

## **Trustees Report 2017 – 2018**

The focus of our Executive Committee continues to be on our core activities and meeting our aims and objectives. Addressing lack of attendance at some of our events has proven to be fruitful, both socially and financially however classes attendance continues to be a challenge, particularly in securing venues which meet our requirements. The reserves within our General Fund have decreased from £42,625 to £40,741 however this fully meets our operational costs of £27,237 and the Trustees consider the level of the General Fund to be more than adequate.

Governance has continued to be a high priority with the Trustees as we prepared for the changes being introduced by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We are grateful for the assistance provided by both the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) and the Information Commissioners Office which allowed us to be better prepared in advance of new legislation coming into force. We are confident that all our data is stored securely and that we have processes in place to ensure that changes to Trustees will be managed well. Our new Privacy Policy ensures that members and supporters are informed about how we use and manage their personal information.

Our Risk Management plan is regularly reviewed and the key risks identified are:

- the ongoing decrease in membership, which has a long term impact on the sustainability of the Branch
- the need to ensure recruitment of Trustees with the relevant experience and skills to ensure sound governance of the Branch

To aid this, we continue to offer membership of the Branch at a low cost, and where possible pricing of classes and events is set to encourage membership. Additionally, we are in the process of upskilling our Trustees and volunteers' particularly in marketing where we recognise a skills gap.

The new Trustees appointed at our AGM in 2017 are now experienced members of our management team and their enthusiasm and fresh ideas are very welcome. Our new Membership Secretary has quickly and efficiently organised our data to ensure that all of our records meet the best practice standards set by the Information Commissioners Office. In addition, our Membership Secretary has overseen the changes required for GDPR.

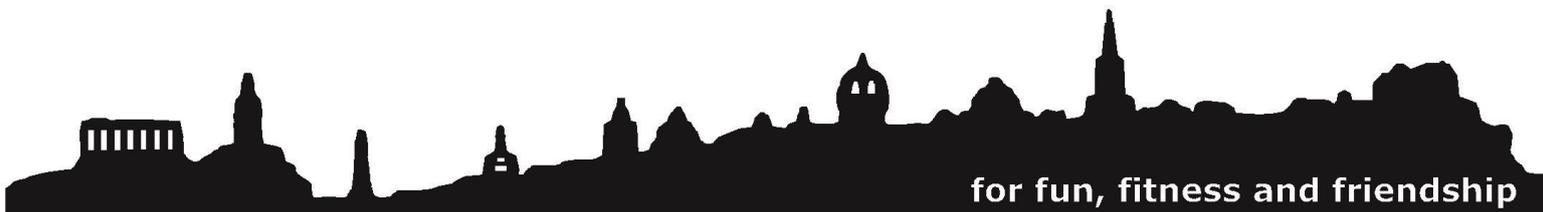
We continue to take a prudent approach to our Investments and to invest in line with this policy, ongoing reviews of our Investment performance are undertaken.

Our Classes over the past year have had mixed results. Our Monday evening Beginners class in Murrayfield continues to be popular with both dancers in the local area and from further afield. Many new dancers from this class choose to become members and therefore support the ongoing work of the RSCDS and Edinburgh Branch.

We expected to get similar results from our Tuesday Beginners class in a city centre location however this has not proved to be the case. An advert within the Edinburgh Evening News in January enticed no new dancers and a review of our classes advertising material is being undertaken. The Trustees are committed to continue running classes for Beginners.

Two teachers returning after a period shared the teaching of our Intermediate class and this has been very successful. They have worked to provide the class with a seamless transition each week and this has proved to be a popular class with dancers improving their technique and dancing ability. Our use of the hall at Cluny Centre has been under threat for some time, and the hall eventually closed its doors at Christmas. The Advanced class relocated to Greenbank Parish Church but this has been unpopular with our dancers. There is currently a lack of suitable alternatives; however we continue to seek new venues.

The Advanced Plus class offers experienced dancers an opportunity to continue dancing at a high level. Dancers are encouraged to attend our classes on a weekly basis each term to benefit from our progressive teaching however flexible payment options are available for those unable to make a regular weekly commitment.



Teacher training opportunities continue to be offered wherever possible to aspiring teachers. We are indebted to the musicians who play for our classes ensuring that the music and dance, together, continue to be a part of our culture.

Regrettably, overall numbers attending Branch classes this year has declined, despite increased numbers in some classes. In addition, occasional workshops have been poorly attended and have been temporarily suspended. Classes and workshops help all of us gain and maintain a high standard of dancing. The Trustees will continue to assess the position and review our advertising. We welcome anyone with ideas as to how we can grow our classes to ensure that Scottish country dancing remains a popular pastime. Growing our classes will ensure that our events are sustainable and that dancers gain confidence to dance socially, this in turn assists other local groups and clubs.

The Trustees have focussed on ensuring that our events are successful, with dance programmes suitable for all, excellent bands and a warm welcome.

The tone of our events for the year was set when we welcomed dancers from neighbouring Branches to the Joint Lothians dance in Edinburgh and continued through to our Nice'n'Easy dance where all ages and abilities enjoyed dancing together.

The Ceilidh for Canada was a special event run jointly with the RSCDS to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Canada. This free event to promote Scottish dancing and the many links between Scotland and Canada attracted over 300 participants, many of them visitors to Edinburgh. It was a fantastic event promoting Scottish dancing to lots of new dancers and we were pleased to host this on behalf of the RSCDS.

Our Ball is always the highlight of the year in Greyfriars Kirk and it's proving to be a popular venue for our Festival Ceilidh. We welcomed dancers from around the world to both events. Our ceilidh promotes Scottish country dancing to a worldwide audience and is perfectly timed to promote our classes to local dancers.

