



MINUTES of the meeting of the LONSDALE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held on the 26 November 2019 at District Headquarters, Moor Street, Lancaster.

Present: T Andrews (Chair), M Sweet (DC), S Clarke (Treasurer), A S Hague (Secretary), D Bateman, J Carbert, H Greenwood.

Apologies Received: K Caldicott, S. Mather, L Maun, C Seton, D Squirrel, T Wilkinson.

Not Present: R Parker, D Smith.

Meeting Quorum:

The Chair indicated that as the meeting was inquorate no votes could be taken nor any official decisions taken. Following the meeting he would write to Executive members to inform everyone of issues discussed to seek approval to the recommendations made.

Chair's 'Thought for the Day':

"Try and be the shepherd not the sheep. Remember, you aren't just a face in the crowd. You're unique.

Despite a planet of seven billion. There is no one else like you.

Your personality will be shaped and moulded by the company you keep and the experiences you have. Be comfortable with who you are. Don't try and be what others want or expect you to be." Ben Fogle (Published in UP - My Life's Journey to the Top of Everest.)

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2019 were accepted as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

Nil.

E906 Secretary's Report / Correspondence

A letter had been received from Water-Plus regarding payment of the 1st October water bill for DHQ. The Treasurer confirmed that payments were made by Direct Debit.

Following the meeting of the Awards Advisory Committee in June the Secretary had submitted nominations for Chief Scout's Commendations to TSA in line with the revised system. In association with the DC higher awards nominations had also been forwarded to County for consideration.

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E907 Governance:

i. Chair's Actions

The Chair reported having taken 'Chair's Action' in respect of authorising payment for further essential work at Littledale SAC, that was partly outside the AC's budget: for remedial electrical work in connection with electrical systems checking carried out by M. J. Catterall. The total sum expended at both Centres was now £4628.65. This action was endorsed by the meeting.

Also, following testing of the water supply at Littledale SAC by Lancaster City Council, which had shown very high levels of manganese being present Cumbrian Water Services had been commissioned to undertake urgent remedial work as detailed in the minutes of the ACMB meeting of 13 November 2019. The total sum involved was £5532.00 for which provision had been made in the 2020 AC's budget. However, some expenditure will be necessary in this financial year - a deposit of £1750 +VAT requested had been paid. The Chair highlighted that this situation had come about partly because self-maintenance had not been carried out and it was evident also that the servicing undertaken by another contractor had been wholly inadequate. This action was also endorsed by the meeting.

ii. Finance sub-Committee

The Chair reported that he had met with Stephen Landles who was an ASL at the 33rd Lancaster Sea Scouts Group. He had a background appropriate for the FSC Chair appointment (confirmed by a number of people) and had agreed to take on the role. Robert Gill was already Minutes Secretary for the sub Committee and also Group Treasurer of the 16th Morecambe and Heysham Scout Group. It was felt appropriate to appoint him a full member (thus enabling a Group Treasurer's input to committee discussions; the FSC were also seeking to appoint another Group Treasurer).

The recommendations to the Executive were to Co-opt Stephen Landles as a member of the Executive Committee (and thus a Trustee), to appoint Stephen Landles as Chair of the Finance sub-Committee and to appoint Robert Gill as a member of the Finance sub-Committee.

These recommendations were endorsed by the meeting.

iii. Expenses Policy

The Chair reported that no changes were proposed; it was part of the annual cycle to review all policy documents. The meeting accepted the recommendation to approve the Policy.

iv. Communications Mast at SilverHelme

The purpose of this report was to update Trustees in relation to the on-going work to agree (and enact) a new lease for the Emergency Services Communications Mast at SilverHelme Activity Centre.

As detailed in his paper the Chair reminded members why the District used The Scout Association Trust Corporation (SATC) as Custodian Trustee. The District retains all management responsibility for running itself and any decisions regarding its land. The SATC's limited role is merely holding title to the land as Custodian Trustees.

