

St Michael's Scottish Country Dancing Club

2024 AGM Minutes

Thursday 9th May 2024

Davis Hall, Howell Hill, West Camel BA22 7QX

1. Members Present: All committee : Maggie Westley (MW) Chair,) Gary Duffield (GD) Acting Treasurer, Elspeth Wright (EW) Secretary, Caroline Hill (CH), Cressida Goslin (CG), Pam Winter-Goodwin (PW-G) and 16 members.

Apologies: Heather Toomer, Caroline Fisher , Mary Widger, Julia Roles, Christine Bailey, Verlie Croft, Julia Duffield, Gill Forsyth, Nic Hill, Tom Stokes.

2. Minutes of AGM held on 11th May 2023 distributed to those present. Proposer for adoption of the minutes: Patsy Patterson, Seconder Gwyneth Sugg. A show of hands was called for, all in favour of adoption and Minutes signed by the Chair Maggie Westley.

3. Matters Arising. None.

4. Chairman's Report.

Another year, another Chairman and it's been busy, this is a quick summary of what we have been doing over the past twelve months.

On a lovely sunny day in July we celebrated 100 years of the RSCDS with a very successful tea dance, then in August our Charity Dance was another excellent event resulting in a generous donation to the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, thanks to the raffle run by Pam and Cressida. The AA also received a further donation at Christmas from the Christmas cards.

Last term we welcomed Anita Wilson and this term Liz Beckinsale for an evening of tuition and dancing, also Clive Warren-Smith has taken a couple of evenings with more instruction and interesting dances. These have been very much enjoyed by everyone and we look forward to having Nicky Tyson with us next month. To have experienced teachers coming along is a real bonus for the group and much appreciated. Thanks to them all.

We celebrated St Andrews Night on 30 November with Scottish delicacies at teatime and our Christmas Party dance is always a fun evening, however we were becoming slightly anxious about our Treasurer Ray Helliard. Sadly, it turned out that Ray was terminally ill and he died in February with his funeral in March attended by a good turnout of SCD. We had a bit of a back and forward with the Bank and are so grateful to Gary Duffield for stepping into the breach and taking over as acting treasurer. His input in dealing with everything, especially as we have not been able to retrieve all the paperwork that was held by Ray has been so helpful in keeping our accounts on track. Thank you Gary and to Nic Hill for his advice and back up.

This last year both prominent Scottish dates, St Andrews and Burns have fallen on a Thursday so we couldn't help but celebrate and on Burns Night we were entertained by Tom Stokes and Tam O'Shanter and myself by lowering the tone with Kate O'Shanter. We had Burns dances but unfortunately no piping as Mike's pipes were misbehaving but hopefully next year Mike. We had haggis and smoked salmon which were much enjoyed so thanks to the food suppliers. Earlier that day some of us danced for the residents at Cookson Court where Ann now lives and we were made very welcome.

We have just enjoyed our Spring Dance with Chris and Julie Dewhurst playing which always makes for a good evening and we are now in the run up to the end of term and looking ahead to the Tea

Dance, now renamed the Jam Jar dance on 14 July and our Charity Dance on 17 August, so raffle prizes are now being requested to be given to Pam and Cressida.

Some members have unfortunately not enjoyed good health this year and our best wishes go to them, particularly Caroline Fisher who has sadly made the decision to stop dancing altogether but hopes to come back for special events. At present she doesn't want any fuss made and is about to go on holiday so when she returns we will sort something out for her. Also Julia has had a fall resulting in a fractured shoulder so she will not be dancing for some time and we will keep in touch with both of them.

Now to the thank yous which are numerous, so in no particular order – to

All the helpers at dances, Jill, Margaret, Michaela, Linda, Les, Christine and Caroline, Gary and Julia and anyone else who does their bit on the night

Flower providers at dances – Margaret, Linda and Cressida

Callers, Mike, Gwyneth, including her dance lists each week; Margaret, Dot, Jean and Tom. For their continued dedication in sorting out dances each week and putting together programmes. It's been such a bonus to have Dot calling each week and for her clipboard work in collecting dance suggestions.

Jean – for our website which is continually updated, for all the dance lists each week and for the music itself. She's truly indispensable!

To Gary for all his work in getting the bank etc sorted out and of course for all the photos and videos he produces.

To Tom and Linda, for all their photos

To Les, for examining the accounts and signing them off

To Sue for floor sweeping

To the dance sub Committee for putting together our Spring and Charity Dance programmes

To our Committee, Pam Cressida and Caroline, who are so good in making practical and useful suggestions.

Possibly last but certainly not least, to our Secretary Elspeth who we would be lost without. She thinks of everything before anyone else has had a chance to and is invaluable in keeping us informed about classes, dances, the state of the 303, puddles on the road and much more.

