

**Minute of the 91st Annual General Meeting of the Aberdeen
Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.
Held at Girl Guides HQ, Victoria Street Aberdeen
on 12th June 2017**

Present were the following 44 members of the Branch:

Margaret Alexander, Brian Anderson, Aileen Appleyard, Sheila Bain, Morag Barclay, Kathleen Bruce, Sheila Cameron, Lynne Cursiter, Pam Dignan, David Eastwood, Edna Ewen, Anne Findlay, Sheila Fyfe, Stan Grycuk, Clare Grycuk, Martha Harris, Sally Lawton, Betty MacKenzie, David MacKenzie, Michele MacLeod, Jean Martin, Lesley Martin, Heather McDonald, Linda McDonald, Heather McKenna, Paul McKnight, Isobel McMillan, Martin Milne, George Rae, Annie Robertson, Mary Robinson, Irene Shand, Fiona Spence, Jim Stott, Billy Stuart, Walter Sutherland, Evelyn Swanson, Fiona Taylor, Vera Tocher, Betty White, Eric White, Fiona Wilson, James Wilson, Lynn Wood.

1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks.

Morag Barclay, interim Acting Chairman, welcomed members and especially our President Lesley Martin to the Aberdeen Branch's 91st AGM and made the following remarks:

"Good evening everyone and welcome to the 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Aberdeen Branch of the RSCDS.

Last year the committee was asked to find a different venue for tonight's AGM and Girl Guide Headquarters was chosen. Not too inappropriate perhaps since one of the RSCDS co-founders, back in the 1920s, was a Guide Commissioner. I hope that you find this central location suitable for our needs and that the parking was not too difficult.

As most of you will already know, Emma Allsop, our chairman, had to resign in February for personal reasons and as Vice-Chairman, I took over as interim chairman for the last few months until the end of our year.

During the past year the Branch was delighted to have taken part in the HQ Global Youth Week Initiative. We also ran a very successful Beginner's dance on a Sunday afternoon in February. This was much appreciated by all the beginners from both the Monday evening class and the new Thursday afternoon class, and quite a number of more experienced dancers helped to make it a happy social event.

Perhaps this proved to be a worthy alternative to the Winter Socials and something to consider running again.

Classes have on the whole been well attended; dances have had an excellent turnout, and the earlier start time of 7:30pm together with a shorter programme, has proved to be popular. Jim Lindsay and his band played at the Christmas Dance and we enjoyed good music from Alan Ross and his band at the Spring Dance.

The Aberdeen Festival in March is another of our year's highlights when a number of local primary, secondary and adult teams participated alongside visiting teams from further afield.

It almost goes without saying that the Branch could not function with the huge input from our secretary Lynn Wood and our treasurer Fiona Taylor and I have only recently become aware of how hard they work behind the scenes on behalf of our branch.

Lastly I would like to thank all our committee members for their support throughout the year and particularly to our retiring members Michele MacLeod and Kathleen Bruce.

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from the Honorary Vice-Presidents Doris Kinghorn and Jane Leys and 33 other members as follows:

Jean Allan, Phil Allan, Emma Allsop, Margaret Brown, Robert Clarke, Laura Fettes, Margaret Gowans, Tom Hall, Ray Inkster, Jackie Keith, Max Keith, Theresa MacVarish, Andrew MacLeod, Gordon McRuvie, Moira Morrison, Peter O'donnaghaile, June Rait, Alastair Reid, Judith Riddoch, Pam Robertson, Sally Russell, Alan Smail, Anna Smail, Norman Stephen, Bruce Taylor, Frank Thomson, Eileen Watson, James Watson, Margaret Webster, Bruce Wyer, Lynda Wyer, Doris Young, Angela Young.

1.3 Approval of the Minute of Previous Annual General Meeting

The minute of the Meeting of 13th June 2016 had been circulated beforehand to members.

The minute was approved and adopted on a proposal by Isobel McMillan and seconded by David MacKenzie.

1.4 Matters arising from the Previous Minutes:

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes as all actions discussed had been implemented.

2. Honorary Secretary's Report

The Honorary Secretary's Reports had been circulated beforehand to members.

On a proposal by Martha Harris seconded Jean Martin, the Honorary Secretary's Report was unanimously adopted.

3. Honorary Treasurer's Report

The accounts for the year and statistics from our classes and events throughout the year had been circulated beforehand to members.

Fiona Taylor presented the accounts and spoke of the surplus and loss breakdown for the year for adult and children's classes.

Walter Sutherland queried the details of the Income and what constituted the "Meetings and other expenses" under Administrative Expenditure. Fiona explained that the income was less than in 2015 as we had made a huge

surplus on the 9 for 90 Books and CDs. He also noted that “Sums due to the Branch” and “Stock in Hand” were missing in the accounts.

