

The 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston, MA Inc.

Monday June 10, 2024, 7:45 PM

This is a hybrid meeting, in-person and on Zoom at the
Canadian American Club, 202 Arlington Street, Watertown, MA
Ten percent of the membership (23) will need to be present or logged in.

Free dancing for in-person attendees after the meeting. Non-members are welcome to attend the meeting and enjoy the dance afterwards.

MINUTES

“Thank you’s” given by Linda. Please consider volunteering. Gender neutral survey is out, please let us know if not yet received. Please respond by June 20.

1. Minutes of the SAGM, Nov. 6, 2023 (**Alena**)
Additions/corrections: Fix the spelling for Keira Hartstein in the Pinewoods report. Motioned and approved.
2. Election results (**Alena**)
 - a. 28 emailed ballots, 4 mailed ballots. Linda McJannet: Branch President for a 2-year term, Alena Taylor: Branch Secretary for a 2-year term, Robert McOwen and David Ward: Executive Committee (at large) for 3-year terms.
 - b. Since no candidate could be found to serve on the Nominating Committee, as provided for in the By-Laws, a member will be appointed to a one-year term until the next election.
3. Treasurer’s interim report (**Cathy**)
 - a. Please refer to the Statement of Activities – Interim Report.

We have completed eight months of our current fiscal year which ends September 30, 2024. As this is an interim report, keep in mind that certain programs, namely the Pinewoods sessions, are very much incomplete. No comparative information is provided because the timing of revenue coming in and expenses paid out can vary year over year.

Overall, I can say that as a small non-profit we are fiscally healthy. Times change and unavoidably certain expenses go up. At the same time, we are the beneficiaries of the generosity of our members.

Some highlights as of May 31st

Membership:

Overall, revenue increased 3.5% from a year ago and there was a 3.5% increase in members (233 vs 226). In FY24 Branch membership dues were increased on average by 4%. The average increase in subscription fees from HQ was 4.5%. Separately, the associate’s membership fee (those members whose primary branch is elsewhere) was increased to \$25 from \$20 (It has been years since the last increase.) Currently we have 17 associate members.

Fall Concert/Ceilidh:

This year we changed the venue and format, and with the help of a grant from NHScot, we cleared \$966. You'll hear more about the concert a little later.

Highland Ball Weekend:

Kudos to our Chairs! We ended in the black by \$659.

Pinewoods Sessions – Scottish & ESCape:

In process.

Other Expenses:

- Administrative - Overall, administrative expenses to date have increased about 7%. This includes an increase in Square Fees, purchase of new software, and an increase in tax prep fees.
- Insurance – we are not immune. Like the rest of society, our insurance premiums have increased too.
- Music/Event Subsidies – so far, we have paid out subsidies to 6 classes including Fairlee, VT, and Belfast, ME each who last held parties in 2019.

Our increase in net assets (that's non-profit speak for net income) on 5/31/24 is \$13,627. Remember, this is an interim report.

Finally, our cash in the bank is a healthy \$77,586. Of this balance \$40,000 is invested in a 1-year CD (due 2/1/2025) with an interest rate of 5%.

4. SDCEA report and class awards (**Kendra**)

a. New Dancer Awards

- Albany: Gerald Pottern, Sharon Pottern, Kristen Longstreet
- Bedford: Pat Moore
- Belfast: Sharon Bottesch
- Bucksport: Dorothy Corall, Karen Cullen, Mary Murray, Ann Ward
- Cambridge: Hana Lang, Nikki Lauranzano, Crispin Weinberg
- Chelmsford: Karen Cole, William Nash, Kimberly Tice
- Fairlee: Adwaita Bose, Kiran Mirpuri
- Greenland/Seacoast: Sherri Mancusi

b. General SDCEA Activities

- Back to full operation, including first scholarship dance since before pandemic.
2023 income (donations, dance, interest): \$2,672.33.
2023 Scholarships: \$2,861.93 (Pinewoods, ball, St. Andrews)

5. Membership (**Anne Johnson**)

a. New family registration online, form is being updated

b. Membership Count as of June 10, 2024

<u>Membership Type</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Persons</u>
Basic Single	78	78
Sustaining Single	15	15
Benefactor Single	10	10
Student/limited income Single	11	11
Youth (0-17) Single	2	2
Associate* Single	8	8
Basic Couple	39	78
Sustaining Couple	6	12
Benefactor Couple	5	10
Student/limited income Couple		
Youth (0-17) Couple		
Associate* Couple	5	10
Total	179	234

