

**MINUTES of the meeting of the LONSDALE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held on 18 May 2020 online.**

**Present:** T Andrews (Chair), M Sweet (DC), S Landles (Treasurer), A S Hague (Secretary), J Carbert, H Greenwood, S Mather, L Maun, D Smith, S Sweet (by invitation), T Wilkinson.

**Apologies Received:** D Bateman, R Parker, C Seton.

**Not Present:** K Caldicott.

**Chair's Introduction / Meeting Procedures:**

Owing to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic restrictions on social distancing the meeting was being held online. The Chair detailed some associated domestic issues with this.

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

"Stop worrying about the potholes in the road and celebrate the journey" (Fitzhugh Mullan).

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2020 were agreed as an accurate record subject to the following amendment: -

**Minute E919 Secretary's Report (Annual Census):** Howard Greenwood wished to clarify that his comment about timescales did not refer to the census per se, with which he had no issue with in terms of its timescale, but to the short timescale available to complete the census following the issue of the County's spreadsheets, which they were told had to be used and which were not, in his opinion, fit for purpose as first issued and which caused himself and other GSL's much angst, extra work and last minute rushing - through no fault of their own.

**Outcome of Consultation Following Cancellation of Meeting of 18 March 2020:**

The Chair reported that with the cancellation of the meeting scheduled for 18th March 2020 several proposals had been circulated for approval.

No objections had been received with regard to the proposals to agree to recommend to the next District AGM that Mrs. Kath. Bromilow MBE be appointed District President and Mrs. Suzie Reynolds DL be appointed a District Vice-President. Also, with regard to authorising the District Chair to incur expenditure to obtain a qualified surveyor's report in order to satisfy Section 119 of the Charities Act 2011.

There had been one objection to the proposal to agree to enter into a deed of liability with the Scout Association Trust Corporation.

In relation to the required qualified surveyor's report he had approached a company but had not so far received a response.

**Matters Arising:**

Nil.

**E931 Secretary's Report / Correspondence**

No correspondence had been received.

**E932 Governance:**

**i. Advance Amendments to POR**

The Chair outlined that The Scout Association had approved an amendment to the standard constitutions in Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) which allowed meetings to be held remotely. This also allowed decisions to be made electronically. In line with the guidance at least 75% of committee members must approve any decision to be made by the committee.

Also, the District Executive Committee and its sub-committees could meet by telephone conference, videoconference as well as face to face in order to discharge its responsibilities, when agreed by the appropriate Chair.

As Lonsdale had its own separate constitution it would be necessary to amend the document accordingly. It was proposed that the Executive formally adopt these amendments in line with The Scout Associations timeline and as an Executive Committee, appropriate amendments to our constitution be recommended to the forthcoming AGM. This was agreed.

At his request the Chair was tasked with reviewing the District's current constitution to determine if any further amendments were needed.

**Action: District Chair**

**ii. District Treasurer**

The Chair presented his paper outlining that Steve Clarke had notified the D.C. and himself of his resignation as a trustee and his indication that he was willing to continue as Treasurer should this be permitted under the terms of the District's Governance Document. Whatever the outcome, this would mean, inter alia, that there would be no attendance at meetings of the District Executive Committee. In the period since the D.C. and himself had been informed of the decision, the Chair had been giving the matter much thought, undertaken research and had discussions with others, including the County Chair. The advice he had received was that the Treasurer had to be a trustee as there needed to be a channel of accountability for trustees.

Following the outcome of these discussions, and the agreement of those involved, the following proposals submitted to the Executive Committee were noted/approved: -

- a. The resignation of Steve Clarke as a District trustee.
- b. Stephen Landles (Chair of the Finance sub-Committee) be appointed Treasurer
- c. Steve Clarke be appointed as Finance Officer of the Council.

In essence, the Finance Officer would be carrying out the vast majority of the work usually the responsibility of the Treasurer.

Steve Clarke had indicated that he was happy with this course of action.

**iii. Review of TORs of Activity Centres Management Board**

The District Chair had circulated the Terms of Reference of the Activity Centres Management Board. When these had been approved the previous year, it had been for one year only with the normal cycle being to review TOR's every two years and this would bring this one into line. The ones circulated were exactly as previously approved and the ACMB Chair had indicated that these would be satisfactory for now. The Terms of Reference for the ACMB were approved to continue for a further year.

**iii. Annual General Meeting**

The District Chair presented his paper outlining that the date currently set for this year's AGM was the 25th June 2020. At the present time it wasn't certain if face to face meetings would be possible then owing to the continuing Covid 19 situation. His view being that we should continue to plan for a meeting on this date but fully expect to defer it until a later date.

