



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Dry Stone Walling Association
held on Saturday 4 March 2017 at the Derbyshire Eco Centre, Middleton by Wirksworth**

Present: Mr R Stockall (Chairman), Mrs T Blackwell (Deputy Chairman), Mr A Brown-Jackson, Mr N Coombey, Mr C Hardman, Dr B Jones, Mr A Loudon (Craft Skills Coordinator), Mr R Love and 25 members as recorded in the attendance book.

In Attendance: Miss A Shaw (Office Administrator), Mrs L Clarkson (Training & Education Coordinator)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed the Association's thanks to the Derbyshire Branch, and in particular to Emma Yates, for organising the weekend.

AGM17.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Lord & Lady Cavendish and 6 members as recorded.

AGM17.2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2016

That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12 March 2016 be adopted was proposed by R Love and seconded by A Brown-Jackson. There were no amendments and there was a majority vote of 32 in favour, with 2 against. The minutes were therefore agreed and signed.

AGM17.3 Annual Report

That the Annual Report for 2015/2016 as presented by the Chairman be adopted was proposed by R Stockall and seconded by A Loudon. Copies of the report were available.

A summary of the Association's work over the last year was given and the following points highlighted.

It has been another busy year with a wide range of events, demonstrations and displays offered throughout the country. In 2016 over 600 people attended one of the beginner training courses offered by branches. Grateful thanks were recorded to everyone who has given their time to help raise awareness of dry stone walls in whatever way.

Amendments have been made to the Association's governing documents, including Constitution, Rules and, Branch Procedures. These together with the DSWA Financial Procedures document now provide a suite of operational guidelines which meet Charity Commission requirements.

The Training Voucher Scheme, funded through The Prince's Countryside Fund (PCF) has now come to an end but over 150 vouchers were issued to people throughout the country to enable them to take part in a beginner training course and/or the Initial/Level 1 test. The Association was very grateful to PCF for its support of the project and thanks were recorded to Linda Clarkson for the hard work she had put in to making the scheme such a success.

The Heritage Lottery Fund project continues to run until October 2017. It was very pleasing to note that the Bursary Trainees have now successfully completed their training and are working as dry stone wallers. A further update on the project is provided later.

Membership figures remained fairly static throughout the year. New members need to be encouraged to get involved in branch and national activities in order to ensure the Association has a thriving future.

Thanks were recorded to branches and members who have made financial donations to the Association throughout the year, whether these are for specific projects such as the printing of leaflets, etc or of a more general nature to enable the Association to further its charitable aims.

An Honorary Editor has been appointed for the Waller & Dyker. Shirley Addy was settling into the role and has been encouraging members to submit articles of interest for future issues.

Congratulations were extended to all those involved in projects acknowledged through the DSWA Pinnacle Award Scheme. A full Pinnacle Award was granted to Lydia Noble and Adam Clarke for The Hive, a private commission for a client in West Yorkshire. Further awards were made for the rebuilding of Cross Fell Shelter in Cumbria, which was granted a Certificate of Merit in the Historical Restoration category, presented to Laurie Lambeth; and the Rhodesian African Rifles Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, built by Chris Ingles, Nick Sutton and Tim Righton, which received a Certificate of Merit in the Public Works category.

The report was agreed by a majority vote of 31 in favour with 3 against.

A total of 38 voting papers had been returned although 4 were invalid for want of a mark. A vote of thanks was recorded to Mrs Patricia Bell, EU Election Observer, for acting as Returning Officer for the voting forms.

AGM17.4 Accounts

That the inspected accounts for the year ended 31 August 2016 be adopted was proposed by R Stockall and seconded by T Blackwell. Copies of the accounts were available at the meeting.

It was with regret that the Association had accepted the resignation of M Booth from the role of Honorary Treasurer with effect from 31 August, due to family circumstances. Grateful thanks were recorded to M Booth for all the work he had done in moving the Association's financial matters forward over the last few years. A replacement Honorary Treasurer was actively being sought.

There were no questions about the accounts, which were approved by a majority vote of 31 in favour, with 3 against.

