



**MINUTES of the meeting of the LONSDALE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held on the 17 January 2018 at District Headquarters, Moor Street, Lancaster.**

**Present:** T Andrews (Chair), C Dewar (DC), S Clarke (Treasurer), A S Hague (Secretary), D Bateman, R Bell, A Blenkinship, J Carbert, H Greenwood, A Kayll, Wilkinson.

The meeting agreed to a proposal from the DC that in future non-attendance at the meeting should be appropriately noted for record purposes.

**Apologies Received:** C Graham, R Parker,

**Not Present:** D Smith.

**Chairman's 'Thought for the Day':**

"The most effective way to do it, is to do it" - Amelia Earhart.

**E797 Secretary's Report / Correspondence**

Information had been received from the Scout Association outlining details for collecting the census of membership at 31 January 2018. The Secretary had communicated the necessary information to Group Scout Leaders and others for them to report the necessary details.

The deadline for the completion of the census return forms had been set as 11 February 2018, with invoices sent to Groups for payment of membership fees by the 18 February with a deadline for payments to be made to the District Treasurer of 28 February.

**E798 Governance:**

**- Appointment of Chair, Activity Centres Management Board**

No objections had been received to the DC's nomination, circulated by email, of Andrew Kayll as chair of the Activity Centres Management Board. His appointment was therefore ratified by the meeting.

**- Membership - Activity Centres Strategic Review**

The terms of reference of the ACMB had been circulated and as there had been no objections raised these were agreed. The nomination of certain members of the Board for specific roles outlined in the document, which was to have been confirmed at this meeting, was pending the identification of individuals.

With regard to the proposed Strategic Review Group to consider the future of the activity centres it had been proposed that Andrew Kayll would chair the Group, which would also include the District Secretary and District Chair, along with Darren Phillips (GSL 23<sup>rd</sup> Lancaster) and Yak Patel (Chief Executive, Lancaster District CVS) plus an accountant to provide financial input and a nominee from Facilities Management at the University of Cumbria. The DC and District Chair were given delegated authority to appoint the remaining members of the Review Group.

The District Chair emphasized that no decisions had been taken at this stage regarding the future of the Activity Centres and asked that the matter not be

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discussed with non-Trustees. The procedure would be that the Review Group would report back to the District Executive meeting following which any proposals would be put out to consultation prior to any implementation.

#### - **Support to Group Executive Committees**

The District Chair outlined that at a recent meeting of the District Executive Committee we had identified that there was a need to be more effective in our support of Group Executive Committees. A small working group had been appointed to look into this, and this had met on 6 December 2017.

To remind us of our responsibilities [as the District Executive] in supporting Group Executive Committees, he had consulted Policy, Organisation and Rules. The detail was somewhat scant; relevant extracts were in an annex to his paper.

The Group identified early on that we probably would not attract representatives from Scout Groups most in the need of help to a general meeting.

We know that there are Scout Groups with:

- i. No functioning Group Executive Committee.
- ii. Not a full complement of Officers.
- iii. Difficulties with accounting for monies received and paid on behalf of the charity.
- iv. No submission of end-of-year accounts.
- v. Non-compliance with Charity Law (or the requirements of POR).

The Group in its discussions had identified the 'minimum standard' (or 'minimum requirements') for an effective Group Executive Committee (these were presented as an annex to his paper).

Thus, it was believed that the way ahead was to firstly identify those Scout Groups most in need of support and work with them - **for a limited period** - to assist as required. Obviously the five members of the working group would not be a sufficient number to provide the support we believe is needed. We aim to spread-the-load by seeking assistance from others (members of the District Executive and indeed those from effective Group Executive Committees). Thus, we will not be asking an inordinate amount from each 'assister'.

The DC proposed the addition of "Groups that did not hold AGM's" to the itemised list above. A further item to add to the list [of minimum requirements] was that the title of all land and buildings is to be vested with The Scout Association Trust Corporation and the Group Executive Committees had copies of such documents or any lease agreements entered into. Members agreed with a view, stressed by Howard Greenwood, that any task force was going in to assist Groups and not in any way to take over.

The proposed way forward was endorsed by the meeting.

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**E799 Treasurer's Report**

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

**Debtors -**

With regard to the outstanding membership fees from 2017 of £961 the DC reported that the particular AGSL had looked into the situation and where there had been separate section accounts in the Group concerned; a Group bank account had now been set up. Matters were moving forward and the Group now had an Executive Committee established, which should help in resolving matters.

