



**Minutes of the meeting of the DSWA Trustee Board meeting held
on Sunday 8 March 2015 at the Heights Hotel, Isle of Portland, Dorset**

Present: R Stockall (Chairman), Mrs T Blackwell, A Brown-Jackson N Coombey, R Ingles, B Jones, A Loudon & R Love.

ACTION BY

In Attendance: Miss A Shaw

Apologies: M Booth, P Dolphin, J Hanson and C Hardman.

TB15.01 **Chairman's Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and was sorry that the two new Trustees had not been able to attend the meeting.

TB15.02 **DSWA AGM**

TB15.02a **2015 Feedback:** Dorset Branch, and Sally Fielding in particular, were thanked for organising such a successful event which had been enjoyed by everyone attending the weekend.

Thanks were recorded to Messrs Adcock and Devonport for their work on the Trustee Board and previous Management Committee and a welcome extended to the two new Trustees and the two returning Trustees, R Love and A Loudon.

TB15.02b **Date & Venue for 2016:** The Members' Weekend and AGM for 2016 would take place over the weekend of 5-6 March and would be held in Wales, hosted jointly by both branches.

TB15.03 **Trustee Board**

TB15.03a **Appointments and Branch Responsibilities:** An updated suggestion for Trustee Branch Responsibilities was discussed and agreed as follows. The full list would be circulated with the minutes along with updated contacts for the Trustee Board.

A SHAW

Cumbria/Northumbria - J Hanson
West & South Yorkshire - P Dolphin
Wales - B Jones
Non-branch members - A Loudon.

Updated Trustee Declaration forms were signed and copies would be sent to those who were absent from the meeting for completion and return to the office.

A SHAW

TB15.03b **Nominating Committee:** The previously circulated paper produced by C Stephens was discussed. Following a brief but lively discussion, it was agreed that whilst the Nominating Committee exists, there is at present little need for much action to be taken. The Trustee Board needs to encourage members who would bring value and skills to the Trustee Board to stand as potential candidates. It was further agreed that R Love and Mrs Blackwell would liaise with C Stephens in relation to candidates for 2016.

**R LOVE/
T BLACKWELL/
C STEPHENS**

TB15.04 **To confirm minutes of previous Trustee Board meeting -7 December 2014**

In response to a query under Item TB14.56a and the amount of reserves held by branches, it was noted that this figure was a recommendation only and the new financial guidelines being drafted for branches had yet to be circulated to branches for comment and discussion.

M BOOTH

There were no further queries and the minutes were therefore signed as a correct record of the meeting.

TB15.05 **Matters Arising not Otherwise on the Agenda**

TB15.05a **E-Newsletters:** A summary of potential contacts for such an item had been previously circulated by A Brown-Jackson. The meeting was advised that Derbyshire Branch was hoping to set up a pilot project using local expertise. Following a short discussion, it was agreed that A Brown-Jackson would bring to the next meeting an example of the content for an e-newsletter, which could be used by other branches. It was noted that if this idea is moved forward there must be a consistent approach to format and content. There also needs to be an option for recipients to unsubscribe from the circulation. Ideally, the information should be sent to the office by 8 May in order to be circulated with the next agenda.

**A BROWN-
JACKSON**

TB15.05b **Trustee Responsibilities:** Item TB14.56e from the previous minutes referred, in relation to the responsibility of Scottish branch trustees who were in fact responsible for funds within those branches. A link to Charity Commission guidance on this subject had been provided by the DSWA Accountants and circulated to Trustees previously.

A discussion then followed about the content of the Annual Report on pages 16-17, summarising the branch annual returns. It was noted that this is the form used as the starting point for judging the Branch of the Year competition and is not the financial return for the branch. It was acknowledged that the figures were misleading but assurance was given that branch accounts had been included in the full accounts prepared for the Charity Commission, even if there was no entry in the Annual Report table. It was agreed that in future, if a branch annual return form had not been received, the financial opening and closing balances would be included in the Annual Report. This gave rise to further discussion about the Branch of the Year form as it was noted that a summary of branch activity was useful. It was agreed to see if C Stephens would be willing to work with Miss Shaw in terms of updating the Branch of the Year criteria. *Subsequent to the meeting, C Stephens had agreed to this action.*

A SHAW/
C STEPHENS

TB15.06 **Correspondence**

The Association had recently received generous donations from the Otley & Yorkshire Dales and Dorset branches as well as funds from other branches to pay for the reprint of leaflets. Thanks were recorded to the branches for the support in this way and letters of acknowledgement had been sent.

A SHAW

A letter had been received from Sir Christopher Audland, thanking the Association for its kind wishes following the death of his sister, Elizabeth. It was noted that a number of DSWA members had attended the funeral service in January.

TB15.07 **Financial Matters**

TB15.07a **Current Financial Situation:** A report had been produced by M Booth and previously circulated. It was regrettable that the Hon Treasurer was unable to attend the meeting due to family issues. It was noted that the income from certification had dropped, mainly as a result of a lack of test days being arranged by colleges. A suggestion was made to send details of the qualifications to all colleges to see if additional interest might be generated. This idea would be forwarded to Mrs Clarkson for consideration.

