

# THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

## LONDON BRANCH

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held

on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION

**Present:** Joanne Lawrence (Chair), Jim Cook (Vice Chair), Simon Wales (Treasurer), Melanie Rowland (Secretary), Rachel Wilton (President), Rona Black, Adam Brady, Maureen Campbell, Margaret Catchick, Richard Clarke, Lizzy Conder, Cathy Daldy, Jacmel Dent, Pamela Ellam, Tony Ellam, James Fairbairn, Alan Holliday, Alan Ip, Andrew Kellett, Lorna Kleinsorge, Willie Lawrence, Rita Marlow, Wendy Morris, Danielle Reinstein, Lena Robinson, Lindsey Jane Rousseau, Sam Schad, Hamish Todd

**Apologies:** Mary Barker, Catriona Bennett, Elizabeth Bennett, Christine Davies, Edward Davies, Elaine Davies, Katy Davies, David Hall, Jon Friend, Jenny Greene, Christine Hastie, Sheena Henderson, Chris Hodd, Judith Jones, Jenny Kendrick, Peter Knight, Andrew Nolan, Marjory Reid, Thelma-Jane Robb, Philip Rousseau, Margaret Shaw, Rosemary Tilden, Judy Valvona.

#### 1. Chair's Opening Remarks

Joanne Lawrence, Chair, welcomed all Branch members and observers, including those watching over the internet, to the Branch's AGM.

#### 2. Minutes of 2022 AGM

On a motion proposed by Willie Lawrence and seconded by Maureen Campbell, the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were approved.

#### 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

#### 4. Report on the Branch's Activities 2022-2023 ([linked here – Branch Report 2023](#)) a. Chair's Report

Joanne Lawrence, Chair, summarised the Branch Report 2022-2023 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting which included the following.

a) The Chair first reviewed the success of the season's priorities.

i) London Branch celebrated the centenary of the RSCDS by holding a tea dance at Allum Hall in March. Later in the month many London dancers attended the RSCDS Centenary Ball in the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms.

ii) The Chair was pleased to report on the work that had been done during the season to attract younger dancers to participate in Branch events. The monthly Tuesday Social was

launched in September 2022, and has regular attendance of 2 – 3 sets, with some of the dances also joining the weekly classes at Park Walk.

iii) The Branch's increased use of social media has helped to support wider attendance to our events. Most notably - our Open Air dancing in Kensington Gardens, to the Tuesday Social and to our Burns Supper, which attracted 180 attendees. The Wednesday classes held at St Columba's, Pont Street and the Beginners/Improvers Class in Richmond are both flourishing. Live music has been introduced to the end of term sessions for these classes, in addition to the weekly classes at Park Walk in Chelsea.

b. The chair then reported on the post COVID -19 changes which had impacted negatively on Branch events. Changes in working patterns has meant fewer people are available to attend classes in town during the week. Venue costs have increased dramatically, making it difficult to find accessible venues at affordable prices for regular classes and events such as the Day School.

c. Looking ahead to the 2023/4 season, the Chair said the Branch priorities will be:

to continue to work on widening its appeal to new dancers

to continue to support the Park Walk Improvers and technique class members

to provide greater opportunities for more advanced dancers with monthly teaching sessions in accessible locations.

Following the success of the Intermediate Dancing Achievement Award course, which ran during the summer term, it is hoped to run an advanced course next season. Several London Branch members are currently participating in a serTA teacher training course. Options to provide training for MCs in the London area are currently being explored.

d. The Chair next reported on the Branch communications. Meryl Thomson, who has managed the Branch website for more than two decades, is retiring from her role at the end of the season. The Chair thanked Meryl and Ian, for all their support over so many years. Thanks was given to Chris Collings for his work in developing our new website, which will be demonstrated at the end of the AGM. It will be launched at the end of June.

The Chair also gave thanks to Simon Wales for his work in editing The Reel. The Branch will continue to use a range of communication tools, including eUpdates, Facebook, Twitter, MeetUp, to keep members and friends of RSCDS London informed of Branch activities.

e. The chair then outlined the forthcoming changes to Branch personnel. Special thanks were given to Rachel Wilton, who is stepping down as Branch President after ten years in the role. She will be succeeded by Andrew Kellett, former Society and Branch Chairman. Thanks were also given to Jim Cook for his work as Chair (2019-21) and Vice Chair (2021-23). Committee member, Richard Clarke will take over the role of Vice Chair. Unfortunately, Margaret Moore is unable to continue as classes convenor due to ill health. The Chair wished her a swift and complete recovery. New committee member, Wendy Morris was welcomed.

f. The Chair thanked all the Branch teachers, musicians, MCs, caterers, webmaster, organisers and dancers.