6. Mailing List (none received)

7. Boston Scottish Country Dancers (**Laura D.**)

- a. This year, the Boston Scottish Country Dancers performed at the Fall Ceilidh, the British Officers Club Burns Night, and NEFFA. We held one open rehearsal and gained one new member. Our rehearsals are now being held at Arts at the Armory in Somerville. We made the move from Lexington to make our rehearsals more accessible by public transit.
8. Teaching and Music Committee (**Debbie J.**)
- a. TMC, the Teaching and Music Committee, plans and organizes the teaching and music aspects of events that promote Scottish Country Dancing and music including the Highland Ball, Pinewoods Scottish sessions, and other workshops and events.

This past year's TMC members include Debbie Jarvis (as a musician and chair), Robert McOwen (as a teacher and vice-chair), Marc Hartstein (as a teacher), Jennifer Schoonover (as a teacher), Laurie Somario (as a member-at-large and secretary), Susie Petrov (as a musician), and new (returning) member this year MaryEllen Scannell (as a teacher). Ex-officio, non-voting members also include Catherine Miller as Pinewoods Music Director, Keira Hartstein as Pinewoods a co-chair, and Katarina Dutton as Exec Liaison.

As usual, we offered a few events at NEFFA this past April. Howard Lasnik led a Scottish Country Dance workshop, Charles Liu led a workshop for beginners, and Karen Sollins led a workshop for families. The Boston Scottish Dancers performed in the Sunday dance performances as they have for many years.

Our Highland Ball, co-chaired by MaryEllen Scannell and Sharon Gilmour, was a success with reports of an excellent program and great energy. We'd like to thank MaryEllen and Sharon for putting together a fantastic weekend.

Our next big event is Scottish Sessions 1 and 2 at Pinewoods, co-chaired this year and next by Marc and Keira Hartstein. This year we are thrilled to welcome back David and Catherine Queen from Scotland to our teaching staff, with David teaching SCD and highland and Catherine focusing on Step. We are excited to welcome first-time Pinewoods teacher Jeanne Moody from California as well as returning teacher Jody Kulas from Canada. Back by popular demand, Jennifer Schoonover will again teach her conditioning class, and Roberta Lasnik will teach her well-loved yoga for dancers. This year's Music Director is Catherine Miller, and she has lined up a stellar roster of players including fiddlers Katie McNally, Peter Macfarlane and James McQueen and Calum Pasqua for sessions 1 and 2 respectively. Dave Wiesler and Neil Pearlman join on piano, and pipers Stephen Thomforde and Nate Silva join for sessions 1 and 2, respectively. This year, we are also trying something new. Fiddler Leland Martin joins the music staff as session leader, taking the onus of starting sessions off of otherwise engaged or exhausted staff musicians and campers. Sessions are scheduled daily, and Leland will also start sessions at the afterparties.

We, along with the Executive Committee, are also very interested in hearing from our membership as we continue to navigate the delicate but important issue of terminology. We held a gender-neutral terminology workshop, led by Susie Petrov, which was well attended. We truly do want to include members in the discussion on gender and terminology. We want to be conscious of changing with the times; we want all dancers to feel welcomed, comfortable, respected. We have recently emailed a survey to learn your thoughts on the matter. Speaking as chair of the committee: I know there are many voices in this community, and I want to hear them all. I want to represent all our dancers, regardless of age, gender (or lack thereof), or volume of voice.

Again, I'd like to thank all members of the committee for donating their time to help ensure the success of our branch and its events.

Submitted respectfully, Debbie Jarvis, TMC Chair Boston Branch of the RSCDS

9. Tartan Times (**Linda & Nikki**)

- a. Most recent issue was just published. Having fun! Please contribute and provide feedback. Next issue is focused on new dancers and ESCape. Educational, inspirational, celebratory journal is the goal.

