

ST. COLUMBA'S SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

MINUTES

Monday 14 March 2022

St. Columba's Church, Lower Hall, Pont Street, SW1X0BD

1 Apologies for absence

There were apologies from Thelma-Jane Robb, Steve Oakes, George Potts, Margaret Shaw and Griselda Vrolyk.

2 Minutes of the 2020 AGM

The minutes were accepted by the meeting; proposed by Valerie Saunders and seconded by Roy Southall.

2a Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3 Treasurer's Report

In Margaret's absence, Willie had circulated the accounts. There had been 3 band nights which had all made a profit. CD evenings had done reasonably well. There were profits because people in the kitchen do not claim expenses although Willie felt they should be refunded. He thanked them very much.

Adverts had been placed in the Reel and a collection was held for Borderline. At the end of the year the balance was £3569.73. From this, £2000.00 had recently been donated to the church. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Joanne and seconded by Rona.

4 Election of the Committee

All members of the Committee were scheduled for re-election. Gill had decided not to stand for re-election, but all other members were prepared to stand. Lizzie proposed the election of the Committee and Valerie Strachan seconded. Willie thanked Margaret, Joan, Steve, Helen, Lena, George, Thelma-Jane and Gill for supporting him. Special thanks were made to Gill Austin who retired from the committee.

5 Fees for Season 2022-23

For some considerable time the donation for tea and biscuits on CD evenings had been £1.50, Band Nights fees £10.00 and Burns Night fees £12.00. Willie proposed to increase CD evenings to £2.00, Band Nights to £11.00 and Burns Night to £13.00.

We are not charged for the hall but donate £2,000 a year to the church. This is about £67.00 per evening. Inflation was running at 5%+; bands have not increased their fees for 2 years and it was to be expected that they would. Also, the generosity of the kitchen's members donations of consumables should not be assumed in the future. The majority of dancers were in favour of the increases, none against, but there were 2 abstentions.

6 The Valerie Twining Legacy

Music for our evenings was now digital on an iPad. Willie thought it likely that the iPad would have to be upgraded. He proposed using the Valerie Twining Legacy of which £217.00 remained as part of the cost of the upgrade.

7 Convenor's Report

Willie thanked everyone for being here this evening and he hoped that all were enjoying the dancing.

He began by paying tribute to his predecessor as convenor, Valerie Strachan. Valerie had been a loyal attender and supporter of St. Columba's Dancers for over 40 years, and had spent 4 years as convenor. He said he thought all would agree that she is superb at organising and leading us and is personable and admired by all. When he was recruited as convenor, Willie was told that St. Columba's Dancers ran like a well-oiled machine. That had been in no small part due to the work put in by Valerie, who had an ability to make things run smoothly and to look so easy. He said that when something was done well and looked easy, someone had put a lot of hard work into it. Our thanks go to Valerie. Willie said a personal thank you to Valerie for the help that she gave him as we transitioned from her term as convenor to his.

Two members of the MCs committee had also stepped down this year; Sheila Launchbury and Rachel Wilton. Sheila had, for some time, been the secretary to the MCs, prepared the programmes and the various spreadsheets that were necessary to support our weekly events. Both Sheila and Rachel had supported St. Columba's for many decades as dancers and MCs. They had also attended other dance groups in a teaching capacity and as demonstration dancers. We would miss their valuable expertise and insights, but Willie said he knew that we could call on them should the need arise. Thank you both.

Since our last AGM in March 2020, the world, including St. Columba's Dancers had been impacted by Covid-19. We all missed dancing between March 2020 and October 2021, not only for the dancing but for the camaraderie and social function that St. Columba's allowed us to enjoy.

When dancing re-commenced in October 2021, the committee asked that dancers conformed to our Covid-19 Protocol and Willie was happy to say that this went well. Dancers were asked to keep up to date with vaccinations and take a responsible approach to social distancing, to keep others and themselves safe. Willie thanked us for taking this seriously, which allowed us all to return to enjoy our Monday evenings safely at St. Columba's. Since our return, attendances have been good

and we had appreciated old favourites and some new dances to stretch our minds a little.

Band nights had been well attended with Chris Oxtoby, Ken Martlew and Barbara Manning and Calum Mitchell and Graham Hamilton. Last week Ian Robertson and Rebecca Hare played for us. Regrettably, Burns' Night in January with Frank Reid had to be cancelled due to the Omicron outbreak. Willie said the decision was not taken lightly, but at the time it was viewed as too much of a risk, particularly with food being served. Other dance groups in London, Highland Club, Wembley, Harrow and RSCDS London also cancelled their Burns' events. Two more Band nights were scheduled this season with Chris Oxtoby on 4 April and Craigievar on the last Monday of the season on 23 May.

Willie said, the current website provided us all with information about events and dance programmes. Mike Johnson built and maintained it and Willie said he conveyed his thanks to him for the work that he had done to keep it up and running. The work that Mike had put into the website had been substantial and was done in a timely manner. Our thanks go to Mike.

The website was in need of being refreshed. A new website had been developed and was nearly ready. It is to be launched after the end of the current season to provide information for dancers ready for the new dance season.

Willie thanked the committee for the considerable amount of work involved: Joan for the minutes and Margaret for the finance. Steve and Thelma-Jane for publicity. Lena, Helen and Gill for their work in the kitchen and Sarah who supported us on band nights. Willie said he was particularly pleased to have received wise counsel from committee members which he said was much needed and appreciated.

Willie said, almost last but not least, the MCs who did a considerable amount of work in devising programmes and preparing themselves to MC on their allotted evenings. He gave thanks to Lindsey, Roy, Jim, Murrough and Brian. He said he had come to realise that it was no small task MCing a dance and that all dancers appreciate the substantial effort made. St. Columba's Dancers simply could not survive without the support of these people.

Willie finally thanked the dancers and asked that they continued to come and to encourage friends to come. Thank you all.

8 Any Other Business

Daniel Capron thanked Willie for all his hard work.