



**Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of**  
**The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association**  
**London & South of England Branch**  
**held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2022**  
**Via - ZOOM**

**Present**

Walter MacGregor	President & Treasurer, Gatwick Caledonian Pipe Band
Jackie Allan	Chair, Essex Caledonian Pipe Band
Jonathan Rouse	Chief Steward, Reading Scottish Pipe Band
Dr R Ian Graham	Minute Secretary, Manchester Phoenix Pipe Band
Tom Curd	Pipe Major, Gatwick Caledonian Pipe Band
S. Jones	Pipe Major, Glenmoriston Pipe Band
Iona Scotson	Senior Pipe Major, Gordon's School
Gareth Utting	Pipe Major, Stowe Caledonian Pipe Band
Gillian Furlong	Essex Caledonian Pipe Band
Tom Randall	Pipe Sergeant, Essex Caledonian Pipe Band
Robbie Barrett	Trophy Convenor & Seaforth LRC
Steve Tidmarsh	Pipe Major, Milton Keynes Pipe Band

**Apologies for absence**

Irene Samson	Secretary, & Essex Caledonian Pipe Band
Peter McNaughton	Scots Guards Association (South) Pipe Band
George Davidson	Welsh Piping Society
Sally Morante	Instructor Air Cadets 19 Crawley Squadron RAF
Ron Paterson	Pipe Major, Reading Scottish Pipe Band
Ian Souter	Cambridge Caledonian Pipe Band

**Minutes**

nb: the numbers refer to the agenda.

**1) President's welcome**

The President (Walter MacGregor) welcomed everyone to the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, the 3<sup>rd</sup> on ZOOM. The Branch now holds all meetings on ZOOM.

Walter said that 'apathy and anno domini' appear to be the Branch's greatest enemies. The Branch would like more younger people to become involved.

Walter asked for a one minute silence in memory of those no longer with us.

**2) Apologies**

See 'apologies for absence' above.

**3) Minute of the previous Annual General Meeting dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were agreed and duly 'signed off' as a true record of that meeting. Proposer: W MacGregor, Seconder: J Rouse. Unanimous.

**4) Matters arising**

Ian Souter's point about on-line registration is now cleared as RSPBA's new website includes online forms.

## **5) Chairman's report**

See Appendix 1 for the Chairman's report.

The Chairman (Jackie Allan) hopes that 2023 will see more of the Branch's bands rebuilding their strength post-COVID. The Secretary has received expressions of interest from the following bands:-

- ❖ The Southern Jacobites
- ❖ The Irish Guards
- ❖ The Royal Tank Regiment

Jackie said that she would like a Vice-Chair, especially a non-player. Steve Jones (Glenmoriston) said he would ask around the non-players from his band.

## **6) RSPBA Director's Report**

The Director's Report is attached at Appendix 2

Walter reported that RSPBA had borrowed £150,000.00 from Bank of Scotland under HM Government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme which helped to keep RSPBA afloat during the pandemic. The loan is repayable over five years from July 2022.

A profit in excess of £100k for 2022 is anticipated but Walter advised it was too early to predict the profit figure for 2023. A more modest surplus is expected.

Walter also mentioned that he would like to see PDQB / SQA assessments for pipers and drummers being undertaken within the Branch.

Finally, Walter advised that he was required to retire as Director but would be happy to remain as Branch President. This was proposed by J. Allan, and seconded by Robbie Barratt

Jackie proposed a vote of thanks for all the work that Walter has done as RSPBA Director from 2011-2022. Unanimous.

## **7) Secretary's Report**

See Appendix 3 for the Secretary's report.

The Chairman (Jackie Allan) presented the Secretary's report on behalf of the Secretary who was unable to attend.

Appendix 2 (Secretary's Report) shows a list of bands who have paid their fees as at Nov 22.

Gatwick are asked to pay their RSPBA fees as soon as possible.

Gordon's School have paid their RSPBA fees, but this hasn't appeared on the RSPBA website yet. Iona said that she paid the fees about a month ago and has a receipt to that effect. Walter said he would look into it.

**Note: confirmed post AGM that both Gordons and Gatwick have paid**

Jackie said that it looks like the Branch has 'inherited' the Midland Branch. To be clarified.

