



DUNBARTONSHIRE  
CONCERT  
BAND

## **Dunbartonshire Concert Band**

### **Minutes of AGM**

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2025, 11:40am-12:25pm**

**Kessington Hall, 58 Milngavie Road, Bearsden, Glasgow, G61 2DP**

#### **1. Attendance and apologies**

The meeting was quorate as more than one third of the current membership were present.

Apologies were received from Alistair Gibson, Anna Baker, Heather Brown, Adam Wilson, Andrew Kwan, Grant Henderson, Anne Dunbar, Lorraine Sherry, Carrie Dixon, Annie Lester

#### **2. Approval of Previous AGM minutes**

The minutes were approved by Laura Hunter and seconded by Alan Cooper.

#### **3. Receive Financial Accounts**

The accounts were published and sent to the band via email prior to the AGM.

The accounts were approved by Jonathan Smithers and seconded by Jacqui McMahon,

#### **4. Chairpersons Report – Ruth Sinclair**

Another AGM comes around so time for a quick recap of the past season. We played a total of 12 concerts – starting with Kirkintilloch Canal Festival, the visit of Star of the North Concert Band and an afternoon performance at Gartnavel Royal, all prior to last year's AGM. The festive season 2024 saw the band once again at Gartnavel Royal, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and here at Kessington Hall. A special mention also to the brass group of Emma, Neil, Grant, Anneli, Stewart and Charlotte for fabulous festive playing at Morrisons Anniesland in what was like a wind tunnel at times – and Susan and I once again were excellent collection bucket elves!

In December 2024 we were saddened to learn of the death of Arthur Main, one of DCB's founding members, at the age of 96. Arthur attended the band's first rehearsal in January 1973 and played in the trumpet section for almost 40 years, as well as taking on numerous roles – Chair, Treasurer, Librarian and Trustee. Arthur was the first DCB member given Honorary Life Membership. Andrew McCafferty has written a fitting tribute to Arthur, which can be viewed in full on the website.

In the autumn 2024 session, we had selected 5 candidates from applicants to audition for the post of Associate Conductor – Alistair, Isabella, Chloe, Martin and Ashley. Coordinating auditions on top of ongoing rehearsals was a challenge (for example, Isabella went to Uganda for 5-6 weeks to deliver a community music outreach programme), however by the end of the auditions, we had 3 possible candidates to choose from and we planned to invite Alistair, Isabella and Chloe back to take at least one full rehearsal each while Robert was away with Scottish Ballet. It then became clear that neither Isabella or Chloe were able to commit regularly to Saturday mornings at that time and we were delighted to ultimately offer Alistair the Associate Conductor post. I am sure you'll agree Alistair has been a great addition to DCB.

The summer season initially didn't have too many concerts scheduled but ended up with 6! After a return to Gartnavel Royal, where Fiona, the staff and patients were as always extremely grateful to have us, we made a welcome return to Erskine Home for the first time since before Covid. Craig, the Activities Coordinator at Erskine, was delighted to see us again. As is often the case with outdoor concerts, we're at the mercy of the weather and unfortunately the Musicals at the Museum event in Dumbarton was hit by torrential rain halfway through our performance (although 3 minutes later than David Brown's weather app said it would rain!). The organisers loved DCB and couldn't say thank you enough to those of us who made the effort to come. We were luckier with the weather at Mugdock the next week, with the rain holding off until just after we finished playing. Thank you to Alistair for conducting those 4 concerts and to those who helped move chairs, percussion gear or hold down gazebos as required!

Our penultimate concert of the season was the RSNO's Big Music Weekend at The Pyramid in Anderston – and I'd just like to say thank you to Robert for getting DCB invited to play at it and to Fiona for organising the bus. We finished the season with another very successful Summer Concert here at Kessington. It was a challenging programme but the band sounded fantastic (audience feedback!). We also marked Robert's 25 years as MD of DCB with a surprise presentation. At the start of June Robert said to me "you're not going to do anything to mark the occasion, are you?" and I said of course not..... only for Michele to appear with the amazing cake she baked about an hour later. So he should have known better than to believe me when I said the "only" thing at the concert would be a paragraph in the programme!

We started this season with "An Afternoon with Glyn", a concert we've had in mind to hold for some time, a way to celebrate and acknowledge all the music that Glyn has provided for the band over the years. Glyn had always said no to a concert, couldn't think of anything worse – but with persistent asking, we wore him down – and he was very touched by the whole event and found it quite emotional. Glyn's specific request was for the concert to be in aid of a children's cancer charity so it was fantastic that the event raised almost £1,180 for Calum's Cabin.

