

**Minute of the 86<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Aberdeen  
Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.  
Held at Curl Aberdeen, Eday Road, Aberdeen  
on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

**Present** were the following 42 members of the Branch:

Brian Anderson, Aileen Appleyard, Sheila Bain, Morag Barclay, Kathleen Bruce, Sheila Cameron, Pam Dignan, Rachel Discombe, Edna Ewen, Anne Findlay, Gail Fraser, Martha Harris, Ray Inkster, Jackie Keith, Max Keith, Jane Leys, Jean Martin, Lesley Martin, Linda McDonald, Fiona Mclver, Heather McKenna, Isobel McMillan, George Rae, June Rae, Judith Riddoch, Irene Shand, Marjorie Sleigh, Anna Smail, Fiona Spence, James Stott, William Stuart, Walter Sutherland, Evelyn Swanson, Fiona Taylor, Nikh Tigerson, Eileen Watson, James Watson, Elizabeth White, Eric White, Lynn Wood, Bruce Wyer, Linda Wyer.

### **1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks.**

Fiona Spence, Chairman, welcomed members to the Aberdeen Branch's 86th AGM and made the following remarks:

"At the last AGM, I made a declaration of intent, and much has been achieved since then. While it was ambitious, I am convinced that a less thorough approach would not have been helpful. The whole strategic planning process was crucial to opening up debate, stimulating suggestions and setting up systems which I hope will be consolidated over the next few years.

Lots of the work has been "housekeeping"- around the governance of our organisation. The purpose, to some extent, was to "get our house in order", but just as important was to provide useful information to teachers, Committee members and the Chairman. Apart from this background work, and the core classes and social programme, there has been really positive innovation. The Branch Facebook page was an excellent idea from Fiona Mclver, and a decision to redesign the website has been taken. A trial of a Youth Group, also suggested by Fiona Mclver, was fully supported by the Committee, and will continue next session, as will a new Demonstration Class. The Winter Socials are to be extended, again to assess whether this is a popular development.

Regrettably, our membership has not increased, but hopefully the decline has slowed up. Neither complacency nor defeatism is appropriate. If the Branch keeps aiming to provide a high quality dancing experience, whether at classes or events, I believe it will become increasingly confident about promoting this excellent "product" using a variety of media. Having visited all the adult and children's classes at least once during this last session, I am genuinely in awe of our teachers, who show tremendous dedication and skill, and are central to the success of the "product".

Challenges remain - and I regret very much that I will not be part of the next

phase. While I was definitely reluctant to stand for the office of Chairman, I believe I did bring particular qualities which were useful for the work done this last year. I know that I carried out my duties with integrity, and always with the best interests of the Branch in mind. I trust that members will recognise that my decision to demit office this year has been taken in accordance with these same principles. I am sure that my successor, supported by the new Committee, will rise to the challenges. Isobel brings enthusiasm, commitment and a unique approach which I am sure will be an asset throughout her term of office.

I want to recognise the time and effort which all Committee members contribute to the Branch, often despite demanding jobs, or otherwise busy lives. Retiring this year, Linda Dickie is enviably competent in every situation, and Heather McKenna is especially committed to young people's dancing. Alongside June Rae's practical skills, I appreciated her constructive comments on often complex issues. Fiona McIver has made a significant contribution in relation to publicity and, as mentioned earlier, it was at her instigation that the Youth group was set up. I particularly want to thank our Treasurer, Fiona Taylor, who is outstandingly efficient at processing a huge number of transactions throughout the year, and also Lynn Wood, our patient and extremely hardworking Secretary. I am grateful also to the many Branch members who have been encouraging and supportive.

Please consider standing as a Committee member next year - make a difference to the Branch! I know that I have gained an enormous amount from the experience and, despite the frustrations which are an inevitable part of Committee work, I do not regret taking my turn on Committee or as Chairman."

**1.2 Apologies for absence** were received from the Honorary Vice-Presidents Doris Kinghorn and David Robertson, and 31 other members as follows:

Jean Allan, Rhona Bean, Margaret Brown, Bill Cheyne, David Eastwood, Jackie Flett, Alastair Forsyth, Moira Forsyth, Sheila Fyfe, Willie Fyfe, Barbara Golden, Margaret Gowans, Tom Hall, Magdalen Leiper, Iain Martin, Alister McDonald, Heather McDonald, Jenny McDonald, Nicola McPherson, Gordon McRuvie, Jim Morrison, Moira Morrison, Alister Reid, Mary Robinson, Alan Smail, Frank Thomson, Fiona Wilson, James Wilson, Anne Wood, Angela Young, Doris Young.

