

**THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY  
GLASGOW BRANCH**

**Charity Registered in Scotland  
SC008002**

**Annual General Meeting held at 1900 hours on Thursday 16 May 2024  
In Renfield Training and Conference Centre, Glasgow G2 4JP**

*35 members attended. Sebastian Wanless, Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the 101st AGM of the RSCDS Glasgow Branch.*

**1 Apologies for absence:**

Secretary Debbie McAlees is unable to attend due to work commitments.

Apologies were also received from Caitlin Abbott, Ishbel Bertram, Amy Bryson, Joyce and Tom Carmichael, Heather Cowan, Daphne Davidson, Lorraine Dick, James Ferguson, Marion Ganthony, Helen Kelly, Shona Holmes, Vijay Iyer, Helen Wood, Les Lambert, Sandra McAllister, Penelope McKimmie, Alan and Ann Munro, Graham and Helen Murray, Lilian Murray, Viv O'Duffy, Sue and Gordon Porter, Anne Robertson, Marjorie Small, David Smith and Aileen Warwick.

**2 Chair's Remarks**

The last twelve months have been frenetic, exhilarating and decidedly memorable! Throughout 2023 we worked hard on Centenary celebrations, culminating in our spirited and much appreciated Centenary Ball in Glasgow City Chambers on 24th November at the invitation of the Lord Provost and attended by the Society Chair and Chair-Elect.

During the year we also enjoyed publicising the Branch with public dance demonstrations at the Bearsden and Milngavie Highland Games and in Kelvingrove Museum, promoting the Glasgow Branch 100th Anniversary Book and commemorating our thriving Seniors Group at a Centenary Afternoon Tea at the House for an Art Lover: this last with the lively participation again of the Society Chair, William Williamson, whose rendering of Highland dancing is now a Facebook feature! The 100th Anniversary Book has been a resounding success, having now sold 377 copies, making a profit of £1,975. In 2024, we have complemented the book with a recording of the music associated with the 13 featured dances. The recording is available for download on the Bandcamp platform. The Branch also played a key role in supporting the Society AGM in November 2023 just as we did in 2022. In addition, at the request of the Society, Glasgow Branch also made a major contribution to the planning of the Society's 100th Anniversary event on 23 November at the former Athenaeum in Glasgow, ending with the unveiling of a commemorative plaque and flash mob dancing on Buchanan Street.

At the same time as these exciting Centenary events, we continued the everyday work of the Branch, successfully running our six classes, nine Branch dances in addition to the Midwinter Ball and an increasingly varied number of outreach activities. As promised at the AGM in 2023, the Committee also made targeted investments using funds from our reserves. Some initial outlay of funds was required in planning Centenary activities, although ultimately these resulted overall in a profit of £1,397, primarily due to the sale of Centenary books. In addition, we ran a new Social Marketing Campaign attracting new dancers to our Beginners Classes in January 2024 and we contributed funds to assist two of our members undergoing their teacher training. In 2024 we added to the Centenary associated expenses by publishing the music accompanying the dances from the Centenary Book on Bandcamp at a cost of

£1,000. However, by March 2024, even that had recouped nearly £700 in sales. As shown in the approved 2023/2024 accounts, overall, despite the additional expenses throughout the year and including the much appreciated £7 members' subscription, the Branch made a small profit of £530.50.

For me personally the last twelve months have been both challenging and rewarding. They have reinforced my belief in the unique value of Scottish country dancing. I strongly believe that Scottish country dancing and the community it has engendered brings a lot of light to the world. How energised one feels after an evening of dance, accompanied by our unique form of traditional music and after greeting and talking with our like-minded friends! It is also worth emphasising that our form of dancing has substantial physical and mental health benefits. You can read about this on the Branch website at this link: [Health Strategy](#). I am pleased to say that the Society is now embarking on a future campaign to promote the health benefits of Scottish country dancing, including such innovative ways as prescribing it for those who can thereby most profit. Can you imagine any better activity to provide “fun, fitness and friendship” as our own slogan so expressively describes it!

I would like to thank all Branch Members for their stellar support, especially during the time we were restarting activities after the COVID-19 epidemic. Let me express my appreciation to our Honorary President, Ruth Beattie, and Honorary Vice President, John Johnston for their valuable help and support. Thanks also to the many other members of the Branch who contribute valuable time to support our activities. In this respect, special gratitude is deserved by Elspeth Johnson for her assistance with our accounts and by Mary Webster and Margaret Tough for their diligent maintenance of the website. Many thanks to Peter Knapman for his excellent editing of our Newsletter and to the non-committee members of the Centenary subcommittee who provided excellent guidance of our many Centenary year activities, including Margaret Sanders who chaired 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.

