

THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF 90TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN GANNOCHY TRUST SPORTS COMPLEX, PERTH

on Saturday 2 November 2019, at 2.00pm

1 PRESENT

Chairman: Andrew Kellett

Honorary President (& Past Chairman): Jean Martin

Past Chairmen: Ruth Beattie, Irene Bennett, Jim Healy, Linda Gaul, John Wilkinson

In Attendance: Lorna Ogilvie (Chairman Elect), William Cant (Treasurer), Malcolm Brown (Convenor, Education & Training), Peter Knapman (Convenor, Membership Services), Joana Stausberg (Convenor, Youth Services).

136 delegates were present, representing 87 branches and a further 53 branches had submitted proxy votes.

2 APOLOGIES

Past Chairmen –Helen Russell, Stewart Adam, Alex Gray, Alan Mair

Branches – Annan, Bramhall, Edmonton, Hague District, Leicester

3 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed all delegates and observers, including those watching over the internet, to the 90th RSCDS Annual General Meeting. He advised that only delegates and members of the Board and former Chairmen can address the meeting and only delegates can vote. Where a vote was required, the Chairman noted that he would proceed on the basis of a show of hands. If the vote was obviously conclusive he would declare a result. In the event of the slightest doubt there would be a card vote.

He then read the message received from Her Majesty The Queen.

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

"Please convey my warm thanks to the Management Board and Members of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society for their loyal greetings, sent on the occasion of their 90th Annual General Meeting which is being held during their Autumn Gathering from 1st to 3rd November.

As your Patron, I much appreciate your kind words, and in return, send my best wishes to all concerned for a most successful weekend."

Signed: *Elizabeth R*

5 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SOCIETY'S SCROLL OF HONOUR RECIPIENTS

The Society's President, Jean Martin, presented Scrolls to the following, and Lorna Ogilvie, Chairman Elect, read the citations (*nominating branch in brackets*):

- Catherine Elliot Shaw (*London Canada Branch*)
- Mervyn Short (*Berks/Hants/Surrey Border Branch*)
- James Stott (*Aberdeen Branch and Education and Training Committee*)

6 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 3RD NOVEMBER 2018

The motion "To confirm the adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of 3rd November 2018" was proposed by Lynn Wood (Aberdeen), seconded by Andrew Locke (Cheshire), and **was approved by a show of hands**.

7 SOCIETY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman acknowledged that it had already been a great Autumn Gathering weekend with a presentation of the nearly ready to launch Core Training for Instructors at the Teaching Conference the day before; the fantastic Friday night dance; the launch of the new publication "Thirty Popular Dances Volume Two" which went on sale that morning; and the meeting between the RSCDS Scottish Schools Working Group and John Swinney, MSP, Deputy First Minister of Scotland and Cabinet Secretary for Education which took place earlier that afternoon.

8 On behalf of the RSCDS, the Chairman congratulated the Board, the committees, the many volunteers and staff responsible for delivering these important developments. He particularly thanked those who were retiring or stepping down from the Board and committees for all their hard work including Malcolm Brown, Trevor Clarke, Clive Warren-Smith, Ute Hoppman Lacour, Ellie Briscoe, Jane McIntosh, Trish Reid, William Williamson, Lara Friedman-Shedlov and Marilyn Watson. The Chairman also welcomed Debbie Morris, the new Marketing and Communications Officer and Clare MacGregor, the new Office Manager.

9 The Chairman noted that membership this year rose slightly, which represented a huge effort by the Branches where so much important RSCDS work took place. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman thanked the Branches for all they had achieved in promoting Scottish country dancing and the Society.

10 Having read many Trustees' Reports over the years, the Chairman explained he felt they never told the full story. There are hundreds of dancing activities taking place across Branches around the world and RSCDS teachers introduce thousands of people to Scottish country dancing and encourage thousands more to take pleasure in dancing well. We have an international network that promotes health, happiness and fellowship which is perhaps the real RSCDS that is not fully outlined in the Report.

