

Minutes of the DSWA Trustee Board meeting held

on Saturday 26 June 2021 at the Westmorland County Showground & Via Zoom

Present: P Clayton(Chairman), T Blackwell, G Hicks, P Isherwood, A Loudon, C Noble, L Noble, R Stockall, J Taylor, T Wragg and E Yates

In Attendance: Mrs L Clarkson (Treasurer), Miss A Shaw

Apologies: Lord Cavendish, B Hartley

		ACTION BY
TB21.18	<u>Opening Remarks</u> The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting, whether in person or via Zoom.	
TB21.19	<u>To confirm minutes of previous Trustee Board meeting – 6 March 2021</u> There were no amendments or corrections to the minutes which were agreed and signed as a correct record of the meeting.	
TB21.20	<u>Matters Arising not otherwise on the Agenda</u>	
TB21.20a	Upgrade of Office Computers & Telephone System: Both these items have now been upgraded. SharePoint is still to be rolled out to all Trustees.	A SHAW
TB21.20b	Local Housebuilding Projects: TB21.16e refers and will be carried forward to the next meeting.	B HARTLEY
TB21.21	<u>Correspondence</u> A letter had been received from Clarence House, thanking the DSWA for its letter of condolence sent to HRH The Prince of Wales following the death of the Duke of Edinburgh.	
TB21.22	<u>Financial Matters</u>	
TB21.22a	Current Financial Figures: Current figures were tabled at the meeting and thanks were recorded to L Clarkson for all the work she has done to make the figures more readily accessible. It was noted that there have been recent changes to Sage, which have caused quite a lot of extra work. During discussions, it was agreed that a summary of the Association's financial situation should be shared with branches to help them understand the wider picture in terms of income and expenditure. It was agreed that L Clarkson would summarise the information made available at the meeting which could then be circulated to branches.	L CLARKSON/ A SHAW
	A suggestion was put forward that finance could be a topic for discussion under the proposed "communication workshops" that would be discussed later in the meeting.	J TAYLOR/ E YATES
TB21.22b	Gift Aid: The Gift Aid claim for the tax year to the 5 April 2021 had been submitted and an amount of £7093.22 received.	
TB21.22c	DSWA Finance Group Terms of Reference: This document had been circulated ahead of the meeting and was unanimously agreed.	
TB21.22d	National Lottery Heritage Fund: A new grant had been submitted to the NLHF, outcome pending.	
TB21.23	<u>Durham Legacy Update</u> Correspondence had taken place between A Loudon and the Northumbria Branch about the proposed project working in conjunction with the Stockton & Darlington Railway, which was the likely way forward to use the legacy left to DSWA. Enquiries to other organisations such as the Durham Wildlife Trust and County Council Countryside Service have come to nothing. It was noted that the railway company was also looking into possible funding opportunities to support the project. It was agreed that discussions need to take place with the branch and the railway company to establish some costings and it was agreed that a meeting between the three parties should be organised as soon as possible. G Hicks agreed to forward the railway company contact to L Clarkson so that an initial meeting can be arranged with support from G Hicks, A Loudon and P Isherwood. Following this meeting, a lead role is to be agreed to steer the project and terms of reference drafted. P Clayton and the office would be copied in on developments for information.	G HICKS/ L CLARKSON/ A LOUDON/ P ISHERWOOD

