



MINUTES of the meeting of the LONSDALE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held on the 16 September 2019 at District Headquarters, Moor Street, Lancaster.

Present: T Andrews (Chair), M Sweet (DC), S Clarke (Treasurer), A S Hague (Secretary), J Carbert, H Greenwood, S. Mather, L Maun, T Wilkinson.

Apologies Received: D Bateman, K Caldicott, R Parker, D Squirrel.

Not Present: D Smith.

Chair's 'Thought for the Day':

For Ludo and Iona: "Life is about the journey not the destination. Live it brightly. Live it brilliantly and live it wisely. Don't waste it. Not one single day. Add life to your days not days to your life." Ben Fogle (Published in UP - My Life's Journey to the Top of Everest.)

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

The Chair reported that following the granting of certain sums from the International Fund (Minute E893) he had been pleased to receive an appreciative letter from a parent of an Explorer Scout who would be taking part in the Croatia 2020 trip.

E894 Secretary's Report / Correspondence

A letter had been received from the Lancaster City Council outlining details for the forthcoming Remembrance Day celebration in Lancaster. This would be on the 10th of November, 2019. Information was awaited for the arrangements at Morecambe.

E 895 Governance:

- Governance Document

The Governance Document was received for information. Members were reminded that its purpose was to bring together in one place all actions required of the Trustees. It provided a useful check list on progress. As indicated previously it had been agreed that the document would now only be reviewed once in the year at the May meeting. An assessment would be carried out at that time and any actions required noted.

In relation to Item 17 under the District Executive heading "Support is offered to Group Executive Committees as may be required." the DC advised that as part of the Strategic Plan the Training Manager had been tasked with following up training aspects with Groups.

Lonsdale District Scouts

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- **Trustee declarations**

The committee had decided previously that these needed to be completed annually. Members present completed these on the pro-formas circulated; these were handed to the Secretary.

- **Appointment of sub-committee Chairs**

At its first meeting after the AGM sub-committee Chairs required to be appointed by the Executive Committee.

The following appointments were agreed: -

14 -25 Finance and Support Group - Tom Wilkinson
 Activity Centres Management Board - Steven Mather
 Appointments Advisory Committee - David Bateman
 Awards Advisory Committee - District Chair
 Finance sub-Committee (Interim) - District Chair

With regard to the latter the Chair advised members of ongoing discussions to find a suitable individual.

- **Approval of sub-Committee Membership**

The membership of the various sub-Committees as outlined in the paper circulated, were agreed.

The DC queried whether the Youth Commissioner should be a member of the 14-25 Finance & Support Group. The Chair agreed to review this.

Action: District Chair

It was also reported that Robert Gill (Treasurer, 16th Morecambe) had agreed to take on the role of Minute Secretary for the Finance Sub-Committee, and Steph Stephenson (ESL, Discovery ESU) had agreed to act as interim Activity Centres Booking Secretary.

E896 Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer's report was received, a copy is attached to these minutes.

i. Sharpe Bequest Funds

Although the Executive Committee had approved in principle the Finance sub-Committee's proposal to move some or all of the capital funds now totalling £104,630.20 from bank deposits into equity investment, detailed consideration was being deferred in the light of the current political and economic uncertainty. Meanwhile the fund has been or will be spread across a one-year deposit, and deposit accounts with 60-day notice and instant access, which will enable access to the majority of the funds at short notice. The maximum loss of interest, compared with the best returns presently available on one-year deposits, assuming the fund remains uninvested for the 12 months, was estimated at around £350-£400.