Special thanks in addition to all our talented teachers and musicians and our dance demonstration teams who keep our traditions alive and flourishing. It remains for me to wish the soon to be elected, incoming Committee, new Honorary President and Vice-President, new Safeguarding Officers and new External Examiner all the very best for the continuing success of Glasgow Branch. There may be new challenges, but more importantly novel opportunities ahead but I am confident the Branch will address both with energy and aplomb.

### **3 Minutes of AGM held on 18 May 2023**

The Minutes of the 2023 AGM have been available on our website.

Approval:

Proposed by Ian Johnson

Seconded by Muriel Bone.

### **4 Matters arising**

None

## **5 Branch Report**

In the absence of the Branch Secretary, Debbie McAlees, this was read by Ian Johnson. This is the 101st Report for RSCDS Glasgow Branch.

### **Membership:**

Our current membership stands at 234 of which 30 are life members. In addition, we have 19 associate members. We have 12 linked groups.

### **Classes:**

Classes began in September 2023 with seven Branch Classes running over the year catering for dancers of all abilities from beginners to the more experienced. We were able to move the Advanced Class from Bellahouston to the more accessible site at the Glasgow Gaelic School for the second term beginning in January 2024. As in previous years, the Milngavie general class and Westerton beginners' class combined after Easter for a final term and ran into May and Hillpark Beginners had two additional classes in April. Additionally, four Spring Classes with a "historic theme" were held with four different guest teachers: Jimmie Hill, Anne Robertson, Janet Johnston and Peter Knapman.

At the beginning of 2024 a new social marketing campaign was launched with assistance from Social Marketing Gateway. Respondents were directed through Eventbrite to three free extra beginners' classes in Westerton, Garnethill and Hillpark Secondary School. Fifty-two people signed up through Eventbrite, of whom 22 have attended some classes during January and February. There was a decrease in March, but this coincided with a decrease in attendance at most of our Branch classes.

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, the Centenary Ball in November 2023 and the Midwinter Ball in January 2024. Milngavie Town Hall became available again for dances from December 2023, but contemporaneously, Bearsden Hub was closed due to RAAC investigation and repair work.

The highlight of the year, as mentioned above in the Chair's remarks was the Centenary Ball in Glasgow City Chambers, a spectacular event in a spectacular venue.

### **Newsletters:**

Three newsletters have been published during the year. We greatly thank Peter Knapman for continuing in the role of Editor and producing the newsletters with the Committee's and Membership's input. The Newsletters have benefited from novel and insightful contributions from Peter himself.

### **RSCDS AGM and Conference Weekend:**

This year the Society held their AGM and Autumn Gathering in Glasgow again, to coincide with the founding of the Society 100 years ago in Glasgow. Glasgow Branch assisted with logistics for the weekend. Five delegates attended the AGM in Glasgow, and a full report was published in the Winter Newsletter 2023. Many Branch members were present to take part in evening dances and some of the other enjoyable and informative weekend events.

#### Glasgow Music Festival:

The Festival was held on 9th March. Six primary school aged teams and, for the first time, one high school took part. St Andrew's Primary School from Falkirk was awarded the Marion B Hamilton Certificate with the highest score of 88% for dancing Hedwig's Reel. In the adult section there were three teams: Glasgow Dancers, Edinburgh University New Scotland Dance Society and Dundee University Scottish Country Dance Society. Glasgow Dancers were the winners and were awarded the Glasgow Branch Quaich for obtaining the highest score of 90%. Thank you to our new adjudicator, Les Lambert, for his positive comments, to Maureen Daniel for recording the comments and to Màrtainn Skene for the lovely music. Thanks also to the school staff, dance instructors and of course the pupils and dancers who all worked so hard and to all the Glasgow Branch volunteers who acted as stewards on the day. Sincere thanks go to Susan Ewington for all her hard work in making this year's festival a success.

#### Primary School Festival - Day of Dance:

This one-day event for Scottish country dancing was even more memorable than last year because it was held in Glasgow City Chambers, hosted by the Lord Provost. We were again very grateful to Walter Proven as our experienced MC and for the excellent music provided by John Carmichael and his band. The Chair of RSCDS, William Williamson, his wife Linda and the RSCDS COO (Chief Operating Officer) Jon Berridge were also again in attendance. We were delighted that the Lord Provost herself joined in one of the dances! 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 took place throughout the year, including a performance of music by Ian Muir in the summer, and fascinating talks about the jute mills of Dundee and mountaineering by Patrick Murray and Les Lambert respectively. And of course, the exceptional Seniors Group Centenary Afternoon Tea at the House for an Art Lover, attended by RSCDS Chair, William Williamson, who entertained us with song and highland dancing. Musical entertainment was provided by Màrtainn Skene and poetry from Glasgow Chair-Elect, Ian Johnson and Margaret and Chris Sanders.