After discussion it was agreed that the treasurer would expand the details of the Income and the Administrative expenses under Meetings and other expenses which would be circulated to the members. It was agreed that a Special General Meeting would be convened on Wednesday 26th July 2017 at 7:15pm, Curl Aberdeen for the Adoption and Approval of the Minutes.

3.1 Children and Young Person’s Fund

The amount for this fund of £1,000 had been recommended by the Finance sub-committee, notified to committee and to be agreed at the AGM. It was noted that £937 (with a fund of £700 agreed) had been spent during the year (Inverness Festival entries, Children’s Party Dance, Aberdeen Festival Entry Fees).

The Children and Young Person’s Fund was adopted on a proposal by Finance Committee and seconded by Clare Grycuk.

4. Report from Headquarters

As members had regular copies of the Scottish Country Dancer they were familiar with Headquarters' news.

Outstanding items included PRS licences (Performing Rights Society) with whom HQ (David Cunningham) is still in correspondence.

Two members of the Aberdeen Branch were on committees at present:

Isobel McMillan – Management Board

Emma Allsop – Youth Services Committee and Business Working Plan Group

Emma Allsop advised on **Youth Services**

This year, the Youth Services committee has been working hard to ensure that yet again, a fun Spring Fling was had by all who attended. This year it was in Bonn. Every second year it is held abroad, and the local branch had worked hard to make it a feasible event. With the distant location, there was a lot of communication to make sure that their sub-committee of organisers were happy with their work and that they had all the resources that were needed. Although I was unable to attend, the weekend proved to be a big success. Pictures and videos are on the website and Facebook.

We have also been looking at requests for groups of dancers to go abroad and demonstrate, and I was hoping to get a group from Aberdeen to go to France for a festival, however, unfortunately the contact pulled out. This was disappointing as it would have been a fantastic experience for some of our younger dancers to dancer abroad and explore other cultures. I am looking into getting other similar opportunities.

A fairly large project which is coming soon is our Virtual Festival. This year will be a pilot scheme with the hope to make it an annual event. The idea came from the Newcastle Festival which is a huge event with teams from all over the world. Many people consider the highlight of the Festival is the

Display section where teams of as many dancers as you wish, have a 6 minute slot to choreograph any type of Scottish Dancing display. It can include other types of dancing, and specially devised dances, as long as there are three recognisable RSCDS dances in the display. Often there is a theme, but this is not a requirement. As this is only done in Newcastle, many dancers throughout the world cannot compete, so the idea is that we would have a virtual festival. Teams of dancers can record themselves dancing a display and submit it to our adjudicators. There will obviously be rules and regulations and support for submitting the displays. This year it is planned to do this in October, but final details are still being decided and information will be available soon.

As part of our remit, we are continually building links with University groups and providing support as required at their dances and events. We are also still looking at more ways of getting dancing into schools.

Business Plan

At the weekend I had my last Business Plan meeting as it is all now taking shape. It has been a long but very interesting process, beginning with contacting all the Branches allocated to me, getting their opinions on what the Society is good at, what could it do to improve etc. All these suggestions were then collated and broken down into groups. From here, we worked in our committee to produce SMART (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) targets. It will show all suggestions and recommendations have been thought through and will improve the society. It has taken a fair amount of work to get lots of big vague but good ideas into a concise plan which can be worked with. Now that the plans are in place, it is up to the Society to start implementing them.

Isobel McMillan spoke: Report on the Management Board

I am now in my final 6 months of representing you on the main Board of the RSCDS. It has been a good experience and an eye-opener at the same time. Last year I told you a fair bit about the workings of the Board, and I am going to carry on that theme.

We have a new Chair, Helen Russell, who I think is excellent and will carry out a brilliant job on your behalf. The Chair Elect is Andrew Kellett; Bill Cant is still our treasurer; Anselm Lingnau from Germany is still the Membership Convener; Anne McArthur is the new Convener of Youth Services; Malcolm Brown is the new Convener of Education and Training; and we have two new ordinary Board members.

We are in the middle of trying to replace our Executive Officer, Gillian Wilson. Her departure causes a lot of extra work for the rest of the office staff and for Helen, so the sooner we appoint someone the better.

As I said last year, there are only six or seven Board Meetings a year, and so a lot of the discussions take place by email. On some issues the thread can be extremely long, and one has to keep going back to the beginning to catch up. The longest one so far, and is still continuing, is the discussion on the

tenders for updating the website – long overdue.

Now as you all know, I am not a dab hand at the computer, and so took the easy way out and acknowledged that my knowhow was abysmal, and that I would have to leave it to the experts. However, as the trail went on I came to realise that opting out wasn't really the thing to do. So I went through the tender with Lynn Wood and she explained this stuff to me and we made up a list of questions and points to be considered. I am happy to say that once again my down-to-earth approach seemed to work, and Anselm answered every query in everyday language that I understood. So then I had received thanks from some of the others who were like me, and a 'well done' from Andrew for improving my abysmal to a basic understanding!