I CLARKSON

A brief discussion took place about the draft document produced by M Booth in relation to updating branch financial procedures, which was to be circulated shortly to branches for comment and discussion.

M BOOTH/
A SHAW

The meeting was made aware of the concerns expressed by Cumbria branch that questions previously raised had not yet been answered. B Jones agreed to contact the branch to request a list of items it considered to be outstanding in order to try and address the matter.

B JONES

A request was made for the 5-year plan to be moved forward.

M BOOTH/
R STOCKALL

TB15.08 **Governance Issues**

TB15.08a **CIO Update:** A lengthy discussion took place about the merits or otherwise of the Association continuing with any change. As well as financial implications, there is the need to look at the principle of whether it would still be appropriate to move to a CIO, given information that is now available that was not available when initial exploratory work was being done. A breakdown of costs had been submitted by M Booth, following a request at the last meeting, but it was felt that further clarification of the figures were needed and indeed perhaps quotes for items such as insurance cover and rent should be obtained. Concerns were expressed that advice had been sought but if the questions asked when seeking the advice were not appropriate, then careful thought must be given to what should have been asked and revised questions put back to the company. It was agreed that if anyone had questions, these should be sent to the office in the first instance by **20 March** to be collated and forwarded to Moore & Smalley. The list of original questions was contained within the above mentioned report, which was circulated to all Trustees, but is shown below for information.

M BOOTH/
A SHAW

ALL TRUSTEES

- Q1 Should DSWA incorporate?
- Q2 If NO; how could there be significant safeguards to protect the organisation and trustees?
- Q3 If YES; is a CIO or a Charitable Company the better route?
- Q4 Is separate registration of (a) the organisation and (b) the individual Scottish branches, if incorporated in England and Wales, necessary with OSCR, and with what status?
- Q5 With respect to the impending Scottish referendum, is August 2014 the best date?
- Q6 We have identified some formalities and changes in our documentation and letterhead associated with the change in status. Also possible changes in our method of executing membership Direct Debits. We have insignificant trading income outside our direct charitable aims so tax should cause little effect. Is there anything else we ought to consider?

A report would be made at the June meeting, when a final decision on the CIO subject would be made.

The paper originally produced for the December Trustee Board meeting (TBDec14/Item6, reissued as TBMarch15/Item 8) was carried forward to the next meeting.

A SHAW

TB15.09

Membership

Current Membership Figures: The current membership figures were given as follows. A total of 842 members, including 603 Open, 208 Professional, 19 Corporate and 6 Junior. It was disappointing to note that these figures were much lower than usual. It was suggested that it was probably due, in part, to the membership year being brought back to run on a calendar year and members may not have renewed in January, despite renewal letters being sent out. All branches would be encouraged to chase those people who had not renewed. A suggestion was made that the drop in members could also be due to the public image of the Association which does need to be addressed.

Subsequent to the meeting, over forty people had sent in subscriptions, most of who had simply forgotten to renew in January.

It was noted that a number of people were still paying the incorrect amount of subscription via Standing Order although this had reduced significantly from previous years as members were encouraged to change over to direct debit payments. Some members had also sent in the shortfall.

TB15.10

Membership within Training Course Fees

The paper produced by R Parker from the Otley & Yorkshire Dales branch had been previously circulated. A lively discussion took place on the subject and the following points noted, some of which echoed comments submitted by the Cumbria and Dorset branches.

- If membership is included within a course fee, this could make the course prohibitively expensive for some people which would discourage them from attending.
- By including membership, it could be seen as devaluing the membership itself, as it is “given away” as part of a course fee.
- Branches should enthuse course participants so they wish to join the Association as a result and that way are perhaps more likely to remain a member.

It was acknowledged that it would be useful to have a standard format for branch courses, particularly in relation to whether Instructors were paid or not. If payment was offered, there would be the option for the individual to donate it back to the branch. It was agreed that Mrs Clarkson should be asked to suggest a standard structure/format for courses.

L CLARKSON

There was a suggestion that the above points should be discussed at the Branch Treasurers’ meeting previously mentioned and further thought would be given to this matter.

M BOOTH

Thanks were recorded to Mr Parker for taking the trouble to submit his ideas for consideration.

TB15.11

Craft Skills Group

TB15.11a

Report from Meeting: The last meeting of the Craft Skills Group had taken place on 6 February. Minutes from the meeting would be circulated with the Trustee Board minutes. A brief summary of the meeting was given and the following points noted.

- Details are in hand for the upcoming Examiner Standardisation course, taking place on 24-26 April. The Friday evening would be primarily for new Examiners although returning Examiner would be welcome to attend. Candidates have been identified for the build day on the Saturday and booking details sent to those needing to attend.
- An Instructor Training Course has been arranged for the end of March and details sent out. Some consideration needs to be given to the succession planning for tutors of the course, which this year would again be run by D Griffiths and W Oldham. Mrs Clarkson has a meeting with the tutors prior to the course taking place to discuss content and format of the weekend.
- A letter had been received from the college representative on the Craft Skills Group advising that he would no longer be able to be part of the group directly but would be willing to help with specific tasks if required. It was not felt necessary to replace this vacancy at present.

