

**THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY
GLASGOW BRANCH
Charity Registered in Scotland
SC008002**

**Annual General Meeting held at 1900 hours on Thursday 18 May 2023
in
Renfield Training and Conference Centre, Glasgow G2 4JP**

Thirty-five members attended. Sebastian Wanless, Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the 100th AGM of the RSCDS Glasgow Branch.

1 Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Debbie McAlees, Fiona McDonald, Anne Thorn, Helen Murray, Graham Murray, James Ferguson, Ishbel Bertram, James Miller, Joyce Carmichael, Tom Carmichael, Lorraine Dick, Helen Kelly.

2 Chair's Remarks

At last year's AGM, the world had already started to put lockdowns behind them. We had discovered that the bluebells still bloomed in May, that our grandchildren were as beautiful as we remembered them, that the trains might still be delayed and importantly that we could still dance!

And so, the Branch had successfully restarted classes, dances and outreach activities. This year, the pace has picked up significantly. Although the format of our classes has been modified to limit losses, they have continued successfully and attendance at some of them has increased to the point that they do not all make a loss. Dances have been very well attended and overall have made a profit. Meanwhile outreach activities have blossomed as you will hear from the Branch report. The most recent of these took place on Monday morning of this week when we delivered a ceilidh lesson to approximately 70 French 14- and 15-year-old students and their teachers/accompanying adults. This could not have taken place without the outstanding contribution of Anne Robertson who coped admirably with the large number in attendance, in French, and the fine music from Frank Reid. Centenary celebrations have commenced with the launch of the Glasgow Branch 100th Anniversary Book, of which over 200 copies have now been sold and with our support of a Society ceilidh at Celtic Connections in January. The Branch also played a key role in supporting the Society AGM in November 2022 and will do so again this year. Meanwhile, plans for the Glasgow Branch Centenary Ball, a celebratory afternoon tea for our Seniors' Group, a commemorative event at the Athenaeum on 26th November and a number of public demonstrations of dance are all well underway. The Centenary Ball, for which dancers received a formal invitation from the Lord Provost of Glasgow, promises to be a grand affair, attended by William Williamson, his wife, Gary Coul and Lizzy Conder as well as our own Ruth Beattie and John Johnston.

During this last year, in order to address the substantial loss incurred in 2021/2022 (of the order of £7,500) we enacted somewhat drastic changes to the format of our classes and dances. This has resulted in us more or less breaking even this year. At last year's AGM, I spent time justifying why we were proposing to limit the Glasgow Branch subscription to only £3 instead of £5, in order to offset the steep rise in the Society's fee. Ironically, this year I will be justifying a larger increase. The Committee, as trustees, believes this to be necessary in order to ensure the continuing financial health of the Branch. However, more of that anon.

Despite the ongoing post-COVID challenges, I believe the Branch is thriving perhaps beyond expectations and it has been my pleasure to be Chair, supported by an outstanding and exceptionally

hardworking Committee. I also want to express my appreciation to our Honorary President, Ruth Beattie, and Honorary Vice President, John Johnston for their valuable help and support. I would also like to thank the many other members of the Branch who contribute valuable time to support our activities. In this respect, special thanks go to Mary Webster and Margaret Tough for their diligent maintenance of the website, to Peter Knapman for his excellent editing of our Newsletter, to the non-committee members of the Centenary subcommittee who have provided excellent guidance of our many Centenary year activities, including Margaret Sanders who chairs the subcommittee as well as Muriel Bone, Eilidh Hart and Amy Bryson. Thanks also to many who volunteer to help with refreshments at our dances and to many who volunteer to participate in outreach activities. Many thanks in addition to all our talented teachers and musicians who keep our traditions alive and flourishing.

Let us now progress to the next items on the agenda.

3 Minutes of AGM held on 19 May 2022

The Minutes of the 2022 AGM have been available on our website.

Approval: Proposed by Marilyn Mowbray and Seconded by Mary Webster.

4 Matters arising

Chris Sanders pointed out a spelling mistake under item 8 where the name of the seconder should be Maureen Daniel.