#### Centenary Book:

The Branch's Centenary book, launched at the Mid-Winter Ball of 2023 proved a great success, eventually generating a profit of over £1,900. Filming of the dances was completed, and the videos were posted on YouTube, the Scottish Country Dancing Dictionary and Strathspey Server. In order to compensate for the lack of an accompanying CD, the Branch decided to publish the music for each dance on Bandcamp, which has also proved very popular.

#### Outreach:

The Branch has responded to many requests to hold or participate in a wide range of events. We have supplied various teachers, dancers and musicians throughout the year, for a range of activities including demonstrations at the Bearsden and Milngavie Highland Games and in Kelvingrove Museum to mark its 5,000th daily organ recital. In September members of the Westerton and St Joseph's classes performed demonstrations of 3 dances each at the Westerton Gala.

In June, volunteers from Glasgow Branch were invited to entertain the members of the Moments Café, a dementia friendly group, which meets in Cathcart Trinity Church Hall twice a month. A return visit was made in February 2024. In October, we made a return visit to St Francis Care Home in Govan to help them celebrate St Francis Feast Day. Further visits to the Care Home were held in December 2023 and on 25 January 2024, to mark Burns Day. In August the Branch supported a summer program run by the charity called Fare by helping primary school children join in ceilidh dancing. RSCDS again approached Glasgow Branch for support with a Ceilidh at the 31st Celtic Connections festival.

Special thanks go to our Outreach Convenor, Anne Murray for the remarkable way she organised a flash mob to dance on 26 November 2023 on Buchanan Street, in association with the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the founding of the Society.

#### Branch Administration:

The Committee had several changes during this year, with the Membership Secretary retiring early and being replaced as well as two additional members being co-opted onto the Committee: Aileen McKenzie and Revathy Nayar. It remains challenging to attract Members to serve on the Committee. Committee meetings were split between face-to-face meetings at Sherbrooke Parish Church and over Zoom.

Mary Webster and Margaret Tough continued to provide invaluable and timely support and updating of the Branch Website.

Several sub-committees continued work from previous years: e.g., Centenary, Classes and Dance Programme subcommittees. The Health Strategy Subcommittee was incorporated into a Society wide initiative, in which Glasgow Chair, Sebastian Wanless participates. The Class subcommittee was created to examine our class offering in detail and its work will continue under the newly elected Committee from May 2024. Its remit is to consider how to go forward with classes and dances, ensuring that the Branch meets its obligations to promote Scottish country dancing while being financially responsible and to hear the views of members and teachers on what we offer, anything additional they would like, and their reaction to the changes made to classes and dances in the future. These views will be solicited through a questionnaire designed by the subcommittee.

At the Midwinter Ball in January 2024, Branch awards were given to three ladies who have made major contributions to Glasgow Branch over many years: Margaret Sanders, Muriel Bone and Fiona McDonald (see photograph at the end of this report).

At this AGM, the following Committee Members are stepping down: the Chair, Sebastian Wanless, the Secretary, Debbie McAlees, the Treasurer, Marilyn Mowbray and the Social Events Convenor, Aileen Warwick. They all wish the new Committee the very best continuing success in the years to come.

## **6 Financial Report including Trustees' Report for year ended 31 March 2024**

Marilyn Mowbray gave her report: "As Sebastian has already said, this has been an exceptionally busy year with all the Centenary activities and events in addition to our normal programme.

Sebastian's figure for the overall profit from Centenary events covers the 3 years in which we have had income and expenditure for them. The figures in the accounts presented are only those incurred this year.

The classes continue to make a loss, some of which can be attributed to our 3 free Taster Classes in January. These, however, have yielded some new regular attendees.

The dances have made a handsome profit this year due to the great support from our members and also partly as a result of having duo rather than trio bands for many of the dances. The catering costs in the accounts include the cost of food served at the Midwinter Ball in January 2024.

The Glasgow Music and Primary Schools Festivals look as if they made a large loss this year. That is due to late payment by Glasgow City Council of the £750 for the band for the Primary Schools Festival. It has now been paid. The Nan Inch Legacy Fund now stands at just under £900."