TB21.24	<p><u>Branch Updates from Trustees</u></p> <p>It was noted that most branches have now commenced practical walling once more and courses were also being organised and proving popular. A number of branches have held regular Zoom meetings during the lockdowns. Other points noted included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the regular shows attended by branches have again been cancelled for this year although there are some events that have been allowed to go ahead. • Ellwood Branch was planning on holding a competition on 25 September and details would be forwarded to the office for inclusion on the website. South West Scotland Branch also has plans for a competition on 2 October. • Otley & Yorkshire Dales Branch is currently building new sections of training site wall and is considering holding a "Wallathon" type event to move the work forward, details to be confirmed. • South West England Branch is hoping to organise some training courses in Cornwall, including some in Cornish hedging. This branch has also been successful in securing funding from the National Grid Community Grant to run courses for volunteers with the Mendip AONB and Somerset Wildlife Trust. • Following on from the request for branches to contact local MPs about the new Environmental Land Management Scheme being developed, Northumbria Branch had held a very useful meeting with one of its MPs and it is hoped that dialogue will continue. 	
TB21.24a	<p>Improved Communication between Trustee Board and Branches: A discussion meeting had taken place prior to the Trustee Board meeting to look at ways of increasing the engagement of branch members with the wider activities of the Association. A suggestion had been put forward to hold "communication workshops", which could be done by Zoom, to look at different topics/subject of interest. A suggestion was made that the outcomes of the branch questionnaire and workshops held in March 2019 could be used as a starting point for this process. Copies of the documents would be re-sent to Trustees. J Taylor was happy to coordinate these events and it was suggested that B Hartley should also be involved as he was instrumental in developing the branch questionnaires. It was agreed that a date should be identified as soon as practical.</p>	<p>A SHAW</p> <p>J TAYLOR/ B HARTLEY</p>
TB21.25	<p><u>Covid-19</u></p> <p>It was noted that revised protocols for practice days, training courses and test days had been re-issued at the beginning of June along with revised risk assessments. A further review of the protocols would be needed after the 19 July following the Government update on its road map.</p>	<p>P CLAYTON/ B HARTLEY</p>
TB21.26	<p><u>Governance Issues</u></p>	
TB21.26a	<p>Skills Set for Trustee Board: A paper detailing the skills set of existing Trustees was tabled at the meeting and would be circulated to trustees. It also identified gaps in the skills required on the Trustee Board, to be taken into account when seeking new trustees. From the Skills Audit, there is also a need to engage/encourage younger members to become trustees, see TB21.26e below.</p>	<p>E YATES/ A SHAW</p>
TB21.26b	<p>Trustee Liability: This item would be carried forward to the September meeting. A document produced by N Coombey showing the risks of the Association would be re-sent to all trustees.</p>	<p>E YATES/ J TAYLOR A SHAW</p>
TB21.26c	<p>Working Groups: A number of small working groups are being set up to deal with specific areas of work as follows: Craft Skills, Finance, Marketing (media and merchandising), Short Term Projects, Policies, 5-year Business Plan and Staffing. The organogram would be circulated with the minutes. It was agreed that Terms of Reference for each of the working groups should be drafted and made available by the next Trustee Board meeting. L Clarkson thanked the Trustee Board for setting up the working groups which would help in staff having guidance on the aims of the Trustee Board and its purpose. It was noted that the National Lottery Heritage Fund website has information that may be useful to these groups, as does the Lantra website. It was agreed that a folder on SharePoint should be created to file useful documents with links for trustees to access.</p>	<p>E YATES/ A SHAW</p> <p>A SHAW</p>
TB21.26d	<p>NCVO Membership: A project proposal form had been submitted for the Association to re-join NCVO for a year, which is the umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector in England. This was unanimously agreed and would be actioned with immediate effect.</p>	<p>A SHAW</p>
TB21.26e	<p>Nomination of Trustees for 2022: The Trustees coming to the end of their three year term of office in 2022 will be C Noble, R Stockall, J Taylor and T Wragg. G Hicks would also come to the end of his year-long co-option. All are eligible to submit nomination forms although it was noted that some will not be standing again for personal reasons. Following a short discussion, it was agreed that there is a need to encourage members to take on the role of a trustee but also to be aware of the skills required by the Trustee Board. It was agreed that a short article on the role of a DSWA Trustee should be produced to encourage participation and be circulated to members and posted on social media to encourage others outside DSWA to consider becoming a trustee and to fill gaps in the skills audit if not filled by DSWA.</p>	<p>E YATES/ A SHAW</p>

TB21.26f	<p>Members' Weekend and AGM 2022: A short discussion took place on the location and format of this event, to encourage greater participation and make it more accessible to members. It was agreed that some form of walling activity should be included and more flexible options for food and accommodation considered. It was agreed that it would be better to hold this later in the year. DSWA can hold its AGM up to 15 months from the last one so it was agreed that dates from mid-May to mid-June should be considered. It was further agreed that the event would take place at Crooklands utilising the DSWA facilities.</p>	P CLAYTON/ A SHAW/ P ISHERWOOD/ A LOUDON
TB21.27	<p><u>DSWA 5-Year Plan/Business Plan</u> It was agreed that the document would be updated ahead of the next Trustee Board meeting.</p>	P CLAYTON/ R STOCKALL
TB21.28	<p><u>DSWA Policies</u> Work was ongoing with regards the updates of DSWA policies. It was noted that as part of the internal quality assurance process, policies relating to training issues need to be cross referenced with Lantra documents. L Clarkson agreed to forward the link to relevant policies within Lantra.</p>	L CLARKSON
TB21.29 TB21.29a	<p><u>Membership</u> Current Membership Figures: The current membership figures are as follows: a total of 955 members, including 702 Open, 215 Professional, 15 Corporate and 19 Junior/student.</p> <p>A lively discussion took place on the need to encourage new members and ways in which this might be achieved included offering discounts on certain merchandise, making the professional membership more attractive and identifying why people, particularly professional wallers, do not engage with the Association. It was suggested that there needs to be a multi-faceted approach to tackling the declining membership, which could be one of the topics discussed within the communication workshops already mentioned.</p> <p>Another suggestion was to increase the DSWA presence on social media, which is the communication method of many younger people. It was agreed that there should be a photo gallery set up on the SharePoint folder which would be available to access items for Facebook, etc. Action on YouTube is also potentially more beneficial than Facebook as there is a small amount of income generated from activity once a clip has reached 1000+ views. Participants on courses, etc should also be encouraged to upload information to their own social media pages. A brief discussion took place about the Discussion Forum on the DSWA website. This is now rarely used and it was unanimously agreed that it would be taken down with immediate effect.</p> <p>It was noted that if new initiatives are being considered, there also needs to be a review of admin structure, etc to ensure there is the staffing capacity to deliver the work.</p>	J TAYLOR/ E YATES
TB21.29b	<p>Subscriptions for 2022: A brief discussion took place on the need to increase subscriptions by a small amount on a regular basis. The last increase was in 2020 and it was unanimously agreed there should be increases effective from 1 January 2022 as follows, proposed by P Clayton, seconded by R Stockall:</p> <p>Open from £38 to £45 Overseas Open from £43 to £50 Joint Open from £60 to £65 Professional no change £115 Corporate no change £175 Student/unemployed from £22 to £25 Junior no change.</p>	A SHAW A SHAW
TB21.30 TB21.30a	<p><u>Craft Skills Group</u> Craft Skills Group Minutes: These had been previously circulated and there were no comments.</p>	
TB21.30b	<p>IOA Update: A pilot project has now got underway with regards the internal quality assurance that DSWA is required to undertake with Lantra as part of the craftsman certification scheme. The process will be rolled out in full to all Examiners in 2022.</p>	CRAFT SKILLS GROUP
TB21.30c	<p>Certification and Training: As part of the internal quality assurance process, the time is now right to redefine the way in which training and tests are managed. A paper was circulated prior to the meeting outlining a proposed new role to manage and streamline the certification scheme. Following a brief discussion, the paper was unanimously agreed as a way forward.</p>	B HARTLEY/ E YATES/ A SHAW
TB21.31	<p><u>Training & Education Update</u> There has been a steady stream of enquiries for the qualification training courses and it was agreed that an additional course in September would be added, along with an extra test day.</p> <p>A beginner course has been arranged as part of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Project and short courses are also planned for the Canal & River Trust and the Woodland Trust.</p>	L CLARKSON

