

Minutes of the DSWA Trustee Board meeting held  
on Saturday 12 March 2022 at the Westmorland County Showground & via Zoom

Present: P Clayton (Chairman), T Blackwell, B Hartley (Z), P Isherwood, P Kirkup, A Loudon (Z), C Noble, L Noble, J Taylor (Z= attended via Zoom)

In Attendance: Mrs L Clarkson (Treasurer) (present for Items 1-7) & Ms A Shaw

Apologies: Lord Cavendish, B Jones, E Yates

	ACTION BY
TB22.01 <u>Opening Remarks</u> The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting, whether in person or via Zoom.	
TB22.02 <u>Appointments</u> The current post holders of Chairman and Deputy Chair were willing to continue for a further year. There was unanimous support for the election of Paul Clayton as Chairman and Tracey Blackwell as Deputy Chair for the coming year. The meeting was also pleased to welcome Pamela Kirkup as a new trustee, for a three year period, and to co-opt Cuthbert Noble to the Trustee Board for a one year period.  Thanks were recorded to the trustees who had stood down this year, Gordon Hicks, Ray Stockall and Trevor Wragg, and appreciation of their hard work noted.  Following a brief discussion, minor changes have been made to the branches which trustees have a designated responsibility for as follows. Others remain unchanged:  Cumbria – Paul Clayton Cotswold, Dorset and South West England – Tracey Blackwell Northumbria – Pamela Kirkup Otley & Yorkshire Dales - Tracey Blackwell joint with Brian Hartley  An amended list of all branch contacts would be sent out. Trustees were reminded that it was important for them to keep in touch with their respective branches and establish good communication links.	A SHAW
TB22.03 <u>To confirm minutes of previous Trustee Board meeting – 11 December 2021</u> No amendments or corrections had been received so the minutes were therefore agreed and signed as a correct record of the meeting.	
TB22.04 <u>Matters Arising not otherwise on the Agenda</u> TB22.04a     Scout Activity Badge: (Item TB21.68a refers). This would be followed up with R Stockall.	P CLAYTON
TB22.04b     Scotland Liaison Group: A request was made to clarify and confirm that members of the West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association attend the Scotland Liaison Group meeting as non-voting members.	B HARTLEY
TB22.04c     Branch contacts and website links: It was noted that there had been a change of contact for some branches which was not reflected on the DSWA website and also some broken/out of date links, which need to be addressed. A regular check should be made on these items.	A SHAW
TB22.04d     Training Levy: In response to a query raised by Cumbria Branch about what the additional funds generated by the increase in the training levy would be used for and how it might benefit the wider membership, a lively discussion took place. It was pointed out that all monies legally belong to the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain, although designated funds are held by individual branches; they are in effect custodians of those funds. The transfer of funds is non-specific and would be used to further the objectives of the Association. It was noted that within the DSWA Financial Procedures, branches are expected to submit an annual budget on what expenditure it might incur in the following year. This would be followed up. A further point was	L CLARKSON

made that the branches and wider membership were probably not aware that the costs of running the Association are not covered by subscriptions and much of the activity nationally is "subsidised" by the training and certification scheme activities. The meeting was reminded that overheads such as the office exist for the whole organisation. A suggestion was made that a short article could be included in the Waller & Dyker/newsletter to members highlight this situation, which was agreed.

P CLAYTON/  
A SHAW

TB22.05 Correspondence

DSWA had received an invitation for a representative to attend one of the Royal Garden parties with the suggestion that the person invited to the 2020 event, which was subsequently cancelled, might be approached. This was followed up and S Fielding from the Dorset Branch will be attending.

TB22.06 Financial Matters

TB22.06a Current Financial Figures: These were circulated shortly ahead of the meeting and the following points noted.

