

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE
held on Thursday 2 February 2017 at 7.30 pm at District Headquarters

PRESENT: Tony Andrews (Chairman and Acting Secretary); Steve Clarke (Treasurer); and Ray Salisbury (Activity Centres Treasurer).

APOLOGIES: David Bateman (Chairman 14-25 Finance and Support Group); and Craig Dewar (DC).

1 Welcome and Chairman's Opening Remarks:

The Chairman welcomed and acknowledged the work that had been undertaken in preparing the Annual Accounts for the year to 31 December 2016.

2. Minutes of Meeting held 10 November 2016:

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and were agreed as a correct record [of that meeting].

3. Matters Arising:

The Treasurer reported on a number of items:

- a. Sharpe Bequest (Minute 6a):** The Treasurer reported that Hornby Scout Group had not claimed the grant [awarded to them] and that arrangements had been made to advance £500 [of the grant awarded] to Caton Scout Group, in order to overcome a cash-flow difficulty (and that the total grant awarded had now been claimed).
- b. Restricted Funds (Minute 6c(1)):** Expenditure from the Cubs' Centenary Restricted Fund had reduced the balance to zero (as was anticipated).
- c. Start-Up Grants (Minute 6f(1)):** The two grants [for the Explorer Scout Units] had been paid.
- d. Online Scout Manager (Minute 6f(2)):** It was noted that at the present time only eight Gold+ licences had been purchased (against the 10 approved).

4. Treasurer's Report:

In addition to items that would be covered elsewhere during the meeting (mainly in connexion with the preparation of the Annual Accounts), the Treasurer reported:

- a. Scout Groups' Charity Commission Returns:** At the date of the meeting, there were four Scout Groups, with a Financial Year ending 31 March 2016 that had yet to submit an Annual Return to the Charity Commission (due 31 January 2017). The Treasurer undertook to remind the contacts for these Scout Groups as identified on the Charity Commissioner web site.
- b. HQ Electricity:** The sub-Committee confirmed the Treasurer's actions to enter into a one year contract with SSE. During the protected process, compounded by the difficulty that U-Switch claimed that it could only deal with individuals rather than organisations, compensation of £135 was successfully claimed. In recent weeks, there had been some discussions in relation to the functioning of the storage heaters in the main meeting room. It was agreed that the District Secretary would continue with the arrangements for one to be repaired and that no other actions be taken (noting that the lease prevents any replacement of the fixtures without the landlord's agreement).
- c. Scout Groups' Accounts:** As had been discussed previously, the Treasurer noted that a not insignificant number of Scout Groups are failing in the requirement to submit annual accounts within two weeks of their AGM. This was a matter that the Chairman is collating/monitoring (and will be covered also later in the meeting (Item 10)).

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<p>d. Payment for Events: The Treasurer observed that there were both a number of individuals and Scout Groups telling organisers [of events] that payments had been made, by BACS to the District Bank Account, which had proven not been the case - or that there were significant delays in such payments being made (even after the event). If nothing else this results in much nugatory work. In reviewing the situation, it was identified that there should be liaison between the Treasurer and the appropriate organiser just prior to the event to identify, from the former's point-of-view which payments had been received (and so enable the latter to emphatically remind the offenders - or even collect the money from them at the event).</p>	SC
<p>5. Activity Centres Financial Report: The Activity Centres Treasurer reported for 2016 total receipts had amounted to £45,915.72 and payments £47,111.55. It was noted that there had been some significant maintenance expenditure at both sites and for the servicing of the fire alarm systems. The current bank balance was reported as £79,396.37. The Booking Secretary had reported a total of 1,971 visitors to Littledale and 2,925 to Silverhelme. As had been noted at the recent District Executive Committee meeting, a breakdown of the occupancy (by the various groupings of users) of both sites' lodges would have been of interest. The Activity Centres Treasurer also indicated that quotations for building the new Silverhelme were anticipated to be received within the next couple of weeks.</p>	
<p>6. 14-25 Finance and Support Group: In tendering his apologies, the Chairman had indicated that there were no items to report (as the next meeting of the sub-Committee was scheduled for Wednesday 8 February 2017). The District Chairman reported on his recent discussions with the District Explorer Scout Administrator and in particular her appreciation of the value of Online Scout Manager (although she was yet to identify its full potential). At the present time, however, the accounts package had proven to be of very limited use but she did intend to make representations, to the author, with a view to suggesting some improvements.</p>	
<p>7. Annual Accounts: The sub-Committee reviewed the first draft of the Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31 December 2016 and discussed (and agreed) a number of, particularly textual, changes to be made to the document. In addition to further work to be undertaken by the Treasurer and Activity Centres Treasurer, the following actions were agreed:</p>	SC RS
<p>a. The achievement and performance section on page 2 to be reviewed by the DC.</p>	CD
<p>b. Following agreement that the Scout Council's stated investment in the Lancaster Scout and Guide Shop should be restated, the Treasurer undertook to discuss the matter with our Accountants and the Chairman to draft a 'form of words' for the Annual Report.</p>	SC TA
<p>c. A revised list of Trustees would be obtained from the Secretary.</p>	RS
<p>8. International Fund - Grant Application: A grant-in-aid of £200 was agreed for one participant, from the District, in West Lancashire Scouts' visit to Mongolia. The Chairman would notify the award of the grant and obtain the necessary bank details to enable the Treasurer to make the payment. The Chairman shared with members the form he had designed, following consultation with the DC, to provide a simple means of applying for grants (both from the International Fund and the Scouting4All Fund; in particular bank details would be collected as part of the application process.</p>	TA TA
<p>9. Support to Scout Groups: The Chairman reported discussions during a recent meeting of GSLs' in relation to the support which could be offered to Group Executive Committee. One aspect which was identified is an overview of Scouting and particularly the role of Charity Trustees (and, inter alia, the functioning of the Executive Committee). This is a training module which already exists and should be delivered under the aegis of Local Training Managers. The second key element identified focussed on financial matters. Of these the first involved the maintenance of proper accounting records. The Chairman provided an example of the Excel worksheets he had been using successfully with a number of Air Training Corps Squadrons, locally. It was agreed that research was needed to identify how such worksheets could be modified for use in Scout Groups. The Chairman undertook to approach one Scout Group with a view to carrying-out this research and assisting them with their record keeping. The second aspect was in relation to financial awareness and budgeting - noted at this stage for further consideration.</p>	TA

10. Any Other Business:

No items were identified.

11. Date of Next Meeting: The date of the next meeting of the sub-Committee had previously been agreed as Thursday 2 May 2017 (at the District Headquarters, commencing at 7.30 pm).

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