ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

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RSCDS.ORG

Management Board and Committee Candidates

RSCDS AGM Elections 2026

Management Board
Candidates

Heather Cowan
Glasgow Branch, Scotland

Proposer: Margo Priestley
Seconder: Andrew McCausland

Management Board
Trustee

Having served on the Management Board for three years, I have the experience, commitment and enthusiasm to serve as a Trustee for a further term.

I want to support the Society's evolution for current and future generations, ensuring Scottish country dancing remains accessible to all ages and abilities, and promoting its happiness, health and wellbeing benefits, with safeguarding at its heart. I would also support effective branch engagement, strong governance and the promotion of Scottish country dancing as a fun, friendly and healthy activity worldwide.

With Scottish country dancing central to my family across three generations, I am a member of Glasgow Branch and volunteer at Society and branch events, including with other branches, and have benefited directly from RSCDS support through my teaching qualification, tutoring course and teaching at St Andrews Summer School. Teaching in Scotland and internationally, including Canada and Europe, has strengthened my understanding of the importance of Scottish dancing and music worldwide, and of supporting members wherever they are.

Alongside my passion for dance, I bring professional Civil Service experience in managing teams, assessing information, advising others and supporting decisions. I would bring integrity, diplomacy, a broad policy perspective and a collaborative approach to Board work.

Anna Underhill
Sydney Branch, Australia

Proposer: Debbie Baker
Seconder: Debbie Roxburgh

Management Board
Trustee

I have been involved in Scottish Country Dancing for over 20 years, qualifying as a teacher in 2022. I currently teach the Killara Class and a beginners and improvers class, mentor a Unit 4 candidate and support several Unit 1 candidates through a series of worksheets.

My commitment to the Society includes Treasurer of Sydney Branch (7 years), Treasurer of the Australian Teachers' Alliance, convenor of the 2023 Australian Winter School, and examination coordinator. I am delighted to be working with the same dedicated team and a co-convenor, towards the 50th Australian Winter School in 2028.

My professional career brings complementary skills in education, business, strategic planning, performance management and technology. I was Head Teacher mathematics and, with my husband, established a management consulting company in 1996. We developed proprietary software, and I managed the programming and testing team.

More recently, I have worked with the RSCDS Administration team on the JustGo implementation, contributing requirements, testing, bug reporting and user documentation.

I believe this combination of practical governance experience, financial expertise, technological understanding and a deep commitment to Scottish Country Dancing would enable me to make a valuable contribution to the RSCDS Management Committee and the Society's future.

Christine Jeffery

Oxfordshire Branch, England

Proposer: David Queen
Seconder: Jeremy Hill

Management Board
Trustee

I learned Scottish country dancing as a child, and it was an important part of my life until I left university, when family and work took priority, and I stopped dancing for a number of years before returning just over 10 years ago. Having to relearn steps, formations and dances as an adult gave me a real understanding of the challenges faced by people coming to dancing later in life and the importance of making classes welcoming and supportive.

Since returning, I qualified as an RSCDS teacher and teach classes in Oxfordshire. I have also served as Secretary and Chair of the Oxfordshire Branch, and am a member of serTA. I was co-opted onto the Management Board a year ago, and this has given me a deeper understanding of the Society's operations, governance and strategic challenges, areas where I can bring my skills and experience.

Alongside my dancing and teaching, I bring over 30 years working in HR, administration and operations in higher education and fundraising. My primary aim as a volunteer on the Management Board is to help ensure that through the RSCDS, Scottish country dancing, which has brought me such joy and friendships around the world continues to thrive.

Anders Gjörling

Stockholm Branch, Sweden

Proposer: Agne Hanson
Seconder: Elisabet Regner

Management Board
Trustee

Anders Gjörling first began dancing with the Stockholm Scottish Country Dance Club in 1969. At the time, he was also playing in the first Swedish pipe band, The Thistle Pipe Band. He met his wife, Susanne, a certified teacher in the dance group and was also active in the Thistles Pipe Bands Highland Sword Dance team.