Going forward, for the rest of 2025, we'll be back at Erskine on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November; Gartnavel Royal on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December (just confirmed); our Christmas Concert here at Kessington is booked for Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December and Christmas at Kelvingrove for Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December. I've also recently submitted an application to ScotRail for a group (not the full band) to play at Queen Street Station in the run up to Christmas so I may be speaking to some of you about that, depending on their response – if they respond!

Going forward into 2026, the annual statement of "hopefully this will be the year we make it back to Arrochar" is made – 12 years and counting! There is an open invitation from Gartnavel Royal, there's Mugdock; the organisers of the event in Dumbarton do an INDOOR fundraising concert (emphasis on the indoor!) each year and have expressed interest in having the band play a concert for them; maybe the RSNO will have us back and our Summer Concert next May/June may have a different format.

Back in the distant past, in the years after DCB/DWE split into 2 groups, they often came together for concerts. Both groups have recently had their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary years and Laura, myself, Robert and Michelle thought it could be nice to have a one-off joint concert. We're at the very early stages of planning so watch this space.

I also haven't given up hope of us returning to play in the atrium at the QEUH – but the refurbishment works are still happening. However Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS now has a Music & Arts Coordinator volunteer and they are pondering what other venue(s) we could play in. As always, if you have any new venue suggestions, especially one that can easily fit the full band and where we can collect donations, please let the committee know.

I mentioned The Bearsden Bears day last AGM – Colin's epic piece he wrote during lockdown that we want to record for the DCB archives. We ran out of weeks last season between one thing and another but hope to do it in 2026 with a morning of sectionals and then record the piece in the afternoon, however we'd need commitment from people to attend and not have 25-30 people absent.

Which brings me on to the subject of attendance – it was brought up in detail by Robert at last year's AGM. Thank you to those who send apologies – often weeks in advance – it's appreciated. We don't expect people to attend 100% of the time (although obviously you can!) and, as I know only too well, unfortunately life happens (indeed, we have a few people taking breaks at present for personal reasons) but there are a number of people who float in and out, don't send apologies, and seem to believe rehearsal attendance is

optional – but of course want to play in the main concerts and at Kelvingrove. I know this has become an issue to members because many have spoken to me about attendance from others within their section, asking what can be done to improve the situation. And while we're not sure of the solution at present, the situation as is – with 20+ people absent most weeks – needs to change.

Second issue – the handing – or not handing – back in of music when asked to hand back music. A couple of summers ago, a small group of band members put a lot of work into sorting out the library. Before a set of music is handed out, we know how many of each part there are. If more of that part are handed back in than were handed out, thank you for copying extras. If less come back, someone in the section has “misaid” the music. You are responsible for the band's music while it is in your folders – please take care of it.

And now the thank-yous. A huge thank you to Robert and Alistair for the hard work, time, encouragement and support that they put in and give to the band. As I say every year, there is an awful lot goes on behind the scenes that you don't see. The next thank you goes to the committee for their support and all the work they've put in over the past year – Alison, Fiona, Heather, Louise, Annie, Anna and John. Heather and John are both standing down from the committee this year – thank you both very much for all you've done for DCB. Don't worry, Heather has agreed to continue designing the concert posters and tickets – phew! Thank you to Colin for stepping in to take a couple of rehearsals and to Glyn, still arranging music for us! Thank you also to David, Alan, Susan and Robert for all the work that goes in to Kessington. Susan will give a short update later but thank you to the Kessington Team for making our home a success. Thank you to Neil Harper as Making Music Rep, Neil Macmillan and Martin Windebank for taking photos, Grant for organising and running the 100 Club, Susan for editing videos and putting concert programme content into the correct order and to family, friends and members who help before, during and tidying up after concerts. A note of thanks to Alan, for the website, setting up online ticket booking etc and to Ellen Beattie as our independent financial examiner.

In conclusion, the band has had another very successful and busy year, bringing enjoyment to members and audiences – the plan is for a repeat in the coming year. The end. Thank you!

## **5. Musical Directors Report – Robert Baxter**

Robert's report focussed on 3 main areas – attendance, repertoire and concerts.

Attendance: At the 2024 AGM, Robert spoke at length about attendance and the importance of regular attendance at rehearsals. Attendance remains an issue and will be being discussed at committee as to how we (as a band) can manage it. It is hugely positive to have around 75 players who want to be in the band, but we average 20 players absent every rehearsal which isn't ideal.

Repertoire: Robert spends a huge amount of time finding repertoire for us. He aims to create high quality pieces for our summer concert as well as continually adding lighter repertoire for other concerts. He described briefly the grading system for wind band repertoire and how he tries to find grade 4.5-5 pieces (6 is the highest grade) for our big concerts.

