

## **RSCDS Business Plan**

### **Mission:**

Growing a vibrant worldwide community of Scottish Country Dancers and musicians.

### **5 Strategic Aims and planned actions to deliver on them:**

#### **Aim 1. To promote Scottish Country Dance and related dance forms as inclusive, healthy and exciting activities**

#### **To achieve this aim we intend to create these changes and end results:**

1. The RSCDS portrays itself as a fun, sociable, inclusive and family friendly organisation promoting a healthy activity, in collaboration with its branches.
2. RSCDS is recognised as a leading organisation for Scottish dance and music in Scotland and internationally.
3. The general public is aware of the different forms of Scottish dance.
4. RSCDS works effectively with relevant dance, music and arts organisations in Scotland and internationally.
5. RSCDS is an internationally relevant and accessible organisation.

#### **During our consultation with Branches, the key points they fed back were:**

Aim 1 is very important but a 'one size fits all' marketing will not work, we need to tailor message or emphasis for different areas of the world and have a variety of messages for different audiences and age groups. We need to continue to push messages and images about fun, fitness, health benefits (body and mind), social network, international travel and Scottish culture/heritage and need to include informal as well as formal dancing. We should use 'Dance Scottish' more than RSCDS.

We could link more with popular culture and also develop a high-energy choreography of Scottish dance (like Riverdance for Irish dancing) and use this to secure media profile. We could also link with a fitness regime type of approach (e.g. a SCD type Zumba).

We need to work with organisations linked to these messages (health/fitness -e.g. Heart Foundation, Diabetes UK, Alzheimer Association etc.), culture (Scottish Government, British Council), etc. and look at the ceilidh / wedding market.

Having a better website is a huge priority - including a better search function, a prominent 'Join' button with branch finder on RSCDS website linked to branch websites and niche content not available elsewhere online.

We need to be clearer about what RSCDS membership and branch status provides.

#### **Proposed actions for the Business Plan under Aim 1:**

- 1.1** Develop a clear communications and marketing strategy with targeted messages and methods for different target audiences
- 1.2** Carry out a thorough review and upgrade of RSCDS's online presence, including both website and social media, to make it much more useful, searchable and to develop niche content not provided by other organisations
- 1.3** Review, upgrade and deliver on a Health strategy to promote the benefits of SCD
- 1.4** Develop a choreographed high energy version of Scottish Country Dancing done by young people and use this in marketing SCD
- 1.5** Promote ceilidh dancing and develop related materials for use by branches, particularly in relation to weddings and other major personal milestones' events
- 1.6** Plan for the RSCDS Centenary in 2023 to promote the Society and grow its profile

**Aim 2. To build the capacity and networking of branches and other dance groups who share our aims, to help them grow and deliver SCD activity more effectively**

**To achieve this aim we intend to create these changes and end results:**

1. RSCDS becomes the norm for people who want to take part in Scottish country dancing, at branch level and branches will attract and retain more members.
2. There is an increase in cooperation and mutual support between branches, affiliated groups and other dance organisations.
3. Branches, affiliated groups and members have a better understanding of the value of the RSCDS and value what membership offers.
4. The RSCDS has a better understanding of the needs and issues worldwide of individual branches, and tailors services accordingly.
5. More branches and affiliate groups join the RSCDS.

**Key elements of feedback on Aim 2 from the branch consultations**

- Much better website: where branches and members can find information more easily / better search function / better database use / better events booking online, etc. – and material that cannot be found elsewhere (niche material)
- MS Committee to be active on remit regarding services to members, not just publications
- Provision of support/guidance/materials/publicity templates from RSCDS for Branches: particularly in relation to membership benefits and materials for member recruitment, improving their online presence including social media, governance, health and safety, child protection etc.
- More regular and planned attendance by RSCDS officials at major events and networking around the world
- More regular communications (two way) between Branches and RSCDS, so HQ maintains its knowledge of what branches are doing and needing
- More support for branches to network and share ideas, particularly online but also regionally
- Clearer information from HQ about support and resources available
- Recognising the differing needs and focus of branches in different parts of the world, not so Scotland and UK-centric

**Proposed actions for the Business Plan under Aim 2:**

2.1 Strengthened online communications with branches and members, through improving the website, branch support materials and guidance, e-mailings and use of social media, and more access to these in different languages.

2.2 Keep up to date with and link with branches and affiliate groups on a regular basis

2.3 Work with Branches and Affiliate Groups to recruit and retain more RSCDS members: (see also section 2.1 above, for online elements of this work)

2.4 Support increased branch networking and sharing of experience (also links with 2.1)

2.4 Review relative benefits of Branch and Affiliate status and incentivise Branch status

2.5 Identify areas of the world where we could encourage new branches and affiliate groups to join RSCDS

**Aim 3. To maintain and develop high standards of teaching of Scottish country dance and music, including the development of dance and music for all ages and abilities**

**To achieve this aim we intend to create these changes and end results:**

1. Teaching information resources and materials are widely accessible worldwide.
2. RSCDS has a comprehensive education system enabling progress for different age groups and abilities.
3. More musicians are trained in order that they are effective class and band musicians.
4. RSCDS has dance teachers, music teachers and exam tutors trained throughout the world via accessible and affordable training.
5. RSCDS promotes a teaching methodology that encompasses both technical and social aspects.

