

THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF 91ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD VIRTUALLY ON ZOOM

on Saturday 7 November 2020, at 2.00pm

1 PRESENT

Chairman: Andrew Kellett

Chairman Elect: Lorna Ogilvie

Treasurer: William Cant

417 registered individuals attended online, including 174 delegates representing 100 branches. The honorary President, Jean Martin also attended online.

2 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 91st RSCDS Annual General Meeting and noted it was the first virtual AGM. He advised that delegates had been asked to complete their digital voting in advance of the meeting and that the voting turnout had been over 87%. Due to logistical reasons, the Chairman apologised that delegates would not be able to speak at this AGM but that they had been asked to submit their questions in advance.

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

3 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 91st Annual General Meeting which is being held today via video conference.

Your continued support is much valued and, as your Patron, I send my warm good wishes to you all for a most memorable and enjoyable virtual gathering."

Signed: Elizabeth R

4 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SOCIETY'S SCROLL OF HONOUR RECIPIENTS

Lorna Ogilvie, Chairman Elect, read the citations (*nominating branch in brackets*):

- James Healy (*Management Board*)
- Marjorie McLaughlin (*San Diego Branch*)
- Fiona Miller (*Medicine Hat Branch*)
- Ian Muir (*Management Board*)
- Ron Wallace (*San Francisco Branch*)
- Marilyn Watson (*Youth Services Committee*)
- Ruby Wilkinson (*Edinburgh Branch*)
- Angela Young (*Management Board*)

5 APOLOGIES

Apologies from two former Chairmen, Irene Bennett and Helen Russell. No apologies from Branches.

6 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 2ND NOVEMBER 2019

Margaret Sanders (Glasgow Branch) had proposed that the minutes were adopted as an accurate record of that meeting and this motion was seconded by Simon Wales (London Branch). 304 delegates had voted in favour of the motion; there were no votes against, with 25 abstentions.

7 SOCIETY CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman began his remarks by acknowledging that the meeting had a good virtual attendance and was quorate but noted that it was a great shame it had not been possible to meet and dance together at the annual gathering in Perth.

8 Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Chairman conceded that the Society was in the middle of a crisis. He noted that last March, the Society had been in good health with membership numbers increasing, albeit by modest numbers, and with lots of Society, Branch and Group activities taking place. However, Coronavirus had turned the world upside down, stopped dancing and meant events had to be cancelled. This created a huge hole in the RSCDS budget and resulted in difficult decisions to reduce central costs. Some RSCDS staff were placed on furlough and in October, with deep regret, the Board made two members of staff redundant: Julia Parr and Mairi Marshall. The Chairman thanked Julia and Mairi for their hard work on behalf of the Society and paid tribute to all the RSCDS staff for their flexibility and dedication in keeping the office running in these very difficult times.

9 In addition, the Chairman recognised Angela Young and Ian Muir for their tremendous achievement in producing *Dance Scottish At Home* (both the digital newsletter and the podcast) which has kept members and the wider Scottish dance and music community connected and engaged. He also thanked the Committee Convenors, Peter Knapman, Joana Stausberg and Anne Taylor as well as all the teachers and musicians who contributed to *DSAH* plus David Queen, who played a big part in the Summer Celebration virtual event.

10 Despite the circumstances, a surprising amount of usual Society business had continued with more resources added to the website and the SCD Magazine maintained to its usual high standard. All of the Management Committees and Working Groups had remained active with publications and recordings being planned plus Global Youth Week taking place and Unit 1 exams completed in October.

11 The Chairman noted that the response to this crisis from Branches, Groups and members everywhere was truly impressive. Whether this was keeping in contact, organising online events or Covid-secure dance experimentation when the conditions allowed or most importantly planning for a time when a return to dancing is possible, he recognised that all of this local activity would be vital in the recovery of the Society.