5 Branch Report

In the absence of the Branch Secretary, Debbie McAlees, this was read by Ian Johnson.

This is the 100th Report for RSCDS Glasgow Branch.

Membership: Our current membership stands at 230 of which 31 are life members. In addition, we have 18 associate members. We have 12 linked groups.

Classes: Classes began in September 2022 with 7 Branch Classes running over the year catering for dancers of all abilities from beginners to experienced. The beginner's class on the south side of Glasgow moved location to Hillpark Secondary School from the Maccabi Centre, Giffnock. As in previous years, the Milngavie general class and Westerton beginners' class combined after Easter for a final term and ran into May. Due to the timing of the Spring Fling, other classes also had opportunities to practise their demonstrations and Nice and Easy dances. Additionally, 4 Spring Classes with an "anniversary theme" were held, each with a different guest teacher. The Branch would like to thank all the musicians and teachers who make our classes possible; it is greatly appreciated.

Dances: Eleven dances were held during the last year including 'Nice & Easy' Dances, Branch Dances and our Midwinter Ball which reverted back to January. Both Milngavie Town Hall and Carmichael Hall are still being used as vaccination centres, so Bearsden Hub and Clarkston Hall became regular venues for all of our Branch Dances. We welcomed a large group of dancers from the Ribble Valley Branch, who attended our April dance. The Spring Fling took place on 29th April and was well supported and enjoyed by many dancers from Branch Classes and Linked clubs across the Greater Glasgow area. Matthew Maclennan providing the music for the 9 displays and the dances across the afternoon.

Glasgow Branch Newsletters: Three newsletters have been published this year. We greatly thank Peter Knapman for taking on the role of Editor and producing the newsletters with the Committee's input.

RSCDS AGM and Conference Weekend: This was a very exciting year for RSCDS Glasgow Branch, as Glasgow held the AGM and Autumn Gathering in preparation for the 2023 Centenary AGM. Five delegates attended the AGM in Glasgow and a full report was published in the Winter Newsletter 2022. Many Branch members joined them to take part in evening dances and some of the other enjoyable weekend events.

Glasgow Music Festival: The Festival was held on 11th March. Six primary school aged teams took part. In the adult section there were three teams: Glasgow Dancers, Edinburgh University New Scotland Dance Society and St Andrews Celtic Society. Glasgow Dancers were the winners. Music was provided by Susan MacFadyen. Thank you to Susan Ewington for all her hard work in making this festival a success. Thanks also to all the school staff, dance instructors and of course the pupils and dancers who all worked so hard and all the Glasgow Branch volunteers who acted as stewards on the day. A big thank you to Avril Smillie, who has been an enthusiastic adjudicator over the past few years. A new adjudicator will be appointed for 2024's Festival.

Primary School Festival - Day of Dance: This one-day event for Scottish country dancing was back this year in March with a resounding success. We had Walter Proven - as our experienced MC and excellent music from John Carmichael and his band. The day was supported by The Lord Provost of Glasgow and The Chair of RSCDS William Williamson as well as the new RSCDS COO Jon Berridge. Thank you to Fiona McDonald who organises this event with Glasgow Education and all the RSCDS members who volunteered to help on the day.

Seniors' Group: Four meetings have taken place - one in June 2022, one in September 2022, a festive lunch and one in April 2023. Meetings have included musicians and past dancers and a very interesting presentation on the Society Archives by Society Archivist, Alan Macpherson.

Centenary Book: The Branch has compiled this book and it was launched at the Mid-Winter Ball at a cost of £10. Thirteen dances and a history of the Branch are included, with 'The Story' pulled together by the late Effie Maclellan. We thank Margaret Sanders, Amy Bryson, Eilidh Hart, Peter Knapman and Maureen Daniel for all their hard work on the book. Videoing of the dances has been completed and they will be available shortly on YouTube.

Teacher Training: One candidate took her part 1 exam and was successful at RSCDS Summer School.

Outreach: The Branch has been contacted a lot this year with requests for dancers or teachers. We have supplied various teachers, dancers and musicians across the year, for a range of activities including demonstrations in care homes, teaching 50 children over Easter and welcoming Canadian, French and Ukrainian participants and supporting a session at the Indepen-Dance Gathered Together Festival.