It is pleasing to see a small profit from our Functions. Special thanks must go to our sponsors – Walkers Shortbread, Blacketyside Farm and Teashop and Findlays of Portobello for their ongoing support.

Losses of £361 on Children's activities continue to be acceptable to the Trustees and are seen as an investment in the future of Scottish country dancing. We have a small group of keen children and committed parents which have allowed the class to compete in the Perth Festival and entertain us at our Nice'n'Easy dance. The children are currently working hard to demonstrate in Princes Street Gardens. We are indebted to our teachers, musicians and helpers who ensure that this class continues every week.

Our Children's Ball moved to a new venue at the Lauriston Hall. This proved very popular and attracted new groups to the ball. A competition to devise a dance was a hit with the children; we had lots of entries and the winning dance was published in our recent magazine 'Dancing Forth' and had a tune especially composed for it.

A pilot with Central Library where we ran a series of Children's workshops on Saturday mornings was successful and we are considering how we could sustain this over a longer period of time. Activity with local schools is currently under discussion as we review the best use of our limited time.

The demonstration team have continued to promote Scottish dancing within Edinburgh. Ceilidh events for visitors to the city continue to be popular and we are grateful to our teachers and musicians who undertake these events on our behalf. The highlight of the year was filming the dances from our 90th Anniversary book in the City Chambers. The stunning venue is matched by the dancing and making these dances freely available on YouTube, as a teaching resource, encourages a worldwide audience to dance our dances and is excellent publicity for our Branch and Demonstration group. The project was funded from our 90th Anniversary fund to promote Scottish country dancing for the benefit of many.

A display of items from our Archive was held in Central Library throughout August and September 2017. The display was excellent and well received. The timing of the event ensured that visitors to the city with an interest in Scottish dance were able to view this and we have had positive feedback from many attendees. As well as creating the display a small team started the process to digitalise our archive, and

we are grateful to their contributions to ensure that these documents, photographs and memorabilia is preserved for the future. We regularly release items of interest via Social media.

Marketing our classes and events is a large part of our role, and we particularly focus on the health benefits of Scottish country dancing, as evidenced in the RSCDS Health Strategy, for recruitment and retention activities. We contact GP surgeries annually and lots of our Social Media content relates to the fun, fitness and friendship Scottish dancing provides. Social Media is a powerful marketing tool which we use fully and our Facebook "likes" have grown from 1,110 to 1,366 over the past year. We also have over 520 Twitter followers and a growing network on YouTube and Instagram which helps to expand our reach. Our recently published 90th Anniversary Dances on YouTube have had over 10,600 views collectively to date.

The Branch website continues to support these channels and is the first point of contact for classes and membership enquiries. Direct mailing remains a cost effective method of distribution and our magazine 'Dancing Forth' reaches a wide network of local dancers.

Our Trustees continue to focus on the strategic direction and management of the Branch and we are already taking steps to plan ahead towards our 100th Anniversary in 2024. The use of email to reduce the cost of physical meetings and makes better use of our Trustees time.

Running regular weekly classes, planning and running workshops, dances, the annual ball, demonstration team practices as well as other ad hoc activities takes a considerable amount of work, so special thanks are due to those who work both in front and behind the scenes throughout the year.

If you feel you could assist the Branch by serving as a Trustee or helping in any other way, any of the committee would be delighted to speak with you.

*David Watson, Chairman, May 2018.*

# Statement of Financial Activities to 31st March 2018

## Statutory Information

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (Edinburgh Branch)  
SC016958 c/o 95 Overton Crescent, East Calder, EH53 0RJ

Regulated by Constitution since January 1924.

The **OBJECTS** of the branch shall be to advance the education of the public in the Edinburgh area in traditional Scottish Country Dancing and in furtherance thereof: -

- a) to preserve and promote the dancing of traditional Scottish Country Dances and modern dances of merit in the traditional style;
- b) to provide or assist in providing instruction in the dancing of Scottish Country Dances;
- c) to promote the enjoyment and appreciation of Scottish Country Dances by suitable means which may include the giving of demonstrations and theatrical performances;
- d) generally to do such other things as are or may be considered by the Branch to be incidental or conducive to foregoing objects or any one of them.

**BANKERS:** Bank of Scotland, Corstorphine West Branch, 206 St John's Rd, Edinburgh EH12 8SH

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER:**

Martin J Gill ACA, Partner, BDO LLP, Citypoint, 65 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD

**TRUSTEES:** The Trustees for 2017/18 are made up of the Executive Committee, which consists of:

David Watson	Chairman
Elizabeth Harry	Treasurer
Susan Ross	Membership Secretary since 21st June 2017
Brian Harry, Rena Mulholland and Susan Ross until 21st June 2017	
Christine MacRae and Ian Auld	
Stephen Carr, Alex Dyet and Melvyn Grieg since 21st June 2017	

Trustees are elected as per the Constitution in General Meeting.

**POLICIES:**

Income Reserves – The Executive Committee consider that the ideal value of reserves required to be held should be equivalent to one year's operational expenditure. The current value of the reserves is £40,741, which is considerably more than one year's expenditure.

Selection of Investments - Professional advice is sought, when the need arises. Investments are selected to provide income as well as maintaining the capital sum.

Grants - From time to time the Executive Committee may make grants available to supporters, to assist in furthering the objects of the Charity. Each event is considered on its own merits and criteria for applying are published.

Investment Powers – Funds in excess of the day to day requirements are invested in accordance with powers granted in General Meeting. Professional advice is sought when the need arises. The investments have been selected to provide income as well as maintaining capital value of the funds.

Relationship to HQ – The Branch is an independent Charity recognised as such by OSCR and the HM Revenue and Customs, and holds a License Agreement with the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (a Scottish based charity with worldwide membership).

*David Watson, Chairman, May 2018*