12 The Society will thrive again but the strength of this recovery will not be determined by Coates Crescent but rather depends on Branches to organise events and teachers, recruit new dancers and members as well as train instructors and musicians. We must all be ready to rebuild Scottish country dance activities when the time comes and the hard work, imagination and spirit shown by the Board, committees and staff but above all by Branches, dancers and musicians is convincing of a strong come back.

13 TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

William Cant, Treasurer, presented his report.

14 The Treasurer referred to the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the Society for the year to 31st March 2020. This document was approved by the Management Board on 27th June, duly signed by the Auditors on 1st 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. This is followed by the audit report and detailed financial information.

15 During the year to 31st March, the Society reported a deficit of £46,717 (compared with the 2019 surplus of £47,504). This significant turnaround was anticipated, mentioned at this time last year and reflects the less financially successful Summer School, ongoing investment in website capacity and the fact that 2019 benefitted from a significant legacy.

16 The Treasurer noted that at this stage of the update, he would usually spend time comparing the financial numbers outlined in the Trustees' Report with last year's numbers. However, the impact of the current pandemic stopping dancing activities warranted time spent explaining how this would affect the future finances of the Society instead.

17 Referring to the Society's revised budget for the year to 31st March 2021 on the recently issued activity summary, the Treasurer advised that the budget is normally prepared to cover the General Fund. However, in order to facilitate the reasonable comparison of this budget, this revised budget covered all of the Society's activities and showed an anticipated budget deficit of £170,452 compared to the 2020 actual deficit of £46,717.

18 To further explain this, the Treasurer advised that the Society does not budget for donations and legacies and that the anticipated investment income had been reduced to allow for companies reducing their dividends. The reduced subscription income reflected the recent subscription reduction implemented to encourage recruitment by Branches as well as an anticipated modest reduction in membership numbers. Under charitable activities there were yawning gaps where in the past, Summer School and Winter School income would have been shown. Similarly, it was anticipated that sales of books and CDs would be hit by the lack of Summer School and the closure of the office.

19 As a result the total income was budgeted to fall from £818,000 to £230,000. The cancellation of Summer School and the Autumn Gathering meant that there were no expenses related to these events, however, the Society also lost a significant financial contribution from these events. The cost of the magazine was reduced as the Society anticipated distributing two editions of the magazine electronically to save money in these difficult times. The support costs, dominated by staff costs, benefitted from the UK Government's furlough scheme and although two members of staff were made redundant, the full financial benefit of the redundancies would not be felt until next year. The depreciation charge was similar to previous years, as the Society writes off the value of the website. Elsewhere miscellaneous expenses, covering stationery, printing, heating and telephone, were reduced for the budget. Some governance costs were unavoidable, but the budget anticipated reduced travel.

20 This budget shows that while Covid has caused a significant loss in income, it is difficult and painful to reduce costs to mitigate that impact. The result is a budgeted deficit of £139,000 for the operations of the Society in the General Fund and with the additional depreciation charge to the fixed assets fund gives an anticipated accounting deficit of £137,000 compared to the 2020 deficit of £46,770.

21 The Treasurer advised that the Management Board had now reviewed draft numbers for the first six months of the current year. Predictably the numbers showed a reduction in subscription income, usually collected by Branches when classes start, and the Treasurer noted that it was therefore vital for Branches to make membership returns to the Society, even if only partial returns.

22 On a more positive note, the Treasurer gave sincere thanks for all the donations received to date which were not budgeted for and advised that investment income had held up reasonably well. He also advised that actual staff costs are similar to budget and miscellaneous expenses were down further, while equipment software cost rose with additional Zoom costs. Governance costs were lower than budget as there has been no travelling to meetings.

23 Therefore, overall the draft deficit for the six-month period for the general fund was £64,342 which was not unreasonable compared to the budgeted general fund deficit for the full year of £139,000.

24 As a final point, the Treasurer noted that this year and possibly next year would be difficult for the Society's finances. Prudent management of our predecessors meant that there were sufficient reserves to help us survive the Covid- induced dancing famine. However, it was important for members to respond positively to the Society's donation appeal and even more important for Branches to retain members so that we are ready to start dancing again in what we hope is the not too distant future.

