

**The Minutes of the meeting of the Lothian & Borders Branch of
The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association
On Sunday 29th November 2020**

J. Hughes, President	Peoples Ford Boghall & Bathgate Caledonia
L.A. Riad, Treasurer	Peoples Ford Boghall & Bathgate Caledonia
P. Hazzard, Minute Secretary	City of Edinburgh
S. Starr	Peebles Ex-Servicemen's
W. Dalziel	Wallacestone & District
V. McMorran	Glencorse
S. McQuillan, Music Board	Peoples Ford Boghall & Bathgate Caledonia
E. Scott	Wallacestone & District
I. Simpson, Music Board	George Watson's College Novice Juvenile A + B
M. Binder, Magazine Reporter	Royal High
B. Watt, Trophy Convenor	Peoples Ford Boghall and Bathgate Caledonia
J. McKenna	Scottish Fire & Rescue
M. Watters	Scottish Fire & Rescue
M. Cameron	Cameron & District
C. Reid	Police Scotland Fife
D. McDermot	George Herriot School
M. Brown-Scott, Director	Scottish Fire & Rescue
T. Thomson	Peoples Ford Boghall and Bathgate Caledonia
G. Dyet	Peoples Ford Boghall and Bathgate Caledonia
L. Moore	Preston Lodge High School
P. White	City of Edinburgh

Apologies: S. Orr RVM, K. Reid MM, W. McIntyre, M. Reilly

Welcome

As the Branch Chairman was unable to attend due to work commitments, the Branch President took the chair and welcomed everyone to the 80th Annual General Meeting.

Minutes

The Minutes of the 2019 AGM Proposed by Wallacestone & District and seconded by Police Scotland Fife

Chairman's Report

Well, what a year 2020 has turned out to be. We have been presented with challenges unlike anything we have had before in our 90-year history. As we are all very much aware these are unprecedented times, and the Board are doing all they can to steer the Association through these challenges.

A series of decisions were taken by the Board, in association with the relevant promoters, regarding the 5 major championships. The decision to cancel each of the championships were taken as timeously as possible, as the picture was changing on a daily basis. However, it was felt that the safety of all involved was of primary importance to the Association and its partners, so as the global pandemic continued, it became necessary to cancel all five major championships.

As the year continued, and following a great deal of work from the WSD Sub Group of the Music Board to look at alternative options, it became clear that the World Solo Drumming and

International Juvenile Tenor Drumming Championships would also have to join the list of cancelled events. The venue became unavailable to us and the continued restrictions on indoor events made it impossible to find a suitable replacement.

At this point in time, we are still hopeful of a season of some sort next year, but at present we do not yet know what that will look like. However, as in previous years, we need to start preparing now for the coming season. We have already had discussions with some of our current promoters and are arranging to speak to the remainder shortly. They too have their challenges as it is likely that there will still be restrictions in place for mass gatherings next year, as well as a number of specific and detailed guidelines that will need to be followed.

Therefore, in order to be prepared for some of these challenges, we have pulled together a working group under the RSPBA Vice Chairman, Paul Brown, to look at what we might be able to do in 2021 and beyond. This working group is made up from all of the standing committees across the Association, so Adjudicators, Music Board, Directors, and Promoters. It is hoped that we can have some direct input from the Scottish Government through Event Scotland as they already have input to a number of our major championships.

There is no doubt that this has been a difficult year for many, if not all of us, and it looks like it's not over yet. The loss of our five Major Championships, and the restrictions imposed because of Covid-19 has clearly had a major effect on the financial position of the Association. We have managed to keep going by attracting some funding and by tightly managing our costs, including putting the office staff on Furlough since 1st April.

Throughout the period from 1st April, we still needed to meet the general overheads and running costs, as well as the balance of staff costs which fell outside the furlough scheme, and we will see these costs increase further, as we bring the staff back, albeit on a part time basis.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid 19 restrictions, the Summer School Principal along with the Board of Directors took the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 RSPBA Summer School. This was in consideration of the forecast given by the Scottish Government regarding the management of public meetings, in that there will be a continued level of social distancing required for some time to come, essentially precludes a live Summer School event being managed.

We have recently confirmed that our exam assessments will go ahead in December this year. The practical component of the exams will have to be done online, and the assessors are being updated on how that process will work.

The Board have started the process of considering a refresh of the existing website. A request for an Expression of Interest from anyone who wished to be considered was posted on the website and several enquiries were received. These submissions have been reviewed and a number have been taken forward and a Request for Proposal has been issued to the leading contenders, all of which were invited to attend a briefing session ahead of their submission. We await the outcome of the review of the proposals.

In August, the Board received notification that the CEO will be retiring at the end of November 2020, but has agreed to remain within the organisation on a part time basis to assist with the transition.

Ian has intimated to the Board that the role of the CEO has changed substantially over the years, and especially since the move to a Company Limited by Guarantee, which has necessitated the Board of Directors to have more active involvement in the running of the organisation due to the Corporate Responsibility that comes with being a Company Director.

So as a Board we need to consider what is required, and just as importantly when it is required. If we're going to have a full season next year, then we'd probably need someone in post by March 2021. However, until we have some degree of clarity on this position, the financial impact of recruiting a senior member of staff needs to be considered.