RSCDS also approached Glasgow Branch for support with a Ceilidh at the 30th anniversary of Celtic Connections, which was held in Maryhill in January and well organised by Susan Ewington and Peter Knapman on behalf of the Branch.

It was an honour and a privilege for members of the RSCDS Glasgow Branch to be extended an invitation to meet HRH Princess Anne at a reception in the Banqueting Hall of Glasgow City Chambers. The Princess had expressed a wish to meet organisations which held the royal patronage and particularly people who had met Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during her lifetime.

Branch Administration: The Committee was made up of 13 elected members - but we have had changes along this year, with 2 members demitting office, one retiring early and one being co-opted onto the Committee.

Committee meetings were split between face-to-face and over zoom.

Mary Webster continued to be responsible for the Branch Website.

There were several sub-committees set up and continued from previous years: e.g., Centenary, Classes and Dance Programme subcommittees. The Health Strategy Subcommittee was continued but is now contributing to a Society wide initiative. The Centenary subcommittee continues to provide support for The Society for the Autumn Gathering in 2023 as well as organising our own events for our Centenary Year.

Sadly, we lost some branch members in the past year. These include Helen Blair, Margaret Filer, Dorothy Hamilton, Effie Maclellan and Patricia Maureen Reid.

This is my first report as Secretary and on behalf of Glasgow Branch. Unfortunately, I cannot attend in person, but I look forward to hearing all about it. I would like to thank the Committee members for all their hard work and time in planning and making sure Glasgow Branch gets back on track after Covid times and for running successful dances and classes throughout the year.

6 Financial Report including Trustees' Report for year ended 31 March 2023

This year's figures are much better news than last year's. You will see that we made a small profit overall. We were able to run our full programme of classes and dances, the combination of which more than covered their costs. Following last year's very large loss on the classes, we reduced our 2 terms to 10 weeks each and we also increased the cost of dance tickets.

Branch running costs this year were significantly more than last year, partly because we held more face-to-face committee meetings including a Branch strategy development half day meeting. Increased activity meant more ink, paper and stamps were used by committee members. However, there are hidden subsidies within the profit. More than half the donation amount came from a single donor and was a one-off. Moreover, some committee members have not claimed for all or some of their expenses. At the last committee meeting it was recognised that this disguises the true cost of running the Branch and also that we should not expect any committee member to subsidise the branch in this way. Consequently, next year's running costs will be greater.

Last year the Seniors' Group made a profit, but this year they have made a loss of over £200. The organisers are not Trustees of the Branch and therefore cannot have access to the full bank statements. To help them keep track of their income and expenditure from now on, I will send them a spreadsheet of the payments made for their events.

The Branch still holds significant reserves. I have been able to find figures going back to 2017 which show any changes in the value of our assets.

Year	Investments	BoS Treasurer's Account
2017	£42,480	£16,148
2018	£42,030	£17,414
2019	£48,940	£5,074
2020	£48,058	£2,434
2021	£44,428	£6,082

You can see 2022 and 2023 figures in this year's audited account. You may remember that last year, in order to keep the Branch solvent, the Committee decided to put the proceeds of a matured bond in the Hampshire Trust Bank, just over £9000, into the BoS Treasurer's account.

We are able to meet our financial commitments in Glasgow Branch. The Accounts were examined by Robert McColl in the position of External Examiner. His report is available on request. All the activities of the Branch throughout the year were consistent with the aims of the Branch as specified in our Branch Constitution.

The Chair then asked for any questions/comments

Chris Sanders asked why the cost of first aid kits was now shown separately in the additional list of other items of expenditure rather than in the Branch end of year accounts and Carol-Ann Knox asked why that was as she thought they belonged in the Branch end of year accounts.

Answer: The external examiner asked the Treasurer to only show costs directly attributable to the main activities run by the Branch i.e., classes and dances and to show all other expenses separately as administration costs.

