

**MINUTES of the meeting of the LONSDALE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE held on 27 September 2021 at District Headquarters, Moor Street, Lancaster.**

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

**Apologies Received:** S. Duncan, R Parker.

**Not Present:** D Bateman.

**Welcome:**

On behalf of the committee the Chair introduced and welcomed Stuart Taylor to his first Executive meeting.

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

"Success is not final. Failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts. - Winston Churchill.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

**E1004 Secretary's Report / Correspondence:**

The Secretary reported receipt of a letter from Lancaster City Council regarding a planning application (for a neighbouring building) - notification in respect of a proposal for a change in use of the first floor (previously approved for student accommodation) into supported living arrangements for 3a Mary Street Lancaster. It had not been felt that any comment was necessary on behalf of the District.

**E1005 Governance:**

**i. Annual Trustee Declaration**

It had been agreed previously that trustee declarations should be completed annually. Pro forma had been circulated for members to complete.

**ii. Membership of sub-Committees**

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

**iii. Mines and minerals, SilverHelme Activity Centre - Outcome**

The Chair presented a paper providing background information for Trustees on a notice received on 14 May 2021, from The Scout Association Trust Corporation (SATC), in this matter.

The District Executive Committee had decided at its previous meeting to object to the claim [for mines and minerals] to be returned to the heirs and successors of the original, beneficial owners. This representation was made to the Land Registry. In response the Land Registry decided not to uphold the objection we made. Their lawyer indicated that any objection should have been based on the validity of the information presented by the claimant (or any information we could provide to counter this). That presented by the claimant appears to have satisfied the Land Registry. It was the Chair's opinion that to make any detailed objection would have necessitated us engaging the services of a solicitor - at significant expense - and any such work would probably not have been completed in the limited time frame available to us.

The Land Registry's lawyer also indicated that although our objection had not been successful, there was the matter of planning approval if and when the claimants decided to exercise their rights. We could, at that time, make representation in the terms listed in the paper.

**iv. COVID-19 - District Approved Risk Assessments**

With changes to the processes made some weeks ago, The Scout Association no longer required Sections and Groups to submit COVID-19 risk assessments to District for approval. There was, however, the requirements for these to be prepared and shared more locally.

During the period of the approval process' operation, the District had approved 364 risk assessments. A detailed analysis, based solely on the information presented to us, showed that:

- Two Groups did not submit any COVID-19 activity-related risk assessments.
- In four Groups risk assessments were not submitted for all Sections.
- All Explorer Scout Units submitted risk assessments.

Some risk assessments were linked with just one activity whilst others were more generic. We did not track the number of risk assessments that had to be returned for amendment before approval could be given. Most Leaders understood the reasons why approval could not be given in the first instance.

At an early stage it had been decided that all approved risk assessments would be made available on the District website (in the protected area). It is not possible to know how many volunteers used this resource when preparing their own risk assessments. There is some evidence that the information was accessed (and used).

Thanks are due to those involved in the guidance/approval process (on behalf of the District Executive) - particularly Howard Greenwood who both led the team and approved most of the submitted risk assessments.

**v. Review of 14-25 Finance and Support Group**

The Chair presented his papers in this matter.

He had reported previously that it was felt that we needed to review both the Terms of Reference and composition of the 14-25 Finance and Support Group. Interested parties had met earlier in the year to formulate recommendations to the District Executive.

Two documents had been prepared and were presented to the District Executive for approval:

- Terms of Reference of 14-25 Finance and Support Group
- Analysis of Responsibilities.

The second document summarised much of the Group's discussions, as they considered the responsibilities of the District Executive in supporting both Explorer Scouts and the Scout Network (and also those which they believed rest firmly with the Sections). Note that the District Executive has similar responsibilities as a Group Executive Committee has in supporting the Beaver Scout, Cub Scout and Scout Sections [of the Group].

The documents were approved.

**vi. Awards Advisory Committee**

The Chair wished to report that this committee met on a regular basis and he outlined the process under which it determined its recommendations to the DC for good service awards. He wished to highlight again the disappointment that a number of potential awards could not be put forward for approval as the leaders concerned did not satisfy the minimum training requirements required by TSA.