In light of advice received from the Charity Commission his proposal was that the trustees note the guidance from them but continue to plan for an AGM to be held on the 25 June 2020 recognising that it might not be possible so to do. If this proved to be the case the Chair, in consultation with the DC and other officers, should be authorised to implement plans to hold the AGM as soon as is reasonably possible after the Government advice on holding face to face meetings changed. In making such a decision it had to be considered that within Scouting it was not customary for such a meeting to be held during the period of school summer holidays. This proposal was agreed.

The Chair added that once the Annual Report and Accounts had been approved by the Executive these could be sent to the Charity Commission and published on their website thus fulfilling our legal obligations; they only required to be received and considered at the AGM. The remaining obligation was informing the District what we have done and to appoint members of the Executive.

The Treasurer expressed a wish for the accounts to be finalised as soon as possible. The Chair would supply a copy of the Shop accounts [for the accounts] to do this.

**Action : Chair**

**E933 Treasurer's Report:**

Owing to the changeover of responsibilities a written report was not available on this occasion. One had been prepared for the previous meeting that had not taken place and the Treasurer gave a verbal update on the this.

**i. Current funds**

In the General account £56k - CAF account £18k, Skipton BS £37k (excludes grant £10k anticipated for Moor Street from Government Hardship Fund) Sharpe Bequest £104 -. currently yielding 1.21%, over various accounts.

The Finance sub-Committee had undertaken an exercise estimating cash flow to the year end and was satisfied we can meet our commitments plus have some

provision for contingencies in the present turmoil. An opportunity had been taken to move £60k to Shawbrook Bank for 12 months at 1.45%.

**ii. Debtors**

There were no debtors at the present time.

**iii. Creditors**

The issue reported previously with Yorkshire Energy was ongoing.

**iv. Scout & Guide Shop**

The accounts for the Scout and Guide Shop for the year ended 31 March 2019 had just been received and had yet to be agreed with the Guide Division Commissioners. It was acknowledged that a discussion, in depth, would be needed, in the future, to review the Shop's operation.

**E934 Finance Sub-Committee:**

**i. Sharpe Bequest**

Income from interest this year would be c. £1k only; this could be made available for Groups to apply for. Previously it had been the policy to index link the fund so that it didn't diminish. However, with Inflation at 1.5% (CPI) this would mean there would be nothing to make available this year if this strategy was pursued. In the circumstances the FSC had decided to make £1k available acknowledging that that would be 'robbing tomorrow'.

The District Chair would now invite applications for grants with a deadline of 31 August. He would remind applicants of the condition that any grant must be used for the purpose given. It was agreed that the policy would be to target Groups who were low on funds. The District Chair had re-worded the application form (the 50% requirement) to ask what funds Groups had "raised in the year and not committed to other purposes."

**Action: District Chair**

The Network Comm. enquired if the national policy in similar cases be followed that applicants must have utilised gift aid. Noting this the District Chair stated that our requirement at the moment was just to provide a copy of their up to date accounts. Howard Greenwood felt that there should be a policy that the grants should be directed to Groups struggling financially. This proposal was supported. He stated that TSA had advocated that Groups should hold reserves to a minimum of one year's turnover but a number of local Groups held much more than that yet had applied for grants in the past.

The Treasurer suggested the necessity, possibly, to identify different mechanisms for the distribution of grants in the future subject to rules surrounding the restrictive covenant

**ii. Investments**

The Treasurer spoke to a paper he had circulated on investment proposals. This matter had been discussed previously at the September 2019 meeting where a proposal had been agreed to proceed with an initial investment of £50k of funding. Since then the market had been in some turmoil, which was not a good situation for our investments.

The FSC proposals were now that: -

- a. We reaffirm that despite the market turmoil the investment proposals previously agreed remain valid.
- b. We agree to constitute the Investment sub-Committee and ask it to meet within 4 weeks.
- c. We nominate a trustee and 2 others to the committee. (FSC Chair and District Treasurer are ex officio members.)
- d. We instruct the Investment sub-Committee to use phased purchasing to reduce timing risk.
- e. To give the longest possible phasing on purchases we make an immediate start (once the Investment Committee has met) with up to £20k with the remainder of the authorised £50k spread over the next few months.

With regard to item c. the FSC Chair and District Treasurer are now one person. It was proposed that the Finance Officer should take the Treasurer's role. Also, that Ray Salisbury (ACMB Treasurer) should be a member of the ISC. Howard Greenwood accepted a nomination to be the trustee member. Julie Harper (Treasurer, 23rd Lancaster) would be approached to become a member also to fill the remaining vacancy.