So being on the Board can be challenging, but it is interesting to be involved in finding ways to grow our Society. For example, how would we get groups of Country Dancers to become at least affiliated members? How do we find them, and what is the correct approach? I believe that this is where you come in. The Board needs your help.

Work is now well in hand for the November AGM, and I look forward to dancing with many of you there on the Friday or Saturday. I am hoping that at that AGM I will have persuaded someone from the NE to take my place on the Board. We are one of the most successful Branches and it would be pity if we were not represented. Please do think about it.

Jim Stott who is the Convenor of Summer School spoke about his role.

5.1 Appointment of Honorary President

The appointment of Lesley Martin, as Honorary President was confirmed.

5.2 Appointment of Honorary Vice-Presidents

The appointment as Honorary Vice-President of Miss Doris Kinghorn was confirmed.

The appointment of Jane Leys as Honorary Vice-President was confirmed.

6.1 Election of Chairman Nominee – Morag Barclay

This was proposed by Sheila Cameron and seconded by Stan Grycuk.

This was approved by the meeting.

6.2 Election of Vice-Chairman Nominee – Brian Anderson

This was proposed by Fiona Spence and seconded by Billy Stuart.

This was approved by the meeting. Brian was invited to join Morag at the top table.

6.3 Election of Honorary Secretary Nominee – Lynn Wood

Proposed by Gordon McRuvie and seconded by Kathleen Bruce. There being no other nomination, **Lynn Wood was duly elected as Honorary Secretary.**

6.4 Election of Honorary Treasurer. Nominee – Fiona Taylor

Proposed by Bruce Taylor and seconded by Fiona Spence. There being no other nomination, **Fiona Taylor was duly elected as Honorary Treasurer.**

6.5 Election of Committee Members to replace those retiring

Nominations received:

Norman Stephen – proposed by Lynn Wood and seconded by Michele Macleod.

Clare Grycuk – proposed by Lynne Cursiter and seconded by Sheila Bain.

Isobel McMillan – proposed by Sheila Bain and seconded by Clare Grycuk.

As there was a vacancy for 1 year, nominations were requested from the floor.

Vera Tocher nominated **David Eastwood**, seconded by Jean Martin for the 1 year vacancy.

With no further nominations Norman Stephen, Clare Grycuk and Isobel McMillan were duly elected to serve on the Committee for three years and David Eastwood for 1 year.

6.6 Election of Delegates to the 2017 Society AGM

Members were reminded that its size entitles the Branch to have up to five AGM delegates, three of which were the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. Nominations were requested from the floor for two other delegates for the AGM in Perth in 2017.

Isobel McMillan and Paul McKnight volunteered.

With no further nominations from the floor these delegates were approved.

7. Appointment of Honorary Auditor

Morag Barclay noted:

It has come to the attention of the committee that we should perhaps be looking at appointing an Independent Examiner from outside the Branch as in recent years, there have been some changes to legislation. The committee seeks your approval to look further into this matter.

Walter Sutherland proposed that the committee should appoint an Independent Examiner as they felt fit. David Eastwood seconded this

proposal and the meeting approved this motion.

8. Motions

The committee had put forward a motion proposing amendments to our Constitution following a change instigated by HQ in the manner in which members can join multiple branches and be part of those branches. A document had been circulated to the members prior to the AGM detailing the reasoning behind these changes and the proposed changes to the Constitution. Lynn Wood read out the document and the proposed changes.

These were proposed by Fiona Spence and seconded by Isobel McMillan.

These were approved by the meeting.

9. Any other Competent Business

Martha Harris spoke about the difficulties that the Festival was facing. She noted that without donations and fund raising efforts, the event would have made a £2,500 loss. She noted that they had received donations from many sources including RSCDS Aberdeen for which she thanked us.

She noted that the Music Hall was still being renovated, and the Beach Ballroom had limited dates available but confirmed that 16th March 2018 would be in the Beach Ballroom and the 17th March would be at Mannofield church.

She noted that the Festival was a Music festival with a Country Dance section. The books for the SCD have to go to full committee and all the accounts are audited. At the full AGM (in Sept/Oct), the main office bearers would be resigning and thus the festival may not run in 2018 or ever again, but it is hoped that the SCD section will run in 2018. She noted that other SCD festivals in Scotland were in the same financial difficulties, and also throughout UK.

Stan Grycuk noted that he felt that the SCD festival was very well organised and he was proud to see other groups from Scotland attending.

Martha noted that perhaps the Branch could consider running the festival. She also noted that if the festival was finished, there were trophies from 1926.

9.1 Membership Fees 2017-2018

Morag noted that at the HQ AGM in November, membership fees would not increase and there would be no increase in local membership fees.

10. Close of Meeting

There being no other business, Morag Barclay thanked all those who had attended. The meeting thereafter closed with thanks to the Chair.

11. Date of next Branch AGM

This was set to 11th June 2018 – venue to be confirmed.