### **The Chair then asked for any questions/comments**

Robert McColl commented that the Centenary had made a profit and without this event the branch would have made a loss. The Treasurer added that the Chair knew that there would be expenses during the Centenary year but at the last AGM members had agreed that some of the reserves could be used to defray expenses. The late payment from Glasgow City Council of £750 for the band for the Primary Schools Festival would also have offset the above referenced loss to some extent.

Lyndsey Brown added that there would still be profit from BandCamp music sales this financial year.

Muriel Bone asked for clarification re. Dancer Development (£400). The Treasurer explained that two Branch members had received a grant of £200 each to complete their teacher training at Summer School.

The Chair explained that the Treasurer had itemised the Branch running costs in a clear fashion and that the Branch subscription of £7.00 per members does cover running costs.

The Chair stated that the Branch accounts and Trustees report had been approved all members of the Branch committee prior to the AGM.

### **7 Appointment of External Examiner of the Accounts**

Robert McColl has intimated that he wishes to step down from this role as External Accounts Examiner. The Chair stated that the Branch was very grateful as he had done a fantastic job. A small gift was presented to Robert McColl by Sebastian Wanless.

The Chair stated that Jim Gibson (a qualified accountant who has a great deal of experience working in other charitable organisations) was willing to be nominated for the position of External Accounts Examiner.

Proposed by Peter Knapman  
Seconded by Elspeth Johnson

## 8 Motions

There were no motions but the Committee would like to add the following Rule to the current Rules:

*The Annual General Meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the RSCDS (May 2024) instructs the Committee of Management of the Glasgow Branch of the RSCDS to appoint the non-committee posts of External Examiner and Safeguarding Officers. The Committee should review the External Examiner appointment on a three-yearly basis, the Safeguarding Officer appointments annually and any other future analogous posts according to an appropriate schedule.*

As per sections 9.5 and 9.6 of the Branch Constitution, the rules are subject to the following criteria:

*9.5 The Local Association in General Meeting may enact such Rules as it may determine for the proper working of the Local Association.*

*9.6 Such Rules shall only be enacted by Resolution passed by the Local Association in General Meeting and only after receiving the vote of not less than one-half of the Members present and entitled to vote.*

### **A vote took place to add an additional rule to Glasgow Branch “Rules”**

**Tellers:** Margaret Sanders and Peter Knapman

### **Results of voting**

For: 30

Against: 1

Abstentions: 2

The Rule change was approved.

## 9 Confirmation of President and Vice President

The Chair intimated that Ruth Beattie had stated that she wished to retire from her position as Honorary President. He added that Ruth had taken a very close interest in Branch matters and had always provided very sound advice to the committee. Ruth stated that it had been a pleasure to serve Glasgow Branch for the last 16 years. Having lived in England for the last 6 years she felt it was best to retire from her position. She added that she had joined the Branch in 1963 and had enjoyed dancing in the demonstration team, dancing on the streets and across the world representing the Branch. She ended by saying that she had tremendous memories of being of member of Glasgow Branch and had made lasting friendships as a result. Sebastian Wanless presented Ruth with a small gift in appreciation of all Ruth had done for the Branch.

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

Proposed by Maureen Daniel

Seconded by Margaret Sanders

John stated that it was a tremendous honour for him to accept and to follow in Ruth’s footsteps.

**Honorary Vice President:** Sebastian Wanless asked for the confirmation of Fiona McDonald in the role of Honorary Vice President.

Proposed by Mary Webster

Seconded by Meg Barrowman

## **10 Election of Office Bearers and Committee for 2024-2025**

Sebastian Wanless thanked everyone for their support during his time of office.

**Chair:** John Johnston as Hon President was invited to take the Chair. John Johnston took the Chair.

Ian Johnson was proposed as Chair of Glasgow Branch

Proposed by Peter Knapman

Seconded by Fiona McDonald

Ian Johnson then took the Chair. He thanked members for their willingness to accept him as Chair of Glasgow Branch. He hoped that he could live up to members' expectations and would endeavour to do his best and to respond to the trust members had put in him.

He thanked Sebastian Wanless for his 3 years as Chair and the years prior to this where he had undertaken a number of roles. He praised Sebastian for taking the branch out of Covid lockdown, leading the Branch Centenary celebrations and RSCDS Centenary Celebrations. Ian stated that there are many other aspects which Sebastian has handled graciously and tactfully which members and the committee are unaware of.

**Chair-elect:** Hilary Wood was proposed

Proposed by Susan Ewington

Seconded by Gale McCallum

Hilary Wood was elected.

**Secretary:** Anne Thorn was proposed

Proposed by Catherine Raeburn

Seconded by Meg Barrowman

Anne Thorn was elected.

