

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

**Annual General Meeting held at 19.00 on Thursday 19 May 2022 in
Kirk Lounge of The Renfield Training and Conference, Glasgow**

33 members attended. Sebastian Wanless welcomed everyone to the AGM and everyone was made aware of refreshments and fire safety.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Johan Maclean, Effie Maclellan, Anne Robertson, Daphne Davidson, Helen Kelly, Anne Murray, Fiona McDonald, Marion Cole, Fiona Fairlie, Robert Fairlie, Carol-Ann Knox and Shona Holmes

- 2. Chairman's Remarks:**

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all in attendance here today. This is the first time we have been able to hold an AGM in person since 2019 and it's a pleasure to see old friends' faces and have a chance to catch up with those we might not have encountered at a class or a dance recently.

I would be lying if I were to say that my first year as Chairman of Glasgow Branch has been a walk in the park. In June of 2021, the committee made an informed, but nonetheless provisional decision to plan for the recommencement of classes and dances in September. This engendered a very significant amount of work by all committee members, given that we were a relatively new committee with some office bearers new to their role. We had to identify halls for classes and dances at a time when many venues were not available. We reengaged with teachers and musicians and were successful in scheduling everything initially for the first term, including two new beginners' classes in Garnethill and Kelvinside. Covid precautions had to be devised and Covid officers appointed and trained. We are extremely grateful to Alistair Raeburn, who not only helped us draft COVID risk management procedures, but personally visited all the venues to assess suitability.

Concomitantly we launched the social marketing campaign we had been working on during the lockdown. This was advertised on Facebook and Google ads., reaching 44,128 Facebook users and generating 1,711 clicks in total. The adverts were linked to details of our classes, including information about three taster events we ran at Sloans Bar, the Multicultural Centre in Garnethill and Kelvinbridge Parish Church. In excess of 40 new dancers have come to our beginners' classes and since September of 2021, 22 new members have joined the Branch.

The planning paid off and we started with a bang: a dance in Bearsden Hub on the 11th. of September with fantastic music by the Iain Muir Sound. It was probably the first such dance in Scotland and certainly a cathartic moment after so many months without live dancing. And so we continued with only a minor break due to the short lockdown over the holiday period.

Despite that sense of optimism, there are new challenges. Although we have new dancers and new members, some of our former friends have not yet returned to dancing. Attendance at classes has been variable, although gradually improving. The consequence has been a reduction in income from classes, at the same time as hall lets, band fees and payments to teachers and

musicians have all increased. As you will hear from Marilyn, our Treasurer, there has, therefore, been a substantial loss on classes, while profit from dances has not been as robust as before the lockdown. Loss on our classes is not a new phenomenon, but not on the scale we have observed this year. We took some remedial actions at the end of the first term, by curtailing the Kelvinbridge beginners' class, moving some classes to less expensive venues, reducing the number of all classes in the second and third terms and deciding not to run summer workshops this year. We have also kept refreshments rather minimal at dances. Nonetheless, I hope you enjoyed your one biscuit per dancer!

This also means that we will have to continue to make some cost-cutting adjustments from this autumn onwards. The list of measures has not been finalized by the committee, but the following are all under consideration:

- 1) Upfront payment of classes for the entire term
- 2) Alterations to the cost structure of classes (a subcommittee is developing proposals)
- 3) Limitation of classes to 10 per term for all classes in the first and second terms
- 4) Review of classes to determine more efficient ways of running them
- 5) Cancellation of loss-making dances
- 6) Hiring more two-piece bands
- 7) Continued restriction of refreshments at dances
- 8) Increase in subscription from 2023 (I will return to the 2022 subscription issue under the motion later in the agenda)
- 9) Hybrid committee meetings: some in person, some by Zoom

Let me conclude by thanking my colleagues on the committee who have done a stellar job in challenging times, as well as many others who have contributed to Branch activities. I would also like to personally thank my predecessor, Margaret Sanders, who has always been available to advise me, especially when I didn't know what to do! Despite the challenges we faced, I have actually enjoyed being Chairman and I have learnt a lot.

2. Minutes of AGM held on 20 May 2021:

The Minutes of the 2021 AGM have been available on our website; this was mentioned in the last Newsletter. Approval: proposed by Sandra McAllister and seconded by Maureen Daniel.

3. Matters arising: N/A

4. Branch Report:

This is the 99th Report for Glasgow Branch.

Membership: Our current membership stands at 234 of which 32 are life members. In addition, we have 14 associate members. We have 13 linked groups.

Advertising: The Social Marketing sub-committee worked hard over the summer to put together an advertising campaign for several taster sessions and new classes we wanted to launch. We ran 3 taster events and launched an additional two beginners' classes.