Robert described that over the course of the last year, we have played approximately 55 pieces. 35 standard repertoire including pieces by Glyn Bragg and around 20 Christmas pieces. Within that, 11 were new pieces. Robert aims to keep adding substantial pieces to our library (for example, Sketches on a Tudor Psalm, El Camino Real and Chess) as the audience appreciate these as it keeps the programme diverse and challenges us players.

We are very fortunate to have an extensive library of music built over the lifetime of the band, including many pieces donated by Glyn Bragg. Music is expensive and Robert stressed the importance of looking after our parts and taking responsibility for this as individuals. We have recently lost a few parts for pieces and although these can be replaced, it is difficult and costly.

Concerts: Playing at concerts and attendance at rehearsals go hand in hand. Robert stressed the importance of attending rehearsals, and crucially, completing the polls to sign up for concerts. All concerts are equally important (the 'lighter' concerts in the community as well as our main concerts at Kessington). Sometimes, depending on the venue, we may have to reduce player numbers as space permits, but everyone should still sign up in the first instance. Knowing who is attending helps plan the programme.

Attending all concerts not only keeps the standard of the band high but also builds community within the band and maintains concert stamina.

Robert concluded his report by thanking Ruth and the committee for all their time invested in the band.

## **6. Treasurers Report – Fiona Ross**

Fiona gave the following presentation:

I'm afraid that I have failed to balance the books once again – and we made a £1400 surplus this year. Exact budgeting for DCB is very difficult. For instance, this year I had expected that we were going to buy a new tuba case which will cost more than a thousand pounds but this has been postponed until the current financial year. We had also hoped to work on Colin's piece, the Bearsden Bears, culminating in a sectional rehearsal followed by a recording and the band was going to bear the whole cost of that which would have been significant. So those were expenses that didn't happen.

On the other hand we put on 12 concerts this year when we haven't managed more than 7 since Covid, even in our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, and all our non-ticketed concerts make a loss, although the actual amount varies.

Although I am happy to take questions at the end of the report, I don't want to say anything more about these figures than the comments in the notes on the financial statement, apart from mentioning that Robert spent very little on music last year, although we got plenty of new pieces due to borrowing from other bands, music from Glyn, and Alistair letting us play a piece that he owns. However, Robert is making up for that this season and there is going to be a lot of new music.

The only other thing to say is that in line with additional regulation from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (or OSCR) the committee has looked carefully at what our financial reserves should be. We now have gold level insurance from Making Music; we increased this from silver level last year because we now have so many good quality percussion instruments. We feel that the main reason we need reserves would be if something disastrous happened to Kessington Hall. In the long term our insurance should cover the replacement of instruments and essential music but in the short term we would need to pay for a different rehearsal space and buy or hire music and percussion instruments to let us carry on regardless. We feel that £6000 should tide us over in that situation but we had over £15,000 at the start of this season.

We are already using our good financial position to subsidise other charities with the Star of the North Concert last year and Glyn's concert this year. However, I would rather not be making more surpluses. As I have explained previously, my rationale was to make our guaranteed income (that is subs plus gift aid) cover our rehearsal expenses and that was keeping us afloat before we moved to Kessington. However, because we are so well off now, I am letting that slide for the moment. I am proposing that the subs stay the same but we have increased the MD payments by 3%. Kessington Hall is kindly holding our hire rate to the same as it has been since we moved here but guaranteed income will not cover these expenses this year. I also think there is a reasonable chance that, provided we keep up the number of non-income concerts, we will actually make a loss this year, but I have been proved wrong for the last 3 years! Thank you.

## **7. Subscriptions**

Fiona explained that due to the band's healthy financial situation, subscriptions will remain unchanged this year.

Full member: £110; Retired: £65; Unwaged: £50

Fiona emphasised that subscriptions can be paid in any frequency (monthly, quarterly etc.), and asked band members to speak to her in confidence if they are struggling to pay the required subscription amount. Details are on the band website.

## **8. Election of Committee Members**

Ruth thanked Heather Brown and John Carswell who are both standing down from their committee roles.

3 new committee members were nominated prior to the AGM. Fraser Thomson, Jan and Andrew MacDonald. These appointments were proposed by Anneli Demberg and seconded by Monika Mihm Carmichael.

Anna Baker as joint Librarian with Steven (off committee) while Annie Lester is on sabbatical.

### **9. Election of Honorary Independent Financial Advisor**

Ellen Beattie has agreed to continue in this role.

Her election was proposed by Cameron McCulloch and seconded by Laura Hunter.

### **10. Consider Resolutions of which due notice has been given.**

No resolutions were raised.