## **8 Treasurer's report**

Walter reported that the branch made a small profit for 2022 and is quite healthy financially. He presented the accounts to the meeting which were very detailed and transparent. Tom Curd proposed acceptance of the accounts, which was seconded by Iona Scotson. Unanimous

## **9) Appointment of Honorary Auditor**

The Branch now has online banking and there are now two other officials with access to the bank accounts so that these may be scrutinised monthly providing full transparency. Walter therefore recommended that the Branch cease using an independent auditor. Proposed by Jonathan Rouse; seconded by Tom Curd. Unanimous.

Walter recommended that Branch fees for 2022/2023 be waived. Proposed by Jackie Allan and seconded by Robbie Barrett. Unanimous.

In addition to the Branch fees being waived Walter recommended that competition entry fees be increased by maximum 5%. Proposed by Steve Jones, seconded by Gareth Utting. Unanimous.

#### **10) Music Board Representative's report**

Iona reported that the scheme for the 'static start' for Grade 4 will be limited to Novice Juveniles and Major Contests. She also reported that the qualifiers for the World drumming competition will be done within Branches.

#### **11) Webmaster's report**

No report submitted but Jackie thanked Andy Inns, who was a very diligent webmaster, and quick to update the website with new information.

#### **12) Education Officer's report**

The proposed training day scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022 was not held due to lack of applicants. Gareth Utting said that £30.00 per applicant was too high. Steve Jones said that the location was too far away and would involve too much travel. Walter suggested using ZOOM, but Jackie said that whilst ZOOM was OK for meetings it wasn't suitable for training.

#### **13) Election of Branch Office Bearers**

There are vacancies for:-

- ❖ Vice-chair. (remains vacant)
- ❖ Assistant Treasurer. Note: Post meeting Gill Furlong volunteered
- ❖ RSPBA Director. Walter outlined the role of RSPBA Director. Jackie Allan volunteered. Proposed by W MacGregor, seconded Ian Graham. Unanimous.
- ❖ Minute Secretary. Elaine Gloss resigned. Gill Furlong volunteered. Proposed by Jackie Allan, and seconded by W MacGregor. Unanimous.
- ❖ Trophy Convenor. Robbie Barrett volunteered earlier in the year. This was unanimously ratified.
- ❖ Music Board Representative. Iona agreed to stay on. No objections
- ❖ Webmaster. Andy Inns agreed to stay on. No objections

#### **14) Branch activities and calendar**

The Chair (Jackie Allan) outlined proposed activities for 2023.

❖ Branch meetings:-

19<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Sunday) @18:00.

18<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023 (Thursdays) @20:00

15<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (Sunday) @18:00

26<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (Sunday) AGM. Is 14:00 still the best time or would 16:00 or 18:00 be better? The Chairman asked that band representatives contact her with preferences

**Action: all band representatives**

❖ **Competitions 2023:-**

26 <sup>th</sup> March	Indoor quartets & mini bands. <b>NOTE: changed to 23 Apr post AGM</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> May	Jim McGinn, indoor full band.
11 <sup>th</sup> June	Colchester
9 <sup>th</sup> July	Corby.
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> September	Chatsworth.
11 <sup>th</sup> November	On-line juveniles.

**15) RSPBA and Guidance on Safeguarding**

Guidelines on Safeguarding for vulnerable adults and children are on the RSPBA website. Jackie recommended all bands review these excellent templates, modify as needed for their own band eg by inserting the name of their local Safeguarding Officer, and adopt these guidelines. Cambridgeshire Caledonian website is an example of best practice. **Action: All bands**

**16 Any other competent business**

Walter welcomed Steve Tidmarsh from the Milton Keynes Pipe Band and asked if there was anything the Branch could do with a view to the band competing again. Steve said that the band had a shortage of drummers.

Gareth Utting from Stowe Caledonian Pipe Band has a couple of trainee pipers who need some experience of competing. Jackie said there wasn't much demand for on-line competitions for this sector but would follow up outside the meeting. **Action. J Allan**

**Date of next AGM**

26<sup>th</sup> November 2023

The meeting finished at 15:20

Dr. R. Ian Graham, Minute Secretary

Signed -----  
W. MacGregor, President

Signed -----  
J. Allan, Chairman

**Appendix 1**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR AGM NOVEMBER 2022**

It gives me enormous pleasure to be able to report on a full year of activities post-pandemic. It is a tribute to the commitment and enthusiasm of so many players that sixteen bands were signed up to the Branch this past year. To put this in context numbers have fallen across the whole of the UK over the past two years, and you would have seen this reflected in attendance at the World Pipe Band Championships, down by some 70 bands to 146 this summer.