10. Website (**Meyer**)

- a. There have been a few major changes to the organization and content of the website this past year. We have put the Tartan Times online. This years and last year's issues are listed on the page itself, with a link to older issues, and those are stored in an archive going back to 2014.
 - b. The second content change has been inclusion of the membership directory. Because this contains potentially sensitive information such as email addresses and phone numbers, the site now uses a secure URL (https://), and all pages going from the site to you are encrypted.
 - c. These two changes have necessitated a change in the organization of the site itself. Prior to this, the members only page, which is password-protected, didn't contain any sensitive information (we hadn't yet included the directory); what it did contain didn't require secure access.
 - d. Now, the top-level tab is called Branch Resources, and it in turn contains a tab for Branch Documents and one for Members Only. Branch Documents, which is open to the public, contains minutes of executive committee meetings, minutes of AGMs and SAGMs, By-Laws, Policies and Procedures, etc. These are all visible to the general public. The second tab, Members Only, is password-protected and contains the membership directory and musicians list, each of which contain names and contact information.
 - e. The old Subscribe tab, used for people who are not members to sign up for our general Branch informational mailings, has been expanded and renamed Keep In Touch. This tab contains Subscribe, and Newsletter (so-called because people may not know that the Tartan Times is a newsletter). The Newsletter tab, in turn, contains two years' worth of Tartan Times issues plus a link to the archive of older issues.
 - f. We continue to send out information about the Branch (such as save-the-date announcements, fliers for events, and reminders for deadlines to apply for an event). These are made available through an RSS feed to which people can subscribe via an external RSS reader, and then sent by email to both the site informational mailing list and the membership list. Everything goes to both lists except membership-specific announcements such as this meeting. We have no ability to track how many people use RSS and pull information from our news feed, but we do know that 227 people are currently on the general information mailing list and 204 on the members mailing list. That means each announcement we send out reaches approximately 425 people (there are 5 or 6 email addresses which are on both lists).
 - g. Site statistics show that we are delivering approximately 1000 pages per day. The largest category, by both number of pages and amount of data, is for the Pinewoods photo gallery. Next is for Pinewoods Scottish sessions. The actual number of pages must be taken with a grain of salt, since some of those requests come from search engine bots and other automated agents.
- Respectfully submitted, Meyer Billmers, for the webmasters

11. Calendar (**Jeremy**)

- a. If you send something to calendar@rscds.org, Jeremy will put it on the website. Please send flyers or events to Jeremy. Sometimes non branch Scottish events will also be posted as well.

12. Equipment (no report)

13. Archives (seems to be on the way out...website contains historical reports and data)

14. Bookstore (**Laurie**)

- a. Available by email bookstore@rscds.org and will be at Pinewoods

15. Pinewoods Camp, Inc. (**Bruce**)

- a. Good evening, my name is Bruce Mabbott and I am the RSCDS representative to the Pinewoods Board of Directors.

We are off to a great start this year at Pinewoods. We have had two weekend sessions already. We welcomed La Nuestra Tango to camp for the first time, and then this past weekend we were delighted to welcome back the Lavender Folk and Country dancers.

Our Executive Director, Chris Jacobs, has been very busy getting everything ready for the summer and is especially looking forward to seeing the Scots in July. We had two great work weekends with very good attendance, especially the Memorial Day weekend. The Fall work weekend is scheduled for September 14, 15. We hope you can make it! It is a great opportunity to enjoy the beauty of camp for free!

We had a quiet winter overall, which is always welcome.

Recently completed projects include more accessible routes around camp, a new handrail at the concrete steps outside the camphouse, new epoxy floors in Amsterdam, and graded paths with better drainage. The roof and structure repairs at Hands Across are very close to completion. Unfortunately, the bathroom project behind Hands Across suffered some bureaucratic delays in the spring. Construction is now underway, and foundations are being poured this week. However, we are going to stop major construction until the fall as we don't want to impact sessions over the summer. So, it will not be ready this summer.

A new map of the camp has been drawn! We are hoping that this will be useful for wayfinding around camp. We are also going to be using it to help with infrastructure and facilities planning at camp. We are looking for feedback from users, so please check it out when you are at camp!

Disease continues to ravage the beech trees at camp. More and more of them are succumbing and we are having to allocate resources to being more proactive to avoid limb damage from diseased trees. We continue to be worried about the changing climate of camp that has seen more tree diseases, as well as more invasive species.

Our Centennial is coming up next year. Several projects are underway as well as events to celebrate. Stay tuned the closer we get!