There has been some interest from employers on building sites looking to provide dry stone walling courses for employees, which is something L Clarkson was keen to pursue.

TB21.32 Coordinator Reports

TB21.32a Environmental Land Management Scheme: DSWA has contributed to the development of this new scheme through links with DEFRA. The scheme is now in the final stages of preparation.

A link received from B Jones, which he felt should be supported, had been forwarded to those involved with the early discussions, [Environment-Bill-Second-Reading-HOC-Briefing.pdf](http://theheritagealliance.org.uk/Environment-Bill-Second-Reading-HOC-Briefing.pdf) (theheritagealliance.org.uk).

TB21.32b International: Plans are still going ahead for the International Dry Stone Walling Congress, scheduled to take place from 1-3 October 2021 in Konavle, Croatia. The following link gives more details: <http://www.dragodid.org>

TB21.32c Pinnacle Awards: No new applications have been received. It is hoped that the presentation for the Certificate of Merit garden project in Baildon can be moved forward now that Covid-19 restrictions have been relaxed.

A SHAW

TB21.33 Any Other Business

TB21.33a Christmas Cards, Year Planner and Calendar: It was agreed that the Media working group would look at whether the Association should produce the above and report back by mid July.

P CLAYTON

TB21.33b Waller & Dyker: As had been agreed at the last meeting, there would only be two printed copies in 2021. The copy date for the next issue will be 1 November. However, it had been previously suggested that an electronic newsletter could be produced in the interim and it was agreed this should be followed up. J Taylor was happy to lead on this action and agreed to circulate draft wording to the trustees before it was issued to the membership.

J TAYLOR/
A SHAW

TB21.33c International Walling Opportunities: Details of opportunities for Australia had been previously circulated and it was agreed that DSWA could promote the details via Facebook and the website. T Blackwell would liaise with Australian contact for details and article to be shared.

T BLACKWELL

An opportunity for walling in France had also been received and details would be forwarded to Trustees for consideration on how best to promote the opportunity.

A SHAW

Both opportunities could be included in the electronic newsletter outlined above if available and agreed.

J TAYLOR

TB21.33d DSWA Zoom Account: There was unanimous agreement for DSWA to set up a generic Zoom account that would allow meetings of longer than 40 minutes to take place, hosted by different Trustee Board members.

A SHAW

TB21.34 Hundred Club

Draws for the Hundred Club were made as follows:

April 2021	2% S Donald (97)	1% Derbyshire Branch (13) and J Grant (53)
May 2021	2% D Findlay (43)	1% J Muffitt (95) and H Robinson (169)
June 2021	2% J Doohan (153)	1% B Klinger (22) and D Findlay (48).

TB21.35 Date of Next Meeting

It was suggested that the next meeting would take place on Saturday 25 September. However, subsequent to the meeting, the date is not free for the room hire. Alternatives are to be considered.

ALL

Agenda items and papers should be sent to the office by Friday XXX at the latest.

SignedP Clayton.....

A Shaw/7 July 2021

Date2 October 2021.....

ref: dswa/tbmtg/june21mins