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ii. **Zellhof expedition.**

The expedition would realise a surplus of around £3,500, £1500 of which had been spent with the approval of the Finance sub-Committee on refunds of £250 to each of the six leaders. A reunion later this year is planned to absorb most of the remaining balance.

iii. **Jamboree**

The funding raised by the parents of the participants had been within less than £50 short of their target. The net cost to the District was £6,611 compared with about £3,000 which accrued to the fund in District levies and interest over the 4 years since the last Jamboree.

iv. **Debtors**

- a) 11th Morecambe- balance of membership fees £352.50 – now paid. All Groups have now paid their 2019 membership fees.
- b) Scout & Guide Shop monthly contributions £200
- c) Several Groups owe small amounts for badges taken and BACS payments promised but not yet made.

v. **Scout Association membership fee**

It was recently announced that for 2020 this will be £29, a £1 increase over the current year.

vi. **Current funds**

A spreadsheet is attached to the report. Most of the proceeds of the matured Cambridge and Counties one-year deposit £50, 921.12 will be placed with the Skipton Building Society, and the balance will be used to replenish the current account.

The Treasurer further reported that that day he had obtained the necessary account signatures to be able to authorise the transfer of £80k from the Skipton 0.55% account to a new 1% Skipton account.

E897 Finance Sub-Committee:

The minutes of the meetings of 4 July and 29 August 2019 were received for information. The Chair highlighted that applications from two Groups for grants from the Sharpe Bequest had been approved - for 13th Lancaster and 53rd Lancaster.

On behalf of the Executive he wished their appreciation to be recorded to the Treasurer for the significant research that he had undertaken and for his specialist input to discussions on the District's investments.

Commenting on the Jamboree position the Chair reminded members that, on the then DC's recommendation, it had been agreed to apply for five places for the visit to the USA - one more than usual - recognising the cost implications and the fact that the fundraising by the Japan Jamboree participants had exceeded their target.

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- Investment Funds, a Guide

This guide produced by the Charities Aid Foundation had been circulated for information. As reported above consideration had been given by the Finance Sub-Committee to moving some or all of the capital funds now totalling £104,630.20 from bank deposits into equity investment – a proposal agreed in principle by this committee. The Treasurer outlined the advantage in dealing with the CAF Bank's Investment Account in terms of them having many funds and therefore the ability to negotiate better deals. This would also have the benefit of having all the District's investments shown in one place. His recommendation was that the District should deal with them highlighting that it would be the District's decision where our funds were to be placed specifically. This arrangement would be more convenient for us and it would be cheaper to go with one provider.

Following discussion, it was agreed to accept the recommendations of the Finance Sub-Committee as follows:

- a. That the District actively invests the deposited Sharpe Bequest funds in equities.
- b. That the attached Investment Policy Statement be approved (mindful of the committee's discussions in relation to ethical investments and that this matter be explored further).
- c. That an Investment sub-Committee [of the Finance sub-Committee] be formed;
 - this to comprise the FSC Chair, District Treasurer, one District trustee, 2 others nominated by the District Executive
- d. That no investment action be taken until after the outcome of BREXIT is known (and the situation has stabilised). It was agreed that more time was needed to discuss this.
- e. That initially £50,000 be invested.
- f. That the Investment sub-Committee be authorised to determine whether to invest the sum agreed in sub-paragraph e. above on one occasion or over a period of months.
- g. That there are no investments in single company shares.
- h. That the CAF Investment Account be used as the vehicle for investments.
- i. That all investments should be in collective funds, as far as possible in Common Investment Funds or Charity Authorised Investment Funds.
- j. That the Investment sub-Committee reports regularly to the Finance sub-Committee and that the Trustees will be consulted when significant changes are proposed to the investment portfolio (or other such matters).

E898 14-25 Finance and Support Group:

In the absence of the Group's Chair at their last meeting the DC reported that discussions had focussed on domestic matters.

E899 Appointments Advisory Committee Report:

The Chair of the Committee's report was received for information.

The AAC had met on 25th June, and had approved two new applications and 4 changes of role. There had been one application for which further advice from the DC was requested. (This situation had subsequently been resolved, with the approval of the DC.) At this stage, there were 6 applicants awaiting interview, and 43 applications for which either references or DBS clearance were required.