### **11. Elect or Re-Elect Band Trustees**

All the current trustees are happy to continue in the role.

The current trustees are: Jill Bolling, Alan Cooper, Moyra Hawthorn, Jonathan Smithers and Colin Suckling.

### **12. Kessington Hall Update – Susan Macfarlane**

An update on all things Kessington-related over the past year.

We have now been in the hall fully for four years. The hall is running very successfully, thanks to the huge efforts from the three trustees, Alan, David and Robert, and a number of other band members who help to keep the hall clean and tidy.

There are a large number of regular users in addition to DCB and DWE. These include a number of musical theatre groups, a children's art club, yoga classes, ballroom dancing, choirs, ballet, tap dancing. New users since last year have included a chair exercise class, a pilates class and a new yoga class. Recently we also had our first visit by an orchestra, Amicus.

The hall is also used by ad hoc groups such as DCB Summer Winds and the Kessington Clarinet Ensemble.

The hall is in constant demand – weekday evenings are fully booked and there are many regular lets during the day and at weekends. We regularly have to decline lets due to lack of availability.

Recently a decision was made to designate Sunday lets to community activities. This will take effect from January next year and will allow us to continue to fulfil our charitable remit as a community resource for music and the arts. Sunday lets might include non-commercial activities such as student/local group concerts, music therapy sessions, orchestral/wind band play days, arts and crafts workshops. An example of a community activity taking place in the hall in January is Alistair's Come and Play Day.

A number of improvements have been made to the hall over the past year, the most noticeable improvement being the new boiler installed over the summer. The new boiler is far more efficient and will hopefully mean that the hall stays nice and warm over the winter – no more bringing your hot water bottle to rehearsals like last year. The kitchen area behind you was also given a major overhaul at the end of last year – thank you to David and Fiona McLean's husband Dave for spending a lot of time on this.

Other improvements that you might have noticed – the front doors were varnished, the ramp was painted, damaged floorboards in the main hall were replaced, trophy shelves were fitted downstairs, storage lockers were installed downstairs, lanterns were fitted outside the hall.

The majority of these improvements were made by Alan and David, and we're very grateful to both of them for dedicating so much of their time to make sure that the hall is such a great facility for all of the user groups. Alan and David also do a huge amount of admin work behind the scenes – answering numerous emails, setting up access codes for new users, issuing invoices, ordering supplies like soap and paper

towels – the list goes on. We're always looking for volunteers to share the load, so if you'd like to get involved, please speak to one of us. You don't need to have any particular skills – even just offering to pop into the hall once a week on your way past to check that everything is ok would be very much appreciated.

Finally, in terms of finances, we aim to maintain a balance of at least £10,000 in the bank account, for contingencies. The current balance is about £25,000. This year's income came almost entirely from hall lets, with just one grant of £2,000 received. Earlier this year, £450 from the grant awarded to DCB Kessington by the William Syson Foundation in 2024 was used to provide financial support for materials used by Creative Hangouts, a children's art class run in the hall. The group does not receive any public funding, so the money was used to cover the costs of materials such as clay, paint and paper. Potential future improvements to the hall have been discussed, such as a lighting rig in the main hall that could be used for concerts and shows. If you have any suggestions for how the hall could be made even better, please let us know.

### **13. AOCB**

1. Monika Mihm Carmichael. Are there any plans to return to competition (Scottish Concert Band Festival) if we are striving to keep raising performance?

Answer from Robert Baxter – taking part in competition allows us time to focus on working towards these. Previously we took part in SCBF biannually but haven't since lockdown. At present, due to the attendance issues highlighted earlier, it isn't feasible as we need 3-4 months of dedicated attendance to prepare.

2. Monika Mihm Carmichael. Would you consider collaboration with a choir for joint concerts?

Answer from Robert Baxter – we are already in discussion with DWE regarding possible joint summer event next year and are looking in to bringing dancers to Kelvingrove (as have previously). Would definitely consider event with choir.

3. Anneli Demberg. Commented that she had also wondered about returning to SCBF because as well as improving our performances, it exposes us to hear other bands playing which is always enjoyable.

4. Michele Muir. Would we consider holding another small groups concert, like we did during our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year as it was such a positive event. Robert Baxter replied that it would be good and Kessington Hall is an asset for this sort of event.

5. David Broad. September 2026 is the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DCB Kessington Hall. It is our first lease-break where we decide if we want to continue the let for the next 25 years. It would be a good chance to bring ALL hall users together for a day-event, showcasing everyone who calls Kessington home.

### **14. Close**

There was no further business and Ruth closed the meeting at 12.25.