**1.3 Approval of the Minute of Previous Annual General Meeting**

The minute of the Meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011 had been circulated beforehand to members. **The minute was approved with noted changes and adopted on a proposal by Linda McDonald and seconded by Evelyn Swanson.**

**1.4 Matters arising from the Previous Minutes:**

There were no matters arising.

**2. Honorary Secretary's Report**

The Honorary Secretary's Reports had been circulated beforehand to members. The Chairman thanked Jane Leys for her continued hard work as Membership Secretary and for providing the membership figures. A chart

had been circulated showing membership figures since 2001/02 and it was noted that with the ending of the Long Term memberships had affected membership numbers. It was noted that there have been no Long Term members in the Branch since 2010.

The secretary also noted that the Branch had held a Day of Dance in May 2011 and a Youth Workshop in Dec 2011.

**On a proposal by June Rae seconded Fiona Mclver, the Honorary Secretary's Report was unanimously adopted.**

### **3. Honorary Treasurer's Report**

Fiona Taylor presented the accounts and spoke of the surplus and loss breakdown for the year for adult and children's classes. It was also noted that there were two sets of figures as the Branch had moved their accounting year end from December to March. Accounts were thus from January to March 2011 and from April 2011 to March 2012.

A breakdown of the figures for the individual classes and events had been circulated at the meeting.

After discussion the **Annual Accounts were unanimously adopted on a proposal by Rachel Discombe and seconded by Bruce Wyer.**

#### **3.1 Children and Young Person's Fund**

The amount for this fund had been recommended by the Finance sub-committee, notified to committee and to be agreed at the AGM.

£500 for the year April 2012 to March 2013 had been recommended.

After discussion this was unanimously agreed by the membership.

### **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.

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

Jean Martin – Management Board

Fiona Mclver – Interim Youth Services

Jim Stott – Education & Training and Interim Youth Services

Frank Thomson – Membership Services

Jim spoke about his enjoyment and how it gives a good insight into how the Society works with debates, initiatives and how things progress. Jim has recently been appointed the Deputy Director of Summer School in weeks 3 and 4 2012. He will work closely with the Director to ensure that all participants have a quality experience. He is also in charge of the RSCDS Demonstration team. He also has to ensure that all examinations run smoothly and that candidates, examiners and volunteers get all the materials

they need.

Jim has also been involved with re-writing the Medal tests for children and noted that some new dances have been added with a greater choice and the syllabus progresses through formations in a structured way. By Grade V the children will be at a higher level of dancing and ready to take Dancing Proficiency Assessments.

Other current Youth Initiatives include Youtube, Facebook, Youth Ezine and Demonstration teams. New Dance Packs for schools will be launched in September. Spring Fling will be in Manchester in 2013 and in Lyon in 2014.

Jim finally commented that the Aberdeen Branch has a good record of participating on different committees at Headquarters and hopes that members will consider doing so in the future.

Jean Martin added that there was a CPD (Continual Professional Development) policy for the whole society and that teacher's packs with lesson plans are being worked on. Jean also noted that the Society is moving to produce music on new media and available to download from the website.

### **5.1 Appointment of Honorary President**

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

### **5.2 Appointment of Honorary Vice-Presidents**

The appointments as Honorary Vice-Presidents of Miss Doris Kinghorn and Mr David Robertson were confirmed.

### **6.1 Election of Chairman Nominee – Isobel McMillan**

Proposed by Fiona Spence and seconded by Alastair Forsyth. There being no other nomination, Isobel McMillan was duly elected as Chairman and the chain of office was handed over from Fiona Spence to Isobel McMillan.

Isobel made the following remarks:

"It is with some trepidation that I take on the role of Chairman of this brilliant Aberdeen Branch of the RSCDS, founded way back in 1925. Last year when I became Vice –Chair, I was an innocent! I had no idea of the hard work and commitment of the committee and in particular of Fiona Spence.

We are indebted to her for her forward thinking: she has urged, cajoled and occasionally nagged us into bringing the Branch into the year 2013! We now have a real Strategic Plan, and an Action Plan with timetable, both of which will make our lives easier. Both documents are on our Website. I urge you to read it and give us your feedback. I like to think that we will have no future last minute panics. Safety Policies, Child Protection Policies, Guide lines on demonstrations etc that were in people's heads and on different computers are now properly documented and easily available to the committee, and to you should you want to see them.

In Fiona's year as Chair we have successfully added Winter Socials and Youth Group Classes. Apart from being great fun they passed the Financial test and so will be continued!

Fiona, you have done a sterling job in a difficult year and we are indebted to you. Thank you from the Club and especially from me, for you have made my job easier.