25 The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020, proposed by William Cant (Treasurer) and seconded by Neil Copland (Perth and Perthshire Branch), were approved by delegates with a majority of 312 for, none against and with 17 abstentions.

26 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 Henderson Loggie. Alexander Sloan have proven to be very professional, 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. The motion was seconded by Joana Stausberg (Central Germany Branch).

27 The appointment of the auditor in the coming year was approved by delegates who voted unanimously by a majority of 297 to none in favour of the motion.

28 MOTION ON MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

The Chairman advised there was one motion on the agenda which had been proposed by the Management Board, who had asked the Treasurer to speak on their behalf. The motion was seconded by Anne Taylor (Banffshire Branch).

29 The Treasurer outlined the motion as “The Management Board proposes that for the year from 1st July 2021 the basic full annual subscription shall be maintained at £18.00, with other membership subscriptions based pro-rata on this amount.”

30 The Treasurer advised that last year he had seconded the motion to give Branches the opportunity to retain £2 of the subscription. He also noted that there had been a lively discussion among Management Board members when discussing whether to increase membership subscriptions for the revised budget for the next financial year.

31 Valid arguments were made for both increasing the subscription in face of the budgeted deficit and for holding the subscription at its current level to encourage Branches to retain and recruit more members. Eventually it was decided that in the light of the pandemic, retention and recruitment were more important than ever.

32 Once we are allowed to return to dancing the Society will need Branches to get membership growing again; Branches are in the best position to achieve this objective by using this money to subsidise beginners’ classes, hire live musicians and utilise their most inspirational teachers.

33 The Chairman advised that delegates had voted overwhelmingly by a majority of 307 to 2 in favour of the motion.

34 CONFIRMATION OF CHAIRMAN

Before moving on to the confirmation of Lorna Ogilvie as the new Chairman, Andrew Kellet advised that he would like to take this opportunity to make a few parting remarks. He began by thanking those members retiring from the Management Board and committees at this AGM. From the Management Board, Linda Gaul, Theresa MacVarish Clark and Sue Ronald. From Youth Services, Margaret Lambourne and Olga Mcintosh. From Education and Training, Deborah Leary and Chris Ronald. From Membership Services, Peter Avery and our Music Director Ian Muir. From the Finance and Governance Advisory Panel, Valerie Strachan. As well as the Editor of the Scottish Country Dancer magazine, Jimmie Hill.

35 Despite the problems of recent months, he advised that it had been a wonderful two years and thanked everyone and the Society, for giving him the opportunity to serve in that role. Although he was stepping down at a time of uncertainty, he remained optimistic about the future of the Society. He advised that he had great confidence in the members and huge confidence in Lorna Ogilvie, the incoming Chair. Lorna would bring to the job a lot of valuable experience, from her long-standing membership of the RSCDS and from a very successful, professional career. With many management and leadership skills, Lorna is a talented organiser with the capacity for hard work and this will no doubt be required going forward.

36 Lorna Ogilvie thanked Andrew Kellett on behalf of members for his two years serving as RSCDS Chairman. Lorna advised that, as previous Chairmen attending today know, it is very difficult for members to totally appreciate the high level of commitment and the hard work that is required in this role. Andrew had approached all tasks energetically and diligently. He had shown interest in every aspect of the work of the Society and attention to detail in all that he did. He also faced quite unprecedented times over his two years as Chairman, which included supporting the staff at Coates Crescent prior to the appointment of the Office Manager in addition to leading the Society. Plus, he had more than risen to the challenge in the last six months with the arrival of Covid-19 through increasing the frequency of Board meetings and by his input to Dance Scottish At Home. The new digital communications ensured that dancers were kept in touch with Board decisions and with each other as well as able to enjoy virtual entertainment during this unsettling period.

