



**Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
Perth and Perthshire Branch
Scottish Charity No: SC024464**

Minutes of the meeting of the 86th Annual General Meeting of the RSCDS Perth and Perthshire Branch held by Zoom on the 19th October 2020 at 7.30 pm.

1. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the virtual AGM. An overview of the activities was given which reflected the impact of Covid-19 over the second 6 months. Allana thanked the Committee for their support.

See addendum for full Chairman's Report.

There were 19 attendees including one Associate member and as such this AGM was not quorate. The decisions taken at this meeting need to be ratified at our (quorate) AGM 2021 but until then the decisions will stand.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from 14 members.

3. Minute of the AGM, September 2019

Item 2 - Change Adam to Andrew, and Macdonald to MacDonald.

With these amendments the minute was approved by the AGM.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the September 2019 AGM

Item 5 – The Constitution had been updated to include our Charity Number as well as a date and version history, and was now on the website.

Item 14 – The Podiatry talk had formed part of the February afternoon Class and Talk.

5. Secretary's Report

See addendum for Secretary's report.

6. Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

See separate Report.

The Treasurer reviewed the Accounts and noted that the deficit was mainly due to the replacement of one of the Coomers (£1,045) as well as losses made on the Children's Class. Reserves had been raised to £7,000 to account for future possible Coomber replacements as well as Covid-19.

A question was raised regarding the increase in the cost of Printing, Postage and Stationery. Discussion revealed that this appeared to be around the Spring Class / Summer Dance programmes, and the use of colour rather than black and white photocopying. It was agreed to keep an eye on this. There was also a suggestion that more people could print their own from the website and thus reduce the number needed; it was also noted that some people, especially non-Branch members, only went to things if a printed programme was distributed.

The Treasurer thanked John Graham for inspecting the accounts.

A question was raised regarding Trustee remuneration and expenses, and that only the Secretary's Honorarium was recorded in the Trustees Report for 2019 / 2020. Should Trustees who also teach in the Branch have payments for their Services recorded; noted that OSCR was set up due to issues around charities raising money for 'health' reasons but paying most of the money received to Trustees. In the Branch 2016 AGM Minutes it was also noted that any persons related to a Trustee who received payments should also be noted in the Accounts. One observation was that Teachers only received expenses not money for services; if it was classed as services then they would have to be declared as taxable and we would lose all our Teachers. Lorna agreed to take this back to HQ for further discussion.

It was also commented that co-opted members were not Trustees, but the Trustees' Report details them as such.

7. Management Report

See addendum for Management Board report.

8. Adoption of Reports

The AGM adopted the Trustees Report, the Secretary's Report and the Management Board Report (proposed by Rod Purcell and seconded by Christopher Smith).

9. Branch Subscription

The RSCDS HQ 2019 AGM had a motion to reduce the HQ subscription by £2 (to £18) with the objective of Branches keeping this £2 for local use. As such the Membership Subscription for 2020/2021 was kept as previously agreed at the 2019 Branch AGM, with the Branch portion being £2 higher. To date there had been 77 renewals and 3 new members, with 44 paying by Bank Transfer.

Lorna thanked the Branch for all it was doing to keep its members.

The RSCDS HQ 2020 AGM had a similar motion to maintain the HQ subscription at £18. There were a variety of suggestions on how to use this money; these included reducing prices, a donation to support HQ and using the money in ways to get people back dancing. It was decided to take these ideas back for Committee discussion.

The AGM agreed that the Branch subscription for 2021/2022 should remain unchanged.

10. Honoraria

The AGM agreed that the Honoraria for 2020/2021 would stay the same. This would be £425 to the Secretary and £300 to the Treasurer.

Rae thanked Sue for her work as Secretary this year, especially in her efforts to keep Members informed and engaged.

11. Independent Examiner

Thanks was extended to John Graham for his work as the Examiner for the Branch. He had agreed to continue with this, and this appointment was approved by the AGM.

12. Election of Officers

The three existing officers namely Chair, Secretary and Treasurer were eligible for re-election and were prepared to stand again. In light of no other nominations the AGM agreed that the following officers be elected for 2020 / 2021:-

Chair: Allana Creighton
Secretary: Sue James
Treasurer: Judith Borup

The position of Vice Chair remained vacant.

There had been one proposal for a Committee member, namely Linda Magill (proposed by Sue James, seconded by Janice MacDonald). Linda was elected unanimously.