As ever Pinewoods is also incredibly grateful for the generosity of the Scots.

16. Fall Concert 2023 (**Linda**)

- a. Big success! Half the people got up to dance at intermission, made a large circle around the audience, and everyone had a blast. Moving to the Arts at the Armory was an excellent idea. This coming year Nov 24th will be the weekend before Thanksgiving with the fiddle group – “Scottish Fish”.

17. Pinewoods Benefit Ball 2023 (**Linda**)

- a. Success! Very fun, at Salem Old Town Hall, excellent music.

18. Highland Ball 2024 (**MaryEllen**)

- a. The Boston Highland Ball Weekend 2024 was brought to you by Sharon Gilmour, MaryEllen Scannell, & Cathy Crabtree. This year Cathy was willing to receive payments

directly and track all incoming information on attendees. It worked out well to have all payments go directly to the branch treasurer.

- b. Sharon & I started planning soon after the 2023 ball. Our plans included locating a venue for the Welcome Dance with AC, inviting Ball MCs who had done it before and could provide clear gender-neutral instructions, & working on a program of dances known to branch members.
- c. With help from TMC & pricing approval from Exec committee, we were able to get out applications & dance instructions to the branch and to an extensive email list of teachers & class contacts from outside the branch.
- d. Experienced MCs were invited & approved by TMC. Susie Long (Welcome Dance MC,) Keira Hartstein, Ted Randolph, & Beth Birdsall (Ball MCs,) and Jen Schoonover (Brunch MC.) Each MC accepted our instructions to provide clear instruction using gender neutral terms and they all did a fantastic job. Their directions were all clear & well received. As we had hoped, this has served to help the branch going forward with a different terminology that respects all who dance Scottish.
- e. The Welcome Dance was hosted by the North Chelmsford class. They were able to secure the venue at substantial savings as well as decorate & prepare the hall, & refreshments. Energetic & exciting music was provided by Torrent who seemed to be having as much fun as the dancers. They also played for the Brunch on Sunday. We appreciate all the class did to make the dance a success. A total of 53 happy dancers attended.
- f. Many people made major contributions to the success of the Saturday Ball. Tom Pixton was a great help with contacting & organizing musicians. Our special guest, Mara Shea, with Catherine Miller, Beth Murray, Tom Pixton, & Stephen Thomforde provided great tunes & amazing music enjoyed by all. Hannah McArdle created beautiful Mackintosh themed banners & decorations. Cathy Fahey managed the liquid refreshments offered at the reception catered by Ferreira Foods. The caterer worked with us to present good food, respecting our dietary requirements, as well as suggesting ways to save on expenses. It is only with the help of many more volunteers that all went smoothly at the Ball. You all have our gratitude. A total of 102 dancers enjoyed the ball this year. Cathy Crabtree reports the Highland Ball Weekend 2024 not only stayed on budget but realized \$659.23 in net income.
- g. Keira & Marc Hartstein generously hosted the Brunch. Lots of delicious food appeared and we had a beautiful day dancing out of doors. Once again it was Torrent who played for the last bit of weekend dancing with Jen Schoonover as MC.
- h. Sharon & I received many comments from dancers that led us to know we had done our job & reached our goals for the 2024 ball. Most of all, comments about being able to enjoy dances known to them with confidence (while also enjoying the great music & sociability.)

Here is one of the messages we received that says it all.

I especially enjoyed the fact that the dance program was approachable. At some past balls, I have felt like I was trapped in that nightmare where you need to take a final exam in a class that you didn't know you were supposed to be attending...the dances were so challenging that I found it very stressful. This year it was easy to relax and have fun dancing!

Respectfully submitted, MaryEllen Scannell & Sharon Gilmour

19. Autumn Gathering (November 1-3, 2024, delegates invited) in Edinburgh

- a. If you'd like to go, we'd love to hear from you.

20. Branch Class reports

Great Barrington, MA

Ted Randolph- Attendance continues to be a big concern, and class is canceled too often. The class is taking a summer break this year, and is scheming to come back in the fall as a beginner class with pre-registration required. However, non-beginners would be able to attend on a drop-

in basis. Details are in process. Ted Randolph also taught a 6-week Beginners' Class at a local community center and dancers from all three of the classes listed here were supportive of this class, attending sessions and the class party.

