

St Michael's Scottish Country Dancing Club

2025 AGM Minutes

Thursday 1st May 2025 8.30pm

Davis Hall, Howell Hill, West Camel BA22 7QX

1. Members Present: Committee : Maggie Westley (MW) Chair, Gary Duffield (GD) Treasurer, Elspeth Wright (EW) Secretary, Caroline Hill (CH), Cressida Goslin (CG), and 25 members.

Apologies: Jean Peacock, Heather Toomer, Pam Winter-Goodwin, Anita Wilson, Mary Widger, Kathy Arnold, Sue Adam.

2. Minutes of AGM held on 9th May 2024 distributed to those present. Proposer for adoption of the minutes: Patsy Patterson, Seconder Jean Hill. A show of hands was called for, all in favour of adoption, and Minutes were signed by the Chair Maggie Westley.

3. Matters Arising. None.

4. Chairman's Report.

I would like to firstly say thank you to the Club for what I think has been a successful, happy and busy year of dancing.

Our two summer dances, the Jam Jar in July and our Charity dance in August both went well with good numbers attending at each.

In September we had our four weeks of Beginners' Classes, starting from 7pm in the hope of encouraging new dancers to join us. Some extensive advertising was done and we had four /five new dancers join us but unfortunately even though a couple of them showed real potential, attendance dwindled during the first half of the term, and they all disappeared, never to be seen again. We tried!

The Christmas dance is again a joyful evening of dancing with good numbers.

As there was no class on the nearest Thursday to Burns due to the village pantomime, we didn't celebrate Burns this year but a group of us were asked back to Cooksons Court (where Ann Hammond now lives) to dance for the residents. This was on the morning of Saturday 25 January, Burns day itself and the Home had gone to great lengths to make it an event for their residents, with decorations, music and haggis. Special thanks to Tom for addressing it in fine style and we ended with Auld Lang Syne. It was a lovely morning, and I am pretty sure we will be asked back next year.

From January this year, Anita has been taking the class once a month to increase our knowledge of formations and footwork and to remind us to be doing all the things we know we should be doing. Thank you Anita.

In January and a month away from the Day School, I admit I was beginning to panic as we had about 12 bookings. However all the assurances I received were correct as we had a full house on the day and six sets in the evening. It was a great day for the Club and it all fell into place, due in no small way to the teamwork of all involved and everyone getting stuck in to help. Simon had a great time; the music of Ian and Judith Muir was of course terrific, and huge thanks must go to Graham Beckinsale with Liz for the Michelin star food.

Would we do it again? I'm game if others are, and that's something to talk about, but a Band needs to be booked at least two years in advance so we're looking quite far ahead. That's for the next chairman to think about!

Classes have been pretty consistent in numbers and we welcome Mike and Maggie Robertson who are now members and there have been a few significant birthdays as well with more to come before the end of term.

We have recently enjoyed the Spring Dance with the Dewhursts who are a delight to have playing for us, wonderful music and such a lovely couple. So nice to have happy musicians on the stage, I watched them sing along to ALS at the end of the dance.

This year, the dance formed part of the Somerset weekend of dancing as purely by chance, the Ashill group were holding their Easter dance the day after ours and for those who attended both it was a great weekend of dancing and music, with Ian and Judith playing on the Sunday. All very successful and hopefully can be repeated, although both clubs' dates do not correspond for the next couple of years. Perhaps with cooperation between the groups, we can arrange something for the future as it brought in interest from dancers from further afield.

To all those who have not had the best of health this year, we wish you well and hope to see you back with us soon.

Time for the lengthy list of very essential thanks you's and in no particular order: -

A big thank you to our teachers who take the class once a term, Anita, Liz and it will be Nicky in June, also to Clive who fits us in when he can and is always a treat to have teaching us. Thank you all.

To the callers, for their continued hard work and dedication in ensuring that we dance interesting and fun dances each week. It takes time and effort to put a programme together and this is much appreciated. And where would we be without Jean to make it all work with the music and for maintaining the website. Thank you all.

To the helpers at dances, Gill, Christine, Margaret and Michaela, Les and Linda. Again, you are all working quietly in the background bringing order to what could be chaos. Thank you.

For the flower ladies, Margaret, Linda and Cressida. Always lovely and looking gorgeous and that's the flowers as well.

To Tom and Irene for the photographs and a special thank you to Tom who brings Pearl along each week to enjoy the dancing.

To the sub committee of Jean, Carol, Caroline and Margaret Laurence for compiling the Spring and Charity dance programmes. Again, not an easy task to try to please everyone.

A special mention to Christine who makes sure we have milk for the tea and coffee each week and has been doing this for a very long time.

To Les, for independently examining the accounts and signing them off and to Nic for supporting Gary as Treasurer.

To the Committee who diligently work on our behalf to ensure we function, Pam, Cressida and Caroline, which brings me to Gary, who apart from being Treasurer has provided us with a microphone system even I can understand, takes super photos and with Julia designs and prints the tickets for our events and our membership cards.

Finally to Elspeth, every committee needs an Elspeth who is there at every turn, with all the knowledge to hand and has done everything that can be thought of before it has occurred to anyone else. It's to her we thank for the completion of the 303 roadworks and although we will be losing her as secretary, we hope she continues with the weather reports.

If anyone ever deserved an OBE, it's Elspeth.

That's more than enough from me, so let's get on.

5. Secretary's Report

As always, I would like to fully support all the thank yous expressed by Maggie our Chairperson to our ever-supportive members for help throughout the year. A huge thank you to Maggie for her unwavering enthusiasm and organisation skills in making this club excellent in its field. The stand-out event I think was the Day School which Maggie put in place, with teaching from the skilled and knowledgeable Simon Wales.