There remained two vacant Committee Member positions, one for 1 year and one for 3 years.

13. Motions

No motions had been submitted to the Branch Secretary.

14. AOCB

Allana thanked Wanda and Susan for completing their three years as Committee Members.

A question was raised regarding the age of the Branch Coomers and potential life span, particularly in light of their replacement cost. It was noted that the Children's Class Coomber was now free, that Rhoda's and Christian's Coomers were older than Rae's when it failed, but as Rhoda and Christian used the same Church Hall there was a possibility for sharing if necessary.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, and was thanked in turn for chairing.

There being no further business the AGM ended at 8.30pm.

1. Chairman's Remarks

Welcome to the 86th Annual General Meeting of the RSCDS Perth & Perthshire Branch.

I hope you have all kept virus free in what has been a very strange and challenging few months. We didn't expect to have to hold this meeting by Zoom but there was no alternative, so thank you all for attending.

We've been holding our committee meetings by Zoom too so thanks to Sue for arranging all those for us.

As you know we unfortunately had to cancel all our events after March and for the remainder of the year. The committee will decide at our next meeting whether we think it will be safe to resume classes in January or not. I remain hopeful that some kind of Spring/Summer season will be possible in 2021.

The committee has been working hard on your behalf and I'd like to thank them all for their help and support. We have been working on updating some of our documents on the Benefits of Membership (both to the RSCDS and to the Branch), Health and Safety Risk Assessment, clarifying the roles of members taking on co-opted posts and making sure we comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

We have also had a lot of discussion about how to promote the Branch and recruit new members and work is ongoing on various publicity materials.

Our next project is to refresh the website and we are also considering producing a book of the dances submitted for our 95th Anniversary 'Devise a Dance' competition. I'd like to thank everyone who took part and congratulate Rhoda who won the competition with a dance called 'Highland Gateway'. The dance will appear in the next edition of the Highland Gateway newsletter.

Allana Creighton

19/10/2020

5. Secretary's Report

This Branch year has been one of two halves, pre-Covid-19 and during the pandemic. The first can be typified by 'normal' branch activities, while the second was of planning and postponing, Zoom meetings and branch administration.

To start with there are some 'Thank You's'. First a belated 'Thank You' to Christopher Smith for his 5 years as Branch Secretary steering us throughout that time and keeping us in order, and to Rod Purcell for his 'chairmanship' over the last 3 years – he stepped up when this role had a maximum term of 2 years only to find this being extended by another year whilst in office! Thanks to you both!

Thank you to Jane Rattray our Youth Coordinator; appointed in 2011 her role ended earlier this year. Under Jane's leadership and tutelage Branch youngsters took part in the annual December children's dance, Dundee's Festival of Dance including winning the Ruby Watson and George Mehan prize, as well as doing demonstrations at the St John's Centre during the RSCDS AGM weekends in 2017 and 2018. Thank you Jane!

Thank you to Hazel Ryan, supported by her husband Tom, for her role of Web Master over the last 3 and a half years, keeping our on-line presence updated. And welcome to Susan Black who has stepped up to take on this role. Rhoda and Rod Purcell have continued as Membership Secretary and Highland Gateway Editor respectively; their work is much appreciated.

Our four weekly Adult Classes ran smoothly through the Autumn / Winter period thanks to the dedication of our Branch Teachers, Christian, Linda Gaul, Rae and Rhoda, only being curtailed a couple of weeks early due to Covid-19. The Children's Class continued through the Autumn with very small numbers, and sadly closed in February. Thank you to Jane for all her work with this class which I know was much appreciated by the youngsters; hopefully we will continue to see a few of them at local dances.

February saw the Imperial Book Class and Foot Injury Prevention Talk. The event went well with 4 sets of dancers and another 8 injured dancers to watch / listen; interestingly half of the attendees came from outside the Branch and quite a number were drawn by the Talk rather than the dance class. Judith taught four dances from the Imperial Book - being competition dances they were not simple, while Alastair Dall's talk was well received with lots of questions.

During these six months the Committee met twice 'face to face' – something we were to later appreciate the value of, and trialled Sunday afternoon Committee Meetings with some success. In order to assist with Branch Communications a branch Gmail address was created in the Autumn; being used for Committee, Branch Members as well as external communications this will also assist in the handover to future secretaries. With Rhoda's assistance we now have consent to email approximately 90% of the Branch membership with dancing information, something which was to prove invaluable as Covid-19 struck.