**Action: DC**

The Network Comm. stated that at the September meeting referred to it had been agreed that no investment action be taken until after the outcome of BREXIT was known. The District Chair stated that the UK had stopped being a member of the European Union (EU) at 23:00 GMT on 31 January 2020.

The District Chair highlighted that the intention would be to work through one of the many CAF Bank investment platforms.

The proposals as outlined were agreed.

**E935 14-25 Finance and Support Group:**

The Group's Chair reported that the scheduled March and May meetings had not taken place for reasons he outlined and the DC confirmed that there was very little business requiring discussion in any event. The sub-Committee Chair would arrange a meeting in due course.

**Action: sub-Committee Chair**

**E936 Appointments Advisory Committee Report:**

The DC reported that the Committee were holding their first 'virtual' meeting that evening. There were 5 potential leaders for interview and the committee were looking to sign off a further 15 who did not require to be seen being change of roles etc. There was still a backlog of volunteers requiring interview and it was hoped to reduce this number under similar arrangements if it proved successful that evening.

### **E937 Activity Centres Management Board:**

The ACMB Chair reported that both sites had been closed since the Covid lock down was put in place. With the recent relaxation in the lock down both wardens had been up to site to check the situation and had taken the opportunity to start on some deep cleaning. It had become clear that a number of mattresses needed replacing and this was in hand purchase having been approved by the ACMB; This would normally have been a phased purchase under general maintenance.

Work on the water filtration system at Littledale was proceeding and was anticipated to be ready for site reopening.

Both sites had been awarded a £10k grant from the Government's Leisure & Hospitality Fund so looking at cash flow that amount just about covered the loss of fees.

The majority of Scout bookings had been rolled forward. Of the two major bookings at Littledale Ripley Academy had had their deposit repaid at their request but it had not been possible to contact Epic Outdoors.

Thanks were recorded to Ray Salisbury for his good work in securing the grants.

The Chair referred to his circulated paper showing the usage of the Activity Centres for 2019. This year he had separated out those units that were booking the lodge for 2 nights from those booking only 1. Totals were: Littledale 23 weekends were there was someone in the Lodge; SilverHelme 30 weekends. He had done a fuller analysis for the DC showing local Group usage to more understand why they were not using the sites. Camping nights at Littledale were high owing to the booking of Epic Outdoors.

### **E938 Explorer Report:**

Steve Sweet reported that meetings were taking place online in at least 4 out of the 8 Units and there had been a good attendance at District meetings with 30+ Explorer Scouts taking part as well as 6-8 leaders. This was improving linking. Young Leader training had also taken place online recently. Applications had been invited for a DesComm

### **E939 Network Report:**

The Network Commissioner reported that the National Network Gathering had been cancelled owing to the Coronavirus restrictions. The County Network Camp 'Reconnected' scheduled for the end of August was still in the diary but would probably not take place. There had been a number of online events and social activities and in association with County an online top awards drop-in evening had been run which had proved to be very successful and worthy of future consideration as a model.

### **E940 District Commissioner's Report:**

#### **County Hardship Fund (Loan) -**

The DC was aware that 6 Groups had received the £10k Government grants. We were working with County to identify Groups in financial hardship. Julie Harper (23rd Lancaster Treasurer) was leading on assisting struggling Groups and was presently contacting GSLs to check their situations.

The District Chair reported that the loans were to be made by Districts but County had agreed to underwrite any default in repayment to 75%. It was acknowledged that, owing to not having met because of the Coronavirus situation, some Groups might have difficulty this year paying their membership fees, which it was understood were not being waived by TSA.

**Training –**

There was a heightened emphasis on Safety and Safeguarding training for all following recent high-profile incidents, one locally. There would be media attention.

The District Chair advised that this training was available online via the website and it didn't take too long to complete. Howard Greenwood felt that training online had advantages for busy leaders and the quality nowadays was very satisfactory. First Aid training was not currently available online but the DC was pursuing a suggestion for carrying out theoretical parts virtually with 1 session on practical aspects.

**Programme –**

Many Sections were busy doing online programming via 'Zoom' meetings, 'Camping at Home', etc. She was chasing Groups who were not participating to see what help they might need to be able to join in.

The District Camp had been cancelled because of uncertainty over the situation; looking at holding Spring 2021 possibly.

County camps had been rescheduled for later in year.

The Leaders' Social was still on the calendar, for now.

Once lockdown is over we will need a big push to make up for lost time.

**E941 Health and Safety Report:**

Nothing to report on this occasion.

**E942 Any Other Business:**

The DC wished to place on record her thanks to everybody within the District for keeping going at this difficult time.

The Chair congratulated Howard Greenwood on the award of the Bar to the Silver Acorn.

**Date of Next Meeting:** (For approval of Annual Report and Accounts) tba