**E1006 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.

**E1007 Finance Sub-Committee:**

The Treasurer presented two papers.

**i. Investment Review**

The Executive had previously authorised placing £50k of the Sharpe Bequest funds into equity investments in 6 monthly instalments. We had now completed 4 months and needed to provide recommendations on the remaining funds. Following is the Investment sub-Committee (IsC) view from its meeting on 1 September. These recommendations were accepted by the Finance sub-Committee on 16 September.

Our first monthly investment was £8,333 made on 4th May. By 27 August we had invested a total of £33,332. The fund value was £34,307.40. We have gained in rising valuations £975.40. In addition, we have had dividend payments of £69.90.

The paper also outlined a number of associated considerations, which were noted.

The Executive agreed to the recommendation that the investment programme continues with the same funds as originally bought (appendix A to be tabled paper) to the full extent of the Sharpe's bequest.

**ii. Budget Review**

The District Chair had asked, at the time of setting the current year's budget, for a bottom-up review of the elements of the budget. The purpose of the paper tabled was to identify some of the key variables in the budget and seek opinion about the options we have.

The intent of the budget is it is our financial plan to achieve the District's objectives. So, the money is an enabler for the District's ambition. It follows that the starting point should be the District strategy or plan and we should shape the budget to fit that.

Considerations noted, and discussed, in the paper included HQ Budget, Activity Centres Budget, Shop Budget, District Team Budget, Minimum Balances, Long turn aspirations and the Capitation Fee.

The following five recommendations were agreed:

- District Chair & DC to review the headings and amounts for Team Budgets
- An increase in the minimum defined balance to £50k
- The setting up of a designated account for long term projects/property and initially fund it with £50k
- That the District Capitation should not be increased for 2022.
- That Budget process be moved from November to September each year.

In discussion it was suggested that attaching a name to the designated account would provide a focus for its intentions.

**iii. Minutes of FSC Meetings 10 May, 16 September 2021**

These minutes were received for information.

The District Chair highlighted his recommendation to the FsC regarding the Coronavirus Grant paid to Retail outlets.

It had been acknowledged that the recently received Government grant [of £9,669.21] paid to Lonsdale District Scouts was essentially to support retail units during the period of the coronavirus pandemic. He strongly believed that - in part - this money should be used to support the Scout and Guide Shop.

From an earlier report it was to be noted that the true cost [to Lonsdale District Scouts] of the exclusive use of part of the District Headquarters - for the Shop - was in the order of £2,400 per annum. Thus, the grant could be considered as equivalent to the costs associated with exclusive use for four years. So that the Scout and Guide Shop benefits (indirectly) from the Government grant, he recommended the cancellation of the contribution [from the Shop] to Lonsdale Scouts [of £1,200 per annum] be waived for four years (that is to say from 1 April 2020 to 30 March 2024).

This recommendation was accepted.

**E1008 14-25 Finance and Support Group:  
Meeting Report 21 September 2021**

See E1005 v. above.

The Chair highlighted that the main task now was in identifying the remaining members for the Group.

**E1009 Scout and Guide Shop**

The Chair referred to his paper, which had been prepared to provide some information prior to a discussion needed in relation to the Lancaster Scout and Guide Shop. A record of these discussions is contained in a separate private minute held by the Secretary.

**E1010 Appointments Advisory Committee Report**

No report on this occasion.

**E1011 Activity Centres Management Board:**

The minutes of the ACMB meetings held on 1 July and 22 September 2021 were received.

Following the recent move to 'Green' status the Activity Centres were now open for bookings. The "Activity Centres' on-line booking system" was being used for all bookings and feedback suggests the new booking system provides a positive customer experience. A few back-office modifications are planned to improve invoicing and the production of management information.

The Wardens and volunteers, continue to carry out essential maintenance and small projects, including upgrades to the borehole water supply and the WIFI at Littledale. The District Explorers' Environment weekend is planned to take place on 16th and 17th October 2021 at SilverHelme, during which a number of environmental projects will be undertaken. These include replacing sections of dilapidated boundary fencing, weeding the climbing rock face, clearing fallen branches from camping area, tidying up the camping areas, Chapel and Campfire Circle and improving drainage along the site access track.

