



MINUTES of the meeting of the LONSDALE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held on the 28 November 2017 at District Headquarters, Moor Street, Lancaster.

Present: T Andrews (Chairman), C Dewar (DC), S Clarke (Treasurer), A S Hague (Secretary), D Bateman, R Bell, J Carbert, A Kayll, N Pullen, D Squirrell, M Sweet, T Wilkinson.

Apologies: C Graham, H Greenwood, R Parker, D Smith.

Welcome: The Chairman extended a welcome to Rhianne Bell and Dave Squirrell the newly appointed District Youth Commissioner and DESComm respectively and also to Mandy Sweet, a meeting observer in her new role as Deputy DC (Programme).

Chairman's 'Thought for the Day':

"Nothing can save England if she will not save herself. If we lose faith in ourselves, in our capacity to guide and govern, if we lose our will to live, then indeed our story is told."

- Winston Spencer Churchill, 1933

Minutes of the Last Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment: -

E781 Activity Centres Management Board Report:

Nigel Pullen pointed out that the bursary of £2000 had not been made available by the Rotary Club of Carnforth but by an associate. It was being held in the Club's account and they were administering it. No grant applications had been made so far and if the bursary was not used it could be lost.

Matters Arising:

- **Trustees records on 'Compass'**

It was reported that the details of the three members of the committee not previously recorded had now been entered onto the system.

- **Activity Centres - Strategic Review**

The Chairman reported that the Terms of Reference for the review, circulated after the previous meeting of the Executive Committee, had been accepted without objection. At the present time the DC and he were formulating the membership of the group (for presentation to the Executive Committee for approval).

**E786 Secretary's Report / Correspondence
Discretionary Rate Relief Review**

As part of standard review procedures, the City Council had written to the District in respect of its three properties at Moor Street plus Littledale and SilverHelme SACs. A consolidated reply covering all three properties had been sent by the Secretary to the Council's Officer together with the information requested.

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E787 Governance: Governance Document

An updated version of the governance document had been circulated with the agenda. Various sections of the document were due for review in November; of particular note:

- a. District Team –
 - i. *A culture of safety is embedded within the programme.* The DC had rated this as 'Amber' as a number of leaders had still to do safety training. In addition, he still felt that there was an issue with under-reporting of accidents/incidents.
- b. Finance Sub-committee –
 - i. *The District has an up to date reserves policy to be reviewed annually by the Executive.* The Chairman had acknowledged that a robust policy is needed; some discussions had identified the way ahead but we still needed to continue to refine our thinking on this matter. Proposals would be presented to the District Executive in due course.
 - ii. *Budget Cycle.* Some improvements had been made and refinements made.
 - iii. *Insurance Cover.* Much work had been carried out by the Treasurer. Cover had been reviewed following a recent renewal request of the contents insurance (and business had been placed with a different broker). Work was in hand to review inventories.
 - iv. *Annual accounts received from all Scout Groups.* The assessment had moved from 'Red' to 'Amber' as the number of returns received had improved. However, returns were still awaited from some Groups.
 - v. *Sharpe Bequest.* One challenge was the significant decrease in interest received (which would limit the grants we can award in the next few years).
- c. Activity Centres Management Board -
 - i. *All buildings, equipment and facilities comply with statutory requirements with respect to disabled persons use.* Nigel Pullen disagreed with the Committee's previously recorded assessment that this should be rated 'Green' feeling there were issues at Littledale, which he outlined, that meant that this should be 'Amber' in his view.
- d. 14-25 Finance & Support Group –

It was agreed that consideration under this heading be deferred until a subsequent meeting.

District Expenses Policy:

An annual review of this policy had previously been agreed. The Chairman highlighted a fundamental change - to include within the policy 'young people representing the District'. On behalf of the sub-Committee he recommended that the vehicle mileage rate stay at 25p per mile subject to review at the next Finance sub-Committee meeting. It was agreed that that committee should have delegated authority to amend the rate, if required.

The revised policy was approved

E788 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented his report and HQ budget for 2018, copies of which are attached to these minutes.

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a. Debtors

- i. Membership fees 2017 -
One Group still owed £961 in membership fees.
- ii. Scout & Guide Shop -
Following approval of its accounts for the three years to 31st March 2017, the shop has paid LDSC the sum of £2897.15, representing the District's share of the surplus for these three years. In addition, the contribution for the exclusive use of the room has been paid up to 1 November 2017.

b. Creditors

The previous report showed that a £100 grant from the Scout Association was owed to Galgate. The amount was actually £200. It is hoped that the Group will be able to open a bank account shortly.

c. Sharpe Bequest

Two claimant Groups have been paid the grants claimed. One Group has been granted an extension of 3 months, to 28th Feb. 2018, to substantiate its grant claim.