In conclusion can I commend the Branch, it's Officials, and its member bands, for the support they give the Association, and I look forward to their continued engagement in the coming year. Let's work together and look forward to a contest season in 2021, in some form or other.

Secretary Report

Nothing to report

Treasurer's report:

The treasurer gave her report and details are available by request.

Accounts adopted by Peoples Ford Boghall and Bathgate Caledonia and Seconded by Scottish Fire and Rescue.

Directors report:

Nothing to report since last meeting.

J. Hughes advised that this year had been a financial challenge due to losing all five majors. All Staff are on Furlough and will remain so until March 2021.

The Chief Executive is due to retire in November, but has agreed to stay on a part time basis to ensure a smooth transition.

Discussions have started with the main sponsors for the Majors in 2021. Vice Chair Paul Brown has started running a sub-committee

Music Board Report

The Music Board continued to meet during 2020 despite the cancellation of the season.

During this time, we reviewed our structure and projects whilst retaining the focus on delivering improved outcomes for our members and bands.

Throughout the year we have:

- Created a new Format Group to ensure we deliver more effectively our obligations in line with rule 2.16. Until formation, there were no named persons and we wanted to address this like the Grading Group by having named individuals and creating accountability.
- Prepared a term of reference following a request from the BOD which has now been approved. This ensures we have a working methodology and a clear approach to managing projects in line with other parts of the Association. This also ensures that the various stakeholder groups are involved along the way.
- The Competition Format guide continues to be updated and will include information on Solos as well as Band Competitions.
- The Format Group has been increased in membership size with 6 live projects- Grade 1 World Championship development, G4B/NJB, 2021 Competition modelling, online development and showcase events, Format Guide and Safeguarding.

- The World Solo Drumming event for 2021 will include an Adult section for Tenor Drumming, 6 prizes are to be awarded across all sections including Juvenile and has a new title - World Solo Tenor Drumming Championship. The International qualifiers for snare drummers are also being reviewed for possible expansion. The draw process is being reviewed to align all sections with the Adult final format.
- We now have an online model for events- Development & Showcase. This follows the research completed where traditional online models have several issues.
 - a. Safeguarding of individuals is paramount, especially young people where video footage requires special arrangements for appropriate handling.
 - b. How to ensure a level playing field (Better recording equipment can make a player sound better).
 - c. Audio and Video footage needs validated where several attempts can be made – adding to the non-level playing field.

The MB, PB College along with some Directors and an APMB representative input to the new and exciting approach. The MB will continue to review the situation, meantime the alternative model is the recommend approach which has several benefits aligned to education resources, PDQB levels with feedback, player development and a world's first in style and content.

- MB Format Group are working on models for the 2021 season subject to COVID-19 restrictions. Named "Project 21" the focus is on plans to minimise risks to help bands perform safely at competitions in 2021. Practice Venues, Coach Travel, Competition venue, Numbers of bands/personnel/spectators, March Past will also be examined and Risk Assessed.
- The Vice Chairman has also set up a group to ensure all standing committees have an overview with representatives from the BOD, MB, APMB etc.
- Following a financial donation from a benefactor to the Music Board, the RSPBA have purchased a 12-month license to utilise an online survey tool. This was used to consult with NJB/Grade 4B band on the – Static Start project. This project will now proceed to a pilot phase for the 2021 season. It is proposed to pilot at the 2021 European Championship, the All Ireland and the minor competitions the weekend before- all subject to any COVID-19 restrictions.
- The Grade 1 Worlds Format project will move to a follow up meeting with a further Conference Call with PM & LD- working in smaller Groups. Several items will be discussed including; MSR Tunes, Qualification, Draws, Band Formation, Playing Criteria/timings and more.
- Grading activity has been light to date with few higher to lower transfers although MB did grade a band by request.
- The playing requirements for 2021 have been published and to maintain the rotational system, these will remain as the 2020 season. Easements to these requirements maybe be required if Bands experience restricted practise arrangements due to COVID-19.

Trophy Convenor Report

Nothing to Report

Elections

The following positions were unanimously accepted: -

President	John Hughes
Chair Person	Stewart Orr
Director	Stewart Orr
Secretary	Peter Hazzard
Minutes Secretary	Susan Starr
Committee	Wilma Dalziel
	Kevin Reid
	Christine Reid
PBC Geographical Representative	Lee Moore

The following position was proposed by George Watsons College, Seconded by Wallacestone & District and accepted

Vice Chair	Malcom Scott Brown
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Honoria

No proposals for change, agreed to remain the same as 2020.

Book of Eminence

There are some entries required to be included, J. Hughes and M. Binder to take this forward.

Branch Fees

2019/2020 Branch Fees to be carried forward to 2020/2021.

L. Moore suggested that fund be set up to assist the bands in purchasing equipment that will assist for band practises to re-commence. There will be an email sent to all Branch Bands, advising of this and that donations to this fund are welcome.

Auditors

J. Hughes suggested that a Director and a Committee Member take on this role. M Brown Scott and Margaret Watters have agreed to take on this process.

Meeting Closed 15.55pm