The CAF Bank balance on 6th September was £41,221.55, along with £45,200 on deposit, giving total funds of £86,421.55.

**E1012 Explorer Report**

Jamie Carbert reported that all Explorer Units had met at least once face to face since the last meeting and three units had camped. There was a shortage of leaders in some Units, also of members. One unit had recently taken part in the West Lancs Mountain Adventure Challenge (MAC).

Some training for leaders was being planned. Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme had been suspended following the withdrawal of one of the leaders who had been mainly organizing this. Leaders were reviewing existing participation to see what might be done in moving those participants forward.

A number of Explorers had registered for 'Red Rose 2022'.  
A meeting of all leaders was being planned to review all processes. Finally, a new Unit was being set up covering the Silverdale/Warton area (notionally called 54N).  
The District Executive supports this proposal.

### **E1013 Network Report**

The newly appointed Network Commissioner had sent his apologies for the meeting as he was attending an All County meeting. In a written report he was looking to try and arrange a get to know you camp within the next couple of months. He had been actively updating 'Compass' records and communicating to all those of age and eligible for Network; Those who had either 'slipped through the net' or were new within the last 18 months.

In the previous couple of weeks he had updated Network members on 'Compass' from 70 to 98 with 18-25 year olds who were within the District who didn't have an official 'Compass' Network member role.

He was hoping to build up a small social events team to take a lead with fortnightly gatherings. With him living in Nottingham the plan was that he wouldn't be there for everything but there when he could.

Members raised concerns over a lack of communication to existing and potentially new Network members over recent times. The DC indicated that she was dealing with this.

### **E1014 District Commissioner's Report**

#### **Squirrels**

This new section for 4–5-year-olds had been launched recently. A meeting had been held with GSL's to look at the requirements to start a Drey and 13<sup>th</sup> Lancaster and Carnforth had expressed an interest. Some potential leaders had already come forward. The DC outlined the process at County and District level to open a Squirrels provision.

#### **Face to Face Scouting**

All Groups were now back meeting with the exception of two sections at Bolton le Sands.

#### **AGMs**

Group AGMs were ongoing and were being attended by District representatives.

#### **District Team Changes**

Andy Baker had stepped down as ADC Cub Scouts; no nominations had been received as yet for a replacement. Scott Duncan had moved to be Network Commissioner and James Phillips had resigned as District Communications Manager.

#### **County Development Officer**

Kelly was settling in well.

### **Refugees & Asylum Seekers**

Eve Sharma (Network) had been doing a sterling job organising assistance for the above. More meetings were planned.

### **E1015 Health and Safety Report**

#### **i. District Headquarters/Shop**

In his report the Chair highlighted that there had been much emphasis recently on Health and Safety matters (including proper management if there is any asbestos in Scout premises). Prompted by the District Secretary, they had undertaken a review of such matters in relation to District Headquarters. In part this was to 'test' a recently produced check list, generated by The Scout Association, which the Chair had come across almost by accident. This checklist is a tool which all Scout Groups - particularly those with their own headquarters - should be encouraged to use.

They reviewed a number of aspects including Risk Assessment (a copy had been circulated to members), Fire Risk Assessment, and Safe Scouting Premises Audit (the check list referred to above).

There were a number of actions which were identified for follow-up action: Portable appliance testing, serviceability of smoke detectors, serviceability of emergency lighting, and blocking-off of Moor Street by Dalton Rooms. For the first three the District Secretary agreed to follow these through with M. J. Catterall Electrical Contractors (of Morecambe); we have used the company at both our Activity Centres and for District Headquarters. A quotation had subsequently been received from Catteralls in the sum of £1,255.21 (inclusive of VAT) for the work required. This would be referred to the FsC for information, and was authorised by the Executive.

Regarding the blocking off of Moor Street it was agreed that the Chair should write again to the Lancashire County Council (no reply having been received to previous communications) for their comments and also direct to the landlord at Glow Nightclub, as opposed to his son who had been spoken to informally.

**Action: District Chair**

### **E1016 Any Other Business**

None.

Date of Next Meeting: 30 November 2021.