37 She stated it was a real honour to accept the role of RSCDS Chairman for the next two years, but that it also carried great responsibility. Scottish country dancing, had given Lorna a lifetime of enjoyment on the dance floor, incredible experiences through teaching children and demonstrations, many treasured memories and most of all friendships. However, despite being an optimist Lorna noted she was pragmatic and was

aware there would be immense challenges ahead, particularly in the next six to seven months. The Society needed to adapt to a 'new normal', with a number of as yet unknowns. Lorna advised that her role, working with the new Management Board, Committees and Working Groups and supported by the office staff, was to review and adapt the RSCDS business plan targets to reinvigorate the Society when dancing resumes. As we start to launch the exciting plans to celebrate our centenary in 2023, Lorna hoped that the fun and friendship aspects of Scottish country dancing would once again take centre stage.

38 ELECTION TO MANAGEMENT BOARD POSTS

The Chairman announced that it was her great pleasure to confirm William Williamson as Chairman Elect for the next two years. She also announced Angela Young as Convenor Elect of Membership Services and noted that unfortunately there were no nominations for Convenor Elect of Youth Services.

Although there were seven vacancies, only six members had stood for nomination for the Management Board. If it was felt appropriate, an appointment could be made under the terms of Article 30 to fill this gap.

3 years - Trevor Clarke, Neil Copland, Fiona Grant

2 years - David Macdonald, Jane Meikle, Joan Nesbitt

39 ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Chairman reminded the meeting that under Article 48 the Management Board could delegate any of its powers to a Committee. She then announced the results of the Committee elections.

40 Members of Education & Training Committee

The Chairman advised there were three candidates for two positions.

3 years – Oluf Olufsen, Rachel Shankland

41 Members of Membership Services Committee

Although there were five vacancies, only two members had stood for nomination.

3 years – Ainslie Dunnett, Keith Rose

42 Members of Youth Services Committee

Although there were two vacancies, only one member had stood for nomination.

3 years – Abigail Brown

43 Under the terms of Rule 16. (h), the Committees will consider whether to make appointments to fill those vacancies. Any appointment will be subject to confirmation by the Management Board.

44 The Chairman congratulated the successful candidates who would be joining the Management Board and Committees. Where candidates were unsuccessful, she hoped they would consider standing again. The Chairman also welcomed Fiona Grant to the Management Board and announced that Fiona would be taking over as Editor of the Scottish Country Dancer magazine. In addition, she welcomed Luke Brady as the new Music Director and Elizabeth Harry who would join the Finance and Governance Advisory Panel.

45 VOTE OF THANKS

Before giving the vote of thanks, the Chairman announced the winners of the Virtual Festival. She noted that the videos were available to view on the RSCDS website and advised that she was most impressed at the ingenuity and imagination of those who sent in contributions. The challenge of working within social distancing restrictions resulted in some inspiring adaptations that we could all consider until we're back to normality on the dance floor. A big thank you and a well done to everyone who entered. In the under 16 category, the winner was Moscow Branch Deer O'Dale Group, with their entry The Scots and the Vikings, which had lovely props, beautiful costumes and some great ideas. In the mixed ages category, the popular vote went to Lyon Branch. Their submission was fun and played on the theme of 'we all can't meet this year' in a really charming way. Our congratulations to both winners.

46 The Chairman noted that the vote of thanks at previous AGM meetings usually included all those who've contributed to the three days of the Autumn Gathering weekend. This year was very different with our first virtual RSCDS AGM. The whole event would not have been possible without a massive amount of work from Clare, our Office Manager and Kat, our Graphic Design and Media Officer. They and all other staff have been working remotely which has added to the production challenges for today. Successfully facilitating a worldwide event such as this was no mean feat and on behalf of members, Lorna offered sincere thanks.

47 Finally, the Chairman also thanked Branch delegates for voting online and attending virtually as well as the many observers, dancers and musicians in Scotland and around the world joining the 2020 AGM. She noted that the willingness of members to adapt to the digital world had been crucial for the smooth running of this event and helped us to meet our legal obligations under OSCR, the Scottish charity regulator.

48 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Saturday 6 November 2021 at the Bell's Centre, Perth.