

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Dry Stone Walling Association
held on Saturday 7 March 2020 at the Best Western Heronston Hotel & Spa, Bridgend, South Wales**

Present: Mr R Stockall (Chairman), Mr P Clayton, Mr P Isherwood, Mr A Loudon, Miss L Noble, and 20 members as recorded in the attendance book.

In Attendance: Ms K May (Development Officer), Miss A Shaw (Office Administrator), Mrs H Robinson (Admin Assistant)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and recorded his thanks to colleagues in the Wales Branch for hosting the weekend. He also recorded thanks to K May and B Hartley for facilitating the members' workshop that had taken place prior to the meeting, which was a very interesting and useful session with plenty of good ideas and suggestions coming from member, which would help inform future plans for the Association. Thanks were recorded to A Shaw for her work in coordinating the weekend to ensure everything runs smoothly.

The Chairman then went on to advise that he would be stepping down from the role, which he had held for seven years, although his term of office as a Trustee would continue for a further two years. He had been privileged to chair the Association during that time and had enjoyed meeting many members from different branches. He went on to record grateful thanks to all members for their continued support and dedication, without which the DSWA could not manage.

AGM20.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Lord Cavendish and 12 members as recorded.

AGM20.2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2019

That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 2 March 2019 be adopted was proposed by R Stockall and seconded by B Noble. There were no amendments and there was a returned vote of 81 in favour, with 1 against. The minutes were therefore agreed and signed.

AGM20.3 Annual Report

That the Annual Report for 2018/2019 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 noted.

The DSWA has seen another busy and varied year and thanks were recorded to everyone who gives up their time to promote the craft. At the start of 2019, the Association was pleased to appoint Karen May as a freelance Development Officer with a specific focus on fund raising and business and organisational development.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund Skills for the Future project has now been completed with a new tranche of young people who were successful in achieving the Intermediate/Level 2 qualification and indeed three of them went on to gain the Advanced/Level 3 certificate. Additional funding has also been secured from The Prince's Countryside Fund to enable DSWA to offer training and qualifications to young people seeking a rural career, with particular focus on people on the north east of England and parts of Scotland. Some training has already been delivered and the project has another year to run before completion.

Over the year DSWA has welcomed people from far and wide to experience training in dry stone walling. Many of the short, beginner courses organised by the branches fill up quickly and it is encouraging to see some participants going on to join the Association thereafter. The four-day training courses available at Crooklands are also proving very popular and offer the opportunity for

participants to take one of the accredited qualifications on the fifth day. Bespoke training courses have been offered for specific groups such as the Canal and River Trust and Sustrans. Away days for a corporate organisation to allow staff to carry out voluntary work were also arranged, which are to be repeated this year.

DSWA is a partner in the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership project and is responsible for coordinating training opportunities in dry stone walling and hedgelaying for the duration of the project, for which DSWA is reimbursed through the grant programme.

In August last year the Association was contacted on behalf of its Patron, to see if there was anything it could do to help with the mass destruction of dry stone walls following the floods in North Yorkshire. A very successful Wallathon event was the result with wallers from far and wide joining forces over a weekend to restore over 200m of wall. Such was the feeling of those taking part that a second event is being planned for later this year.

The report was approved and adopted by a majority vote of 86 in favour with 1 against.

A total of 221 voting papers had been returned although one was invalid and there were 134 voting forms, marked only for electing Trustees. Thanks were recorded to Mrs Patricia Bell, EU Election Observer, for acting as Returning Officer for the voting forms.

AGM20.4 Accounts

That the inspected accounts for the year ended 31 August 2019 as presented by the Chairman be adopted was proposed by B Jones and seconded by C Stephens. Copies of the statement of financial activities and balance sheet were available at the meeting.

The charity had total incoming resources of £363,054 for the year including branch activity. Resources expended totalled £353,047 for the year, again including branch activity. Overall the charity had a net surplus of £10,007 compared to £36,075 last year. The charity's total funds at the year end were £371,188 of which £144,259 was held in branch bank accounts. The figures are taken from the full Charity Commission accounts which are prepared in accordance with Charity SORP guidelines.

There were no questions about the accounts, which were approved by a majority vote of 86 in favour, with 1 against.

AGM20.5 Election of Trustees

For the first time in many years, it was encouraging to see that a vote for the election of Trustees had taken place. Seven nominees had put themselves forward and the following Trustees (in alphabetical order) have been elected. Number of votes shown in brackets.

Tracey Blackwell (131)
Brian Hartley (133)
Gordon Hicks (83)
Lydia Noble (138)
Emma Yates (137)

As per the constitution, the person holding the lowest number of votes will take office for one year, as a replacement for Richard Love who has stood down before the end of his three year term of office. This is Gordon Hicks. The other Trustees will stand for a period of three years. Grateful thanks were extended to R Love, who has been on the Trustee Board for many years, including a period as DSWA Chairman. He will be continuing in his role as Chairman of the Craft Skills Group for the time being.

Thanks were also recorded to the other nominees who put their names forward for election, Richard Andrew and, in particular, Brian Jones who has served on the Management Committee and subsequently the Trustee Board for over 30 years, covering a range of roles and duties during that time, for which the Association is very grateful.

AGM20.6 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 2020/2021 was proposed by B Jones and seconded by P Clayton. Unopposed, no vote necessary.

AGM20.7 Minor Changes to the DSWA Rules

Minor changes had been made to the DSWA Rules, under Section G – Branches, which now reads as follows:

“DSWA members may organise themselves into Branches, which could operate within a geographical area, in which case its boundaries are determined in consultation with existing neighbouring Branches and approved by the DSWA Trustee Board. DSWA Branch Procedures should be followed. The purpose of the Branches is to further the purpose of the DSWA: to advance education in the craft and heritage of dry stone walling for the public benefit.”

The changes were accepted by a show of hands of 23 in favour of the amendments.

AGM20.8 Any Other Business

Although not specifically linked to the AGM, A Loudon reiterated the thanks already extended to R Love and B Jones for their hard work and commitment over the years. He did, however, express slight concerns about the lack of attendance by Trustees and urged people to think carefully about the commitments of Trustees when considering the role.

There being no other business, the formal meeting was declared closed.

Hundred Club

The first draw was made as follows:

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2% J Gwilliam (187)

1% K Chilvers (64) and DSWA Derbyshire Branch (173)

Half Yearly

4% J Grant (29)

Training and Education Coordinator Update

A short presentation was given on behalf of L Clarkson, highlighting the successful Skills for the Future National Lottery Heritage Fund project which had now come to an end. The success of this work relies heavily on the input from professional wallers in terms of mentors and placement providers and is something the Association should be very proud of. It was hoped that similar projects may be possible in the future, depending on funding.

Guest Speaker

Stuart Fry, one of the founding members of the DSWA South Wales Branch, gave an interesting illustrated talk on the use of typology as a means of dating the build period of particular sets of walled enclosures. Typology refers to the placement of individual stones within a wall which creates the whole, free-standing structure. Morphology, which defines the “look” of the built structure, also plays a part in the dating of structures and it is important to ensure regional variations in the construction of walls are retained when being rebuilt. It was hoped that branches might try to adopt the methodology to carry out work in their own areas in order to help build up a national picture or archaeological database for walls across the country.

Signed

Date