The Finance Sub-Committee decided at its meeting on 16th November that sufficient funds should be transferred from the general reserve to fully index the capital fund for the current year by reference to the Consumer Price Index. The sum involved is £1772.57. Authority to progress this matter was delegated to the FSC.

d. Balances at 17th Nov. 2017

A spreadsheet was attached to the report.

e. Budget 2018

The Finance Sub-Committee had considered the prospective out-turn for 2017, which was likely again to show a surplus compared with the budgeted deficit of £6177, and the budget proposals for 2018. The attached statement, showing a deficit of £10463, was submitted for the Executive Committee's consideration with the sub-Committee's recommendation that it be approved.

Commenting on the proposed budget the DC highlighted that the District was in a good position because of careful financial management. Thanks for this were extended to the relevant members. We were now in a good position to invest in local scouting. Options available included continuing the precedent of paying for the first year's membership subscriptions in respect of any new Groups. Support had also been possible to young people participating in international events and experiences.

He was proposing that participation in the jamboree selection weekend would be at no cost to the scouts participating. The budget in Scouting4All had been reduced significantly owing to the fact that this had received few claims and a bursary had now been made available via Nigel Pullen. Sections' budgets had been consolidated into one for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, to be managed by the Deputy DC (Programme).

The DC believed that the District should fund all Young Leader training including the provision of belts (but not First Aid training). A further proposal, supported by the Finance Sub-Committee, was to fund all adult training viz. Getting Started, County day courses, wood badge weekends and leadership and management training - all with effect from the 1st January, 2018.

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With regard to first aid training, presently costing £25.30 to the individual, based on models elsewhere he was proposing that this training be brought in-house with the District training its own trainers, and provided at cost price to participants.

A further initiative was to establish a District activity fund to allow leaders to undertake activity permit training. This to be discretionary amounts and supported by other grant sources, which he outlined.

The Chairman highlighted the fact that this would be a deficit budget in the sum of £10,356; Some reserves had been built up which would support this but the District would need to keep an eye on the deficit budget position in future years.

The Committee accepted the budget as outlined. A letter from the Chairman/ DC would be sent to all Groups in due course outlining the position.

Action: DC/Chairman

The Chairman also reported that a budget statement had now been received from the Activity Centres Treasurer. This included a schedule of proposed charges for 2018. The DC once again expressed concern, his personal view, that charges to outside users were too high. Occupancy figures had been requested previously and these were again required in order to determine a realistic set of charges. Acknowledging that bookings were up he felt that charges to users should not be varied at this time. He also commented on the differing standards of indoor accommodation at the two activity centres although the charge was identical.

On the question of charges and users' expectations Tom Wilkinson suggested that an open day at each of the centres might be beneficially arranged.

Action: ACMB

In the circumstances the Chairman recommended that a decision on charges should be deferred until the details requested had been supplied and this was agreed. It was confirmed that as a matter of process the budget should come first to the Activity Centres Management Board, thence to the Finance sub-Committee, and thereafter to the Executive Committee.

E789 Finance Sub-Committee Report:

- **Minutes of Meeting 4 October 2017**
These minutes were received for information. The Chairman highlighted that the shop accounts for the past three years had been attached to the minutes for information. He provided details of the respective gross profits and commented on certain aspects.
- **Minutes of Meeting 16 November 2017**
These minutes (unconfirmed) were received for information. The Chairman pointed out an 'Exceptional Items - Additional Budget Request for 2017', where the DC had submitted an additional bid to provide equipment to support events (recognising that the District needed to develop its ability to manage any potential safety incidents):

E790 14-25 Finance and Support Group Report:

The District Chairman reported that progress continued to be made with the Explorer section's accounting arrangements. All Explorer Leaders were being encouraged to make full use of the potential of the OSM system.

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E791 Appointments Advisory Committee Report:

David Bateman reported that the Committee had met on 19th October. Provisional warrants had been recommended for 8 applicants: 2 applicants had been unable to attend. The committee had also recommended the acceptance of 3 changes of role.

The pool of panel members was now rather small, and he felt that it would be helpful to have a larger pool to draw from, and that new members representing a slightly wider demographic, would be welcome. They were trying to vary the evenings on which they met, to make it more convenient for applicants as well as for members of the panel. Executive members were requested to keep an eye open for any possible candidates who, for independence reasons, should not be uniformed or active in the District. The DC recommended to AAC members Module 37 of the training scheme 'Advising on Adult Appointments'.

Responding to a query regarding progress on the previously proposed Assistant Appointment Secretary role, the DC supported this stating that finding the right person was the challenge. In this connection he proposed that the AAC members might perhaps visit their colleagues at Preston where the system there had been highlighted as a beacon of good practice. The Preston DC had designed a management system, which might perhaps be utilised beneficially locally.

E792 Activity Centres Management Board Report:

The ACMB Chairman presented his report. Key developments were as follows: - as at 1st November bookings for SilverHelme were 109 for the year and for Littledale were 108. SilverHelme currently had an operating surplus of £8,093.43 and Littledale had a surplus of £2,621.

