed to investigating and providing a response to Mr Boode personally, and making her response a matter of record.

30 The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2017, proposed by William Cant (Treasurer) and seconded by Bernie Hewitt (Dunfermline Branch and Management Board), were unanimously approved on a show of hands.

31 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Bill Cant, Treasurer, proposed the motion. Alexander Sloan CA had been the Society's accountants and Auditors for many years. Last year, the decision was taken to separate the accounting and auditing functions. As a result, Henderson Loggie CA were appointed to provide accounting and VAT support while Alexander Sloan continued as Auditors. Throughout the year end process, excellent support was received from Alan Cunningham and his team at Alexander Sloan, ensuring that the Management Board was able to approve and sign the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements on 1st July as scheduled. He proposed that the Society reappoint Alexander Sloan CA as Auditor.

32 The motion "To appoint Alexander Sloan, Chartered Accountants, as Auditor", proposed by William Cant (Treasurer) and seconded by Trevor Clarke (NW Craven), was approved.

33 ELECTIONS TO MANAGEMENT POSTS

Mrs Russell announced the results of the elections to management posts:

34 Convenor Elect, Membership Services Committee – Peter Knapman

35 Members of Management Board

3 years – Linda Gaul, Theresa MacVarish Clark, Sue Ronald

1 year – David MacDonald, Paul Youlten

36 Members of Membership Services Committee

3 years – Peter Avery, Angela Young

37 Members of Education & Training Committee

3 years – Deborah Leary, Anne Taylor

38 Members of Youth Services Committee

3 years – Olga McIntosh

39 MOTIONS

40 MOTION ON MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

On behalf of the Management Board, Helen Russell, Chairman, proposed the motion that "for the year from 1st July 2018, the basic full annual subscription shall be maintained at £20, and that other memberships will be based pro rata on this rate".

41 The motion was seconded by William Cant, Treasurer. He noted that, in his earlier presentation, delegates had seen the beneficial impact that the previously agreed increase in the subscription to £20 per annum had had on the finances of the Society. Therefore, and despite the inflation rate in the UK currently running at 3%, he seconded the motion.

42 Mrs Russell confirmed that, with no constitutional implications, this motion would be carried or fall on a simple majority. She declared that she held 97 proxy votes in favour of the motion, one against and one abstention.

43 Following a show of hands; there was a majority in favour, one vote against and there were no abstentions.

44 The motion was therefore carried.

45 VOTE OF THANKS

Liz Douglas (New Zealand) began by thanking the management and staff of the Bell's Sports Centre, the RSCDS Coates Crescent staff, and Lorna Ogilvie and Allana Creighton who were the local organisers of the 2017 AGM weekend. Thanks were also due to the chairman of the meeting, Helen Russell, for running yet another excellent meeting, as well as to Andrew Kellett, Malcolm Brown, Anne McArthur and Anselm Lingnau for leading the morning Open Forum session. Thanks also to the Education & Training Committee for organising the Teaching Conference, Ian Muir for tomorrow's music talk, and Alan Macpherson, RSCDS Archivist, for the archive display. Thanks were due to the demonstration dancers, including all the children from local schools. A big thank you went to the Triple Trouble Ceilidh Band and Pia Walker, the ceilidh caller for Friday's ceilidh, to Scott Band and his Scottish Dance Band for Friday's dance, and the Colin Dewar Band for Saturday's Ball. Liz thanked her fellow MC, Heather Cowan for her work at Friday's dance, as well as Angela Young and William Williamson for that night's Ball. She thanked New Zealand Branch and Clackmannanshire Branch for compiling the dance and Ball programmes respectively. Thanks also went to Sam Gifford for setting up the sound system, and also to the volunteer stewards. Also thanked were Andrew Nolan for teaching Saturday's class, with music by George Meikle, and David McQueen for the following day's class, with music by Rodger McAndrew. Lastly, the biggest thanks were to the delegates, for attending the 2017 AGM.

46 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Saturday 3rd November 2018, in Perth