



MINUTES of the meeting of the LONSDALE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held on the 16 March 2017 at District Headquarters, Moor Street, Lancaster.

Present: T Andrews (Chairman), S Clarke (Treasurer), A S Hague (Secretary), J Carbert, D Coulthard, J Edwards, C Graham, H Greenwood, A Kayll, R. Parker, D. Smith, T Wilkinson, J Minshull (Observer).

Apologies: C Dewar (DC), D Bateman, N Pullen.

Welcome: The Chairman welcomed as an observer to the meeting Jon Minshull, the newly appointed Deputy District Commissioner. Introductions were made.

Chairman's 'Thought for the Day':

"Today I give thanks, Whether I feel like it, Or not . . .
It's in the giving of thanks, I feel better . . .
It's in the movement of a smile, I feel like smiling . . .
It's in the singing of a song, I cheer up . . .
It's in the laughing of a laugh, My troubles melt . . .
Today I give thanks, And realise the world is amazing . . . after all."

Minutes of the Last Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising that were not covered on the current agenda.

E755 Secretary's Report / Correspondence

There was nothing to report on this occasion.

E756 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Financial results year ended 31 December 2016

The task of integrating the financial results of HQ and Activity Centres and pulling together the draft Trustees' report had been finished on schedule - 28 February. The papers had been delivered to the District's accountants on 1 March, who had produced the draft accounts on 15 March. These were due to be considered formally by the Finance sub-Committee on 4 May and presented to the next Executive meeting for approval on 16 May. It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Ray Salisbury for the work he had done on the accounts.

Action: District Secretary

Membership fees 2017

Following on from the Census 2017 details were outlined of the present position on payment of membership fees. There had been some delay in Groups submitting census information which had resulted in a backward adjustment to the scheduled timetable. The Treasurer outlined proposals that might be taken to deal with this situation in future years.

Lonsdale District Scouts

Headquarters: 3 Moor Street Lancaster LA1 1PR

President: Mrs. Suzie Reynolds DL. **District Commissioner:** Craig Dewar. **District Chairman:** Dr Tony Andrews.

W:lonsdalescouts.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1027167

So far eleven Groups had paid the fees due.

Charity Commission returns

At the time of writing, only one out of 13 Groups registered with the Charity Commission had been in arrear with submission of its annual return. The Treasurer would be sending a reminder to that Group shortly.

Current financial position

This was detailed in the spreadsheet attached to the Treasurer's report. The spreadsheet had been headed incorrectly and should have read 7 March 2017.

E757 Finance Sub-Committee Report:

Finance sub-Committee Minutes - 2 February 2017

These minutes (unconfirmed) were received for information.

Sharpe Bequest

It was noted that Hornby Scout Group had not claimed the grant awarded to them and that arrangements had been made to advance £500 of the grant awarded to Caton Scout Group, in order to overcome their cash-flow difficulty; the total grant awarded had now been claimed. Also, that income from the bequest this year, available for grant distribution, would again be low reflecting the ongoing low interest rates nationally. John Edwards suggested that Groups might be made aware of this situation to manage their expectations. The Chairman stated that this would be included in the draft letter [to Groups] to be discussed at the next FSC meeting, for approval.

International Fund - Grant Application:

A grant-in-aid of £200 had been agreed for one participant, from the District, in West Lancashire Scouts' visit to Mongolia. The Chairman had shared with FSC members a form he had designed to provide a simple means of applying for grants (both from the International Fund and the Scouting4All Fund; in particular bank details would be collected as part of the application process). This would be published on the District's website shortly.

Accounting and Audit Requirements for Scout Groups

Presenting his report the Chairman outlined that it was a requirement of the Charities Act that the charity trustees of a charity must ensure that accounting records are kept in respect of the charity, which are sufficient to show and explain all the charity's transactions, and which are such as to disclose at any time, with reasonable accuracy, the financial position of the charity at that time, and the accounting records must in particular contain entries showing from day to day all sums of money received and expended by the charity, and the matters in respect of which receipt and expenditure takes place.

A development the previous week had been that The Scout Association's (TSA) guidance had been revised to be more consistent with the Charity Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). However, the Association had a few additional rules which applied to Scout Groups, Districts and Counties. These related to the External Examination of accounts.

The guidance document reflected the SORP, other guidance, and formed part of The Scout Association Policy, Organisation & Rules (POR). The SORP determines how Charities' accounts are presented. This includes such areas as the layout of the Statement of Financial Activities and of the Balance Sheet, how to account for charitable activities undertaken, support costs and governance costs. They also determine the contents of the Trustees' Annual Report for the year.

Lonsdale District Scouts

Headquarters: 3 Moor Street Lancaster LA1 1PR

President: Mrs. Suzie Reynolds DL. **District Commissioner:** Craig Dewar. **District Chairman:** Dr Tony Andrews.