**Knight Hike** – The DC agreed to contact his ADC concerning the total of about £100 in entry fees due to be paid over.

**Creditors**

A £200 grant from the Scout Association is owed to the Galgate Group but they still have no bank account. The DC outlined the present situation at the Group concerning any Executive Committee and other leadership matters. He would be meeting the leaders in the near future along with the County Development Manager and he would raise these issues then.

**Action: DC****Balances at 5/1/18**

In order to increase liquidity, £20,000 was being withdrawn from the Virgin 100 day notice account which no longer offered a market leading interest rate. When this money is received in mid-April, all but about £2,700 of the HQ funds will be in a CAFBank current account or on instant access deposit with the Skipton Building Society.

**Financial out-turn year ended 31 December 2017**

In view of the predicted operating surplus on the HQ account compared with a budgeted deficit of £6,000, the Finance sub-Committee decided that the shortfall on the interest paid to the Sharpe Bequest capital fund compared with the increase in the Consumer Price Index for the year to May 2017 should be made up by a transfer from the operating reserves to the Sharpe Capital fund. Even after this transfer, amounting to about £2,500, the operating surplus brought out by preliminary unagreed figures amounts to nearly £5,000. So before this adjustment there was a difference of around £13,500 between the budgeted deficit and operating surplus - or £14,500 if one Group manages to pay its outstanding membership fees due last March. There were several unbudgeted "windfalls" amounting to nearly £8,000 in total: a surplus on activities, payment of 3 years' share of surpluses from the Scout & Guide shop and rent saving due to the unavailability of the HQ premises following the nearby fire last April. However, the largest divergence came from the aggregate underspends by budget holders.

The Chair highlighted that a deficit budget had been set for this year: with the spending proposals agreed it was anticipated that there would be a call on reserves (rather than generate a surplus - as in previous years).

**World Scout Jamboree 2019**

No payment schedule had yet reached the Treasurer from County, On the assumption that West Lancs would be funding one third and that Lonsdale would have 5

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participants, he thought that we should have to pay over in excess of £6,000 within the next few months. The DC agreed to check the present position on this with County.

**Action: DC**

**E800 Finance Sub-Committee**

As the committee had not met since the last meeting there was no report to present.

**E801 14-25 Finance and Support Group**

As this committee had similarly not met since the last meeting there was no report to present.

**E802 Appointments Advisory Committee Report**

The Chair of the committee reported that they had met the previous evening and had recommended for provisional warrants two Assistant Beaver Scout Leaders and one Assistant Cub Scout Leader. They had also recommended for approval five changes of role, in several cases these being people with a long local commitment to Scouting. As far as he was aware there were currently no other outstanding applications.

He was particularly grateful to Pat Griffin who had stood in as Training Manager for the last two meetings and who had produced a substantial 'Welcome pack' for new applications.

He had discussed the document from Preston, which the DC had sent, with his colleagues. As the 'Word' document was rather lengthy and couldn't easily be filtered to find specific information or individual groups they wondered whether an 'Excel' version would be possible.

The committee was still looking to appoint new panel members, especially from younger members, which would widen the demographic of the committee.

With regard to the appointment of new panel members the DC outlined that the procedure was for these to be selected by the Chair of the Appointments Committee and for the names to be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.

**E803 Activity Centres Management Board:**

**- Minutes of Meeting 9 Jan 2018**

These minutes were received for information. The ACMB Chair thanked the Secretary for his prompt delivery, welcoming the more valuable detailed format.

The terms of reference of the Board had been discussed and the proposed structure agreed. The model proposed and accepted basically involved the setting up of two groups, an Operating Group for each Centre with delegated funds and a Management Board for overall management – this latter function was the area that had perhaps slipped. To take matters forward the DC had proposed at the Executive Committee meeting the identification of five individuals to be responsible for the following elements of the management and operation of the Centres: - Development, Grants, Marketing, Activities and Health & Safety. It was acknowledged that finding people to fill these roles would be a challenge.

A draft budget proposal for 2018 had been considered with several questions raised in the absence of the ACMB Treasurer. These would be considered at the

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next FSC meeting and a budget proposal submitted to the Executive Committee in due course.

- **SilverHelme Toilet Block Finances**

This paper, outlining the budget and payments for this new facility, was received and discussed at length. In summary it was noted that the project was £46,411.85 over budget – nearly twice the agreed budgeted amount. It was noted that at the ACMB meeting it had been stated that no further payments were due to contractors. Gas and electrical certificates had been issued; we await the results of the Building Regulations inspection.

The reasons behind this substantial variance were discussed in detail with such factors as significant omissions of some elements from the quotation accepted viz. costly internal partitions, variations on site to the accepted design and some unexpected additions in the form of additional stone for levelling.