A variety of enquiries were received into the Branch regarding classes and event assistance; these were all dealt with, as well as responses to HQ matters including Branch Delegates for the AGM, HQ Annual Report and an Age Scotland Survey re dancing.

And so to the Covid-19 half of the year.

After Linda Carswell's hard work in creating a Spring Class / Summer Dance programme ('Thank You') we ended up cancelling both; hopefully we may be able to use some or all of the programme in 2021. Similarly the Anniversary Dance was postponed but again it is hoped that all the organising sub-committees hard work can be utilised at our 96th Ball scheduled for September 2021. And then the resumption of Autumn / Winter classes was pushed back to January 2021 at the earliest.

Moving to the positive Christopher Smith suggested a 'Design a Dance Competition' to help keep Branch Members engaged whilst they were unable to dance. Seventeen dances were submitted, with the ultimate winner being 'Highland Gateway' by Rhoda Purcell. Congratulations to Rhoda, and thanks to the 5 judges, and to Allana for arranging the competition.

March saw the start of 'Branch Updates' by email. Originally intended in pre-Covid times to be 4 or 5 times a year we have already reached 10, however these have proved invaluable in communicating details of our AGM and the 'Design a Dance' competition, as well as postponement / cancellation of Branch activities / classes, cheaply as well as in a timely manner. Further content, mostly internet based, has also been included to try and maintain engagement with Branch Members, but it is acknowledged that this does exclude the small number of members without email / internet.

April saw a review into the list of non-Branch classes included in the Highland Gateway and on the Website, all of these being reviewed / updated and individual written consents obtained according to GDPR. Our Membership Form has also been tweaked to make it simpler for Members to confirm that their details have not changed from the previous year. Paperwork for future events will also include a sentence to say that photos may be taken and used for publicity purposes.

In June a substantial piece of work was done looking at the successful Beginners Classes run by Dundee Branch and the Erich Club, including their use of publicity. Thanks go to Janice and the two groups for their assistance with this. Tailored publicity material is now starting to be developed, our Branch page on the RSCDS website and an A5 Flyer for use at Branch Classes to encourage membership of the Branch being the first two with more in plan.

At the end of June the Committee agreed to move to meeting by Zoom, and after a few set up sessions the first of three successful virtual Committee meetings were held. This resulted in simpler discussion and decision making regarding future activities (compared to 6 months by 'email discussion'), including the planning of two AGM's, updating the 'Benefits of Branch and RSCDS Membership', as well as starting to review the Branch's Health and Safety document.

In conclusion 'Thank You' to the Committee for their support during my first year as Branch Secretary; not the sort of year we could ever have predicted, but no doubt we are all just hoping for dancing to resume in 2021 – preferably sooner rather than later!

Sue James

19/10/2020

7. Management Board Report

This has been a strange year and the Board has only met virtually since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic.

It was with regret that both Spring Flings (in Toronto and St Petersburg), Summer School, the Autumn Gathering in 2020 and Winter School in 2021 have all had to be cancelled. As you can imagine, this has had big impact on the finances of the Society. Not only has there been no contribution towards central costs from these events but shop sales have been seriously affected also. An appeal has been launched to members and supporters to mitigate some of these losses.

Other ways of reducing expenditure have been adopted, the Scottish Country Dancer magazine is being delivered electronically to most members and there have been changes in the staff at Coates Crescent. The office is open on a limited basis but not open to visitors.

Dance Scottish at Home has been a great success in keeping dancers all over the world in touch with each other and with the Society. The online classes have been well received, as have the podcasts, extra information on dances and the puzzles. A *Summer Celebration* was available online during the Summer School period and a similar event is planned for the Autumn Gathering weekend.

The Scottish Schools Working Group have been working with Education Scotland and have raised external funds to allow resources to be made available to all school teachers in Scotland. There is also a pilot project to include Scottish country dancing in the teacher training at Scottish universities.

An updated safeguarding policy had been adopted. This has been endorsed by Children 1st and SportScotland. A Child Wellbeing and Protection officer is to be appointed.

There are some good entries for the Virtual Festival which can be viewed on the RSCDS website.

I have now served three years on the Management Board and will retire at the AGM. The Branch will be ably represented by Neil Copland and I wish him well during his term of office. I also wish Lorna well as she takes over as Chairman.

Linda Gaul
19/10/20