**Key elements of feedback on Aim 3 from the branch consultations**

- Set up and maintain a Register of qualified teachers, including when trained & how active/ whether actively teaching
- Conflicting feedback: too many new dances every year putting off older dancers but also, good to have new dances and new book every year
- Teacher training too inflexible, too academic and stressful, current system generates teachers who know how to teach technique, teach in a regimented way and often not friendly enough
- Review teacher training system – including:
  - Course should include training and assessment on people skills / social skills and approach to teaching / being welcoming and encouraging
  - Teacher training course is too expensive
  - Develop the mentoring side more
  - Separate modules for teachers of mixed ability classes, children, etc.
- Conflicting feedback: Teaching of musicians - more teaching of musicians needed; good to have online music training materials; more opportunities for young musicians to play at events ... but also, feedback saying do not teach musicians
- More CPD, including e-learning and weekend workshops

**Proposed actions for the Business Plan under Aim 3:**

3.1 Carry out a review of the teacher training system, syllabus, current assessment criteria and consider the creation of another assessed course for teachers of social dance, as well as the introduction of digitisation of the exams system and use of IT where appropriate

3.2 Increase and strengthen opportunities for teacher training and for Continuing Development for teachers and musicians around the world, working closely with Teachers Associations and other organisations delivering training through events:

3.3 Set up and maintain a Register of qualified teachers globally

3.4 Develop the Music course and access to it globally

3.5 Development of a wider E-learning site and section on the website for teachers

3.6 Support the development of Teacher Associations

3.7 Develop a Schools SCD project in Scotland with funding from Scottish Government

#### **Aim 4. To enable enjoyable and high quality Scottish country dance opportunities for all ages and abilities worldwide**

##### **To achieve this aim we intend to create these changes and end results:**

1. RSCDS events throughout the Society welcome families and young people.
2. More events worldwide target less experienced dancers and beginners.
3. The RSCDS engages with more international dance events and dance related activities.
4. RSCDS capitalises on available sponsorship and funding opportunities.

##### **Key elements of feedback on Aim 4 from the branch consultations**

- Conflicting feedback: many emphasised the importance of continuing with Summer School and Winter School – these were seen as good quality events and unique – while others said these events were unaffordable or just too far away to benefit from them. Clear need to communicate that these events make money and membership fees do not subsidise them.
- Spring Fling is good to continue, but again unaffordable due to travel or just too far away to benefit from them if living far away from Europe.
- Lots of support for the idea of Global Youth Week and Branch development grants for working with young people
- Crucial to not develop competing new events in different parts of the world, but rather to input to and attend existing major events around the world
- Welcome family element / Junior School element at SS- build more family friendly elements to RSCDS events
- More use of dance-throughs at events to make them accessible to beginners
- Consider a regular global event like Commonwealth Ceilidh – not just linked to young people – but maybe once every two years?
- Good to have clear events calendar on RSCDS website – not just RSCDS events, but other major events around the world too
- Ceilidh based events / events more focused on beginners

##### **Proposed actions for the Business Plan under Aim 4:**

4.1 Develop RSCDS presence at and engagement with existing events around the world

4.2 Develop and deliver regular globally themed and coordinated events around the world – including Global Youth week and Dance Scottish Week

4.3 Continue to deliver two major schools each year which contribute to the net income of the Society while delivering their key outcomes of learning, teaching, youth development and enjoyment – Summer School and Winter School

4.4 Continue to deliver and develop Youth focused events and youth elements in all events – including Spring Fling, Junior Summer School, Family elements in Summer School and publicise the financial support already available for Branches' to develop new youth focused events

4.5 Work to secure sponsorships or costs in kind for major RSCDS events

**Aim 5. Strengthen and improve the RSCDS, including its governance and long term financial viability, to enable it to deliver on the above aims**

**To achieve this aim we intend to create these changes and end results:**

1. The RSCDS constitution and structure enables it to be effective and sustainable in the future.
2. The RSCDS operates on a sustainable financial basis and is more transparent about how the money is spent.
3. The RSCDS has reviewed its Management Board and Committees structure to ensure that Management Board sets and drives strategy, Committees deliver strategy within budget and there is more effective communications between Management Board, Committees and HQ staff.
4. The RSCDS has policies and systems that recruit board and committee members with appropriate skills and experience and global representation.

**Key elements of feedback on Aim 5 from the branch consultations**

- Better use of remote access to meetings / use of technology to reduce costs
- Transparency in use of money and membership fees
- Use 12 Coates Crescent more efficiently (sell it? Rent space out? Etc.)
- More proactive recruitment of MB and Committee members, and better screening of them / securing the right people with the right skills
- Continue to have named MB member for each branch

**Proposed actions for the Business Plan under Aim 5:**

5.1 Build the capacity of RSCDS management committees and review their remits

5.2 Review structural relationships within RSCDS: Memberships, Branches, Affiliate Groups and Teachers' Associations to ensure clarity, level playing fields within categories and incentives

5.3 Strengthen the financial accountability and transparency of RSCDS including closer scrutiny of financial transactions and budgets; the provision of clearer financial reports to the Management Board, Committees and to members.