In 1975, together with some other dancers, he formed the Stockholm Caledonian Dance Circle, which became an affiliated group of the RSCDS, and he served as its first chairman. A couple of years later, he formed the demonstration team The Caledonian Dancers.

In 1985, he became the Band President and Drum Major of the Caledonian Pipe Band, and in 1989 he took up the same position with the Pipes and Drums of the 1st Royal Engineers.

In his professional career, he has worked in the whisky business since 1995, most of that time as Scandinavian Brand Ambassador for Diageo.

In 2013, he joined the board of the Stockholm Branch of the RSCDS and has served as treasurer since then. During that time, he has been one of the organizers of the Branch's four weekend courses.

Loth Hammar

Stockholm Branch, Sweden

Proposer: Heather Cowan
Seconder: Anne Robertson

Management Board
Trustee

I have 30+ years of experience from senior positions in communications, public affairs, media management and public governance, in Sweden and internationally.

I want to contribute to the ongoing process of enhancing RSCDS' internal and external communications, building a strong and consistent brand and to help build a strong public presence and visibility world-wide.

I worked for the government of Sweden with the brand of Sweden, as a country, aimed towards international investors and visitors. I thus have a solid experience of building a complex brand relatable to different kinds of target audiences and markets.

I also bring experience of management level roles in multi-cultural global organisations working to enhance communication, bridge cultural gaps and establish mutual trust. I have also solid experience in running large-scale information campaigns, in organising large-scale fundraising and in crisis management.

I am passionate about dancing and have a profound belief that dance is a wonderful means for cultural expression, inspiring teamwork, improving physical health and fitness and for building communities. I run a historical dancing school in Sweden, and have plenty of experience in teaching historical dance, as well as organizing, funding, researching for and performing at historical dance events all over Europe.

It would be an honour and a privilege to serve as a member of the RSCDS Board, if my candidacy is accepted.

Education & Training Committee

Candidates

Anna Perbellini

Northern Italy Branch, Italy

Proposer: Sebastian Wanless
Seconder: James Stott

E&T Committee
Member

I first discovered Scottish Country Dancing as an exchange student in Glasgow, where I still join Branch activities whenever I can. Back in Italy, I joined the RSCDS Northern Italy Branch, where I now serve as treasurer. I pursued teacher training and gained the RSCDS Teacher Certificate. I have also been studying Scottish Step Dancing and, for the past five years, have taught classes and workshops with the RSCDS NIB.

As a dancer and teacher, I am committed to remaining an active learner, which also led me to join TAS. I value teaching that balances the social, technical and musical aspects of Scottish Country Dancing, while adapting to different learners and creating an encouraging learning environment.

As a member of the Education & Training Committee, I would be particularly interested in supporting accessible learning opportunities for members worldwide. My academic and professional career has also allowed me to develop useful skills in education and training. I hope to combine this experience with my perspective as a Scottish Country dancer and teacher, and to contribute practically to the development of dancers and teachers across the Society's growing international community.

Bálint Máté Lajtos

International Branch

Proposer: Lena Johansson
Seconder: Aksel Jessen

E&T Committee
Member

As a young dancer from Hungary who has recently been through the Unit 2&3 course, I wish to make teacher training more appealing and accessible to young dancers across the world. It is important to me that these people get the support they need and resources they can work from, so I look to help with providing them.

I would also aim to emphasise knowledge over titles, so that newly trained teachers are provided a skillset they can put to use in the "real world".

Deirdre MacCuish Bark

Toronto Branch, Canada

Proposer: Moira Korus
Seconder: Arlene Koteff

E&T Committee
Member

Having been fascinated by Scottish Country Dance since dancing with the Girl Guides as a teenager in Inverness, I am interested in helping the Society continue growing into the future ensuring that there are teachers for all dancer needs.

From a professional career prospective, I was a Primary teacher in Scotland for several years, before moving to Canada, later working in a Canadian Law office. I have danced in Canada for over 40 years. During the past 20 years, have served on RSCDS Education and Training, as well as Teachers Association (Canada) and been Toronto Branch Chair, as well as on other committees including Teacher Association, Scotland.

