

Minutes of the DSWA Trustee Board meeting held
on Saturday 6 March 2021 via Teams due to Covid-19 restrictions

Present: P Clayton(Chairman), T Blackwell, B Hartley, G Hicks, P Isherwood, A Loudon, R Stockall, J Taylor and E Yates,

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

Apologies: Lord Cavendish, L Noble, T Wragg

	ACTION BY
TB21.01 <u>Opening Remarks</u> The Chairman thanked everyone for joining the meeting and for persevering during these strange times and with the technology of on-line meetings, which was not always easy.	
TB21.02 <u>Appointments</u> The appointment of Chairman and Deputy were discussed briefly. Both post holders were willing to continue for a further period and it was felt that continuity during these challenging times would be beneficial. Therefore 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 co-opt Gordon Hicks on to the Trustee Board for a further one year period.	
TB21.03 <u>To confirm minutes of previous Trustee Board meeting – 5 December 2020</u> There were no amendments or corrections to the minutes which were agreed and signed as a correct record of the meeting.	
TB21.04 <u>Matters Arising not otherwise on the Agenda</u>	
TB21.04a Upgrade of Office Computers: The upgrade of the office computers had now been agreed and would be implemented as soon as practical.	A SHAW
TB21.04b DSWA Telephone System: The new phone system has now been installed in the office.	
TB21.05 <u>Correspondence</u> Nothing to report.	
TB21.06 <u>Financial Matters</u>	
TB21.06a Current Financial Figures: Current figures had been circulated ahead of the meeting although it was noted that the February details should be taken as draft due to the timing issues of financial quarters and the meetings. Moving the timing of Trustee Board meetings to coincide with the presentation of quarterly accounts should be considered. During discussions the following points were noted.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure for the first six months of the financial year has been kept to a minimum although the Association continued to run at a loss month on month due to the reduction in income caused by Covid-19. The NLHF Emergency Grant offset the overhead costs from August to November thereby negating the shortfall in those months. • Receipt of subscriptions in January boosts bank balances but this money is required to cover overheads for the full year. It was disappointing to note that there are a few subscription payments coming in at old amounts, via Standing Orders, which would be followed up as a matter of urgency, although it was noted that people have been contacted on a regular basis about the errors. • It was agreed that the Crooklands account should hold the DSWA reserves and any restricted funds while the general account would hold funds to cover the day to day running costs, etc. • A lot of time has been spent on developing recording systems which will also help with stock management issues in terms of sales and stock levels held, all of which is valuable in making financial decisions. • Consideration needs to be given to establishing regular reporting procedures for the branches, which could also tie in with funding for projects that have a benefit to branches. • A small finance group has been established, comprising B Hartley, R Stockall, J Taylor and the Treasurer and notes from a meeting held in February had been circulated to the Trustee Board, which had some ideas and suggestions on going forward. The group was also looking at the 	<p>A SHAW</p> <p>B HARTLEY/ P CLAYTON</p> <p>FINANCE GROUP</p>