And to all of you who make coming here each week such fun.

Looking ahead to next year, when we come back in September, we will be having four weeks of half an hour's practice with figures and formations, taken by our callers and more experienced dancers. This will be from 7 – 7.30 and we hope this will encourage some beginners to come along and help from other dancers is welcome.

In February it will be our first Day School, application forms are now being sent out to other groups and I encourage all of you to come along, not only to support the group but if you haven't attended a day school for a while or not at all, you may be surprised at how much you can learn and how enjoyable they are.

I think that's more than enough from me and if I have missed anyone out then please tell me now, otherwise thank you all, I still consider myself to be a bit of a newbie but your kindness and friendship has made my first year a delight.

Let's move on!

5. Secretary's Report

We have had another busy year of Scottish Dancing, and I'd like to repeat the thanks already given by Maggie to all our very supportive club members who always step up and volunteer to help out at weekly and social events. We are lucky to have an enthusiastic and growing club, who are always open to new suggestions for keeping it so.

Membership. We were very sad at the passing of our Treasurer and caller Ray Helliard in February. We know from his smiling face that Scottish dancing brought him a lot of pleasure and that he really enjoyed being in the post of Treasurer for the short time that he was. Our membership now stands at a very healthy 43, which is the same as pre-Covid and as last year. We are very happy to welcome new members Beryl Baker, Hilary and Jim Haywood, Mary Widger, and Sarah Volkert this year.

We hope to attract even more new members in the autumn, when the club will be having a four-week course for absolute beginners – this will be on the four Thursdays in September at 7pm for half an hour here in the main hall before our usual dancing starts. Many thanks to those who have volunteered to help with the teaching. Please can I ask everyone to spread the word about the Beginners' Class.

Events and Social Dances

Your secretary's job is to keep you informed by email and on the noticeboard of dances and events throughout the southwest. A huge thank you to Maggie for her enthusiasm in putting together and organising the Day School to be held on Sunday 9th February 2025. It is the first to be held by our club and the information has gone out to all our dancers and other clubs. I would also like to thank Felicity Hooper who compiles, collates and distributes The Carswellian with all the information about Scottish Dancing in the South West. The Carswellian is available by the notice board every week and is full of interesting articles as well as future events.

Advertising

We have regular advertising in The Camels Magazine, The West Camel Chronicle, The Carswellian, The Davis Hall, The Sherborne Times, also on occasions The Marshwood Vale and Queen Camel Post Office. There is a notice in the Davis Hall, and we are also affiliated members of the RSCDS, which means we have a platform for advertising our club's weekly dances and social dances, and anything else, worldwide. And of course, most importantly our website, run by Jean Hill. Jean does an amazing job of keeping it fresh and up to date and putting up the cribs each week, as well as photographs provided by Tom Stokes and Gary Duffield.

We were also fortunate to have a professional photographer get in touch with the Davis Hall committee, Sally Sargent, who used to work for Community Council for Somerset <https://ccslovesomerset.org/community-buildings/> regarding taking some photographs of various hall activities on behalf of ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) <https://acre.org.uk/> The pictures would be used on their website. Incidentally, The Davis Hall applied for the award of Community Buildings Hallmark Quality standard Scheme, and is proud to be one of eight village halls in Somerset to have achieved the highest award, Hallmark 3. This focuses on community, social awareness, communications, forward planning, and development. The Davis Hall is booked for 2025 and 2026, for our Thursday evenings and Social dances and we look forward to having Chris and Julie Dewhurst play for us again at our Spring Dance 2025.

We have had a few evenings of very wet weather this year, which resulted in dancing being cancelled on one occasion and not surprisingly very low attendance on one or two other occasions. I will continue to try to put out very local weather warnings, in addition to updates on the A303 changes. The A303 dualling should be completed by winter 2024/25, fingers crossed.

I have completed two busy enjoyable years as Secretary, and just want to put the word out that the constitution allows for three years in the post, so if you would like to step up and become secretary from next May, do consider doing so.

Wishing everyone another year of happy life-affirming dancing. END

Proposer for adoption of Secretary's Report: Margaret Manfield.

Seconder: Mike Sugg. A show of hands was called for and report was adopted.

6. Acting Treasurer's Report 2023 -2024

23/23 has been an unusual year for the club due to Ray Helliard being indisposed for a few months before sadly passing away. There was no handover, and, to date, there has been no paperwork, books or computer files received to indicate details of transactions made during the six months between May and November 2023. In February I received the chequebook which gave high-level details of cheque-based payments. In February I also managed to get access to the bank account and was able to see all the historic transactions. When I visited Ray in Dunkirk House, he advised me that there were two 'treasurer books' at his house. Maggie has approached his son and asked if they could be forwarded to us if they are unearthed. Without details of what cost-allocation-code the income and outgoings should be attributed to, it is not possible to give an accurate breakdown of income and outgoings by category.