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The paper outlined a timeline with regard to the lease negotiations. The existing lease for the land [on which the mast is erected] ended on 31 March 2015. Since then - in line with common practice - the lease had 'run-on' under the existing terms. This had the effect that the rent paid to us, since 31 March 2015, has been under the terms of existing lease (but when we were working with Savills - who negotiated the terms for the new lease on our behalf - there was a rise because, it was argued, that earlier calculations were in error). We currently receive an annual rent of £7,120.

The revised lease was acceptable to the SATC who now required the District to enter into a Deed of Indemnity (copy attached to paper); this would indemnify the Trust Corporation against all liabilities, expenses, costs, claims, damages and losses arising out of or in connection with the Property. Discussion took place on certain aspects of the Deed of Indemnity; the Treasurer raised a number of issues including what was stated to be required on the retirement or death of any of the District's Charity Trustees. The Chair agreed to bring the points raised to the attention of the solicitor (Joseph A. Jones & Co) for comment.

Action: Chair

The District Executive Committee had been requested:

- i. To agree to enter into the proposed Deed of Liability.
- ii. To confirm our earlier agreement that the Chair and Secretary, for the time being, of Lonsdale District Scout Council be authorised to sign on behalf of Lonsdale District Scout Council.
- iii. To acknowledge that any liability rests with the Executive Committee (Trustees) and not only the two authorised to sign.

In view of the comments made agreement to enter into the Deed could not be decided at this time. The latter two requests were however confirmed.

A number of confidential issues and proposed actions in connection with the securing of the revised lease are included in a separate, private minute (E918).

E908 Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer's report was received, a copy is attached to these minutes.

i. **Estimated out-turn 2019 and Budget 2020**

The Treasurer had been unable to predict the expenditure which might be incurred by the various budget holders in the last 6 weeks of the current financial year, but he guessed that the deficit on the operating account was unlikely to exceed £5,000, compared with a budgeted loss of £15,404. The main divergences were the unbudgeted receipt of the share of the Scout & Guide Shop surplus (of £1,955) and underspends by the budget holders.

The proposed budget for 2020, which had been discussed and agreed by the Finance sub-Committee on 31st October, was attached to his report.

"Budget holders" – The DC explained the amounts allocated to the holders.

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£150 had been allocated to District Youth Commissioners for Recruitment, Marketing and Training.

Section budgets had been discontinued.

Online Scout Manager (OSM) - although including provision in the budget, to roll OSM out to all Scout Groups, it was proposed not to commit these funds until it was clear what The Scout Association's intentions were in relation to providing centrally a data base for youth members. This was agreed.

In light of experience the Chair indicated that he was thinking about the possibly setting some criteria for the awarding of grants for international visits.

“HQ” – the amounts were usually fairly predictable from year to year.

The Chair queried whether any provision needed to be made in the event of the landlord putting the DHQ rent up as the current lease ended Summer 2020.

Following discussion, it was agreed to leave the matter in abeyance for the time being and for the Treasurer to speak with the landlord 'off camera' to ascertain his intentions.

Action: Treasurer

“Earlier years” –this compared the figures for 2017 to 2020.

The increase in the total levy was wholly attributable to increases imposed by The Scout Association. Over the period the District levy will have reduced by 50p per head, assuming that the Executive does not decide on an increase on the proposed £9 per head.

“2020” –showed projected receipts and payments.

It was Important to note that although we have approved deficit budgets for a number of years, outturns have never been that adverse. That said, next year's budget could be affordable with the reserves currently held.

The recommendation from the FSC to approve the District Budget for 2020 after making one amendment: to increase the budget line for the International Fund from £3,000 to £3,900 (thus the deficit budget total becomes £17,470) was supported but would be subject to approval from Trustees not present, as outlined above.

ii. **'Zellhof Trip' account**

The current credit balance was just over £900. It was confirmed that no more expenditure would be incurred. The £900 resulted from the surplus from the trip (after refunds to the leadership team and a reunion weekend). The organiser had expressed a wish that this surplus be allocated to the “International Fund” (which strictly the District didn't have). There was support from the meeting to a proposal to use the money to support those travelling overseas in 2020 as there could be a significant number of applicants seeking support.