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The AAC had met again on 24th July, and approved 2 applications, one of which was for a District Skills Instructor for climbing. 6 changes of role were also considered, but it was noted that in many cases, Safeguarding Training was not up to date, and some had not yet completed GDPR training. Whilst the committee had agreed to approve these changes of role, subject to urgent completion of the training, it was felt that all leaders may need to be reminded of the absolute priority that must be given to keeping safeguarding training up-to-date. At this meeting, there had been no further update on the number of pending applications.

The AAC would be meeting again in September, but no date has been fixed yet. Although all recent meetings have been at DHQ, they are still very interested in finding other suitable venues for the presentation and interviews to take place.

E900 Activity Centres Management Board:

The minutes of the Board's meetings on 9 July and 4 September 2019 were received for information.

The Board's Chair reported that the services of an interim AC Booking Secretary had been secured – training for her was in hand. The District Chair advised that the proposed new on line booking system was coming along and it was expected that a Beta system would be available to him soon.

Howard Greenwood gave a detailed report on his investigations into the water supply at Littledale, particularly in relation to the reportedly high levels of iron and manganese in the system. An estimate had previously been received from a firm, which they indicated would resolve the situation in the sum of some £12k. Howard had spoken to a representative of Cumbria Water Services, who had installed the system, and to a previous site warden and he was now of the opinion that the problem might be satisfactorily resolved at less cost with the purchase of replacement ion exchange media, internal filters and feed valves. This might amount to £2k, including labour. He agreed to obtain a quote for this. The District Chair stated that he had taken Chairman's action to move this forward.

Action: HG

Howard also gave an update on the SilverHelme Toilet Block Building Regulations situation. He had recently met with the new Building Inspector who had confirmed that a pre-approval application had been submitted but this had not been completed. The Inspector had a series of plans but had concluded that there was no matching plan to what had actually been constructed. The ACMB had paid the fee relating to the planning permission application but not for Building Regulation Pre-Approval.

He had pointed out that whilst the building was of generally good construction the roof cross bracing was at a wrong angle, the drains and manholes were not located as per plan and he required a stability statement.

As it was understood that Tony Pilling, who had been heavily involved with drawing up the original plans, was now much recovered health wise Howard would contact him for clarification and also speak to a consultant who may have been involved in the design stage to ascertain whether any of the work required might already have been done.

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The Chair thanked Howard for all this work.

Action: HG

Steve Mather reported that the ACMB was still looking for an individual to lead on marketing. There was good work now going on to implement robust financial controls and the AC Operations Group were leading on drawing up a forward-looking document for the Centres for consideration by the ACMB.

Tony Andrews reported on a meeting the ACMB Chair and he had held with Epic Outdoors following their second camping season at Littledale. They had been generally satisfied with the site. It was understood that they would be returning again in 2020. They were developing their business in a couple of areas, which the Chair outlined. In discussions it appeared evident that there was perceived to be a lack of adequate customer care and this would be addressed. He had also spoken to a representative from Ripley St. Thomas Academy who were another major user of Littledale to seek their views on their experience - also positive. Together these two bookings brought in income of approximately £15k.

E901 Explorer Report:

The DC presented the DESComm's report.

Over the summer there had been Explorers out and about, they had been 'across the pond' and into Europe on Explorer Belt expeditions and at the Haarlem Jamboree, as well as the District's own Zellhoff trip.

Member numbers were currently stable, with better news coming out from the Castleton Unit regarding leaders, Uptake on leader training was improving.

Events for this period, and planned, were:

- The District's own Environment Camp in October
- Roll out of the District's DofE programme the following Wednesday, dates for enrolment, training, eDofE advice and the expeditions next year have been set and published.
- OSM had been very active over the past couple of weeks with the DESA spearheading event release on this vital administration system
- We are also looking to go to 'Durham 2020' - Durham's first international Scout Jamboree.