The £20,000 grant from the Vera Wolstencroft Trust Fund towards the cost of the construction of the replacement toilet block at SilverHelme had been received. Construction of the toilet block was progressing well and was expected to be finished within the following three weeks. As at the 1st November expenditure on the building was £61,408.66 with plumbing and electrical work estimated to be £27,000 for completion, much of the plumbing work was being carried out by volunteers. One of the volunteer's employers has donated two bundles of copper pipe when he discovered that his employee was working for us in his own time.

Fire safety inspections had been carried out on 9th November at both sites by the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. Their written reports were awaited. Notes of their requirements and recommendations were in his possession, only one of which needed immediate action, which had been put in hand. He outlined a number of the issues which were expected in the awaited report.

In this connection the District Chairman again raised the issue of the three 'Group' huts at Littledale. Attempts to resolve the situation around these had gone on for some time and the DC proposed that the respective GSLs be summoned to a meeting to conclude the matter.

Returning to the matter of the replacement toilet block at SilverHelme, and its greatly increased projected cost (now in the region of £94K) - currently an approximate 93% projected rise in net costs, vide Minute No. 5 of the Finance Sub-Committee (a copy of which is attached to the agenda), Nigel Pullen acknowledged that the District's published financial procedures had not been complied with and at that point he announced his resignation both from the ACMB and the District Executive, having outlined some of the reasons behind the increased costs.

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Responding, the District Chairman acknowledged that the District would be getting a fit-for-purpose building. However, improved governance had been a key objective of the Executive Committee in recent times and this project did not show good governance. Responding to a suggestion from Nigel Pullen that, because of the prevailing circumstances, decisions on some expenditure had necessarily to be made 'on the spot'; the DC stated that this should nevertheless have been referred back to the District Executive. The Chairman highlighted that there was a mechanism for this to be actioned between meetings of the executive Committee).

Continuing, the DC accepted that the building would not have happened without Nigel's input. Significant progress had also been made on facilities at both of the District's sites and confidence in the ACMB had been restored to some extent. He thanked Nigel for all that he had done. The activity centres presented the District's biggest challenge going forward and for that reason a working group was in the process of being established to make recommendations.

Accepting Nigel Pullen's resignation, the DC extended an invitation to him to be the formal opener of the replacement toilet block.

Nigel expressed the view that there had been a lack of support previously from the Executive and the District Team. He left the meeting at that point.

Responding to a question from David Bateman regarding what the effect on progress would have been if the financial procedures had been followed the DC stated that the trustees had to question the governance of the project.

Andrew Kayll asked what would happen now to the AC's fire reports. The Chairman said that he would write to Nigel Pullen, thank him for his work on the ACMB and request that all future correspondence be forwarded to himself. He would also write to all the ACMB's members to acquaint them with the situation.

Action: District Chairman

The DC advised that he would send an email to all Executive Members regarding a new ACMB Chairman, once he had a nomination, to seek approval.

E793 District Explorer Scout Commissioner's Report:

Dave Squirrell gave a verbal report on the respective membership numbers in each of the Explorer Units. One Unit in particular, with minimal numbers, needed support. The Section was again looking to run the 'Triton' event in the Spring

E794 Network Commissioner's Report:

Jamie Carbert circulated a 'birthday card' which would be issued to Explorer Scouts coming up to Network age to appraise them of the benefits of the section. Around 30 were coming up to this stage. He expressed concern regarding current numbers and on members taking the lead on the programme update. There was a need to coach and develop 18 year olds.

E795 District Commissioner's Report:

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

Key points included: -

District team:

The restructure of the team had been well received and the new line managers were currently having 1 to 1's with the people that they are responsible for.

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Programme:

The District was represented at the Lancaster and Morecambe Remembrance Day events, as well as in local village ceremonies.

The Night Hike had been another successful event for the Scout and Explorer sections.

The 'Santa Sleepover' had been a huge success with a large number of children receiving their silver awards.

Planning was moving ahead for a large-scale public event in Lancaster City centre for St. George's Day.

The District had five confirmed places for the next World Scout Jamboree.

Development & Growth:

Various development projects were outlined in the report.

Adult Support/ Valuing Volunteers:

The Awards Committee was due to meet in the New Year.

External Relations:

The District now had an inroad to use Lancaster University as a venue for meeting rooms. Christmas cards would again be sent to community partners. The DC would still like the District to explore the possibility of an external relations reception to further promote our organisation – potentially targeting people with skills we need, and grant funders.

Marketing, Media and Communications:

Two press releases had been prepared and issued regarding the Night Hike and Santa Sleepover.

Group Management:

Group Scout Leader reviews had identified training as being the District's most significant area for work.

Risk:

- Leader remains on bail, with allegations of historic child abuse made against him (not in scouting)
- Committee members/ staff without a DBS/Membership Registration.
- Overspend at SilverHelme in respect of the toilet block.
- Lack of diversity and committee members on the Appointments Advisory Committee.

Safety:

No incidents had been reported to the DC since the last executive meeting

E796 Any Other Business

None declared.

Date of Next Meeting: 17 January 2018.

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