11 Each Branch has its own constitutional framework, independent of 12 Coates Crescent which must always be respected. However, when we measure the scale and describe the strength of the RSCDS we should include all events and activities across the network to get the full overview.

12 While the Trustees' Report is a formal legal document, which complies with Charities Act and Companies Act and includes a huge amount of detail over 38 pages, our Annual Summary is a more informal document. The Annual Summary states that 652 participants attended Summer School this year and had a great time. It would be much more impressive to say that through the RSCDS community our teachers taught 10,000-15,000 people to dance, however, the actual numbers are not currently available. Similarly, the Annual Summary states that 236 children took the medal test. Perhaps as many as 5000 children enjoyed days of dance in Scotland supported by RSCDS members, however we don't know the actual numbers.

13 In the summer, each Branch was provided with an updated licence agreement which requested that a copy of the Branch Annual Report and Accounts be forwarded to Coates Crescent. Some Branches asked why this was required. It was in fact a requirement in the old licensing agreement but more importantly it was requested because the Society does want to know what is happening in Branches. Not to pry, or interfere in the business of independently constituted Branches, but to collect and publicise data about what is happening on the ground across the entire RSCDS community. This would provide much more impressive actual figures for potential supporters. Plus, the Society would seem less remote to dancers around the world and members would know that what happens in Branches, no matter how small or how far from Coates Crescent, really counts. The Chairman stated that the current Annual Summary document is a really good reflection of the Society but could be improved if the Branches forwarded their information.

14 TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

William Cant, Treasurer, presented his report.

15 The Treasurer referred to the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the Society for the year to 31st March 2019. This document was approved by the Management Board on 29th June, duly signed by the Auditors on 5th July and then made available on the RSCDS website. The initial pages of the Report provide details about the Society's achievements and activities throughout the year and reminds the Society of our legal requirements for reporting as a company limited by guarantee. This is followed by the audit report and detailed financial information.

16 During the year to 31st March, the Society made a surplus of £47,504 (compared with the 2018 surplus of £81,627). However, we received donations and legacies of £47,019 – up from previous years. The Society does not budget for these legacies although they are very much appreciated and any donations over £1,000 are used for the long-term development of the Society.

17 The Treasurer noted that on the Annual Summary document, membership numbers were slightly decreased but advised this was only due to timing differences on membership subscription payments.

18 Summer School income of £420,000 was up on the previous year and Winter School income was also increased on the previous year. Income for educational activities looked a lot higher than the previous year,

partly as a result of the Glasgow Spring Fling event. Income from sales of CDs, music and books was slightly down, possibly as a reflection of downloading tracks rather than buying CDs. The overall income for the year was £938,000 compared with £879,000 in the previous year.

19 Expenditure for Summer School was slightly reduced this year whereas expenses for Winter School were slightly increased which reflected a significant increase in the number of dancers. Costs for the sales of CDs were slightly reduced from the previous year, as was the cost of running educational events. Expenditure for running the Conference Weekend and various special activities saw an increase on the previous year. Meanwhile the marketing and *Scottish Country Dancer* magazine production and distribution costs were reduced.

20 Support costs have risen by £86,000 but that includes the depreciation figure of £26,000 which is to cover the value of the newly installed website. There was also a significant increase in expenses for equipment, software and support for the new website and to improve communications which should be beneficial in the long term. Irrecoverable VAT was also included in this section and this amount was larger than last year.

21 However, the governance costs have remained static year on year, which includes the investment management charges. This reflects the fact that more video conferencing meetings are now being held as a result of the investment in equipment.

22 The surplus of £47,000 this year is satisfactory (compared with the exceptional circumstances last year of £81,000) but we should continue to work to ensure that our activities generate a surplus and not be dependent on legacies and donations.

23 The Treasurer referred to the Balance Sheet and highlighted Total Net Assets of £1.9 million. This includes the value of the new website at £46,000, the value of Coates Crescent and some fixed and tangible assets at £626,000, investments at £940,000 plus stock, debtors, money on short term deposit and money in the bank. Although this includes pre-payments for Summer School equalling £300,000.