Albany, NY

Lois New- The class continues to thrive both in-person and in a subsequent hybrid format on Sunday evenings. A dedicated coalition of teachers meet weekly to plan the hybrid portion of the Sunday program, and take turns teaching the hybrid class. The average in-person attendance is about 8-10 dancers, while the number calling in for the hybrid session ranges from 25-35. The class hosted a Hogmanay Party, a Spring Fling Teacher Candidate Workshop (live music by Susie Petrov and Peter Macfarlane) and Dance (featuring Boston Ball dances) in March, and presented some participation dances at a Celtic Weekend sponsored by another group. In addition to the Teachers' Workshop, Lois New has worked tirelessly mentoring, both officially and unofficially, several teacher candidates outside the workshop environment.

Greenland, NH

The Greenland class began its season in September after the usual summer hiatus. We continue to struggle to have a quorum for class. An added twist this year has been that we have to reserve the hall where we meet for a month at a time and prepay. If, at the last minute, someone is ill or injured, resulting in not enough to dance and cancellation of class, we lose the rent we have paid. We have considered changing venues, but so far have not come up with anything suitable. Thanks go to Sherri Mancusi, who set up a Facebook page for us this year, though it has yet to attract new members. We will, again, be taking the summer off and then redouble our efforts to increase class membership in the late summer and early fall. Laurie Stevens is the class teacher, Alan and Lillian Wilson are the keepers of the class music collection, and Merrill Henderson administers the class.

Respectfully submitted, Merrill Henderson

Nashua, NH

The Nashua Class continues to meet nearly every week since we resumed classes after the Great Pandemic. However, as usual, we will take the month of July off. The teaching is shared between Susie Long and me.

I still send out a "headcount" e-mail on Mondays to the class mailing list asking whether one "plans to attend" on that Wednesday. Also, we sometimes cancel if it will be too hot, since the building has no A/C, or for winter weather.

Dancers from outside our group are more than welcome, but they should be sure to contact me before making the trip in case that week's class has been cancelled. Also, because we're the only activity in the church hall on Wednesdays, I lock the outside door after everyone I know is coming has arrived.

Loren Wright, for the Nashua Class

Kennebunk, ME

The Kennebunk class has been dancing in their traditional space in the Community House in Kennebunkport since September. We generally have 6-10 dancers each week. These days it is sometimes a struggle to have enough to dance in class. We benefit from the frequent participation of some of the members of the Greenland, NH, class. We enjoyed the influx of three new dancers who began in April. They attended class regularly and pitched in to help and dance at our annual party. Merrill Henderson teaches the class, with assistance most weeks from Anne Johnson. Anne also fills in when Merrill is away.

The Downeast Fling party was held on Saturday, June 8, with live music provided by Ed and Neil Pearlman. We are grateful to Joanne Hulsey and Peter Sentner who, once again, hosted a potluck supper before the dance and to Thom Howe who brought and operated the Branch sound system. We appreciated the attendance of folks who came from out of state, though we always wish there were more. Our class will be on break through the summer until September.

Respectfully submitted, Merrill Henderson

Belfast, ME

Have a few newer people, and successful class.

Brunswick, ME

The Brunswick, Maine class meets on Thursdays. We have a half hour session at 6:00 for newer people or those who want to review, then begin regular class at 6:30. We met as a class from the Thursday after Labor Day until mid-June when we will take a summer break.

We are delighted that Anne Johnson has been helping teach our class.

A group of us danced at the Maine Highland Games last August and led a Scottish Country Dance Workshop and a Ceilidh "Try-It"

Our plans have been made for our Annual Fall Dance Party. The Dance will be Saturday, October 19, which is the Saturday after the Columbus Day Weekend. We will be at the Topsham Grange Hall, with the start time for dancing at 7:00 making it easier for people to travel home at an earlier time. There will be a pot luck beforehand. Musicians will be Katie McNally and Beth Murray.

Respectfully submitted, Patti Tillotson Class Instructor

Bucksport, ME

Doing really well. Dedicated group of new, enthusiastic dancers, often more than 1 set.

Fairlee, VT

Successful Spring Fling in May. Beautiful music. Now planning on dancing throughout the year.

