

MINUTES of the meeting of the LONSDALE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held on 30 November 2021 at District Headquarters, Moor Street, Lancaster.

Present: T Andrews (Chair), M Sweet (DC), S Landles (Treasurer), A S Hague (Secretary), D Bateman, S. Duncan (via Zoom), R Parker.

Apologies Received: J Carbert, H Greenwood, L Maun.

Not Present: L Ash, S Mather, S Taylor.

Chair's 'Thought for the Day':

"May your choices reflect your hopes not your fears" *The Long Road to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

i. Blocking of Moor Street by Glow

Following previous contact by the Chair with Lancashire County Council and the licensees at Glow, to address this matter, the current licensee had recently indicated that only the access from Mary Street would be blocked off (rather than at both ends - as had been the practice by the previous licensee, when we first experienced this problem). He had acknowledged for the first time that he had no authority to do this but he did it in consideration of the Moor Street occupants to avoid any damage or disturbance from revellers. The block would be put in place no earlier than 10.30 pm and the barrier manned by his staff.

The Chair felt that we had now come to a position where we accepted each other's position in the matter and that the blocking of the street from the stated time should cause no problems to ourselves. The meeting agreed. The situation would be monitored.

ii. District Headquarters/Shop, Health & Safety Review

The District Secretary had contacted the contractor regarding the work on emergency lighting, smoke detectors etc. mentioned at the previous meeting and the work had now been completed to standard.

iii. Lancaster Scout & Guide Shop

On behalf of the Executive the Chair extended congratulations to Jim & Trish Holland on their award as Lancaster BID “Superheroes” recognising their long-standing contributions to the shop.

Attempts to recruit a replacement Shop Manager had been unsuccessful although an individual had come forward offering to do the ordering, accounting, banking and maintaining of financial records. It had been proposed by the DC that this offer be accepted. The role would be as a District Supporter and the meeting felt that a basic DBS check would be required. The DC’s nomination of Mrs. Alison Brown for this role was approved.

E1017 Secretary’s Report / Correspondence:

Nothing to report on this occasion.

E1018 Governance:

i. Annual Trustee Declaration

It had been agreed previously that trustee declarations should be completed annually. Two outstanding declarations were completed at the meeting. Two more were still to be received.

ii. Update - Deed of Indemnity

The Chair presented his paper outlining that when the District was in the final stages of completing the lease for the land associated with the Emergency Communications Mast at SilverHelme, we had been required to sign, by The Scout Association Trust Corporation, a Deed of Indemnity. This we reluctantly agreed to do.

Following a recent communication from the Chair updating the list of trustees the Trust Corporation had stated that “we have dispensed with the need for a deed of indemnity, the group is still responsible for compliance with any deeds that are in the name of SATC and would be liable for any breaches”. This position was noted.

iii. Review of Governance Document

The Chair presented his paper detailing that members of the District Executive Committee were charity trustees and as such had wide-ranging responsibilities for the management of the charity. To cover these, we had developed a Governance Document which collated these responsibilities and aimed to provide trustees with an overview of the effectiveness of the management of the charity. These responsibilities were not additional tasks but were fundamental ones - as set-out in our Governing Document (Policy, Organisation and Rules) and the guidance provided by the Charity Commission (both originating from charity law).

With the onset of lockdown we had other foci at which to direct our efforts. The purpose of his report was now to seek trustees’ views on the way forward.

The DC stated that it was a very useful document against which to check compliance. The Treasurer felt that it was definitely comprehensive.

It was agreed that the District Chair should circulate to each sub-Committee Chair their portion of the document for them to review and report back.

Action: District Chair

E1019 Finance Officer's Report:

The Treasurer wished to highlight that the District was in a solvent position. We had sufficient funds to meet our planned expenditure. Also, our investments were being managed well.

Following a decision at the Executive meeting on 27 September a designated fund, provisionally entitled Development Fund, had been created by the transfer of £50,000 from unrestricted HQ funds. The £50,000 Development reserve has been allocated £30,000 to Activity Centres and £20,000 to HQ.

This proposal was agreed.

The FSC had agreed that as monies had been given specifically for the Hardship fund it should be classed as Restricted rather than Designated.

Moving on to Investments, £50k had been invested and the current account balance was £50,832, excluding dividends £100. We were on course to make our predicted gains.

Sharpe Bequest: The Finance Officer had indicated that as the great majority of the Sharpe funds would soon be in equity investment, the policy that the capital fund should (as far as possible) be indexed annually by reference to the Consumer Price Index in May each year was no longer relevant.

His suggestion that the new rule guidance should simply be that grants may be made up to the amount in the income fund, and that transfers to the capital fund should be made from time to time, whenever the amount of undistributed income is judged to be excessive was accepted.

E1020 Finance Sub-Committee:

i. Minutes of FSC Meeting 11 November 2021

These minutes were received for information.

ii. Budget 2022:

The Treasurer took members through the various elements of the proposed budget for 2022, the principles of which had been agreed at the previous meeting.

The Headquarters figures basically represented unavoidable expenditure but these had been minimised as much as possible.

The District Team budgets were discretionary as agreed with the DC.