AGM17.5 Election of Trustees

Four trustees are elected annually for a three-year period. Retiring Trustees are eligible to apply for re-election. Only three nominations had been received this year so no vote was necessary. The elected Trustees were as follows:

Tracey Blackwell, Brian Jones and Lydia Noble.

L Noble was welcomed as a new member of the Trustee Board and would be attending her first meeting the next day.

AGM17.6 Constitutional Updates

The adoption of the updated objects of the Dry Stone Walling Association, as approved by the Charity Commission, and the revised Rules of the Dry Stone Walling Association together with the updated DSWA Branch Procedures document were ratified by a majority of those in attendance as proposed by B Jones and seconded by S Atkinson.

The updated objects of the Association are:

“To advance education in the craft and heritage of dry stone walling for the public benefit.”

AGM17.7 Appointment of Independent Inspector/Auditor for the annual accounts

That Stables, Thompson & Briscoe, Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors be thanked for their services and be re-appointed for 2017/2018 was proposed by B Jones and seconded by N Coombey. Unopposed, no vote necessary.

AGM17.8 Subscriptions

As noted on the agenda, there would be no increase in subscription rates for 2017 but a small increase would be implemented with effect from January 2018, as follows:

Open £35	Overseas Open £40	Professional £112	Corporate £170
Joint Open £55		Full-time student £20	Junior £5

AGM17.9 Any Other Business

There was no other business as may be properly accepted at an Annual General Meeting. The formal meeting was therefore closed.

Branch of the Year Competition

Presentations were made for the Branch of the Year Competition as follows:

Small Branch

1st Dorset
2nd South Yorkshire
3rd South East Scotland

Large Branch

1st West Yorkshire
2nd Derbyshire
3rd Otley & Yorkshire Dales

Hundred Club

The first draw was made as follows:

March 2017

2% I Mitchell (79)
1% G Hughes (110) and D Mitchell (44)

Half Yearly

4% Derbyshire Branch (57)

Training and Education Coordinator Update

A presentation was given by L Clarkson highlighting the work being carried out as part of the HLF project as well as wider educational work within the Association. The following points were noted.

The Bursary Trainee programme has now been completed with all candidates successfully achieving the Initial and Intermediate qualifications. One of the original trainees dropped out of the programme but a replacement was found, who has also achieved the Intermediate qualification and has subsequently transferred to the mentoring programme. A further trainee was taken on who has successfully achieved the Initial qualification and is working towards the Intermediate certificate later in the year. Three of the four remaining trainees have also gained the Advanced qualification and the remaining trainee hopes to complete this shortly. In addition to the dry stone walling qualifications, the trainees also had the benefit of courses in Health and Safety, manual handling, business management and First Aid. It was encouraging to learn that the trainees have either continued working with their original placement provider or set up their own business as wallers. Grateful thanks were recorded to the placement providers, without which the scheme could not have operated.

Although changes had been made to the way in which the trainees carried out their placements and that there had been changes of personnel, HLF was more than happy with the success rate and the programme had, in effect, helped seven trainees as opposed to the five listed in the grant application.

The Mentoring programme is moving along and there are currently six mentees working towards either the Advanced or Master Craftsman qualifications. A number of events have taken place with community groups or organisations as part of the Built Landscape Heritage Awareness Campaign and further projects and events are planned for 2017, including another residential training week and training opportunities with HMP Kirkham. Thanks were recorded to the Cheshire Branch, in particular, for its support towards a number of the activities undertaken in 2016.

Educational resources aimed at young people and teachers are being produced, which will link in to the national curriculum and will be a widely accessible web-based facility.

An archive of photographic material showing different styles of dry stone walling and historic features was also being compiled, initially for the north west of the country but with a view to this being extended in due course to cover the whole of the country. This would also be an interactive web-based facility.

As has been mentioned in the meeting earlier, the current HLF funding comes to an end in October 2017. An application has been submitted to the HLF Skills for the Future programme for a national training programme for eight young people, which would be run along similar lines to the bursary training programme. The outcome of this application is due to be released shortly. Other potential funding opportunities are also being explored.

The meeting was very appreciative of the huge amount of work that Mrs Clarkson had achieved within the last year. If anyone was interested in helping with any of the initiatives mentioned, they were invited to contact Mrs Clarkson in the office.

Signed

Date