Membership. Our membership stands at 42, one less than last year. We welcomed four new members at the start of this season – Maggie Robertson and Michael Robertson, Lesley Silcock and Margaret Thompson-Hughes. In 2022-23 we had 12 new members, and in 2023 -24 we had 5 new members. Our membership numbers have remained around 42 over the last few years with new members taking the place of those no longer dancing.

Events and Social Dances. As said by Maggie, we had many successful events this year. Attendance at our two ticketed events has been very good. At our Day School in February there were 73 people in the hall including musicians and callers. Our Spring Dance was a sell-out success with 70 tickets. Many non-club members attended, many having earlier attended the Day School. We had the superb Chris and Julie Dewhurst playing, and they had overnight accommodation with Mike and Gwyneth. Many thanks to Mike and Gwyneth for providing hospitality. The Dewhursts are also booked to play at our Spring Dances in 2026 and 2027. They are very popular so it is necessary to book them far in advance!

Advertising There are over 40 clubs and 7 RSCDS branches throughout the South West of England. Notice of their dances and events is emailed widely to other club contacts, then emailed out to our members so we all get the chance to support other clubs' social dances. Can I just encourage everyone to look at our noticeboard each week to see what is on elsewhere, and also to be aware that you are welcome to borrow The Carswellian and RSCDS magazines that are on display. The Carswellian is a vital one-stop publication for dancing events, plus photos and reviews. My thanks go out to Felicity Hooper who single-handedly publishes The Carswellian. She does an incredible job and deserves recognition for her work. Our club is an affiliated member of the RSCDS so we are able to advertise our club and provide articles and photos of our events on this world-wide platform, as well as link to our website. Thanks again to Jean who runs the website so well and keeps it so up to date, with photos by Gary Duffield and Tom & Irene Stokes. We also advertise regularly in the Camels Magazine, the West Camel Chronicle, The Davis Hall, The Sherborne Times and The Spark Magazine, as well as occasional noticeboards in supermarkets and Queen Camel Post Office. As always, it is word of mouth which often brings in new members, so I encourage everyone to keep spreading the word.

Lastly, a lot of emails have been sent out this year regarding the A303 dual carriageway upgrade around West Camel which meant road closures and diversions. Thankfully the upgrade is now finished and access down Howell Hill is possible again. We have the Davis Hall booked for the year ahead, and look forward to seeing everyone dancing in 2025-26. END

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

A show of hands was called for and report was adopted.

6. Treasurer's Report 2024 -2025

See separate document.

Proposer for adoption of Treasurer's Report: Patsy Patterson. Seconder: Clive Warren-Smith.

A show of hands was called for and report was adopted.

7. Approval of Accounts.

See separate document.

8. Election of Committee Secretary and Committee Members

The positions of Chair and Treasurer remain the same.

Election of Secretary. The club constitution states that no member may serve as Secretary for more than three consecutive years, and so nominations were called for for a new secretary. There being no proposals, the present secretary Elspeth Wright was asked if she would continue in the role until a new secretary could be found, albeit with delegation of some tasks to others. EW agreed to continue in the role, with title of Acting Secretary.

Committee member Caroline Hill has agreed to continue, with thanks from MW. Committee members Cressida Goslin and Pam Winter-Goodwin stepped down, and were thanked for their many years of dedicated service to the club. Kathy Arnold, Maggie Robertson and Clive Warren-Smith volunteered to join the committee and, with a show of hands from members, all three were welcomed on to the committee.

9. Review of Constitution 2013 and proposed Draft Constitution 2025.

See attached:

- review of Constitution Document
- Proposed Draft Constitution 2025

Gary Duffield stated reasons for an updated Constitution, as in review of Constitution Document. Members read Draft Constitution and questions were invited. Clive Warren-Smith (in subsequent discussion in item 10 Nomination of Charities), suggested change to Point 8. Nominated Charity, to allow for more than one charity. Proposal for this change agreed.

Proposer for adoption of Constitution : Marion Warren-Smith. Seconder: Dot Starks.

A show of hands was called for and the Constitution was adopted.

10. Nomination of Charities for 2025 -2026

Suggestions were called for. Present charity Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance was suggested by several members, and Jean Hill suggested Lord's Larder, a local charity based in Yeovil. After discussion and a show of hands, it was agreed to continue with Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance as the charity for year 2025 - 2026.

11. Dates for Terms and Dances for Next Year

Term dates and social dance dates are already decided up until end of December 2027. Davis Hall bookings are in place for the remainder of 2025 and for 2026, and also in 2027 for Spring Dance 17th April only.

2025

End of Term Thursday 26th June

Jam Jar Tea Dance Sunday 13th July

Charity Dance Saturday 16th August

New Term Thursday 4th September

Christmas Party Dance Thursday 18th December

2026

New Term Thursday 8th January

Spring Dance Saturday 18th April

AGM Thursday 7th May

End of Term Thursday 25th June

Charity Dance Saturday 15th August

New Term Thursday 3rd September

Christmas Party Dance Thursday 17th December

12. Any Other Business

12.1 New bands. Shauna Ewen suggested the club have more tartan bands made for wearing during dances. All agreed and more bands to be provided.

12.2 **Beginners' classes.** Patsy Patterson asked if club would be having more beginners' classes. MW replied that although they were reasonably well attended, the beginners' classes in September 2024 did not result in new members joining, and there are no plans to repeat at this time.

12.3 **Technical help.** Jean Hill stated that no one knows exactly what she does in terms of music preparation, storage on club devices, and running of the website and other technical aspects. GD prepared and distributed a flyer calling for volunteers to learn those skills from Jean. This resulted in a good response from members and will be acted upon.

Margaret Manfield and Marion Warren-Smith 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 2025 was ended at 9.20pm.

Next AGM will be Thursday 7th May 2026