As regards income the membership fee for 2022 had been agreed at £9 per youth member but there was a degree of uncertainty regarding member numbers following on from the pandemic. The DC reported that the recent snap census taken in October revealed a total of 1444. The budget deficit was therefore

estimated to be £10,731 - £4,000 less than prediction. The Treasurer cautioned that the District could not continue running such a deficit; Matters would come to a head in 2-3 years.

The budget for 2022 was approved.

E1021 14-25 Finance and Support Group:

Meeting Action Points 16 November 2021

The action points from the embryo meeting of the Group were noted. The District Chair reported that good progress was being made in reconstituting the Group. Responding to a query from the Treasurer regarding prepayment cards for the 'Red Rose' camp the District Chair advised that these would be for limited expenditure to a named individual and charged to the District Explorer Scout Fund.

E1022 Appointments Advisory Committee Report

The report prepared by the Committee Chair was received.

It had been encouraging to see how many new applicants had come to Scouting because of the very positive experiences their children had had; and, it was also very rewarding to see applicants who were continuing their 'Scouting journey' by moving on to leadership roles.

There was still a need to find some new members for the committee, particularly younger members, to reduce the burden on the same few members who regularly made up the panels.

E1023 Activity Centres Management Board:

The minutes of the ACMB meeting held on 24 November 2021 were received. In the absence of the Board's Chair the District Chair highlighted some key points.

i. Retirement of Warden – SilverHelme

Kieron Ryan had announced that he would be retiring in 2022. A recruiting process for a new warden was being initiated.

ii. Water Supply, Littledale

The possibility of connecting a mains supply was being investigated with United Utilities.

iii. Fire Officer's Report – SilverHelme

Most of the report's recommendations had been actioned. A Fire Risk Assessment had been completed and supporting documentation for a nominated Fire Safety Warden on each occasion either of the Lonsdale Activity Centres Indoor Accommodation was occupied had been introduced.

There was not much still to do [for this site]; the Fire Risk Assessment had yet to be finalised for Littledale.

iv. Activity Centres - no smoking designation

A recommendation from the ACMB that smoking, including vaping, be not permitted anywhere within the boundary of either Activity Centre was ratified.

v. Activity Centres' Budget 2022

The budget for 2022 had been recommended for approval by the ACMB along with a recommendation for user rates for each Activity Centre, for the forthcoming financial year. It was noted that there was a bottom line deficit of £3,800 accepting that this included a notional figure of capital expenditure of £10,000.

The ACMB were recommending a 5% increase in user rates in most cases. Following discussion this recommendation was approved but with a request - going forward - for the ACMB to look very carefully at the cost and pricing structure. Some members compared the charges and the facilities available with other, local sites.

E1024 Explorer Report

The report submitted by the DESComm was received and noted.

In the budget (approved earlier) he had requested a sum of money towards equipment for the Red Rose camp in 2022. They would be splitting the Explorers into two contingents (to make catering etc easier) but this would require them having more equipment. They would endeavour to borrow equipment from Groups etc. but had also put themselves forward for a £700 Amazon grant - if successful it was intended that this would also be used towards equipment.

It was noted that some Units were struggling with low Leader numbers.

E1025 Network Report

The Network Commissioner reported (via Zoom) that the section had held a successful Zoom meeting recently although not many members had joined.

He detailed a number of current opportunities for Network members. Top awards were being promoted. A social was being planned for 28 December at the Bowl in Morecambe to encourage participation. There were a number of County events planned in 2022. In conclusion he was aware that the section needed invigorating and that was his priority.

E1026 District Commissioner's Report

District Roles

There were a number of vacant roles at present that needed to be filled. A Deputy DC appointment was to be announced in the New Year.

District Camp

Individuals needed to be identified to join the organising team to carry out various roles.

Groups

Slyne – had a new Beaver team and were receiving support in the Scout section.
Bolton le Sands – Beavers had restarted the previous week. Most Beaver Colonies were needing leaders. Caton and Silverdale Beavers had reopened.

Squirrels

This new section for 4–5-year-olds had been launched locally recently. 13th Lancaster were about to start with 10 members.

Service Crew Challenge

Lonsdale had had success in the recent County competition – Buzz ESU won their section and 16th Morecambe came a very close 3rd in theirs.

25th World Scout Jamboree 2023, South Korea

Lonsdale had bid for, and received, confirmation of 5 places. Lydia Maun had been appointed as the Jamboree Coordinator for Lonsdale.

October Census of Youth Members

The total number recorded by Groups had been 1444. This number was good news following on from the damage suffered from the loss of face-to-face Scouting.

Shortage of Leaders

Whilst numbers of youth members were encouraging, and many more were wishing to join, there was a general shortage of leaders, hindering progress. The various reasons for this were discussed. It was hoped that the proposed new HQ 'Leader Journey' pathway when introduced would address a number of current issues.

E1027 Health and Safety Report

The District Secretary reported receipt of three Accident reports for incidents occurring at the Activity Centres. None required the need for Executive involvement.

E1028 Any Other Business

None.

Date of Next Meeting: 26 January 2022.