In terms of the main building quote accepted the Chair highlighted that Andrew Kayll had offered to try to obtain alternative quotes but these had proved difficult to obtain for various reasons outlined. One quote received had been in the sum of £74K + VAT and another £80K + VAT. The likely cost of £50K, accepted as the lowest quote, therefore did seem questionable.

Following a comment from Howard Greenwood querying the mechanics of how the ACMB managed to spend that money, which was elucidated, discussion moved on to how to prevent such a situation occurring in any future capital project. It was suggested that any expenditure that was outside the agreed budget must be referred back to the Executive. Also, perhaps the answer would be to employ a professional to manage the project.

The DC highlighted that the more matters were challenged the less information became forthcoming. The Chair also underlined that Nigel Pullen, the previous ACMB Chair, had resigned at the previous Executive meeting acknowledging that he had not followed due process as clearly detailed in the terms of reference for the ACMB.

In response to a question from the DC as to whether the Executive as Trustees had shown a lack of due diligence, the general feeling was that that was probably the case.

The DC's opinion was that there had clearly been a failure of ACMB management and there was a distinct need to capture the reasons for this in a report for future reference. It was agreed that a small group be set up to undertake this task. This would be chaired by the ACMB Chair and Howard Greenwood agreed to participate also.

The District Chair emphasised that these discussions were confidential to the Executive Committee

Responding to a suggestion regarding an official opening for the new facility the DC felt that this should be kept low key. Once final completion had been achieved the building could be opened for use and a small ceremony performed at a convenient date thereafter.

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- **Activity Centre Usage 2017**

Usage figures had been provided by the ACMB Booking Secretary. As queries had been raised on these she had agreed to review these for further consideration by the ACMB. It was emphasised that accurate data would be needed for the Review Group to do its work meaningfully. Regarding seemingly limited usage of the lodges by local Groups Dave Squirrell suggested that this was partly because some local Groups preferred to go outside the District, similarly outsiders came here. Pending confirmation of the figures the ACMB had not recommended any change to user fees for the present.

- **Update - Renewal of Communications Mast at SilverHelme**

The purpose of this report, prepared by the District Chair, was to provide an update in relation to the renewal of the lease for the communications mast operated by Airwave Solutions Limited was received and noted.

At the present time the Executive Committee was being asked to consider/confirm the following actions:

- i. In the latest iteration of the consideration of the lease, the solicitors acting for Airwave Solutions Limited asked for a variation of the terms. The draft lease included the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1974 that, essentially, gave the tenants no security of tenure - they would have to remove the mast at the end of this next lease. Airwave Solutions Limited asked and I agreed that they be given security of tenure. I believed this to be a valid request, which I agreed to [on behalf of the Trustees].
- ii. As the title of the property is vested in The Scout Association Trust Corporation there is no requirement for Lonsdale District Scout Council to be a party to the signing of lease. I have asked that, in fact, we be a party; we have previously agreed that the Chairman and Secretary, for the time being, sign the lease on behalf of the Scout Council. The Scout Council was a party to the signing of the original lease.
- iii. It is possible - but I have challenged - that The Scout Association Trust Corporation will ask for a surveyor's report (as required by The Charities (Qualified Surveyors' Reports) Regulations 1992 - Statutory Instrument No 2980 of 1992). I believe this to be part of the confusion that this is not a new lease but a renewal!! For the original lease, I recall that I saw such a report in the file I handed back to our solicitors at the start of this whole process. Should we still need to provide such a report, we have a local surveyor who, we believe, could do this for us.
- iv. In the matter of professional charges, we have to meet those for our solicitors and possibly those for a surveyor's report - in addition to those due to The Scout Association Trust Corporation. In the initial negotiations it was agreed that Airwave Solutions Limited would contribute £750 towards our costs. In view of the significant delays (essentially on our side) this could be a delicate matter! We do have a little leeway, in that one of the first actions the surveyor we appointed (from Savills) negotiated a slight increase in the rent due (under the terms of the old lease) as, I believe, increases had not been applied correctly.
- v. Although we are not yet at the conclusion of completion of the lease, I seek your views - based on what I have reported above - as to whether we make a formal complaint to Joseph A Jones & Co in relation to the handling of this matter on our

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behalf. We have to go to the company first and if not satisfied can refer the matter to Legal Ombudsman (as the complaint will be in relation to poor service)

The Chair's actions as outlined were confirmed.

With regard to the last point the Treasurer suggested that an alternative to a formal complaint could be to cap the solicitor's fee to an agreed amount and send this "in full and final settlement of the matter."

