

Gay Gordons Edinburgh 2025 Winter Ceilidh Report

Date: Saturday 1st November 2025

Venue: Main Hall, Barclay Viewforth church

Band: Iain McPhail Scottish Country Dance band (3 musicians)

Caller: Caroline Brockbank

Summary:

- The 2025 winter dance was successful, selling 95% capacity tickets and netting the club £174 surplus.
- The 2025 dance was the first event to use TicketSource as an online booking platform. This was a successful addition to the event planning and greatly streamlined attendance management.
- The event was hosted at Barclay Viewforth church. There were no major issues with this venue, however the fire capacity limited ticket sales and event income.

Actions:

- Confirm Lauriston Hall and Charteris cost and availability for venue hire for November 2026.
- Allocate a committee member to oversee delivering 2026 winter dance.
- Propose raising winter dance ticket price to £25 for 2026.
- Identify 2-3 dances which can be used as 'showcase' dances for winter dance 2026.

Winter Ceilidh

1. Finances

The 2025 ceilidh made a £174 surplus as detailed below.

Income

39 tickets sold at £20 via TicketSource	£780
15 tickets sold at £20 (cash)	£300
Total	£1080

Expenditure

Band	£600
Main Hall hire charge	£215
Catering	£60

Gift to Caller/Donation	£31
Total	£906
Net Surplus	£174

2. Venue hire

The event was hosted at Barclay Viewforth parish church. This hall had a strict fire capacity of 60 persons. As such the dance was limited to a maximum of 56 dance attendees. Barclay Viewforth was a good venue for location and layout. However, the room acoustics were difficult for the band and made the sound feel louder than usual. There was comfortable space for six sets of dancers. The kitchen was suitable for our purposes.

Barclay Viewforth applied a £50 “late music” surcharge for venue hire post 10pm. This surcharge was applied after booking confirmation. This surcharge caused some concern within the Gay Gordons committee, however we decided to proceed with the 2025 event as planned. Even with the surcharge, it is a cheap venue for its floorspace.

For future dance planning we will look for alternative venues to Barclay Viewforth. This is due to the limited venue capacity and difficult acoustics. Lauriston Hall has indicated availability for November 2026. It has a large capacity, but is very expensive at about £675. The Charteris Main Hall (availability being checked) has a capacity of 70 and a cost of approximately £350.¹

3. Ticket sales

For the 2025 dance Gay Gordons applied two routes of ticket sales. 40 tickets were made available for online booking via the TicketSource platform. 16 tickets were reserved for cash payment by Gay Gordons members.

TicketSource

TicketSource is an online event management platform which handles booking and sales for events.

TicketSource greatly improved efficiency for event booking. TicketSource also improved communication with guests, allowing for mass mailouts prior and after the event. Additionally, guests pre-booking tickets greatly mitigated financial risk for the event, with guaranteed income irrespective of dance attendance.

The cancellation/refund period has to be set at first listing. NB that the default is a generous 7 days beforehand for cancellation with a refund.

TicketSource applied a processing fee per ticket of £1.68.

¹ Prices based off October 2025 estimates and will be subject to change prior to Winter 2026.

Cash payments

Gay Gordons reserved a small number of cash tickets for committee members and class attendees. This allowed users to book tickets during classes. There were no issues with handling cash for ticket payment.

Gay Gordons offered 2 complimentary tickets for weekly class instructors.

4. Catering

A hot supper was provided. The menu was a vegan bean stew, cous cous, riata and coleslaw. The stew could be made into a chili dish as people wished by adding sriracha chili sauce and lime pickle, to their taste.

Raw ingredients were ordered as a Tesco delivery to Ewan's and he led a team of volunteer choppers (Anne and Stewart) in preparing and cooking the food on the Saturday morning.

The stew was reheated in the Hall's kitchen, which all worked very well.

There were sufficient disposable bowls remaining from last year. These are made from sugarcane fibre, keep their shape and are biodegradable.

Soft drinks (Robinsons Barley fruit squash) and water were also provided.

5. Caller and Musicians

Gay Gordons hired Iain McPhail for this event. The music was well received on the night. Iain McPhail is a good performer for the night, however he is in high demand for other events during November. Coordinating Iain's availability and Hall availability caused some difficulty for the committee.