With 10 years as Exam Coordinator with Teachers Association, Canada, I gained experience from the changeover of the old exam system into the Unit system.. Since 2019, I have been involved with Core Training for Instructors, as Trainer, Course Leader and Moderator and am now involved in the development and implementation of the CTI system, and transition of the Units and CTI into a new Exam system.

As a Scot and a Canadian , I look at the enjoyable challenge of Scottish dance from both sides of the Atlantic.

Gillian Hardstone

Lockerbie Branch, Scotland

Proposer: Gail Inglis
Seconder: William Williamson

E&T Committee
Member

I started dancing in 1999 with RSCDS Lockerbie, where I currently serve as Branch Chair and teacher. I am also part of the teaching team at RSCDS Dumfries, and RSCDS Carlisle and Border.

I originally began teaching SCD and ceilidh as part of an EU project addressing social and cultural community building in remote rural areas. In 2014, I completed the RSCDS Teacher's Certificate. I teach RSCDS classes and workshops at various levels, from Beginner to General to Advanced, and have taught Day Schools and (non-RSCDS) residential weeks. I have an interest in CPD, and am a member of the Teachers Association of Scotland.

After a career involving accountancy, print media, and academia (teaching and research in the area of innovation and technology management), I would also draw on my experience of collaborative project-based team working; course design, delivery and assessment; and an eye for detail, report-writing, and proof-reading.

If elected to the Education & Training Committee, I would bring my experience, enthusiasm, and commitment to dancing and teaching SCD. I would particularly wish to continue the Committee's work on new arrangements for teacher training, dancing assessments, and CPD for dance teachers.

Jane Rose

Herts and Borders Branch, England

Proposer: Elizabeth J Conder
Seconder: Mervyn Short

E&T Committee
Member

I offer my experience of teaching Scottish Country Dancing which has been wide and varied, from teaching beginners at our local affiliated Club every week for over 16 years to teaching day and residential schools in the UK and abroad, including RSCDS Summer School. I have also tutored 30 candidates successfully covering all units and have recently been appointed an examiner.

The future of Scottish Country Dancing not only depends on encouraging new dancers but equally training new teachers/trainers to provide well-constructed, informative but enjoyable and fun classes. Getting people to "come back next week" and encouraging individuality in styles of teaching are vitally important and I aim to support this on E&T.

As I am no longer Chair of either serTA nor the recently formed Herts and Borders Branch, I have time to commit to the Education and Training Committee.

In my personal life I am married to Brian who is also a dancer and former IB treasurer. We have two children who learnt to dance through the Imperial Medal Tests and I am now enjoying showing our three grandsons how to dance.

We are a moving art and should be able to move-on with the times.

Sharon Barker

Calgary Branch, Canada

Proposer: Sheree Iffla
Seconder: Rebecca Blackhall-Peters

E&T Committee
Member

I have been sitting on the Education and Training Committee for the last year as a co-opted member, so have seen the amount of work and the commitment needed for this role. The committee has been working on several initiatives that, when released, will enhance the skills of both dancers and teachers and facilitate continuous learning for all.

I have been dancing for 50 years, teaching for over 30 years and tutoring for 10 years. I've worked on an E&T subcommittee in the early stages of creating the Core Training for Instructors syllabus. In my home branch, besides being a teacher and tutor, I have held many positions including president and teachers' representative to the branch board of directors. I'm also a past chairman of Teachers' Association (Canada). In my professional life, I am a Business Support Analyst in an accounting department, where my role is primarily to train and support the other accountants in my department.

I would love the opportunity to continue working on these projects and help bring them to the membership.

Membership Services Committee

Candidates

Duncan Brown

Exeter Branch, England

Proposer: Jeremy Hill
Seconder: Fiona Mackie

MS Committee
Convenor Elect

For more than 35 years, the RSCDS has been a big part of my life. What keeps me involved is not just the dancing, but the fun, friendship, and sense of community that Scottish country dancing creates. I care deeply about the Society and want both new and long standing members to feel welcome and inspired.