Peter Knapman agreed that Branch reserves should be kept for 'rainy days' such as covering for the deficit incurred during 2021/2022. However, it would be helpful if details of how they built up or were used were given.

Chris Sanders asked for an explanation of Calico and Spanglefish.

Answer: Calico, which has been taken over by Hostworld, manages our domain name (rscdsglasgow.org) and Spanglefish manage the website.

Eilidh Hart queried the discrepancy between the total running costs shown in the end of year accounts and that shown in the addendum.

Answer: The Chair said this would be addressed later in the Agenda. (See Section 8 below.)

Approval: Proposed by Ian Johnson and Seconded by Harry Dooley.

7 Appointment of External Examiner of the Accounts

Robert McColl is willing to continue in this role.

Proposed by Mary Webster and Seconded by Susan Ewington.

8 Motions

There was one motion at the AGM, namely the proposal to raise the Branch membership subscription to £7. Attendees were reminded that there was an amendment from Mary Webster which had been posted online. Sebastian Wanless then detailed the main arguments from the Branch Committee in support of the motion. This included presentation of an addendum, detailing all of the running costs of the Branch, and which answered Eilidh Hart's query regarding the discrepancy with the total running costs shown in the end of year accounts. Some of these running costs appear under different headings in the end of year accounts. Sebastian stated that this will be made clearer in future statements of accounts. He then invited comments from the attendees which included the following:

Peter Knapman was comfortable with spending reserves on outreach projects.

Other comments on reserves queried what would constitute an acceptable level of reserves and the fact that the reserves were not much greater than the total annual expenditure of running the Branch.

Robert McColl stated that subscriptions should cover the Branch running costs.

Marjory Dooley asked why dance profits were not used to cover other losses/expenses and why we didn't charge non-members a higher price than Branch members for dance tickets.

Ian Johnson thought it might be helpful for the members to know that he was chairing a sub-committee looking at the way forward for classes including expanding the range of classes and that it was likely that this would incur increased costs in the foreseeable future.

Other points mentioned were that becoming a Branch member could be promoted more strongly and it might be worth investigating the proportion of Branch members/non-members attending dances.

Mary Webster was then asked to speak to her amendment where she highlighted some of the points made in the paper she had submitted prior to the meeting. The main point she emphasised was that with this year's reserves remaining relatively stable compared to last year's, an increase of £5 in membership fees would be adequate. Mary finished by proposing that the Branch membership subscription be set at £5.

The Chair explained that there would now be a vote on the amendment to increase the Branch membership subscription to £5 and if this was not carried then there would be a vote on the original proposal to increase the Branch membership subscription to £7.

Margaret Sanders and Peter Knapman volunteered to act as Tellers.

Results of voting

Amendment to set Branch membership subscription to £5

For: 10

Against: 21

Abstentions: 2

Motion was not passed.

Proposal to set Branch membership subscription to £7

For: 22

Against: 5

Abstentions: 5

Motion was passed.

9 Election of Office Bearers and Committee for 2023-2024

Honorary President: Sebastian Wanless asked for the confirmation of Ruth Beattie continuing in the role of Honorary President.

Proposed by Chris Sanders. Seconded by Muriel Bone.

Honorary Vice President: Sebastian Wanless asked for the confirmation of John Johnston continuing in the role of Honorary Vice President.

Proposed by Meg Barrowman. Seconded by Aileen Warwick.

Chair: Ruth Beattie as Hon President was invited to take the Chair. Ruth Beattie took the Chair. Sebastian Wanless is eligible for re-election.

Proposed by John Johnston. Seconded by Peter Knapman.

Sebastian Wanless then retook the Chair.

All candidates proposed were unopposed and duly elected.

Chair-elect: Ian Johnson was re-elected.
Proposed by Susan Ewington. Seconded by Mary Webster.

Secretary: Debbie McAlees was re-elected.
Proposed by Carol-Ann Knox. Seconded by Eilidh Hart.

Treasurer: Marilyn Mowbray was re-elected.
Proposed by Harry Dooley. Seconded by Meg Barrowman.

Events Convenor: Aileen Warwick was re-elected.
Proposed by Eilidh Hart. Seconded by Margaret Sanders.