#### **E804 Explorer Report**

Dave Squirrell (DESComm) gave an update on numbers in the various Explorer Units. These totalled 116 in all. 32 members had signed up to attend the Red Rose Camp 2018. The 'Triton' event was to be run again on 22 June. DofE Award Expeditions were to take place in South Cumbria. A Christmas Camp was being proposed – the DC would discuss possible support for this from the Programme budget.

#### **E805 Network Report**

Jamie Carbert (Network Comm.) reported that members would be meeting later that week to plan the programme for the year.

#### **E806 District Commissioner's Report**

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

#### **Programme:**

**Jamboree** - Applications had been invited for five young people to attend the next World Scout Jamboree. Selection would take place at the end of February and members of the District Team were currently visiting all Scout Troops and Explorer Scout Units to encourage interest.

**International Trip 2019** – Named individuals had been appointed to lead the next District international trip for Scouts and Explorers in summer 2019.

**Events 2018** – The St. George's Day celebration would be held in Lancaster and would be a high profile public event. Plans were in hand to hold the District Camp again at the end of September and also to hold a social event for adults in Scouting in November.

**District Programme Team** – In line with the new structure the respective group had now met and confirmed the district diary for the year, with a planned increase in events for Scouts and Explorers. The focus remained on nights away, top awards and opportunities to bring people together.

**Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme Accredited Trainers** – Options were currently being explored for the District to become an accredited training centre for the award. This would give us the ability to train our own assessors and might also become an income stream.

#### **Adult Support and Communications:**

**Training** – A new online training booking system had been introduced, which alongside us offering free training meant it was easier than ever for leaders to book onto courses. New ways of monitoring were being looked at for those leaders who had failed to meet their training requirements within an agreed period of time .

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**Awards** – The Awards Committee had met and recommended a significant number of good service awards for our adult volunteers. The DC would speak to the District President about holding an awards reception again.

**Media** – The new manager had put together a media plan for the forthcoming 12 months. The DC looked forward to an increased district profile.

**Group Support:**

**GSL's** – The DDC (Group Support) had chaired the last GSL's meeting and was in the process of setting up follow-up induction meetings for GSL's who had been in post less than 12 months.

**Groups without GSL's** - 5th Lancaster, Slyne with Hest, Hornby, Galgate.

**GSL appointment** – Dan Rawes had been appointed as GSL at 35<sup>th</sup> Lancaster to succeed Mandy Sweet.

**Group Executive Support** – the DC was currently offering support to 11<sup>th</sup> Morecambe. The following Groups did not currently have Executive Committees: Slyne, Hornby, Galgate, 5th Lancaster, Westgate, Caton.

**Development and Growth:**

Current projects were Galgate, Explorer Scout support, Hornby.  
Closed projects since the last meeting were 5th Lancaster and 34<sup>th</sup> Lancaster.

**'Vision 2023'** – the District Team were meeting on the 9/11 February at SilverHelme to consider our new strategic plan. District Executive members were invited to join the group on Sunday 11 February from 10 am to 1 pm. Lunch would be included.

**Risks and Challenges:**

The suspended leader (historic allegations) had been notified that the police were taking no further action. The DC was awaiting information on how to proceed.  
Less than 70% compliance with basic leader training across the District.  
Lack of members on the Appointments Advisory Committee hindering its effectiveness.  
The ACMB now had vastly eroded reserves which might hinder the District in the future.

**E807 Health and Safety Report**

One incident had been reported involving a Scout injured at SilverHelme going to hospital. Andrew Kayll reported that the Fire Service report on the Activity Centres was still awaited. The District Chair agreed to follow this up.

**Action: TA**

Following the agreement at the previous meeting to the global Health & Safety Policy the ACMB Chair and District Chair had arranged to meet and carry out a survey of the sites to list risks with a view to preparing a draft Safety Policy for each site.

The DC asked that the ACMB review reporting procedures at the sites paying particular attention to confidentiality and security of records.

**Action: AK**

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**E808 Any Other Business****a. District President**

The District Chair and DC would be meeting with Mrs Reynolds to discuss various matters, including that she had indicated her intention to retire at the 2018 AGM.

**b. District Website**

Following a recent website problem, subsequently resolved, the District Chair reported that should further fatal problems occur he was prepared to take 'Chair's Action' to approve expenditure for an alternative provision to ensure the continuity of this invaluable communication medium, should this be necessary.

**c. Reporting from County Executive**

The District Chair acknowledged that the DC and himself had not reported very often on matters considered at County. Two recent deliberations had been on a possible introduction of a County Levy sometime in the future and the appointment of a new County Chairman.

**Date of Next Meeting: 15 March 2018.**

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