

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE
held on 5 May 2017, at 7.30 pm at the District Commissioner's Residence

PRESENT: Tony Andrews (Chairman and Acting Secretary); Steve Clarke (Treasurer); Craig Dewar (DC), Jon Minshull (Deputy DC), and Ray Salisbury (Activity Centres Treasurer).

APOLOGIES: David Bateman (Chairman 14-25 Finance and Support Group)

1 Welcome and Chairman's Opening Remarks:

The Chairman welcomed Jon Minshull (in attendance) and thanked the DC for his hospitality.

2 Minutes of Meeting held 2 February 2017:

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and were agreed as a correct record after amending protected to read protracted in the second line of para 4b.

3 Matters Arising:

The DC indicated that he had identified a possible secretary for the sub-Committee and would progress this in due course.

4 Treasurer's Report:

With the exception of the HQ rent (referred to in his report and covered elsewhere during the meeting) the Treasurer reported:

a. Debtors: There are a number of debtors:

(1) District Ball: Currently seven people owe £35 each (a total of £245) - the DC will remind them, yet again.

(2) Membership Subscriptions: Presently these are two Scout Groups (Slyne with Hest and 11th Morecambe) with monies outstanding. The latter has paid a sum on account but approximately half the sum is outstanding. Nothing has been received for the former. In addition, Illustrious Explorer Scout Unit will pay their outstanding dues within the next few days. It was also noted that Saints Explorer Scout Unit currently does not have sufficient funds to pay their sum outstanding. There was some uncertainty if Eric's Explorer Scout Unit had paid their 2016 dues.

(3) Membership Subscriptions - Collection Difficulties: The Treasurer indicated that there had been some significant delays in issuing invoices [to Scout Groups and Explorer Scout Units] and that we were very close to the payment deadline, in transferring funds to County. The DC indicated that the significant problem had been in relation to confirming Young Leaders numbers. Until this was done, a Scout Group could not be 'signed-off' as complete and an invoice issued. It was agreed that the subject would be revisited, in more detail, by the sub-Committee at a meeting prior to the end of the year.

(4) Training Courses: The Treasurer reported that it would appear that monies may still be due in respect of training courses (mainly First Aid courses). The DC indicated that the Training Manager was attempting to identify non-payers. It was emphasised that participants are to pay for courses on booking (and not when attending on the day itself). This would also be applied to the forthcoming County Rally.

b. Creditors: The sum of £200 is currently held for Galgate Scout Group (Start-Up Grant) as the Group does not yet have a bank account.

c. Charity Commission Returns: The Treasurer reported that all Scout Groups [registered with the Charity Commission] had made the necessary returns.

Action

CD

CD

CD/SC

TA/SC

TA

CD

SC

d. District Accounts for Year Ending 31 December 2016: It was noted that creditors had been overstated by £600 (for the purchase of commemorative badges not actioned by supplier); it was not proposed to amend the figure.

e. Support to Executive Committees: Following-on from earlier discussions, the Treasurer had been able to contact one accountant, who was not optimistic that young accountants could be identified, on a pro bono basis, to assist Executive Committees. The Treasurer was asked to follow this up with other local practices.

SC

5. Annual Accounts for 2016:

It was agreed to recommend to the District Executive (Trustees), at the meeting on 16 May 2017, that the Annual Accounts for 2016 be approved. One insignificant textural amendment would be made by the Treasurer before the document is forwarded to the District Secretary (for distribution prior to that meeting).

SC

6. Activity Centres Financial Report:

The Activity Centres Treasurer provided an update in relation to Activity Centre finances. Currently the total funds, held by the Management Board on behalf of the District, amount to £73,977.86 (including £45,000 held with the Skipton Building Society). It was reported that expenditure to date at Littledale is £6,818.11 and that at Silverhelme £4,529.00. Chubb Fire had been paid for inspections at both sites as has Lancaster City Council for refuse collection (to 31 March 2017). Additionally, at Littledale £2,568.00 has been paid to fix the soakaway. The DC enquired if, at Littledale, expenditure was still greater than camping receipts. The Activity Centres Treasurer undertook so investigate (as far as was possible using the data available). It was also reported that B4RN had been granted a wayleave (to permit cable laying along the boundary of the site); it had been decided to connect Silverhelme to the B4RN network. The Chairman asked that copies of the wayleaves for both Littledale and Silverhelme be forwarded to him (as it was adjudged that these should be lodged with The Scout Association Trust Corporation). A breakdown of the costings for the new toilet block was provided; the District Chairman had taken *Chairman's Action*, at the meeting of the Activity Centres Management Board on 25 April 2017, to approve a total maximum expenditure of £64,112 (to be reduced by £20,000 with a grant-in-aid) to delay no further this construction project. He would ask for his action to be confirmed at the forthcoming meeting of the District Executive.

RS

RS/TA

7. International Fund - Grant Applications:

The following grants-in-aid were approved:

- a. £100 each to two members participating in Explorer Belt - Finland.
- b. £100 each to two scouts participating in the Romanian Jamboree.
- c. A discretionary sum of £200 to an Explorer Scout travelling to South Africa (for personal development).