Caroline graciously called the event, which was well received. Comments from dance attendees were very positive with Caroline's approach to calling dances throughout the night.

6. Dance Programme

The dance consisted of 19 dances, listed in appendix a. These dances were graded using a three-star system (easy, moderate, complex).

Dancers had notable difficulty with some of the most complex dances on the program, including *Duke of Perth* and *Postie's Jig*. The majority of attendees had little-to-no experience with Scottish Country Dance.

Future dance programs might choose to change these dances to 'showcase' elements, featuring only Gay Gordons class attendees.

7. Concluding statements and further actions

The annual dance remains popular for Gay Gordons members and public attendees. At the 2025 AGM Gay Gordons members expressed a desire to continue² hosting an annual dance.

Over the past three years the winter dance has netted the society £229 profit. A breakdown of event expenses is included below.

	2025	2024	2023
Attendance (%)	c.96%	77%	c.95%
Price per ticket	£20	£20	£15
Income	£1080	£920	£1335
Expenses	£906	£1112	£1088
Surplus	£174	£(192)	£247

There was no increase in ticket price between 2024-2025. If ticket prices had been increased to £25 the club would net an additional £270 profit, nearly threefold increase in 2025 surplus.

The annual winter dance has remained profitable largely through suppression of costs associated with catering and small halls. If these costs were to increase the annual dance would quickly become financially unviable.

The committee recommends the following actions:

- 2026 hall hire should prioritise upwards of 80 person capacity. Event success should target a minimum 90% ticket sales.
- Ticket sales should increase to £25 per ticket in 2026.

TicketSource was a successful tool for managing event attendance and ticket sales. TicketSource releases funds **after** the event, which can cause some financial risk. This is an acceptable risk, especially given the efficiency for event management that TicketSource offers.

We should consider the cancellation and refund policy before listing next year's tickets. This year ticket purchasers could cancel for a refund up to 7 days before the event.

² Ticket sales inflation was 23% for 2025: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2kdxlv8x05o>.

Appendix A - Dance List

1.	Gay Gordons	couple dance	M 16 6x
2.	The Ferry Boat	round the room dance	R 32 8x
3.	Kingston Jig	4-couple longwise sets	J 32 4x
4.	Dashing White Sergeant	round the room dance	R 32 6x
5.	Barley Bree	4-couple longwise sets	J 40 4x
6.	Dunedin Festival Dance	Circle (3) couple dance	R 32 8x
7.	Deil Amang the Tailors	4-couple longwise sets	R 32 8x
8.	Butterscotch and Honey	4-couple longwise sets	S 32 4x
9.	Canadian Barn Dance		
10.	Strip the Willow	4-couple longwise sets	
11.	La Chapelloise	round the room cpls dance	J 32 8x
12.	Flying Scotsman		
13.	Highland Rambler	4-couple longwise sets	R 40 8x
14.	Byron Strathspey	3-couple longwise sets	S 32 3X
15.	Domino 5	5-person square sets	R 32 5x
16.	Postie's Jig	4-couple longwise sets	J 32 4x
17.	Duke of Perth	4-couple longwise sets	R 32 8x
18.	Riverside Jig	4-somes in a longwise set	J 32 ad lib

Appendix B - 2023-5 finance comparison

	2025	2024	2023
Date	1 November 2025	30 November 2024	25 November 2023
Band	Iain MacPhail	Lindsay Weir and Colin Garvin	Iain MacPhail
Size of band	3-piece	3-piece	3-piece
Caller	Caroline Brocklebank	Caroline Brocklebank	Elizabeth from RSCDS
Venue	Barclay Viewforth	Charteris, Pleasance	Columcille, Morningside
Tickets sold	54	46	89
Ticket price	£20	£20	£15
Income	£1080	£920	£1,335
Expenditure			
Band	£600	£600	£550
Main Hall hire charge	£215	£324	£260
Kitchen supplement	-	£50	-
Catering	£60	£80	£160
Gift to Caller/Donation	£31	£32	£88
Disposables	-	£26	£30
Total Costs	£906	£1,112	£1,088
Net Surplus/(loss)	£174	£(192)	£247