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- iii. **Debtors**
 - a. 11th Morecambe have paid the balance owing on their 2019 membership fees.
 - b. £350 due from 3rd Morecambe for District Camp fees still not yet received. The DC agree to investigate.
Action: DC
 - c. Several Groups owed small amounts for badges taken and BACS payments promised but not yet made.
- iv. **Current funds**
Spreadsheet was attached.

E909 Finance Sub-Committee:

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2019 were received for information. With regard to the submissions of Groups' annual accounts, due earlier in the year, the Chair reported that these were still awaited from seven Groups - 1st Carnforth and 1st Forton had submitted theirs but without an independent scrutineers statement; nothing had been received from 2nd Bolton le Sands, Galgate, 1st Silverdale, 1st Slyne with Hest and Westgate. These would be pursued.

Action: Chair, DC

Having reviewed a number of Group accounts the Chair highlighted, for interest, the fact that some had very small cash reserves, amounting for some as little as 6 weeks' expenditure (if straight lined throughout the year).

E910 14-25 Finance and Support Group:

No report - the planned meeting on 5 November 2019 had not been held.

E911 Appointments Advisory Committee Report:

The Chair of the Committee's report was received for information. The AAC had met in September at DHQ, in October at 16th Lancaster, and on 21st November at 16th Morecambe. This had enabled the recommendation for approval of 13 applications, and to make one further recommendation to the DC regarding another appointment, which needed some further consideration. This has since be satisfactorily resolved. At the November meeting, the committee had been able to have two panels, and the panels had been impressed by the quality of the applicants. It was worth noting that many of them become volunteer leaders because their children are involved in Scouting, but there is a considerable number who are simply continuing a journey through Scouting which began with their own involvement as youngsters. Thanks were expressed to 16th Lancaster and 16th Morecambe for the use of their HQs and to all panel members for their attendance and contributions.

As at 21st November, there were still 8 applications awaiting interview, and 46 applications which couldn't yet be processed for interview, for the following reasons:

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- Awaiting DBS and references 3
- Awaiting DBS only 3
- Awaiting 1 further reference 15
- Awaiting 2 references 25

Obtaining references quickly enough was clearly a problem. He had discussed this with Tracy Seton and with the DC, and was looking at ways in which this might be improved. GSLs have a very important role in this procedure, and might need reminding of the part they play in this process. We also need to look at the procedure through which reference requests are sent, and how, when, and to whom reminders are sent.

E912 Activity Centres Management Board:

The minutes of the Board's meeting held on 13 November 2019 were received for information.

Howard Greenwood updated the meeting on progress with signing off building regulations for the SilverHelme toilet block. This had been on the 'back burner' to some extent owing to all his work on the Littledale water supply. He highlighted that detailed drawings might require to be produced, which might have a financial implication for the District.

The Chair highlighted that the organisational split of operational aspects from strategic ones by the forming of two separate committees (Activity Centres Management Board and Activity Centres Operating Group) seemed to be working well to everyone's satisfaction. He also updated members on progress with the new Activity Centres website and booking system, which it was envisaged would be operational very shortly.

Activity Centres Budget 2020:

This had previously been considered by the Activity Centres Management Board and the Finance sub Committee. As with the District Budget it was a deficit one but was affordable with the reserves currently held. The meeting accepted the recommendation.

Activity Centre Charges 2020:

The proposed Activity Centres Charges for 2020 had been circulated. It was agreed that the daily camping fee for Lonsdale Scouts should remain at £2.30 and for Other Scout/Guide Groups £4.80 (at both sites).

It was felt that the amendment better reflected earlier discussions: that there was a need to increase the number of such campers and thus not vary the fee from that currently charged.

E913 Explorer Report:

The DC reported that Dave Squirrell (DESComm) had indicated that he would be unable to attend meetings until March. His District Leaders would be filling in. Steve Sweet had said that he could attend Executive meetings on his behalf. This offer was accepted. He would not be a Trustee in the circumstances.

Explorers had enjoyed the Environment weekend at Littledale and were looking forward to repeating the experience, this time at SilverHelme.