- The day to day overheads of the Association should be covered by the organisation and not subsidised by income from training, etc as is the current situation.
- Savings have been made but there is a need to continue to look at ways of reducing costs.
- Analysis of the merchandise offered by DSWA is underway with a view to looking at stocking levels and mark up rate applied to items.
- National training courses are now booked on-line with payment being made at time of booking which should reduce the instances of people cancelling a course place without having paid.
- There is a need for the Association to establish an accurate budget/cash flow forecast and to stick to it. This would be set up for the new financial year in September.
- There is a need for the Treasurer to have access to the bank account information to eliminate the need to wait for the figures at the month end so that work can be spread more evenly throughout the month. This was being followed up.
- It was hoped that information can be shared via Teams/SharePoint going forward so that Trustees have access to information on a regular basis.

J TAYLOR/  
P CLAYTON

L CLARKSON

A SHAW

B HARTLEY/  
A SHAW

TB22.06b National Minimum Wage: It was noted that the rate will increase from 1 April. In line with these changes it was unanimously agreed that the hourly rate paid to H Robinson would be adjusted accordingly, proposed by A Loudon and seconded by J Taylor. It was also noted that consideration should also be given to other salary rates in order to maintain a pro-rata difference.

A SHAW

TB22.06c Financial Services Compensation Scheme: Item TB21.57a refers and would be looked at by the Finance committee.

B HARTLEY

TB22.06d DSWA Credit Card: An application process was ongoing to arrange for a business credit card.

A SHAW

TB22.07 Training & Education Update

Despite a slightly slow start, bookings for the four-day courses at Crooklands are now moving forward with booking for most of them and the first two, in March and April, fully booked.

There have been some enquiries about Level 3 training and this is being offered on the September course. There is some work to be done on the training field as well as housekeeping activities for the welfare unit.

L CLARKSON

External courses have been run for Abbeystead Estate and plans are underway for training to trainees in the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. As part of the Pendle Hill Landscape project, training and certification is being offered to volunteers.

The Rural Skills Hub is progressing very well and a number of events have taken place recently, including a very successful experience day, hosted by DSWA Northumbria Branch for Young Green Leaders in the Northumberland National Park. There are further opportunities for such events to take place in England. Please contact the Rural Skills Hub Co-ordinator, Carrie House, on [info@ruralskillshub.org.uk](mailto:info@ruralskillshub.org.uk) if interested. Thanks were recorded to the Northumbria Branch for hosting the day, which had been enjoyed by everyone involved.

ALL

Thanks were recorded to L Clarkson for all the work she continues to do in the Training & Education Co-ordinator role, which is much appreciated.

TB22.08	<p><u>Durham Legacy Update</u></p> <p>Further communication had taken place with regards the project outlined with the Stockton &amp; Darlington Railway although matters had not moved forward in any significant way. A short, but lively discussion took place with regards the training being suggested for the project and whether a bursary type scheme for young wallers in the Durham area could be incorporated, which would not only enable walls to be built and repaired, as per the request in the legacy, but would form a lasting legacy going forward so there were people able to carry out work in the future. The Northumbria Branch made it clear that it does not consider the legacy money to be theirs, as was suggested at the meeting, but wishes to fulfil the wishes of the legacy – to be used for repair and building walls in County Durham. The Stockton &amp; Darlington Railway project would fulfil this wish as well as being prestigious; 2025 will be the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first railway in the world to offer passenger and freight travel using steam traction.</p> <p>It was agreed that P Clayton would contact the Stockton &amp; Darlington Railway with a view to moving things forward in a meaningful way and would report back in due course.</p>	P CLAYTON
TB22.09	<p><u>Branch Updates from Trustees</u></p> <p>A second Zoom call with branch representatives had taken place in February as an informal meeting, which had, in general, been received favourably and was considered a useful opportunity for dialogue between branches and trustees, although some concerns had been expressed about the number of trustees attending. The notes from the meeting had been circulated. It was hoped that regular meetings would continue, the idea being for four a year, the next one in May/June. Branches would be invited to submit topics for discussion.</p> <p>Other branch updates included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in the bookings for training courses experienced by a number of branches.</li> <li>• Ellwood Branch is planning activities to help fund two of its members travelling to a walling event in Italy.</li> <li>• Northumbria hosts one day taster sessions which prove very popular. It has also been working with UTASS (Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services) offering training for its members.</li> <li>• Cheshire Branch offers a gift card for courses, which other branches might consider if not already doing so.</li> </ul>	
TB22.10	<p><u>Governance Issues</u></p> <p>A suggestion had been made that wording in the complaints/grievance policies might need amending which would be looked at.</p>	B HARTLEY/ T BLACKWELL
TB22.11	<p><u>Staffing</u></p> <p>Work was progressing with the review of staff contracts and key responsibilities. The Chairman advised that he was hoping to establish regular meetings with staff and would try to fit in some visits to the office.</p>	P CLAYTON/ A SHAW
TB22.12	<p><u>DSWA 5-Year Plan/Business Plan</u></p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	P CLAYTON/ R STOCKALL
TB22.13	<p><u>DSWA Working Groups</u></p> <p>Currently there are working groups covering Finance, Marketing and Policies. A suggestion was made that members could be invited to help with some of this work if they had relevant skills and a request would be included in the Waller &amp; Dyker.</p>	P CLAYTON/ A SHAW
TB22.14 TB22.14a	<p><u>Membership</u></p> <p>Current Membership Figures: Current membership figures were as follows: a total of 950 current members, including 718 open, 204 professional, 11 corporate and 13 junior/student/unemployed.</p> <p>A suggestion was put forward as to whether a change in membership year start time would help members make payment rather than funds having to be paid in January. Further thought will be given to this idea.</p>	
TB22.15	<p><u>Craft Skills Group</u></p> <p>Minutes from the recent meeting had been previously circulated. It was noted that the Examiner Standardisation weekend would be taking place from 8-10 April and booking details had been sent out. There are some changes to the format of the course, in line with IQA procedures from Lantra. Minor changes have also been made to the Craftsman Certification Scheme booklet and a reprint is underway.</p>	A SHAW

