

## **GARDENS SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCERS (GSCD)**

### **MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING**

**HELD AT 7.00 PM ON 2nd SEPTEMBER 2013**

**At St PETER'S CHURCH HALL, LUTTON PLACE, EDINBURGH.**

#### **In attendance**

Margaret Burns (Chairperson), James Summers (Secretary), Rae Ballantyne, (Treasurer), Margaret Harris, Linda Watson, Rosemary Wylie, (All Committee Members)  
40 dancers also attended

#### **1. Apologies**

Ian & Dorothy Auld, Joyce Boyd, Shiona Clark, Sandra Cummings, Sylvia Davie, Jacqueline Milligan, Agnes MacMichael, Chris Lyon, Irene Palmer.

#### **2. Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012**

There were no comments on the minutes and they were approved by May Collier and seconded by Graham Davie.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

#### **4. Chair Person's Report**

Margaret Burns thanked everyone for coming and read the following report :-

“Thank you for taking the trouble to attend our Annual Meeting. As we do not have a membership, anyone can attend and contribute to the meeting as it is you, the dancers who support us regularly, that have a right to know how things have gone.

What a quick summer! We began our season on a cold Monday night in May with a very poor crowd for a first night, but over recent weeks, as the weather improved, so did the attendances slightly, but there is not the same interest as in years gone by. Unfortunately the condition of the floor is quite worrying and one of the reasons why some people do not come along, but prefer to dance at our indoor nights. We had hoped that there would be some repairs carried out before the season started but this never materialised.

Attendances at all venues are down this year. Our indoor nights attendances at Lutton Place were slightly down but numbers at Stockbridge House were well down on last year. Was it because of the warm weather or transport problems?

We have introduced some new musicians and bands this year and they seem to have been well received so hopefully we will have them again

As usual we are looking for some new people to join our committee. Please don't wait to be proposed. If you feel you would like to help organise the dancing please just volunteer. We can only continue if we have people

prepared to help.

We do need some new committee members as Linda Watson, who has been on our committee for the past three years, feels that she would now like a break and, as we didn't get any new members last year, we need to replace about three people.

I would like to thank Linda for her efforts over the years. She has attended faithfully and was always a hard working member of the committee and

willing to take on any task.

I would also like to thank everyone who offered to Steward, do the Box Office or helped in any way, it is all much appreciated.

Hopefully we will have a good meeting and once the business is done you can enjoy the dancing afterwards.

### **5. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer gave everyone attending a copy of The Provisional Statement of Accounts and a copy of this is attached to this Minute.

The Treasurer read out the following report to the meeting :-

"I've tried to keep the accounts simple and I think everything is self explanatory but there are a few points which I'd like to clarify.

Because of increased costs this year the committee decided to raise the admission charge to £4.00. This turned out to be prudent as we had a fall in numbers at all venues. We need 132 dancers to cover our costs at the Gardens but we averaged only 100, down from 103 in 2012. We rely on the Indoor nights to subsidise the Gardens, however Luton Place averaged 66, which was 2 fewer than last year, while Stockbridge House dropped by 13 to only 56. The rent at Luton Place increased by £16.50 per night and Stockbridge House by a more modest £1.50 per night.

We also had the additional cost of a Public Entertainment Licence for the Gardens. This is a Council requirement where the public are admitted to some form of entertainment, such as a dance. This licence will have to be renewed every year.

But it's not all bad news as we expect to have a surplus of £329.85 which gives us a healthy bank balance of more than £9,000.00. However we will probably have to dip into this as next year's rent for the Ross Theatre is going up by approximately £1,000.00.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the Clubs and individuals who made donations - these contributions are very much appreciated.

I think that covers everything but if there is anything which isn't clear please feel free to ask

The Treasurer's report was proposed by Margo Lyall and seconded by Sandra Wallace.

### **6. Secretary's Report**

The Secretary reported that he had emailed the Usher Hall (the booking body for the Council) requesting bookings for the Ross Theatre for 2014 and that Emma at the Usher Hall had replied saying that the dates had been pencilled in the diary.

The Chairperson, Margaret Burns, told the meeting that nothing would be signed without a fight to get the floor repaired.