W:lonsdalescouts.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1027167

The purpose of the Chairman's paper was to consider the implications for Scout Groups within the District and to identify, with the District Executive, a way ahead. One of the aims had to be to ensure that we present to Group Trustees both the necessary material and aim to help them comply with the requirements placed on them by Charity Law together with Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association.

It is a requirement of POR that all Scout Groups submit a copy of their accounts (signed by two Trustees - usually the Chairman and Treasurer - together with the Scrutineer's or Independent Examiner's Report) to District (in our case the District Chairman) within two weeks of the Scout Group's Annual General Meeting . There has been little change in this requirement.

The significant change was in relation to the Trustees' Annual Report. The Trustees are now required to produce a report to accompany each set of accounts. The SORP now prescribes standard headings to be included, which are:-

- Reference and administration details.
- Structure, governance and management.
- Objectives and activities.
- Achievements and performance.
- Financial review.
- Plans for future period and other optional information.

Headquarters has produced a [specimen Trustees' Annual Report](#) and it was recommended that this be used.

The Chairman continued by outlining previous experience in Lonsdale, particularly difficulties in ensuring that Scout Groups complied with the requirements in POR. It was not a new problem. We know that we have identified problems with the existing process; his concern was that the additional requirement, of a Trustees' Annual Report, would introduce similar problems.

Howard Greenwood enunciated a concern regarding the continuing number of guidance documents cascading down from Headquarters that GSLs in particular had to cope with. He stated that any changes should be in POR. Noting the comment, the Chairman advised that the matter under discussion did form part of POR.

The Chairman suggested that perhaps a group might usefully be formed with the object of helping Group Executives, targeting those who were perceived to be struggling, on a short-term basis in matters such as recruitment, induction and resolving issues. The Treasurer felt that it would be beneficial to recruit some financially aware people to help in this area, citing young trainee accountants working locally conceivably or accountancy/finance students at Lancaster University. Other comments highlighted the advantages of networking and the fact that the University could well be receptive to an approach as outlined.

Jon Minshull indicated that he was aware that County were considering organising a GSLs' and Executives' gathering at which these matters might be aired.

Action: Chairman, Members

14-25 Finance and Support Group Report:

David Bateman had been unable to attend the meeting but had sent a message that the meeting scheduled for 8th February did not take place, because too few members were able to attend. Since there was no urgent business, the meeting was not rearranged, so the next meeting will take place on April 26th, as previously scheduled.

Lonsdale District Scouts

Headquarters: 3 Moor Street Lancaster LA1 1PR

President: Mrs. Suzie Reynolds DL. **District Commissioner:** Craig Dewar. **District Chairman:** Dr Tony Andrews.

W:lonsdalescouts.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1027167

E758 Appointments Advisory Committee Report:

John Edwards reported that six out of eight candidates had attended the last round of interviews and were being recommended for appointment. He highlighted a difficulty, and a trend in recent times, of candidates for whom appointments had been made not turning up. Jon Minshull conjectured whether this might be to do with the more flexible nature of roles nowadays.

John announced his intention, after 18 years, to stand down as AAC Chairman as from the next AGM. Thanks were extended to him by the District Chairman who indicated that a more formal appreciation of his valuable contribution would be made at the appropriate time.

E759 Activity Centres Management Board Report:

The minutes of the ACMB meeting held on 6 March 2017 were received.

It was noted that at Littledale the District Chairman had met representatives of the LCC Highways dept. on site about the running off of rainwater from Littledale Road onto our property. There was a right for road drains to run off to lower level land to enable roads to be kept clear of water. However, this was affecting an internal footpath. Representatives met had been sympathetic to the problem and the Chairman suggested that the County Council be approached to perhaps provide some stone chips to support the path.

Action: District Chairman

With regard to progress on rebuilding the SilverHelme toilet block, the concerns regarding the deteriorating condition of the existing facility was noted. Andrew Kayll reported that he had approached some builders about quoting for the work, so far without success, but he was continuing to work on it. Following a suggestion regarding contacting a Scouter who had building experience it was pointed out that any builder must be registered for VAT in order for the project to be considered as exempt thereby reducing the overall cost to the District.

Action: Andrew Kayll

In the interests of expediency the Chairman indicated that he would be prepared, with the Executive's agreement, to approve a quote under Chairman's action, if any such was felt to be fair and reasonable. This was agreed.

Radio Mast, SilverHelme

In view of the nature of the matter the Chairman stated that his report on this ongoing situation would be recorded as a 'Private Minute'.

E760 Network Commissioner's Report:

Jamie Carbert, the newly appointed Network Commissioner for Lonsdale, presented his report.

A County Network development day, where the District Scout Network Commissioners from around West Lancs would have met to discuss how the section could continue to be improved and how more members could be encouraged to participate in Network activities had unfortunately been cancelled at the last minute. He believed that this would have been a really beneficial day, not only to understand more about the role but also to meet others involved in Network from around the County. Hopefully the day would be rearranged.