Thankfully, the Branch is not run by the Chairman alone, for I can be disorganised, impulsive, and not very good where figures are concerned; but I will have the help and support of a great team, all of whom contribute hugely and whose knowledge is invaluable. To Lynn our invaluable Secretary, Fiona and Brian, the money people and Jim who has done it all before in particular - I give fair warning: HELP! I need **your** help as well. The membership is falling and if we are to remain healthy and in good fettle we need more folk in the Branch.

We have set up 3 taster/recruitment sessions in September. Imagine - if everyone here were to bring along, to one of those nights, a friend, neighbour, sister, brother, or lover and they get hooked - that's immediately 20/40 extra members (I can feel Fiona's and Brian's internal grins from here!). If increasing or at the very least maintaining the membership numbers is one of my wishes, another one is to upgrade our Website. We really do need to make it much more interesting, so that it draws people into the Branch. Now is there out there in the membership someone with the skills, time and willingness to come forward and help Lynn do this?

I do hope that next year at this time I can report that we have done it! Membership increased, and a brilliant Website.

Ladies and gentlemen, this Branch is yours, we the committee can only do our bit if you help. Please continue to support the dances, socials, day school, workshops and our classes, and tell everyone you know what fun, fitness and friendship we get from Scottish Country Dancing.”  
Thank you.

**6.2 Election of Vice-Chairman** Nominee – **No nomination**

**6.3 Election of Honorary Secretary** Nominee – **Lynn Wood**

Proposed by Jane Leys and seconded by Sheila Fyfe. 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 Wyer and seconded by Shela Bain. 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:

**Gail Fraser** – proposed by Fiona Spence and seconded by June Rae.

**Edna Ewen** – proposed by Isobel McMillan and seconded by Jean Allan.

**Emma Allsop** – proposed by Sheila Bain and seconded by Fiona Spence.

As there were three vacancies for 3 years, and 1 vacancy for 1 year, nominations were requested from the floor.

**Nihk Tigerson** – proposed by Fiona McIver and seconded by Anna Smail.

With no further nominations, and as the required number of nominations to fill vacant posts had now been received, Gail Fraser, Edna Ewen and Emma Allsop were duly elected to serve on the Committee for three years and Nihk Tigerson for one year.

## **6.6 Election of Delegates to the 2012 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 Aberdeen in 2012.

**Brian Anderson** – proposed by Jean Martin and seconded by Fiona McIver.

**Fiona Taylor** – proposed by Linda McDonald and seconded by Sheila Bain.

**With no further nominations from the floor, these were elected.**

## **7. Appointment of Honorary Auditor**

**Frank Thomson**, who had expressed his willingness to serve as Honorary Auditor, was proposed by Nihk Tigerson and seconded by Marjorie Sleigh. This appointment was confirmed.

## **8. Motions**

A motion had been received from the Branch Committee:

1. The Branch Committee proposes that the Annual Branch subscriptions be increased from £3 to £5.

Fiona Taylor spoke about the motion:

Administration cost have risen since 2002 (when the £3 membership fee was set):

Postage	19p to 50p (263%)
Printing	£63 to £124 (100%)
Room hire (meetings)	£10 to £14 (40%)

In 2009 we had £30,000 in the bank, in 2012 we have £25,000 so our reserves have fallen.

There were comments from the floor including :

Economic crisis – is this the time?  
Demographics – many pensioners  
Some people only come to dances  
Will the rise put people off re-joining?  
66% is a large increase, but less than a pint of beer  
It is 10 years since the last increase – should be committee look at incremental increases more regularly?  
All classes and events are discounted for members

After discussion there was a vote with the following result:

For the motion – 30 votes  
Against the motion – 10 votes  
Abstentions – 2 votes

With the majority being in favour of increasing the membership fee to £5.00 this motion was passed.

**9. Any other Competent Business.**

**Linda McDonald** commented that classes for children were to rise by 50p, this may cause some pupils to have a problem in paying.

**Morag Barclay** asked why children's class fees were increasing when they made a surplus.

Responses to these included, the fee of £2.50 per class (with discounts per term) is a lot less than many other children's activities including City Moves (£4.00 and Highland (£6.00).

**Jean Martin** asked if the committee would reconsider their decision and after a show of hands from the members present, Isobel agreed to do so.

**10. Close of Meeting.**

There being no other business, Isobel McMillan thanked the Committee again for all their hard work, in particular Lynn Wood and Fiona Taylor. She reminded members that an Open Forum would follow. She thanked all those who had attended and wished all members a happy dancing year. The meeting thereafter closed with thanks to the Chair.

**11. Date of next Branch AGM**

This was set to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013.