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The Chair reported that he had received 2 applications for financial assistance from 2 Explorers wishing to attend the 'Snow & Ice' event in Scotland. This had been discussed with the DESA and DC with a suggestion of awarding £50 each from the District Explorer Scout Funds as the applications did not fall under the heading of the International or Scouting4All Funds.

Following discussion, it was agreed that as this would set a difficult precedent that the applications should be refused. In the event of financial hardship this was best left to the relevant leader to determine.

E914 Network Report:

The Network Commissioner was pleased to report that interest had been aroused at the recent District International Adventures Evening. Attendance at the Top Awards Drop in had been disappointing but this was its first attempt. A programme of social events up to December 2020 had been drawn up by the members themselves, which was pleasing. In response to a question from the Chair regarding any County Network events Jamie indicated that there had been the Winter Social but he was not aware of anything else in the pipeline.

E915 District Commissioner's Report:

Programme –

'Skills and Chills' weekend was well attended and a lot of fun was had. Feedback had been positive with requests for more social events.

We have had camps for Cubs, Scouts and Explorers and a STEM day for Beavers.

Explorers had a great Environment Weekend at Littledale working very hard and completing several tasks. They have requested a further weekend in the spring term at SilverHelme.

Coming up we have a Cub Sleepover being held at Our Lady's Catholic College. We also start the D of E support for next year in December.

Group Support – We are currently supporting 3rd Morecambe in Cubs and Scouts, but they now have a couple of new leaders and things are starting to improve.

Jamie Carbert has offered to help Galgate Scout Section. They are currently struggling grow the troop, they have started meeting at the same time and location as Cubs and Beavers.

Development and Growth –

We have now opened a new Beaver Colony at Hornby Scout Group, they have new leaders and had 12 new Beavers. Hornby Scout Group have requested a name change to Hornby and Wray Scout Group.

53rd Lancaster have opened a second Cub Pack, but are still in the early stages. The development day went very well. The regional team gave us new ideas to help us develop the Groups and aid with recruitment

3rd Morecambe have been chosen to be one of 30 Groups across the UK to trial the new development resources. They have been given a £100 voucher to spend on signage etc.

Internationals

We had 15 applications for the Asia Pacific Region Jamboree trip, 12 Young People have been selected.

We have also had 3 leaders apply for leader roles on trips being run in 2021.

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We are starting to look towards Lonsdale District International 2021. We are looking at locations and for a Trip Leader.

Appointments -

Hannah Bentele DSL (Explorer, Young Leader) had now gone on maternity leave. Ben Goldsworthy has offered to stand in, with a view to becoming an assistant for Hannah on her return.

Tracy Seton and myself have been working through the appointments list and we have made progress, but there are still quite a few applications waiting for references. Robert Gill has taken on the role as Finance Sub Committee Minutes Secretary.

Awards

These were announced the previous weekend. I am currently still awaiting a list from the CC so that I can send out invites to the Awards Reception at Leighton Hall.

Branding

I am awaiting a quote for replacement pull-up banners. A parent of a Scout has offered to do them for us at a reduced rate, he owns a printing shop. All new branding must be completed by May 2020. We will be having a big push in the new year to help Groups.

Risks

I am still pushing for 3 temporary GSLs to make their role permanent. I am facing some resistance. Jon Minshull has agreed to oversee GSL recruitment as a one-off assignment.

The request for a name change by the 3rd Hornby Group to Hornby and Wray Scout Group was approved.

E916 Health and Safety Report:

The Secretary had reported to the ACMB the receipt of an accident record for an incident at SilverHelme, in the Den, on 13 October 2019 involving a Scout from 5th Lancaster where the person concerned had hit their head on the light over a bunk whilst playing. Injuries suffered were a minor cut to the head and a slight headache. The Warden had indicated that the light was subsequently in the process of being changed

E917 Any Other Business:

Good Service Awards

The Chair advised that the Awards Advisory Committee would be meeting on 9 December to consider nominations. Members were requested to forward any names they considered worthy of commending.

Date of Next Meeting: 23 January 2020.

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