Classes: Classes began in the autumn after over a year of no dancing due to COVID. Our seven Branch Classes ran over the autumn and winter, catering for dancers of all abilities from

beginners to experienced. There was a two-week delay to the start of the second term due to COVID restrictions. The Milngavie general class and Westerton beginners' class combined for a final term and ran into May as did the beginners class in Giffnock. In addition, four Spring Themed Classes 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. Several classes moved location in the first term as school halls were not available for lettings. These classes have mostly moved back to their locations pre COVID except the Milngavie class as Milngavie town hall is still being used as a vaccination centre.

Dances: Seven Dances were held during the last year including 'Nice & Easy' Dances, Branch Dances and our Midwinter Ball which was held in April and rebranded as an End of Season ball due to COVID restrictions. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the Burns Dance in January due to the restrictions. Both Milngavie town hall and Carmichael Hall are vaccinations centres so alternative locations were required to be found.

Glasgow Branch Newsletters: Three newsletters have been published this year. We greatly thank Meg Barrowman for the work she has put in producing the Newsletters throughout the past 10 years. She is now retiring from this role.

Health and Safety: Several members of the committee have taken up an invitation to attend defibrillator training in Bearsden.

RSCDS AGM and Conference Weekend: Five delegates attended the AGM in Perth and a full report was in the Winter Newsletter 2021. Several Branch dancers joined them to take part in the Open Forum, evening dances and some of the other enjoyable weekend events.

Glasgow Music Festival: The festival was held on 12th March. Due to COVID some teams had to withdraw. Two school teams entered the non-competitive class as they had only been dancing since August 2021. In the adult section there were two teams, Glasgow Dancers and St Andrews Celtic Society. Music was provided by Màrtainn Skene. Thank you to Susan Ewington and the team.

The Seniors' Group: After 8 years in post, Daphne Davidson and Katherine Morrison have retired from running the group. Maureen McCrudden has taken over as Convenor with Maureen Daniel assisting. They had a meeting in late 2021 and one in March. The next meeting is the 23rd of June 2022.

Centenary Book: The Branch sent out requests for dance submissions for our Centenary Dance Book that we plan to publish in early 2023. We received 39 submissions. After three testing sessions we have selected 13 dances that will be part of the book. We thank everyone who submitted a dance and to the volunteers who came to the testing sessions.

Teacher training: COVID has disrupted some of our trainee teachers from completing the RSCDS unit examinations. However, two trainees who began sitting their unit examinations in Glasgow have received scholarships to summer school to undertake the course and exam there. We wish them the best of luck.

Callers: In 2020, John Johnston began calling training sessions with four of our newly qualified RSCDS teachers. They completed the second and final training session in January 2022, delayed due to COVID, and have all since been calling at several of our dances. Thank you to

John Johnston for running the sessions and to Margaret Sanders for organising and coming to the sessions in support.

Outreach: The branch occasionally is contacted with requests for dancers or teachers. We supplied a teacher and musician, Fiona McDonald and Màrtainn Skene, to run ceilidh and Scottish Country Dancing sessions in a high school by request from PEPASS. We also visited the Indepen-dance Company and look to make further links with the group. We are organising events in the next year to host a bowling team from Ottawa and the Ribble Valley group.

Branch Administration:

The Committee was made up of thirteen elected members.

All except one committee meeting was held over zoom.

Mary Webster continues to be responsible for the Branch Website.

There were several sub-committees set up and continued from previous years e.g., Centenary, Newsletter, Social Marketing Campaign and dance programme subcommittees. The Health Strategy Subcommittee was continued but is now on hold.

The Centenary subcommittee continues to provide support for Headquarters for the Autumn Gatherings in 2022 and 2023 and organising our own events in celebration of our Centenary Year.

The Chair, Sebastian Wanless, has kept up the tradition from our previous Chair of email communications fortnightly with our membership.

Sadly, we lost some branch members and members of our community in the past year. These include Margaret Kane, Margaret McKenzie, Mary Lamb, Catherine McNeil who was a life member and had received a branch scroll and Derek Hamilton who recorded our 90th Anniversary CD.

This is my second and final report as Secretary as I demit office. On behalf of Glasgow Branch, I would like to thank the committee for the hard work they have put in to encourage us to return to dancing, their resourcefulness and adapting in finding solutions to issues caused by COVID.

5. Financial Report including the Trustees' Report for year ending 31st March 2022

This report covers a period which includes 2 episodes of COVID-19 restrictions, which prevented us from holding classes and dances from April to August 2021 and for a few weeks in January 2022. Uncertainty over when the second period would end led us to cancel the scheduled February Branch Dance.