TB22.15a	<p>Instructor Training Course: DSWA currently has a large number of instructors although it was acknowledged that some members may no longer be active. It was agreed that an audit of instructors should be carried out and it was further agreed that changes to the course content need to be implemented. To that end, there will not be a course in 2022 but one would be arranged for 2023. This decision will be communicated in the Waller &amp; Dyker and to branches.</p> <p>It was noted that some people achieving the Level 2 qualification do so in order to become instructors but sometimes lack the experience/knowledge to then teach others, which needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>A SHAW</p> <p>B HARTLEY/ A SHAW</p>
TB22.16 TB22.16a	<p><u>Coordinator Reports</u></p> <p>International: Enquiries had been made about DSWA hosting the International Congress in 2025 and further details were to be sent over. An outline of costs should be prepared. It was noted that last time the congress was held in Cumbria, a grant had been secured in order to cover most of the costs of the event.</p>	<p>A SHAW</p>
TB22.16b	<p>Pinnacle Awards: Plans were underway for the presentation of the recent Certificate of Merit for the Friendship Bridge at the RHS Harlow Carr Garden.</p> <p>Some changes to the scheme had been suggested by the Award Co-ordinator which would be followed up.</p>	<p>A SHAW</p> <p>A SHAW</p>
TB22.17 TB22.17a	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p><b>Members' Weekend:</b> Following a brief discussion, it was agreed not to hold a Members' Weekend in 2022 but to consider options for the future.</p>	
TB22.17b	<p>The Game Fair: Details had been received for this event, taking place on 29-31 July at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire. Following a short discussion it was unanimously agreed that the Association would not attend.</p>	
TB22.17c	<p>Reprint of Building and Repairing: A request was made for this popular booklet to be reprinted. Costs should be obtained and a review of the book carried out if necessary by the Marketing Group before printing. As publications come up for reprint, a review should be done to ensure consistency in line with DSWA Brand guidelines.</p>	<p>A SHAW</p> <p>J TAYLOR</p>
TB22.18	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Saturday 11 June 2022 at 10am at the Westmorland County Showground or by Zoom.</p> <p>Agenda items and papers (excluding financials) should be sent to the office by Friday 13 May at the latest.</p> <p>Remaining meeting dates for 2022: Saturday 17 September, 10am Saturday 17 December, 10am</p>	<p>ALL</p>

Signed .....P Clayton.....

Date .....11 June 2022.....

A Shaw/24 March 2022

ref: dswa/tbmtg/march 22mins