I'd like to thank Nic Hill who assisted me in apportioning income and outgoings to various categories. Accordingly, the values shown against each category in the receipts and payments account are certainly incorrect and cannot be accurately compared with last year's itemised income and outgoings. However, the good news is that the income and expenditure DO balance and the allocations that Nic and I made are broadly in line with the previous year's allocations. The breakdown of the figures are on the Receipts and Payments Account, which will be attached to the minutes. Owing to the uncertainty of the figures in each category, I don't intend to go through them now unless anyone wants me to read them out? If the Treasurer's Books are retrieved from Ray's family I will revisit the figures to check Nic and my assumptions.

I can report that the income for the year was £2,778 and the outgoings were £3,531. This represents a loss of £753 for the year.

The total receipts for the year are down £1,069 from the previous year. This is mainly due to £820 of ticket sales for our 40th anniversary dance being received and accounted for in the previous FY. As the 40th anniversary dance was in addition to our normal series of dances we expected that our income would drop between £600 and £900 compared with the previous year.

Our outgoings for the year were up by £300 on the previous year, this is due mostly to paying for the website and domain name which occurs every three years. Other expenses such as Bands, refreshments and insurance also rose with inflation.

At the end of the financial year our bank balance stood at £1795. After taking into account payments made after the first of April which were attributable to FY 23/24 and adding credits for the FY and cash-in-hand the balance was £1735. This was £739 down on the same time last year but still represents a healthy balance for the club.

I'd like to publically thank Les Jackson for independently examining and approving the accounts subject to the caveat that he was unable to complete a full check of receipts and payments owing to missing documentation. END

Proposer for adoption of Accounts: Caroline Hill.

Seconder: Dot Starks. A show of hands was called for and accounts were adopted.

7. Election of Committee

The positions of Chair and Secretary remain the same.

Election of Treasurer

MW thanked Gary Duffield for acting as Treasurer following the loss of Ray Helliard.

Nominations were called for, and Gary Duffield was proposed by Linda Jackson, and seconded by Shauna Ewan. Further nominations were called for. There being none, Gary Duffield was returned to the committee with a show of hands.

The remaining committee members – Caroline Hill, Pam Winter-Goodwin, and Cressida Goslin were asked if they would like to continue on the committee. In the absence of any nominations to join the committee, all agreed to do so.

MW thanked the Officers for their hard work and said she looked forward to working with them in the next year.

8. Callers

The dance callers were asked by MW if they were happy to continue calling the dances for the next year – all agreed. Thanks were extended to all callers for their hard work in selecting dance programmes and calling the dances throughout the year.

MW asked for any potentially interested callers to make themselves known to the callers and committee and said they would be made most welcome.

9. Dates for Terms and Dances for Year 2024 -2025

Dates are available on noticeboard, website, and emails to members and were not read out at meeting, but are summarised below.

MW asked for comments on weekly classes and dances and a discussion ensued. A member asked if core dances would continue. Contributions were made as follows –

- Core dances useful – gives dancers homework to do.
- Some clubs have a dance with no call and no walk through – in the past the name of dance was announced, then danced. Consensus was that a call was needed in our club.
- An evening with only core dances
- Do our dancers look at website crib each week?
- A dance of the month? – said to have been done in the past.
- Introduce new dance and add to repertoire, learn it by dancing each week. This was said to have been tried unsuccessfully as not everyone present each week.
- Request for easier dances in first half of evening in September, following Beginners class.
- Beginners Class can be attended by not just beginners but all dancers who wish practise in formations
- Beginners Classes have worked well in another club
- Can callers dance Strathspeys once only for each couple as some are very long? Consensus was that it depends on dance and group.

2024

End of Term Thursday 27th June

Jam Jar Tea Dance Sunday 14th July

Charity Dance Saturday 17th August

New Term Thursday 5th September

Christmas Party Dance Thursday 19th December

2025

New Term Thursday 9th January

Afternoon Day School and Evening Dance Sunday 9th February

Spring Dance Saturday 12th April

AGM Thursday 8th May

End of Term Thursday 26th June

Charity Dance Saturday 16th August

New Term Thursday 4th September

Christmas Party Dance Thursday 18th December

10. Any Other Business - None

Patsy Patterson gave a vote of thanks to committee members for their work throughout the year.

There being no further business, the St Michael's Scottish Country Dancing Club Annual General Meeting for 2024 was ended at 9.15pm.

Next AGM will be Thursday 8th May 2025.