I've served on committees in York & North Humberside, Birmingham, and Exeter Branches, including three years as Chairman of Exeter. These roles have taught me how to work well with others, communicate clearly, and help shape a shared vision. I want to remove any perceived barriers to membership and ensure Branches have the support they need to grow and thrive locally.

I'm also passionate about the creative side of Scottish country dancing — the music and the dances themselves. I want the RSCDS to continue producing high quality new dances and recommended tunes that inspire teachers, musicians, and dancers. With a wide knowledge of Scottish dance music, and having played at Summer School several times, I know how essential good music is to good dancing. In my Branch I teach to recorded music, and I'm committed to ensuring suitable music, written and recorded, remains accessible to everyone.

Kristian Vestli

International Branch

Proposer: Janet Johnston
Seconder: Andrew Nolan

MS Committee
Member

After having danced for ten years, I feel I have the experience to give something back to the dancing community. I dance and teach regularly in a small group in Norway, somewhat on the outskirts of the dancing world, so I know how the RSCDS can help members who do not have a local branch but still dance every week. I believe an international view can be important in developing the membership services for all members.

I travel a lot for dancing, and having seen both small and large events, I hope to use that knowledge in the best way possible to service the branches and groups around the world. I have experience from organising dance events, and I have also been involved in other voluntary organisations and their events. I will bring my enthusiasm for Scottish Country Dance and the joy of helping others experiencing the hobby we all have in common.

Youth Services Committee

Candidates

Catriona Brown

Exeter Branch, England

Proposer: Helen Russell
Seconder: Grace Hill

YS Committee
Member

Scottish dancing is a big part of my life. I have grown up dancing with my family and the local Exeter Branch and then continued with RSCDS Cheltenham Branch whilst at university. However, what has inspired me has been the amazing opportunities to attend youth courses in St Andrews and New Zealand and then attending Spring Flings and RSCDS Summer school as I got older.

These events have made me realise how big our dancing community truly is. Seeing so many people enjoy dancing as much as I do has made me want to join Youth Services. If elected, I would like to focus on creating resources for branches to help them connect with universities and youth groups.

I am on Cheltenham Branch committee and am organising a Freshers Ceilidh, to encourage the link between university and the branch to attract new members. I am also on the Oxford 2027 Spring Fling committee.

I love Scottish dancing, the friends I have made and seeing the enjoyment it brings people. I feel I have the enthusiasm, passion and experience of organising events to allow me to be an asset to the Youth Services Committee and encourage our future generation of dancers.

Margaret Pritchard

Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles Branch, Scotland

Proposer: Maureen Buckley
Seconder: Olive Stillie

YS Committee
Member

I would like to share ideas and examples of good practice from my experiences working with young people. Two examples are the St Andrews Ceilidh events and the youth exchange trip to Plattling, Bavaria in 2024.

Through my involvement in Scottish Country Dancing, I have seen the positive impact that dancing, social activities and international exchanges can have on young people. I would like to help branches and groups develop opportunities that encourage participation, build confidence and create lasting connections.

My experience of working with schools, organising children's classes and developing youth activities would allow me to contribute practical ideas and support the continued growth of youth engagement within the RSCDS.

Emma Sellke

Central Germany Branch, Germany

Proposer: Grace Hill
Seconder: Gabor Turi

YS Committee
Convenor Elect

I would like to become Convenor Elect as I want to encourage more young people to dance, involve them in the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) and make Scottish Country Dancing (SCD) accessible to everyone. I grew up with SCD, fell in love with it young, and want others to have the same opportunities.

I have been a member of the Youth Services Committee since November 2024, with responsibility for the RSCDS Young Dancers social media. Through this role, I promote events and opportunities and help the RSCDS engage young dancers around the world.

I have a Bachelor's degree in Special Education and expect to complete my Master's degree in April 2027, qualifying me as a special education teacher. This has given me experience of working with children with different needs and making activities more inclusive.

I am also working towards my RSCDS teaching qualification, regularly teach SCD and have experience teaching children. I have organised SCD events, including an RSCDS Units 2 and 3 course. Through the German Red Cross, I help organise an International Peace Camp. These experiences have taught me to take responsibility, organise events, coordinate with others and work effectively as part of a team.

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