**Treasurer:** Aileen McKenzie was proposed

Proposed by Marion Cusick

Seconded by Sebastian Wanless

Aileen McKenzie was elected.

**Events Convenor:** Margaret Sanders was proposed.

Proposed by Robert McColl

Seconded by Marjory Dooley

Margaret Sanders was elected.

**Communications Convenor:** Revathy Nayar was elected.

Proposed by Susan Ewington

Seconded by Lyndsey McCrudden (formerly Brown)

**Outreach Convenor:** Anne Murray was re-elected.

Proposed by Muriel Bone

Seconded by Revathy Nayar

Since there were no nominations for **Class Convenor** Ian Johnson stated that this was a vital role as halls, teachers and musicians needed to be booked for the forthcoming dancing season. A contingency measure would therefore be put in place with a small group consisting of Lyndsey McCrudden, Hilary Wood, Caitlin Abbott and Marion Cusick making the necessary arrangements for Branch classes to go ahead.



**Membership Convenor:** Les Lambert was elected.

Proposed by Mary Webster

Seconded by Maureen Daniel

**Committee Members:**

The Branch Committee has five ordinary member posts.

Caitlin Abbott (who has served for 3 years) was re-elected.

Proposed by Fiona McDonald

Seconded by Anne Murray

Lyndsey McCrudden (who has served for 1 year) was re-elected.

Proposed by Susan Ewington

Seconded by Fiona McDonald

Gale McCallum (who has served for 1 year) was re-elected.

Proposed by Meg Barrowman

Seconded by Lyndsey McCrudden

Cameron Raeburn was elected.

Proposed by Marjory Dooley

Seconded by Maureen Daniel

There were no nominees for the final committee position.

**11 Election of Delegates to RSCDS AGM in November 2024**

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 stated that Lyndsey McCrudden had intimated an interest in becoming a delegate. As no other members came forward there was no need for an election.

Approval:

Proposed by Gale McCallum

Seconded by Marion Cusick

The delegates for Glasgow Branch at the Society AGM 2024 will be Ian Johnson, Hilary Wood, Anne Thorn, Aileen McKenzie and Lyndsey McCrudden. In the event of anyone being unable to attend, the Committee has the right to appoint a replacement delegate.

**12 Appointment of the Safeguarding Officers**

The Chair explained that appointing Safeguarding Officers, who were responsible for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, was a complicated process involving application, interview, references and approval from Disclosure Scotland.

He stated that he would continue as Lead Signatory and that Anne Thorn had been appointed as Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer and Additional Signatory and Carol Ann Knox had been appointed as Additional Signatory.

### **13 Appointment of Archivist**

The Chair stated that Christopher Sanders is our Archivist. He is currently just out of hospital and Ian asked Margaret Sanders to convey the Branch's good wishes to Chris. Chris is willing to remain in this post.

Proposed by Fiona McDonald

Seconded by John Johnston

### **14 AOCB**

Muriel Bone questioned the number of Branch delegates we were entitled to. Sebastian Wanless stated that so long as we had 200+ members we were entitled to 5 branch delegates, Aileen McKenzie added that the wording states "one delegate per 50 members or part thereof".

Mary Webster stated that she felt the Society has recently become somewhat "remote" and should decide on priorities and budget within its means rather than countering budget deficits with member subscription increases. She added that the Society should consider its premises in Edinburgh and invest again in small premises. She stated that she would send her proposal to the Branch secretary and asked the new committee to draft a motion to be voted on at the Society AGM in November.

Muriel Bone stated that the RSCDS appoint a Branch link person and asked if there was a way that Glasgow Branch could involve the branch link (Heather Cowan). Debbie McAlees added that Heather has been very proactive and will continue as Glasgow Branch link.

Peter Knapman added that each RSCDS Management Board Member/Convenor has more than twelve branches to link to. He referred to the past arrangement of each branch having a member on the Executive Council but the current arrangement meant that members were unable to speak at the Society AGM. He suggested that it was perhaps time to explore the possibility of one member one vote which might give members more of an incentive to get involved. He added that perhaps Coates Crescent could post out Management Board information to members or post in the members' section of the website. Anne Thorn added that quite often the update on Management Board meeting was very thin or not updated regularly.

Ian Johnson stated that the new committee would discuss this important issue at the next committee meeting as he felt it was important that members were kept in touch with Society matters.

Sebastian Wanless stated that Glasgow Branch is kept in quite high regard by the Society especially during the Centenary year and that this could be used to build communication between the Branch and the Society in the future.

### **15 Date of next AGM – 15 May 2025**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.22 pm

Signed: *Ian Johnson* (Chair)

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025