Lonsdale District Scouts

Headquarters: 3 Moor Street Lancaster LA1 1PR

President: Mrs. Suzie Reynolds DL. **District Commissioner:** Craig Dewar. **District Chairman:** Dr Tony Andrews.

W:lonsdalescouts.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1027167

He had, however, recently met with the ACC (Network), which was extremely useful to learn about the relatively recent changes to the structure of the section and the challenges and opportunities presented by the fact it is now a District provision.

He was currently discussing with the DC plans for a Network programme planning event, in order to put together a programme of activities and events for the remainder of the year – hopefully with different members of the Network running some of these.

Several members of Network had recently supported the Eric's ESU with their Dragnet event, which had been a success.

E761 District Commissioner's Report:

In the absence of the DC the Chairman presented his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Points highlighted included:-

District Team: Jon Minshull (Deputy DC) had taken up post:

Programme: St. George's Day Celebration is 23rd April in Morecambe being led by our new ADC Events.

A number of groups had engaged in the County 'Commissioners Challenge' and Nights Away Challenge to support their programme. It had been pleasing to see an increase in the number of nights away permits issued as we endeavour to increase the number of nights away in the District.

Development & Growth:

Galgate Scout Group was now open with Beavers and Cubs.

5th Lancaster and 11th Morecambe are receiving intensive support from Barbara Hughes.

Adult Support/ Valuing Volunteers:

We needed to change the date with Suzie Reynolds for the Adult Awards Reception at Leighton Hall as the St. George's Day Awards hadn't been announced at that point.

He was delighted that Pat Griffin was awarded the Bar to the Silver Acorn, and Carole Wilkinson and Pat Armstrong were awarded the Silver Acorn in the annual St. George's Day Awards. The Awards Committee had met, and would be putting forward 14 adults for Chief Scout's Commendations, a further 3 for Awards for Merits, and 3 adults for Bar to the Award for Merit. Following County Guidance, the District will also begin using the Commissioner's Commendation and had some thank you cards available for use.

External Relations:

Frank Rice and Geoff Boulton had accepted an invitation to be District Vice-Presidents, pending approval at the District AGM. We need to reschedule the University reception to suit both Suzie Reynolds and Cat Smith's diaries.

Group Management:

The following GSL searches are in progress: 13th Lancaster, 3rd Morecambe, 2nd Bolton le Sands. Census had once again indicated there were some serious weaknesses in some Groups, regarding their executive committees. He was suggesting the creation of a support team to tackle these weaknesses.

Risk:

There was one historic safeguarding issue. A number of exec-members/committee members are not on compass. Poor Group Executives in some places.

Lonsdale District Scouts

Headquarters: 3 Moor Street Lancaster LA1 1PR

President: Mrs. Suzie Reynolds DL. **District Commissioner:** Craig Dewar. **District Chairman:** Dr Tony Andrews.

W:lonsdalescouts.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1027167

Safety:

No reported accidents since the last meeting.

Vacancies:

There was a need to recruit a new District Appointments Secretary.

Annual Census Analysis 2017:

In the absence of the DC the Chairman presented this report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Key points highlighted were that District membership was at its highest point ever.

- Growth in youth membership of 6%
- Total growth of 6.3% against a 4% target (set by County)
- 8.6% growth in female membership in the last 12 months.
- 3rd biggest District in West Lancs.
- 5th consecutive year of membership growth.

The report also provided a Group analysis showing growth on youth membership. Also, the numbers on waiting lists across the District. Seven Groups had indicated they were NOT using Gift Aid. This would be followed up.

Howard Greenwood articulated a strong view on the worth of these statistics feeling that quantity appeared to take precedence over quality. He took particular issue with the quoted 4% target (set by County) querying the basis for this target. It was stated that this had been mutually agreed at a Commissioners' meeting as a means of providing a measure of assessing overall development. His view was that such statistics meant little at Group level and were more appropriate to District and County.

E762 Health and Safety Report:**DHQ Electrical Issues**

The Secretary reported that at the request of the chairman he had arranged for an electrical contractor to repair one of the storage heaters that was faulty. This had been fixed but the contractor, in the course of dealing with this, had carried out an inspection of the electrical system following which he had submitted a condition report. A copy of this, detailing a number of deficiencies that required dealing with, had been sent by the treasurer to the landlord as this was felt to be his responsibility under the terms of the lease. Subsequently the landlord had been in discussion with the contractor direct taking issue with some items. Discussions were ongoing between them. The matter might well come up again at the time of the renewal of the lease.

Annual Inspection of Fire Equipment, DHQ

The Secretary reported that he had arranged with the usual contractor for the annual inspection of the DHQ fire equipment to be carried out before the end of the month.

E763 Any Other Business

None declared..

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 16 May 2017.

Lonsdale District Scouts

Headquarters: 3 Moor Street Lancaster LA1 1PR

President: Mrs. Suzie Reynolds DL. **District Commissioner:** Craig Dewar. **District Chairman:** Dr Tony Andrews.

W:lonsdalescouts.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1027167