24 On 31st March 2016 (the first year the Society reported a Company Limited by Guarantee) the Total Net Assets were £1.6 million, giving an increase of 18%. Half of this increase was from the increase in value in our investments and the other half from the accumulated surpluses over the last few years.

25 This suggests the Society is in a position of some financial strength and able to spend money to invest in encouraging more dancers to engage with Scottish country dancing activities.

26 The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019, proposed by William Cant (Treasurer) and seconded by Sue Ronald (New Jersey Branch), were approved on a show of hands.

27 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

William Cant, Treasurer, proposed the motion. Alexander Sloan, Chartered Accountants, have been the Society's accountants and auditors for many years. They audit the report and accounts as prepared by our accountants HMA Henderson Loggie. Alexander Sloan work very well with our staff and management and this split of duties continues to provide enhanced governance for the Society to the benefit of the Trustees and members. He proposed that the Society reappoint Alexander Sloan, Chartered Accountants, as Auditor.

28 The appointment of the auditor in the coming year was approved on a show of hands.

29 MOTION ON MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

The Chairman noted there was only one motion on the order paper which had been proposed by the Management Board, who had asked him to speak on their behalf. The Chairman relinquished the chair for this agenda item to the Chair Elect, Lorna Ogilvie.

30 The Chair Elect outlined the motion as "The Management Board proposes that for the year from 1st July 2020 the basic full annual subscription shall be reduced by £2.00 to £18.00, with other membership subscriptions based pro-rata on this amount."

31 The Chairman stated that the RSCDS membership subscription had been £20 for the last 3 years, and that almost all Branches attached an additional fee to that membership amount in order to support their local activities. Typically, in the UK, there was an additional £5 Branch fee, so members actually paid £25 to be a member of the Society. However, most members were unlikely to be aware of how their total fee was split

between Coates Crescent (80%) and the Branch (20%), and the Chairman noted that the package of benefits members receive are actually primarily delivered by the Branch through dances, classes, training and local communications. Therefore, the purpose of this motion was to slightly adjust this balance.

32 That said, it was noted that the unwritten side to this motion affected the Branches and what they decided to charge members. The Board recommended that if the motion was passed that Branches increase their fee by £2, the corresponding amount. The result would be that individual members would pay exactly the same, however more money would be available to the Branches to support their activities to recruit, publicise and promote dancing in local areas. As the Treasurer reported, the Society at Coates Crescent has substantial funds on deposit, therefore, the Board was confident that Coates Crescent could continue to fund the core services provided such as Summer School or website developments. There would also still be money in the Development Fund and the Jean Milligan Fund to support activities that require specific funding for Branches or members.

33 The Chairman acknowledged that £2 per member might sound like a modest amount however the Board were aware of increasing costs for things like hall bookings and publicity and were sure that even a small amount of money was sufficient to help Branches to run a beginner's workshop, pay for a musician at a dance or take a Demonstration team to perform in the local community for example. Thus, the Chairman urged support for the motion and also asked Branches to think about the implications of the recommendation to help promote Scottish country dancing.

34 The motion was seconded by William Cant, Treasurer. The Treasurer noted that the Branches were critical in recruiting new members, therefore it was right that the Branches receive this modest financial encouragement. He added that the Society had generated surpluses over the last few years and that these reserves should be used to fund this initiative and invest in the future. The Chair Elect invited comments from the floor.

35 Simon Wales (London) speaking on behalf of the London Branch committee advised they would be opposing this motion for several reasons. As one of the larger Branches, they felt the money was better spent on a global basis by the RSCDS to raise the profile of Scottish country dancing at a higher level which could trickle down to the Branches. He also noted that from the accounts, the surplus this year was also exactly the same amount as the donations and that without those donations the Society would just be breaking even so questioned how long the Society could continue to use up reserves to cover this. In addition, if Branches were short of funds, they could easily raise their Branch fees if required. Finally, there was a concern that too much pressure would be placed on Branches to justify spending the extra £2 when they may struggle to resource extra activities. There were no further comments.