TB15.11b

Understanding Dry Stone Walling: The paper produced by Messrs Ingles, Coombey and Jones had been discussed by the Craft Skills Group and there was broad agreement for the recommendations made within in. A suggestion was made that the subject would form a discussion topic at the Examiner Standardisation course when input for a greater number of professional wallers would be useful.

A LOUDON/
R LOVE

B Jones informed the meeting that he, Theo Schmitt (the author) and the publishers had applied for funding (£1,500) from the Institution of Civil Engineers in order to translate the technical appendix associated with the recently produced Swiss dry stone walling book from German to English. This would be made widely available. There had been no consultation with the Trustee Board about this course of action which was met with some surprise. There was apparently no cash cost involved to DSWA for this project.

There were some concerns expressed by A Loudon about technical, theoretical papers on dry stone walling as there was a general assumption made that walls are treated as monolithic structures, which was not the case. A strong request was made that any technical information should be discussed by the

Craft Skills Group before being circulated and should contain the caveat that the information is of a broad general nature as all dry stone walling projects are different.

It was agreed that the “authors” would review existing information, take on board feedback from the Standardisation weekend and then try to promote the information to wider audiences. Thanks were recorded to Messrs Ingles, Coombe & Jones for their work on this complicated subject.

N COOMBEY

TB15.12 Training & Education Update

The meeting was sorry to learn that Mrs Clarkson was unwell and wished her a speedy recovery.

A report had been produced and previously circulated. A suggestion was made that the wording at the end of the first Item (HLF) was perhaps not appropriate in terms of branch commitment, which was difficult to quantify ahead of knowing the outcome of the grant application.

There has been a small increase in the number of Training Vouchers applied for but there was still the need to promote the funding opportunities as widely as possible.

A comment was made about the need to ensure a robust selection process for apprenticeship candidates, given the fact that the recent student had to have two attempts at the Level 2 test.

TB15.13 Coordinator Reports

TB15.13a **Grants:** The ERDP grants are gradually being sorted out by regional groups in England and the new round of LEADER funding in Scotland is due to come on stream shortly.

TB15.13b **International:** Plans were still ongoing in relation to a proposed visit to the UK later in the year by trainees from the Saugeen First Nation training programme in Canada.

TB15.13c **Pinnacle Awards:** The seating project at Dunbar had now been inspected and copies of the assessors’ reports were tabled at the meeting together with the summary of the work by the Pinnacle Award Coordinator. The Trustee Board was in full support of the recommendation made, which was not to award a Certificate of Merit to the project, for the reasons outlined. A letter would be sent to the applicant.

A query was raised as to why two assessors had visited a Certificate of Merit project and also whether there should be some filtering of potential projects before sending assessors out. Although S Adcock was no longer on the Trustee Board, he had expressed his willingness to continue in the role of Pinnacle Award Coordinator, which was welcomed by the Trustees.

TB15.13d **Ronnie Ball Awards:** A paper had been circulated suggesting that the award in its present format should be discontinued but if, appropriate a new award established to encourage young wallers. It was noted that the Derbyshire Branch might be willing to allocate some funds to help establish a new award, perhaps linked to existing external awards. It was agreed that ideas should be brought to the next meeting but close liaison with Mrs Blackwell, Mrs Clarkson and Lydia Noble was needed.

A BROWN-
JACKSON/
C HARDMAN

TB15.14 DSWA Brand

This item would be carried forward to the next meeting due to the absence of C Hardman.

C HARDMAN

TB15.15 Any Other Business

TB15.15a **Legacy:** Consideration needs to be given to how best to utilise the legacy for the Durham area although there was no urgency to do so and no further criteria to be met other than the money was to be used in the Durham area for dry stone walling projects.

L CLARKSON

TB15.15b **Archive Project:** It was noted that B Jones had taken this over from S Adcock and would produce a report for circulation with the agenda for the next meeting.

B JONES

TB15.15c **Waller & Dyker Editor:** A suggestion had been made that the Association might consider creating a role of Editor for the Waller & Dyker, which would have a responsibility of generating/sourcing articles of broader interest to the membership. It was agreed that an advert would be placed in a future issue of the Waller & Dyker to see if there was someone within the Association who could take on the role.

A SHAW

Thanks were recorded to Tanya Gregson for submitting the suggestion.

TB15.15d **DSWA Forum:** It was noted that the DSWA Forum had a link with the Trustee Board via A Devonport. The situation had now changed but Mrs Blackwell was willing to take over this role, which was welcomed by the Trustees.

T BLACKWELL

TB15.15e **Registered Trademarks:** It was noted that the DSWA logo trademark registration was due for renewal, which was agreed unanimously by the Trustees.

A SHAW

TB15.15f **Branch Reference File:** It was noted that updates were underway with this document.

R STOCKALL

TB15.16 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on **Saturday 6 June at 10am** at the Westmorland County Showground.

Agenda items and papers should be sent to the office by Friday 8 May 2015 at the latest for full circulation.

SignedR STOCKALL.....

Date6 June 2015.....

A Shaw/26 March 2015

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