Class Convenor: Marion Cusick was re-elected.
Proposed by Caitlin Abbott. Seconded by Marilyn Mowbray.

Outreach Convenor: Susan Ewington was no longer eligible for this role having completed her term of office. Anne Murray was elected.
Proposed by Muriel Bone. Seconded by Meg Barrowman.

Communications Convenor: Alexandra Larion had demitted office. Harry Dooley was elected.
Proposed by Maureen McCrudden. Seconded by Alistair Raeburn.

Membership Convenor: Sandra McAllister was re-elected.
Proposed by Carol-Ann Knox. Seconded by Aileen Warwick.

Committee Members:

The Branch Committee has five ordinary member posts. Connor Civatte had demitted office. Marion Cole had retired early.

Caitlin Abbott was re-elected.
Proposed by Carol-Ann Knox. Seconded by Eilidh Hart.

James Miller was elected.
Proposed by Sebastian Wanless. Seconded by Muriel Bone.

Gale McCallum was elected.
Proposed by Marion Cusick. Seconded by Carol-Ann Knox.

Hilary Wood was elected.
Proposed by Mary Webster. Seconded by Meg Barrowman.

Lyndsey Brown was elected.
Proposed by Chris Sanders. Seconded by Eilidh Hart.

10 Election of Delegates to RSCDS AGM in November 2023

Glasgow Branch is entitled to five delegates at the Society AGM. It is usual for the four Office Bearers to be Branch Delegates i.e., Chair, Chair-elect, Secretary and Treasurer. One more delegate was required. The Chair asked the members if anyone was willing to take on this role. Eilidh Hart indicated that she would be willing to become a delegate. As no other members came forward there was no need for an election.

Approval: Proposed by Margaret Sanders. Seconded by Susan Ewington.

The delegates for Glasgow Branch at the Society AGM 2023 will be Sebastian Wanless, Ian Johnson, Debbie McAlees, Marilyn Mowbray and Eilidh Hart. In the event of anyone being unable to attend, the Committee has the right to appoint a replacement delegate.

11 Appointment of Archivist

Christopher Sanders is our Archivist. He is willing to remain in this post. Proposed by Caitlin Abbott. Seconded by Meg Barrowman.

12 AOCB

Hamish Gibb suggested that there might be grants which could be applied for to help fund special projects. It was agreed that this was something which could be explored.

Muriel Bone suggested that it would be useful to re-introduce the post of Youth Convenor on the Branch Committee so that there would be someone on the Committee to act as a link with the university class, Alba etc. There had been one in the past but the post was removed and replaced with an Outreach Convenor which did not really fulfil this role. She wondered if the Constitution required to be changed to do this but Mary Webster said this would not need to happen. The Chair said that this had already come up at our summer meeting last year and we hoped to explore it in the near future.

Anne Robertson informed us of the Walking Scottish class run by Dumfries Branch in conjunction with the NHS for less mobile dancers which might be something worthwhile considering. There is a video on the TAS website.

The Chair told the meeting that some of the health benefits of Scottish country dancing had been put forward and had already been acknowledged in the development of a Branch Health Strategy a few years ago but this was shelved because of the Covid pandemic. When it looked as if classes were likely to restart following the lifting of restrictions, our Social Marketing Project was given priority to raise awareness of Scottish country dancing in Glasgow in general and to hopefully attract new members/dancers. More recently, interest in our Health Strategy has been shown by the Society and the Strategy is on the Society website. The Chair is involved with moving this forward with the Society.

Susan Ewington told the meeting about some of the 'newer' Outreach activities which have taken place over the past year such as performing 'informal' demonstrations in care homes and for other community groups.

It was pointed out that some youth organisations have awards which can be gained by attending Scottish country dancing classes such as Brownie/Guide badges and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

Chris Sanders also informed the meeting that Walter Proven had restarted children's classes in some of the primary schools in Milngavie and Bearsden and it was planned to relaunch the Bearsden and Milngavie Primary Schools Dance Festival.

13 Date of next AGM – 16 May 2024

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.55 pm.