E902 Network Report:

The Network Commissioner was pleased to report that Network members had attended the Zellhof trip, 'Re-connected', the Gilwell Reunion and the recent 'Skills n Chills' camp at Littledale. They had taken part in the Explorer Belt expedition to Serbia and had been part of the International Service Team at the World Scout Jamboree.

Progress was being made in gaining top awards. They were looking forward to the District's Environment Camp where there would be an opportunity for linking with Explorers.

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E903 District Commissioner's Report:

Programme – There had been a good turnout for both 'Pride' events. The Morecambe Carnival had been a wash-out weather-wise but there had been some interest and displays had attracted attention.

Five Colonies had attended the County Beaver Camp and Scout County Rally was well attended with a few new Groups taking part this year.

Explorers had an excellent County Camp and 'Gilwell 24'. Throughout the summer holidays they had helped the Canal and River Trust dig a section of canal at Hincaster Tunnel.

The D of E roll out saw 11 Silver Awards and 20 Bronze. The next round would start again on 18th September.

Coming up we have a very busy session with 'Skills and Chills', County Beaver Fun Day, District Cub Camp, District Scout Camp and the District's Environment Camp. 'Skills and Chills' is planned for 14th-15th September and there are over 60 booked on. They will be able to take part in training modules, including Safeguarding, First Aid, and Challenging Behaviour.

Group Support – District are currently supporting 3rd Morecambe in Cubs and Scouts, but they now have a couple of new leaders and things are starting to get better.

We have plans to support the Scout section at Galgate, who are struggling for leaders and a venue.

Development and Growth – County Development Team is helping us to open Beavers at Hornby and open a second Scout section at Carnforth and a second Cub section at 53rd Lancaster.

A District Development Day has been organised on 12th Oct at 16th Morecambe Scout HQ. This is being run by the Regional Team. All GSLs and section leaders have been invited as have Executive committee members. 3rd Hornby Group are holding an open night on 16 October to hopefully re-launch Beavers there.

Internationals - As well as the Explorer Belt to Serbia we have also had District members in America, Uganda, Haarlem and Zellhoff. All the participants will have lasting memories and gained long lasting friendships.

We have organised an International Night on 25th September at Our Lady's CC. The main event will be the Explorer Belt presentation, but we will have members of all the trips present to talk to us about their adventures. We will also have leaders involved in future trips to try and encourage our members to attend more international events.

Appointments – A new Interim Campsites Booking Secretary has been appointed Jon Minshull has now left the District and I would like to record my thanks to him for all the hard work he put into the role of Deputy District Commissioner. He really made a difference and helped progress a lot of projects.

Steve Sweet and Simon Hester are currently 'learning the ropes' to take over the Outlook 365 work that Jon had started. Drew Holland has agreed to head a team to help roll out Online Scout Manager (OSM) across the District.

We are still searching for a Chair for our Finance Committee.

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Carol Mudd and Tess Barcas have offered to be temporary GSLs at 34th Lancaster until I find another GSL.

Top Awards - Along with all the top awards achieved across the sections, we have also had 5 Lonsdale Network Members gain their Explorer Belt in Serbia.

Strategy 2023 - We had a 'soft launch' at the District AGM and we are now working hard to make sure that it does not just become a forgotten project.

Our Brand - The new DHQ signage is now in place. We need to look at signage for the shop and above the meeting room.

Risks - We have a few Groups that have temporary GSLs and a couple of GSLs that have indicated their intention to retire next year. We need to have a big push to fill these roles.

E904 Health and Safety Report:

A Scout from 1st Warton cut himself whilst undertaking an activity at SilverHelme. An accident report is being completed.

E905 Any Other Business:

Adventurous Activity Notification

The DC advised that the ADC Activities had drafted an on line form for the website to enable leaders to notify the DC of activities being carried out, in order to comply with TSA rules.

Award to District Treasurer

The DC presented a 10-year service award to Steve Clarke.

Date of Next Meeting: 26 November 2019.