

The Minutes of the meeting of the Lothian & Borders Branch of
The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association
On 26 April 2026

L.A. Riad, Treasurer
S. Starr, Secretary
P. Starr, Chairman
M. Brown-Scott
M. Binder
G. Dyet
S. Schembri
L. Moore
S. McQuillan

Peoples Ford Boghall & Bathgate Caledonia
Peebles Ex-Servicemen's
Penicuik & District
Livingston Caledonia
Preston Lodge High School
Peoples Ford Boghall & Bathgate Caledonia
City of Edinburgh
Preston Lodge High School
Peoples Ford Boghall & Bathgate Caledonia

Apologies

S. Orr MVO RVM, M. O'Neill, M. Reilly, J. Simpson

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes

The Minutes of the March Meeting was Proposed by Livingston Caledonia and Seconded by Preston Lodge High School

Treasurer's report:

The treasurer's report was presented and details are available by request. L. Moore asked which type of account the branch used. L. Riad advised that it was a communities account. S. Starr and L. Riad agreed to look into alternative accounts.

Secretary's report

S Starr advised that the Outdoor Entries are starting to come in. There has been no further correspondence from East Lothian Council regarding the potential contest the week prior to the worlds.

Director's report

M. Brown Scott advised that the Post AGM minutes are now on the website and that the following key points had been discussed:-

- **AGM / Rule change: Amended Rule 3.17 (OR3)** agreed—**government-approved ID** will be accepted as **proof of date of birth for juvenile bands** (action: HQ).
- **Membership structure working group:** DT presented findings; board debated how a structure could work for all bands; DT thanked for work.
- **Music Board / Format Group (Grade 2 and championships):**
 - Survey produced with Grade 2 input.
 - Proposals for **2027 season** (e.g., **5–7 min medley**) was discussed.
 - Proposal for a championship format ("**4/4/4**" for Grade 2) was discussed.
 - Suggestion to take **18 bands** through to the final (vs 12) was discussed.
 - If a trigger point is met at **Worlds Grade 2**, plan would be **2 heats Friday + 2 heats Saturday + final**.
 - **WSD tenor timings** need tightened due to overruns.
 - **Rule 4.55 (60 paces/min)** viewed as impractical; request made to remove it.
 - Chairman approved Music Board doing role-clarity interviews with **Big Rab Show** and **Pipes Drums** (action noted to **S McQuillan**).
 - **Ross Bingham** completed Tenor Solo Judge training and added to approved list.
- **Pipe Band College:** No meeting reached quorum since last board meeting.

- **Standing Orders & Steering Committee:** Points already addressed at the AGM.
- **APMB:** Concerns raised about Bass and Tenor prize not being discussed with APMB; “attached Drum Majors” topic to be discussed at next APMB meeting (**16 April**), with a board meeting to be arranged if needed.
- **Marketing & Media:**
 - New website discussed positively; good advertising uptake.
 - Reviewing merchandising companies.
 - All interviews/social posts must go through **HQ** for **CEO authorisation** before release.
- **Finance / Insurance / Maintenance:**
 - Director materials available on **Directors Dropbox**.
 - Board agreed to **investigate paying off the loan** and check for penalties.
 - Auditors advised a **formal audit not required** due to threshold change; **independent review** to be done instead.
 - Board vote recorded: **7** for independent review; **5** for formal audit (RH, JA, MMc, GH, LP).
 - **Expenses rule changed:** remove 90-day rule; claims now due **within 28 days** of event/purpose.
 - **New database** implementation delayed until **end of season** to avoid disruption.
- **Championship update:** CEO and Business Manager site-visited **Belfast** for UK Championships; met stakeholders; site mapped; working with **Ulster Scots Agency**.

Music Board Report

Date: 19 April 2026

1. Previous Minutes & Actions

- Previous minutes were reviewed during the meeting and formally approved

2. Correspondence

- Follow-up required on a branch query (Ayrshire, Dumfries & Galloway).
- Engagement initiated with Pipe Band Australia regarding registration and grading alignment.
- Actions raised to progress overseas registration checks and respond formally.

3. Board of Directors (BoD) Update

- BoD minutes remain unapproved.
- Grade 2 proposals (Medley timing and 4/4/4 MSR), despite 75% band support, were rejected by the BoD. MB highlight the job of the BOD is to confirm MB decisions per SOR 2.1- MB will proceed to action.
- Best Bass Section prize to be revisited by the Format Group.
- Music Board approved to engage in external communications (e.g. Big Rab Show).

4. Standards & Grading

- Band gradings approved.
- Some bands to provide additional documentation (5-year history and updated rosters).
- Registration documentation review ongoing.

5. Format Group – Key Outcomes

5.1 Governance & Rules

- Need identified for improved understanding and application of Standing Orders among Directors and stakeholders.
- Ongoing issues:
 - Enforcement of 60 paces per minute rule. Refer back to SOR
 - Arena entry must begin within the competition arena (not audience space).

5.2 World Solo Drumming (WSD) Review

- Review to proceed in collaboration with stakeholders
- Questions to be developed covering stakeholders and format considerations.

5.3 Grade 2 Draw Process (Worlds)

- Agreed principles:
 - Same-day contests → same draw applies.
 - Multi-day contests → separate draws apply.
- Clarification that Music Board/Format Group defines process; Directors execute it.
- Additional written guidance to be produced and CEO briefed.

5.4 Grade 2 Proposals (Critical Issue)

- Format Group confirmed:
 - Full consultation and due process completed.
 - Survey results validated (strong band support).
- Position stated:
 - BoD role is to **confirm**, not re-approve, unless procedural grounds exist. Hence since the BOD Format Guide has been followed then the outcomes of the survey should proceed.
- Noted benefit:
 - 4/4/4 MSR would reduce competition time by ~24–30 minutes. MB intend to proceed per SOR 2.1

5.5 North of Scotland Proposal

- Proposal recognised as high quality and comprehensive.
- Agreed to meet with proposers to discuss next steps.

5.6 Playing Requirements

- Confirmed:
 - MSR has no timing requirement.
 - Only the MSR performed should appear in Scottish Championship programmes.

5.7 Format Governance Model

- Agreed operating principle:
 - Matters properly processed and signed off by Music Board Directors should move directly to implementation.
 - This is a **confirmation mechanism**, not an approval gateway (unless constitutionally required).

6. Tunes Group

- Query raised regarding tunes not on the prescribed list.
- Bands to submit tunes for formal review.

7. Any Other Competent Business (AOCB)

- Formal recognition of Colin Smith's 42 years of service to the Music Board.
- Noted appreciation and acknowledgment of his contribution upon retirement.

S. Schembri asked why under section 3 the BOD Minutes remain unapproved. S. McQuillan advised that this was due to some of the matters being asked to be rejected as this does not align with the purpose of the purpose of the Music Board.

Pipe Band College

L. Moore advised that C. Mulhern had taken up the role as acting convenor of the Pipe Band College and there has been no meeting since. The Directors have advised that this is in hand and will be followed up in due course.

It was asked if there was any plans to reply to Rob Wallace's article, P. Starr advised that there was plans to reply.

AOCB

Indoors

A discussion took place at the possibility of splitting the event over two days. The solos being held on 27 March 2027 and potential of the bands on 8 May 2027. S. Starr to reach out to other venues to see if they could support the second date.

Next Meeting Online. 20 September 2026