Alan Ip proposed, and Hamish Todd seconded the adoption of the Branch Report for 2022-2023 which was duly carried.

## **5. Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts**

Simon Wales, Treasurer, referred to the Trustees' Report and Financial Statement for the Branch for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The initial pages of the Report provide details of the Branch's achievements and performance during the year. This is followed by the audit report and detailed financial information.

- a) The balance sheet showed the Branch's total net worth of £75,046 (which is slightly down on £81,564 for the previous year). During the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March, the Branch made a Net operating loss of £3,182 plus an unrealised loss on investments of £6,519. The Branch's investments stand at £51,242 (compared to £54,579 for 2022).
- b) Classes made a loss of £5,623. Nearly £1,400 of this is attributable to the Day School which suffered from lack of attendees, post COVID-19 and the need to hire sound equipment previously loaned.
- c) Dances made a surplus of £1,961 largely due to a successful Burns ceilidh, which we able to run for the first time in three years.
- d) The Reel made a loss of £1,447 which was an improvement on £1,855 of the previous year. The Treasurer noted that work was ongoing to try to attract more commercial advertisers.
- e) Donations and legacies raised a small amount of £307 as the Branch had not received any large donations this year. The Treasurer expressed gratitude for the various bequests as these enable the Branch to invest in projects. One award had been made from the Bill Ireland fund to a young person to attend the RSCDS Summer School. Funds had also been made available to support the serTA teacher training of two Branch members.
- f) An allocation of £11,000 from our reserves will be spent on Branch youth activities during the next session.
- g) Branch membership has reduced slightly overall. Although, more members joined in March to avail themselves of the member's discount for the St Andrew's Summer School. The RSCDS subscription will increase from July 2023. The Treasurer noted that this may affect Branch membership numbers in the coming year.
- h) Robert Elliott, the independent examiner, has decided to step down this year. The Treasurer thanked him for all his hard work during his tenure. Helen Ives has expressed her willingness to take on the role.
- i) The Treasurer then invited questions from the attendees. James Fairbairn commented that a disproportionate amount of Branch membership subscription was sent to support HQ. The Treasurer said he would raise this at a future RSCDS management meeting.

James Fairbairn proposed that the accounts be accepted, Tony Ellam seconded, and the motion was passed.

## **6. Confirmation of the Appointment of Honorary President and Honorary Vice President**

The Chair reported on several new appointments. Rachel Wilton will step down as President and Andrew Kellet will take up the role. Rosemary Tilden has decided to step down as Vice President. Mary Barker, Jenny Greene and Danielle Reinstein will continue as Vice Presidents and will be joined by the new appointments of Margaret Catchick and Rita Marlow. Simon Wales on behalf of the Committee, thanked Rachel and Rosemary for all their hard work done for the Branch and welcomed the new appointments.

## **7. Appointment of Office Bearers and Committee of Management for 2022-2023**

The secretary, on behalf of the Chair, announced the nominations which had been received for Officers and Committee members as follows: Officers: Joanne Lawrence (Chair), Richard Clarke (Vice Chair), Simon Wales (Treasurer), Mel Rowland (Secretary) Committee: Elaine Davies, Thelma-Jane Robb, Margaret Shaw, Adam Brady and David Hall. One new member has been elected on the Committee: Wendy Morris. As the number of nominations was less than the number of available places on the Committee, there was no need for a ballot of members and those named above would serve on the new Committee.

## **8. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Helen Ives to be appointed as Independent Examiner.

Rona Black proposed and James Fairbairn seconded the appointments of Honorary President, Vice Presidents, Officers and Committee members and of the Independent Examiner.

## **9. Appoint of Branch Proxy Delegates to Society AGM**

The Vice Chair asked for the names of those who would consent to being on the Proxy List for the AGM in November 2023. Rachel Wilton and Margaret Catchick agreed to their names being put forward.

## **10. A.O.B.**

a) Simon Wales was presented with a Branch Award in recognition of his thirty years' service to the Branch including twenty years as Treasurer and three years as Chairman.

b) There was no other A.O.B

The date of the next AGM was set as Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

The meeting closed ended at 6.55 pm