Our Branch ran indoor competitions in April for quartets and minibands plus full bands at the Jim McGinn in May. There were 26 performances in April and 32 in May, plus the solo contests. At the outdoor contests in Colchester and Chatsworth there were 22 and 21 performances plus solos. In both cases this included quartet and minibands. This format gave bands a chance to perform whilst rebuilding their numbers. The year ended with an online Juvenile solo contest in November with 20 piping and 3 drumming entries.

My congratulations to those bands from our region who made the journey up to Scotland to compete in Major championships. Macanta formed up as a new Grade 3 band just prior to lockdown, so we had no chance to see them in action till this year. They entered four major championships this year, coming 2<sup>nd</sup> at the British, 4<sup>th</sup> at the Europeans, 7<sup>th</sup> at the Scottish and 17<sup>th</sup> at the Worlds. Reading Scottish came 3<sup>rd</sup> at the British but 17<sup>th</sup> at the Scottish and Scots Guards Association (South) came 12<sup>th</sup> at the Scottish Championships.

I am very grateful to past and present members of the Committee for their time and effort this year. The first half of the year was quite hard going with a contest to organise every month for three months, especially as we were all a bit rusty after the lockdown. I hope from your point of view it all appeared to go smoothly; this was only possible due to a lot of hard work behind the scenes and some nimble stewarding on the day. My very sincere thanks to our officials and helpers.

We will be asking for nominees for specific posts on the Branch Committee further down the agenda, but it would be very helpful to have a few additional volunteers to share the tasks and be able to cover for absences. As all meetings are now via Zoom, geographic location is no longer a consideration. It is always useful to get views from other bands, so I would encourage band representatives to attend our Branch meetings, whether or not you are on the committee.

I would like to say an especial thank you to Walter MacGregor who is required to step down as our Branch Director at the end of this year, as he reaches the RSPBA's retirement age. He has served as our Director since 2011, and has not only represented our Branch very ably at national level, he has also made a huge contribution to the overall governance of the RSPBA on the Finance and Marketing subcommittees. He has travelled frequently to Glasgow for Board meetings, and as a Director he has attended all the Major Championships each year. That is a significant commitment in time and effort. I am pleased to say that he has agreed to remain as our Branch President and Treasurer.

Three years ago there were four Branches in England: North West, North East, Midlands and ourselves. There is now just Northern England and ourselves. We have lost a few bands over the past two years, but we remain healthy and viable. We are here to encourage piping and drumming and to provide a supportive framework in which you, the bands can flourish. This year has seen a good return to normality, long may that continue and may I wish you all the best for next season.

JACKIE ALLAN

## **Appendix 2 Director's Report – AGM – 27 November 2022**

## Major Championships

As with the local contests 2022 saw the return of bands 'playing again on the grass' at the major championships after an absence of two years.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Bands</b>	<b>Performances</b>
<b>British</b>	Greenock	21 May	97	97
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Lurgan	11 June	68	68
<b>European</b>	Inverness	25 June	88	88
<b>Scottish</b>	Dumbarton	30 July	104	104
<b>World</b>	Glasgow	12 & 13 August	143	197

The statistics on band attendances and performances, however, demonstrate very clearly the adverse impact Covid pandemic has had on bands, nationally and internationally, in terms of membership numbers and finances.

The 'Worlds' normally attracts over 200 bands and the other majors, apart from the UK, attract between 100 and 120 bands.

It would be remiss of me if I didn't mention the success of Macanta Pipe Band's drum corps being crowned Grade 3B 'Champions of Champions' at Glasgow Green in August.

Whilst very disappointed to be runners up to Edradour, Pitlochry and Blair Atholl at the Worlds, their performances at the Scottish, British and Europeans saw the corps head the table by a very comfortable margin of 5 points over their Perthshire rivals. Macanta also to be congratulated on getting on the band prize list with a fourth place at the Europeans.

A very successful World Solo Drumming and Juvenile Tenor Drumming Championships were also held in Glasgow on 22 October.