### **7. Election of Office Bearers and Committee**

The following existing members of the Committee confirmed their intentions to continue and were duly confirmed as :- Margaret Burns (Chair), James Summers (Secretary), Rae Ballantyne (Treasurer) and Margaret Harris, Agnes

Reed, Rosemary Wylie (Members of Committee)

Margaret Burns asked for nominations from the floor for new Committee Members and Helen Corsie kindly offered. Margaret thanked Helen who was proposed by Margaret Harris and seconded by Rosemary Wylie.

#### **8. Bands**

Margaret Burns asked if everyone was happy with the bands used in 2013 and got general approval from the floor.

#### **9. Programmes**

Margaret Burns asked if everyone was happy with the programmes used in 2013 and got general approval from the floor.

Margaret Burns reminded everyone to let their Clubs know that programmes were welcome particularly for the indoor nights.

#### **10. Website**

Margaret Burns asked if there was anyone willing to help with running the web site but no offers were received from the floor. James Summers (Secretary) proposed that some thought was given to making use of the RSCDS Edinburgh Branch web site. The Gardens Country Dancers could be added as a link and it would mean that we had a more local contact for updating the weather situation etc. The meeting generally thought that this may be a solution worth investigating and James Summers offered to get in touch with the RSCDS Edinburgh branch and John Watkins who runs the web site. Graham Davie warned that the Edinburgh Branch would charge for this service but all felt that this cost would be faced if the proposal was to prove workable.

#### **11. Dates for 2014**

Margaret Burns read out the following proposed dates :-

Monday nights Gardens :- 26<sup>th</sup> May to 28<sup>th</sup> July (10 nights)

Tuesday nights Luton Place Hall :- 27<sup>th</sup> May to 29<sup>th</sup> July (10 nights)

Monday nights Stockbridge Hall :- 4<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August (4 nights)

Annual Meeting (Venue to be confirmed) - Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014

#### **12. Any Other Business**

Margaret Harris stressed that something must be done about the poor seating and especially the broken floor surface and suggested that representation must be made to the Council to push for improvements. The Secretary pointed out that this had been talked about at the last annual Meeting and asked if any anyone had followed this up - only Tom Nisbet had done this and he had had no response on the subject. It was suggested that dancers generally should find out the leaders of their local councils and petition them on the subject.

Fiona Jones suggested that we alert Visit Scotland to the problem and this was considered a possibility. The Chairperson and the Secretary assured the Dancers that they would continue to press for improvements and that a strongly worded letter had been sent to the Usher Hall asking that these points be attended to without further delay but to date no reply had been received..

Sandra Wallace suggested that, as well as the condition of the floor, one of the main reasons for the fall in attendances at the Gardens was the increasing age of the dancers. Sandra was of the opinion that the older dancers do not like the cold at the Gardens and suggested that 2 nights indoors may be preferable. A show of hands for this proposal only got 5 in favour.

Graham Davie stated that running two indoor nights may clash with other summer dancing.

Moira Calderwood pointed out that more people had attended the Monday

nights in the Gardens than the Tuesday nights in the hall.

The Secretary suggested that Princes Street Gardens continues in its present form in 2014 and that any losses are funded from the reserves which currently stand at over £9,000.00. Those attending were in general agreement to this. Several of those attending said that they did not like the hall at Stockbridge House because it was too hot and parking was a problem and the Chairman asked for alternative venues. Merchiston, Mayfield, Calton Centre, Northfield Community Centre and Rudolph Steiner halls were suggested and the Committee was charged with investigating these venues for possible use. Sandra Wallace suggested that the box office at the Gardens should remain open until 9.30 PM as she thought that revenue was lost by closing at 9.00PM. Sandra said that she had seen some people turned away after 9.00PM and on one occasion she had taken money as a donation from willing customers after 9.00PM. The Chairman was of the opinion that this was an isolated case and that very few people were willing to pay £4.00 for less than half an hour's dancing. The reason for closing the box office at 9.00PM was to enable clearing up and get everyone away before 10.00PM and therefore the 9.00PM closure would remain.

The meeting closed at approx. 8.00 PM .