Our first public events were the implementation of the findings of the research undertaken for our marketing project. The purpose was to increase our membership, particularly aiming to attract a younger age group. We held three 'Taster' classes in different parts of the city which were free for those attending. We resumed regular classes and dances in September 2021. The 3 Beginners' classes have yielded some new members.

Although there was a core of enthusiastic attendees, the Autumn classes made a significant loss. This was caused by a number of factors: reduced attendance because of anxiety about COVID, a long overdue pay rise for teachers and musicians, a change in how their travel expenses are paid, purchase of hand sanitiser and increased charges for halls because local authorities' premises were not being let to the public. As the Chairman has said, we took some measures to reduce losses in the second term and our finances were further helped by the generosity of some teachers and musicians who refunded part of their expenses or fees. These amounts are included under Donations.

The Seniors Group has operated at a profit, making a welcome contribution of almost £400 to our funds.

Thanks to the foresight of previous Trustees, the Branch has significant reserves some of which the Committee agreed needed to be used to cover the deficit in our operating costs. The bond which we held in the Hampshire Trust Bank matured during the year and the Committee agreed to have the full amount paid into the Bank of Scotland Treasurer's account. This has allowed the Branch to remain solvent. We still have significant reserves but obviously cannot continue to run them down at this rate. 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. It was noted, however, that there were some discrepancies in expected expenses for specific items. These might be related to inaccurate allocation to budget headings. It was agreed that the committee will investigate this and will send an update to the membership when the issues have been resolved.

All the activities of the Branch throughout the year were consistent with the aims of the Branch as specified in our Branch Constitution.

Approval: proposed by Margaret Sanders and seconded by Ian Johnson

5. Appointment of External Examiner of the Accounts:

Robert McColl is happy to continue in this role.

Proposed by Meg Barrowman and seconded by Maureen McCrudden

6. Motions:

There was one motion at the AGM, namely the proposal to set the membership fees for 2022/2023 at £28 for the adult subscription and £46 for a joint subscription. This proposal was intended to cushion for this year the rather large increase in the HQ subscription which was increased from £18 to £25 at the HQ AGM in November 2021. It means, for example, that of the Adult subscription, £25 goes to HQ and £3 to Glasgow Branch. There was a lively and useful discussion of this motion. It was approved as detailed below, but on the understanding that this is likely to be a temporary measure with the contribution to Glasgow Branch being increased again in future years.

Margaret Sanders and Hamish Gibb as Tellers

For: 26

Abstain: 7

Motion is passed.

7. Election of Office Bearers and Committee for 2022 – 2023:

Honorary President:

Sebastian Wanless asked for the confirmation of Ruth Beattie continuing in the role of Honorary President. Proposed by Chris Sanders. Seconded by Debbie McAlees

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 Muriel Bone

Chairman: 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 Ian Johnson. Seconded by John Johnston.

Sebastian Wanless then re-took the chair.

All candidates proposed were unopposed and duly elected.

Vice Chairman: Ian Johnson was re-elected. Proposed by Hamish Gibb. Seconded by Eilidh Hart.

Secretary: Amy Bryson stepped down from her role due to commitments to her PhD. Debbie McAlees was elected. Proposed by Susan Ewington. Seconded by Margaret Sanders.

Treasurer: Marilyn Mowbray was re-elected. Proposed by John Johnston. Seconded by Caitlin Abbott.

Events Convenor: Aileen Warwick was re-elected. Proposed by Muriel Bone. Seconded by Eilidh Hart.

Outreach Convenor: Susan Ewington was re-elected. Proposed by Tamara Wanless. Seconded by Debbie McAlees.

Class Convenor: Marion Cusick was re-elected. Proposed by Alistair Raeburn. Seconded by Aileen Warwick.

Membership Secretary: Sandra McAllister was re-elected. Proposed by Maureen McCrudden. Seconded by Meg Barrowman.

Communications Convenor: Debbie McAlees was no longer eligible for this role having completed her term of office. Alexandra Larion was elected. Proposed by Eilidh Hart. Seconded by Caitlin Abbott.

Committee Members: Eilidh Hart is demitting her position after 4 years. Anne Murray, Caitlin Abbott and Marion Cole are still eligible. Proposed by Margaret Sanders. Seconded by Marion Cusick.

Connor Civatte was elected. Proposed by an attendee (name unfortunately not documented). Seconded by Eilidh Hart.

8. Appointment of the Archivist:

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

9. AOCB

Margaret Sanders proposed increasing the dance tickets prices from £10 to £12. The matter of fees for classes and cost of dance tickets is already being considered by the committee for the following year.

The meeting was closed at 8.30pm after which tea, coffee and biscuits were served.