

**Scotland's Cultural Future, 25 years from now.....
A submission from the Laurencekirk Social Traditional Dance Group.**

The Laurencekirk group have been holding weekly Scottish dance classes on Winter evenings for over six years. The group has no formal membership and is entirely self financing, with around 20 - 28 people (ages 34 - 72 years) regularly attending the class. The major driving force behind the group is our founder, Marion Robson, who organises the dances to be taught, selects suitable music and teaches us with unfailing good humour. Marion also organises regular dance evenings where we can dance the dances we have learnt and also enjoy a social evening within our community.

As a group the benefits to us are:

- 1: The enjoyment and fun we have as a community, meeting and mixing across all social groups, in addition to the obvious benefits for our physical and mental wellbeing. We feel dancing is something that can be enjoyed by all ages and for all one's life.
- 2: To enjoy and keep alive the long tradition of social dancing that has existed in Scotland for centuries and to ensure that the dances themselves with their accompanying music continue to be learnt and appreciated.

We were introduced to Scottish dancing at primary school, where we learnt basic dances such as the Gay Gordons; the Dashing White Sergeant; Strip the Willow and the Eightsome Reel. It is regretted that this practice has largely been discontinued. While the traditional social dance scene is currently reasonably healthy, most of the participants are aged 45+. For it to continue we must find ways to re-introduce it to school age children. Otherwise there is a real danger that traditional social dance will have died out by 2030. Already many adults find themselves attending weddings or social events and unable to dance set Scottish dances. We would like everyone to have the opportunity to learn their native dances, if they choose to do so.

For this to happen we can't continue to rely on the generosity of the many 'Marion Robsons' around Scotland.

- We must provide some structured form of training which makes the teaching of dance attractive and fun.
- Most dances take place in village halls or community centres, ideal, local venues. A provision to continue to make these premises available at an economic cost is required.
- We need to ensure, in 2030, that we still have musicians able and willing to play our traditional music in Ceilidh and Dance Bands.
- Without an awareness of Scottish dance, it will disappear as a living cultural tradition. A policy of promoting dance, including the obvious health benefits and the enjoyable social nature of dancing, is necessary.

**Submitted on behalf of the Laurencekirk Social Traditional
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