The District Chairman would write, on behalf of the DC and himself, to notify the recipients. Members requested that recipients of grants be advised that we ask each to report back (to an appropriate forum) upon their return.

TA

8. Lancaster Scout and Guide Shop:

The District Chairman outlined the contents of his report, which (in error) had not been circulated to members prior to the meeting (but that he would do so after the meeting).

TA

The DC together with the District Chairman had met with four Guide representatives (on 28 March 2017) and the District Chairman with the same people secondly on 12 April 2017. In these discussions, it was apparent that the Guide personnel had been planning to ensure a more efficient operation of their element [of the Shop] and to address some of the perceived difficulties that had been encountered. As part of these discussions we offered [on behalf of the District Executive] to reduce the contribution for the exclusive use of the room [within Headquarters] to £1,200 per annum (from £2,400) and that the sum would also include the £150 contents insurance (previously a separate item). This offer was accepted by the Guide personnel.

The District Chairman, in his report, had included the current draft of the TORs for the Management Committee. Any suggested amendments would have to be referred back to the Guide Division Commissioners. One already identified was that the accounts be completed within six months of year

end and that any distribution of generated funds be achieved during the same period. Also within the report was the calculation of the Guide gross profit for the period from 1 April to 13 November 2016. The Independent Examiner's commented "this would suggest to me that, as we suspected, there has been an issue with the stock take for the last couple of years."

The District Chairman indicated that he was working to ensure that the results of the end-of-year stock take (as at 31 March 2017) were passed to the Independent Examiner as promptly as possible. The Examiner had already agreed to complete her work as soon as possible. Once this had been achieved all concerned had agreed that the first formal meeting of the Lancaster Scout and Guide Management Committee needed to be convened as soon as possible thereafter. It was necessary to agree the end-of-year accounts for 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17.

9. 14-25 Finance and Support Group:

In the absence of the Chairman [of the 14-25 Finance and Support Group] the District Chairman had circulated the draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2017. Members were appreciative of the work which had been done, by the District Explorer Scout Administrator, in resolving the myriad of challenges in relation to Explorer Scout Unit finances and related matters. Some of the work-strands had been somewhat protracted (especially when dealing with a bank) and some were ongoing.

In the ensuing discussions, it was agreed that the District Executive be requested to approve an additional £200 to be added to the approved Scout Network budget (to provide additional items to facilitate Network activities). The details of items to be purchased are set-out in the minutes of the 14-25 Finance and Support Group meeting held on 26 April 2017.

10. District Headquarters:

The District Treasurer reported that:

a. Electrical Safety: The Landlord had not responded formally to our letter that remedial action be taken to correct some items identified during a recent inspection (completed at the same time as repairing a storage heater). There had been an informal discussion when the Treasurer had met the landlord following the fire in Moor Street.

b. Access to the Building: Following the fire, in the adjacent property, we had been able to gain access to the Shop from 22 April 2017 but were unable to use the meeting room (due to insufficient/inappropriate emergency exits).

It was agreed that the District Treasurer write to the landlord to request action in relation to the former and for a rent reduction for the period we have been unable to use some, or all, of the premises.

During the discussions, members questioned the possible fate of the fire-damaged building and the knock-on effect this may have on the entire block on Moor Street. It was considered that this matter should be kept under review and some possible alternatives worked-up.

11. Scout Group Accounts (Annual Letter):

The District Chairman had provided a draft letter (plus other documents) to be sent to Scout Groups in relation to the completion and submission of annual accounts. In addition, attention had to be drawn to the requirement to submit a trustees' report. After some minor textural changes, it was agreed that the letter be circulated - with the other documents being made available on the District web site (and a link included in the distributed letter).

12. Sharpe Bequest Application Process 2017:

The District Chairman had provided copies of the documentation to be circulated in relation to the completion and submission of applications for grants-in-aid. After some minor textural changes, it was agreed that the letter be circulated - with the other documents being made available on the District web site (and a link included in the distributed letter). During the consultation last year, it had been agreed that the process be opened-up to Explorer Scout Units; varying views were expressed, as to the logic of this, such that it would be necessary to revisit this subject at a future meeting.

13. Any Other Business:

An ADC had questioned if surpluses generated by section activities could be used to part-fund follow-on activities. The District Treasurer had responded, to the enquiry, by stating that such funds are absorbed into District's funds. If organisers expected the District to underwrite any losses then it is right that any surplus are paid into District funds.

TA

TA

TA

SC

TA

TA

TA

TA

Action

This is as stated in the District's Financial Management Policy:

“In general terms, it should be anticipated that any surplus generated by an event will be retained within District funds. There may be a need to make an exception to this guideline; it will be necessary to speak with the DC and the Chairman of the Finance sub-Committee.”

14. Date of Next Meeting: The date of the next meeting of the sub-Committee had previously been agreed as Thursday 6 July 2017 (presumably at the District Headquarters, commencing at 7.30 pm). All

UNCONFIRMED