As to the 2023 Season, the United Kingdom, Scottish and World Championships have already been secured. Inverclyde Council and LCC Events in Inverness decided not to sponsor their events next year. Discussions are taken place with a number of potential alternative sponsors for the British and European Championships and it is hoped that these will come to a successful conclusion very shortly.

## RSPBA Finances

### Year ended 31 December 2021

Owing to the Covid pandemic restrictions, your Association was unable once again to hold a major championship season. Total income and Expenditure for the year fell to £132k (2020: £223k) and £164k (2020: 215K) resulting in a loss of £32k (2020 Profit 8k) being incurred.

Without the HM Government support, through grants and JR Scheme payments, of £77k (2020: £49k) the financial outcome would have been even more bleak loss and, perhaps, placed the very existence of RSPBA in jeopardy.

To enable RSPBA to meet its cashflow needs going forward a loan of £150k was obtained in July 2021 under the Government sponsored Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. The loan is repayable by monthly instalments of £2.5k that commenced in July 2022.

As at the year end RSPBA had net assets of £510k ((2020: £540k) of which £220k (2020: £158k) comprised cash and bank balances.

### **Year ending 31 December 2022**

As a full major championship programme was held this year, it is anticipated that RSPBA will generate a profit of circa £106k on total income and expenditure of circa £603k and £497k respectively.

During the pandemic years many cost saving efficiencies were initiated, including holding meetings by Zoom and these along with control of other costs have contributed in now small way to the improved outcome projected for this year.

### **Year ending 31 December 2023**

It is hoped that a further improvement in RSPBA finances will be achieved next year but it is too early to provide any firm numbers on the outcome.

### **Education**

In December this year, almost 100 SQA / PDQB assessments for pipers, snare and tenor drummers will be held at three school and one band location in Scotland.

It would be good to see such assessments taking place within the Branch. Depending upon certificate level the assessment fee is circa £50 per candidate and, during the pandemic, assessments were undertaken remotely to save expense.

Depending upon demand, the Branch could consider making a contribution towards each assessment fee.

### **Personal**

The year is my last as a Director of RSPBA and I am delighted that Jackie Allan has agreed, if elected, to succeed me as your representative on the board of directors.

It has been a privilege to serve the Branch since 2003/04, firstly as a national councillor and latterly as a director from 2011 when RSPBA was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

I thank you for your support over these years and I am sure you will continue to give that support to my successor. I think I should add here, that if elected, I will continue to serve the Branch as President and Treasurer.

## **Appendix 3                      RSPBA L & S of E Branch AGM – 28 November 2021 Secretary's Report – Irene Samson**

### **1 Review of Branch Bands & Supporters - Nov 20/21/22**

<b>Band</b>	<b>Previous membership</b>	<b>Pipe Major</b>	<b>Branch Member 22/23</b>
Cambridgeshire Caledonian	2022	Callum Campbell	y
City of Plymouth	2022	Gordon Macaoidh	Y
Colchester Pipes & Drums	2022	Paul Young	y
Essex Caledonian	2022	John Young	y
Gatwick Caledonian	2022	Tom Curd	y
Glen Duart	2022	James Campbell	y
Glenmoriston	2022	Stephen Jones	Y
Gordons School	2020	Iona Scotson	y
Macanta	2021	Tony Doherty	y
Nottinghamshire P & D	Midlands	Pat Larkin	y
Pipes & Drums Scots Guards Assoc South	2022	Steven Duffy	Y
Reading Scottish	2022	Ron Paterson	y
The Stow Caledonian	2021	Gareth Utting	Y
Welsh Piping Society	2022	Chris Sullivan	Y

- Mailing List (past + present)

26 London & South of England Pipe Majors and 24 Band Secretaries/Treasurers ;

Midland Branch - 23 Contacts; Northern Branch - 17 Contacts

## 2 General Comments

In the 2022 season the Branch revived 2 indoor and 2 outdoor competitions with the exception of Corby Highland Gathering although the number of entries has been low. Quartet and Mini Band Competitions were a necessary feature to boost the number of performances and give all Bands the opportunity to compete.

- In excess of 364 emails were sent since AGM Nov 2021 – breakdown as follows:  
Mini Band & Quartet x 53 ; PM Jim McGinn x 40; Scotland in Colchester x 44;  
Chatsworth x 37; Meetings x 21; Training x 15
- Successful enrolment with NatWest Bank for Online Banking Access