36 In summing up, the Chair said he was grateful to London Branch for raising those points but advised that it would be too expensive for the Society to run a global publicity campaign and that a global approach would not necessarily suit all of the local requirements of Branches. Branches are considered the experts in knowing the best approach to take locally to attract new members. The Chairman believed the Society had sufficient financial resources. There was a greater concern that the Society would run out of people before it ran out of money, not just members but people to serve on our committees and teach our classes.

37 The Chair Elect confirmed that, with no constitutional implications, this motion would be carried or fall on a simple majority. From a show of hands, there was a clear majority in favour.

38 **The motion was therefore carried.** The Chairman resumed the Chair.

39 ELECTION TO MANAGEMENT POSTS

The Chairman announced no nominations were received so an election was not required. As a consequence, the Board would be 4 members below its maximum permitted strength. This would not prevent the Board from carrying out its responsibilities but would likely result in appointments being made under the terms of Article 30 to fill the gaps until the next AGM.

40 ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Chairman reminded the meeting that under Article 48 the MB can delegate any of its powers to a Committee. He announced the results of the Committee elections.

41 Members of Education & Training Committee

3 years – Mervyn Short, Anne Robertson, Deirdre MacCuish Bark

1 year – Chris Ronald

42 Members of Youth Services Committee

3 years – Malin Altenmüller, Philippa McKee

1 year – Margaret Lambourne

43 The Chairman congratulated the successful candidates, and also Anne Taylor who, as Convenor Elect, automatically succeeded Malcolm Brown as Convenor E&T. He commiserated with those who had not been elected. Their talents were still needed by the Society.

44 Members of Membership Services Committee

There were no nominations to fill the vacancies on the Membership Services Committee and under the terms of Rule 16. (h), Membership Services will consider whether to make appointments to fill those vacancies. Any appointment will be subject to confirmation by the Management Board.

45 The Chairman noted his disappointment that no nominations had been received for a number of posts and gave a reminder that the Society needs members to come forward to ensure the good work continues.

46 VOTE OF THANKS

On behalf of the Society, Sue Porter (Oban & Lorne) thanked the following, all of whom had put much time and effort into making the Autumn Gathering and AGM such a successful event: Andrew Kellett for chairing the meeting; Iain and Elaine Hutchison for overseeing the vote counting; Sam Gifford for setting up the sound system; and Iain Johnston of Johnston Media for providing the livestreaming.

47 She also thanked the Education & Training Committee for organising the Teaching Conference; Andrew Kellett, Lorna Ogilvie and Peter Knapman for providing the morning sessions; Debbie Lees and Angela Young for delivering the teaching and music respectively at the Saturday morning class; Jimmie Hill and Mo Rutherford for presenting historic dances; and Janet Johnston and Susan MacFadyen for delivering the teaching and music respectively at the Sunday morning class.

48 In addition, thanks were given to James Coutts and his band for the Friday night dance; Fiona Mackie and David Queen for recapping the Friday night programme compiled by Membership Services Committee; Allana Creighton for compiling and recapping the Nice & Easy dance programme and Frank Thomson for providing the music; Nicol McLaren and his band for playing for the Saturday night ball with Jim Stott and Gary Coull recapping the dances and the Banffshire Branch for devising the programme; George Meikle for providing the sound systems and Luke Brady for helping to set up.

49 Finally, thanks were given to Perth & Kinross Council for hosting the Civic Reception; members of the Banffshire Branch for decorating the main arena; Alan Macpherson, RSCDS Archivist, for the archive display; Roy Bain for the Scottish Learning Festival display; the children from Dunfermline, Rosyth, Keltie and Edinburgh who were trained by Agnes Leighton for a dancing display in the Perth Concert Hall; the Youth demonstration team for Saturday evening's demonstration, trained by Rachel Shankland; the management and staff of Bell's Sports Centre; Lorna Ogilvie, Allana Creighton and Moira Thomson, the local organisers for the weekend; RSCDS staff at Coates Crescent; all volunteer stewards, organised by Allana Creighton; and the biggest thanks of course went to the delegates for attending the AGM.

50 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Saturday 7 November 2020 at the Bell's Centre, Perth.