Cambridge, MA

Alex Bowers – We are happy to report that Cambridge Class has danced in person throughout the last year with three or four sets of dancers each Monday evening. We have been pleased to welcome many newer dancers. Occasionally, the Essentials class has had more dancers than the Experienced Class! We have continued with mandatory masks on the first Monday of the month and optional the rest of the month. For most of the year we livestreamed the end-of-the-month double social hour and parties on Zoom. However, the number of Zoom participants has been declining so going forward we will only livestream parties and special events.

We've enjoyed some great teaching and wonderful live music, as well as some awesome dance parties, including our Holiday party and Burns Night celebration. I would like to thank all the teachers and musicians as well as our tech support group, including Charles Liu, John Crabtree, Sue Chari, Lance Ramshaw, and Kyle MacKenzie. Last, but not least, I would like to thank the Cambridge Class Committee for all their hard work over the last 12 months.

The committee for the upcoming year includes Alex Bowers as President, Judy Reynolds Shaw as Secretary, Hanne Eisenfeld as Treasurer, Lance Ramshaw as Musician Coordinator, Charles Liu as Teacher Coordinator, John Crabtree as Leader of the Sound Crew, and Lucinda Brandt, Kat Dutton, and Jen Schoonover as Members at Large. Chris Gallagher is stepping down from the committee. We thank her for all her contributions, not least greeting dancers at the admissions table and scooping ice cream at our End-of-Season party.

On June 24th we will hold our End-of-Season party and Ice Cream Social (in-persona and on Zoom). Lance Ramshaw, MC, has put together a great program of dances and we will dance to live music by Susie Petrov and friends. Please join us and enjoy the fun and ice cream treats (masks optional)!

We will take a break during Pinewoods ESCape and Scottish Sessions. We will resume dancing on Monday July 15th with a post-Pinewoods special!

Respectfully submitted, Alex Bowers, Cambridge Class, President

Bedford, MA

The class is held weekly on Tuesdays from 12.30-2pm in the Bedford Senior Center (COA). Class will continue in this air-conditioned space through the summer, including July. Dancers at any level are welcome.

It is a small class with usual attendance of 8-10 dancers. Recent innovations are live music once a month, class specifically oriented to beginners on the first Tuesday of the month, and on-line info available. There is no charge, but many class members give a donation, to be distributed to various charities.

Classes are taught by Heather Day with occasional sessions by guest teachers from the area. Many classes include dances on up-coming party programs, allowing several members to feel more comfortable at those parties.

Respectfully submitted, Heather Day

Salem, MA

Meeting every other week until April. Created 6-week new dance program before the Highland Ball which was highly successful. Between 1 and 2 sets. At least 4 new dancers joined the Salem Arts Festival dance demonstration/try-it. Working on plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Salem Class.

Stow, MA

No report.

Chelmsford, MA

The Chelmsford class meets every first Friday of the month in the Chelmsford Community Center at North Town Hall in North Chelmsford. We continue to have two sets of three to four pairs of dancers usually with several dancers who have done little to no Scottish Country dancing before. We continue to be a mixed skills level class that is open and welcoming to all interested dancers.

We are thrilled to have musicians play for classes and are very appreciative to have so many skilled local musicians willing to come play for the class.

To pay musicians, we applied for and received a Chelmsford Cultural Council grant. This will allow us to have a musician play for the class while keeping the requested admission donation low.

We are planning a class party for August 10, 2024, 3pm.

While masks are not required, we welcome dancers using them to protect themselves or family members. Vaccines are encouraged, but we are not requiring proof of vaccination.

We were asked to host the Welcome Dance for the Highland Ball weekend - several branch members and other visitors attended who had not come to the hall before and they seemed to be pleased with our dancing home; thank you to MaryEllen and Sharon for including us in this premiere Branch event.

Many thanks to the village that keeps the class up and running – the many talented musicians, Susie Long for being our class teacher and the many varied dancers that dance with us on first Fridays.

Respectfully submitted, Class Coordinators Rebecca Gore and John Salyards

Northampton, MA

Ilene Goldstein- The class meets from September through June. Their numbers fluctuate between 3 and 6-7 couples; report no cancellations due to attendance. Many of their dancers attend class parties and the Boston Ball. Four from their class attended the class party that concluded.

21. Other Business (None)

Meeting Adjourned 9:03pm