	marketing possibilities of stock and P Clayton, J Taylor and E Yates agreed to take this forward and report back. It was also agreed to include C and L Noble in this group as they had been asked to look at this issue previously.	P CLAYTON/ J TAYLOR/ E YATES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to marketing opportunities was the need for DSWA to make better use of social media, including Facebook and Twitter and for regular updates to be posted on these sites. • New funding opportunities are due to be launched from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and details had been circulated with a request for ideas on what DSWA might look at funding. It was agreed that the document would be resent and suggestions submitted by 12 March. E Yates was keen to work with L Clarkson on this matter, which was gratefully received. 	P CLAYTON ALL L CLARKSON/ E YATES
	At the request of the Trustees, the Treasurer has undertaken additional work to review current financial accounting methods and introduce new systems which will provide the Trustee Board with more in depth financial data. This has resulted in more time being spent on this role than initially envisaged and a review of the remuneration for the role may be required. Thanks were recorded to L Clarkson for all the hard work she has put in to making the figures much more accessible.	B HARTLEY
TB21.06b	Wage Increase: It was noted that there will be an increase to the National Living Wage with effect from 1 April and following a short discussion it was unanimously agreed that the hourly rate for H Robinson would be increased to this figure from that date.	A SHAW
TB21.07	<u>Branch Updates from Trustees</u> Most branches were keen to restart walling activities and were hoping guidance would be issued as soon as practical. Many branches have kept members in touch via Zoom meetings or WhatsApp gatherings, which was encouraging. There had been a mixed response to the letters sent to local MPs regarding the new Environmental Land Management Scheme but some useful links had been established.	
TB21.08 TB21.08a	<u>Covid-19</u> Branch Activity, Training Courses and Test Days: Following the Government's current road map out of the pandemic a lively discussion took place on how to safely open up walling activities. From the 29th March it will be possible for small groups of up to six people to meet outdoors which could mean practice days could start from then. Moving forward it was felt that after 12th April training courses could be arranged although the rule of six would still apply. From 17 th May, up to 30 people will be allowed to meet outdoors and this was considered the appropriate time for training courses at Crooklands to recommence, as accommodation and hospitality will also be reopening. Revised protocol and risk assessment documents would be produced and sent to branches as soon as practical with the dates and activities listed. It was noted that the current Government road map was for England but it was felt that branches in Scotland and Wales would be able to use the guidance produced by DSWA as and when changes for the Devolved Administrations were announced. All activity is dependent on the success of the road map and assuming the criteria for each stage is met.	P CLAYTON/ B HARTLEY
	In terms of test days, guidance would be sought from Lantra and it was agreed that the Craft Skills Group would consider the matter further and report back.	CRAFT SKILLS GROUP
TB21.08b	Furloughed Staff: It was agreed that H Robinson should return to work from the beginning of May, providing there was no current Government advice to the contrary. As she has been furloughed for almost a year it was suggested that a "return to work" meeting should be arranged with her beforehand. Consideration also needs to be given to the amount of holiday that has accrued. It was agreed that a general discussion on staff holidays needs to be had at some stage.	P CLAYTON/ A SHAW P CLAYTON
TB21.09 TB21.09a	<u>Governance Issues</u> Visioning: This was something that had arisen during the NLHF grant but it was not something that could take place remotely and it was therefore agreed not to pursue at the present time.	
TB21.09b	Skills Set for Trustee Board: E Yates is moving forward with this piece of work and would be producing a form for Trustees to complete, detailing skills they have and asking why they want to be a Trustee, all of which would feed into future visioning planning.	E YATES
TB21.09c	Trustee Liability: Work was continuing on looking into the liability that might fall to Trustees within the Association, particularly in terms of risk management. It was noted that the DSWA issues a generic risk assessment to branches for activities, which does have a section for adding additional site specific risk issues. E Yates and J Taylor would report back in due course.	E YATES/ J TAYLOR

TB21.10	<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 CLAYTON/ R STOCKALL
TB21.11	<u>DSWA Policies</u> Work was ongoing with regard to policies that would be useful for DSWA to have. Some generic templates are available which can be adopted if necessary. B Hartley agreed to circulate those of key value.	B HARTLEY
TB21.12	<u>Membership</u> Current Membership Figures: The current membership figures are as follows: a total of 830 members, including 604 Open, 196 Professional, 14 Corporate and 12 Junior/student. The drop in numbers since the last meeting is due mainly to members forgetting to renew their subscription by the end of January. Membership lists had been issued to branches in order to follow up on those members yet to send in subscriptions.	
TB21.13 TB21.13a	<u>Craft Skills Group</u> Training Site Developments: It was hoped that work would take place shortly on upgrading the training site to eventually include all features within the certification scheme. A small work party team would be established to help with the work. P Dolphin was co-ordinating the changes and P Isherwood reiterated his offer of help, which was gratefully accepted. A training site in Fife was also being developed by branches in Scotland although progress had been delayed due to the pandemic.	B HARTLEY/ L CLARKSON
TB21.13b	Examiner Standardisation and IOA work: Very little had moved forward with this due to the pandemic. The Craft Skills Group would report back in due course.	CRAFT SKILLS GROUP
TB21.14	<u>Training & Education Update</u> A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. There have been lots of enquiries about courses although actual bookings were still quite slow. Updated information on dates, etc would be issued following the Trustee Board meeting. A suggestion was made by the Chairman that course dates should not necessarily be expanded to try and accommodate everyone although some process of allocation might be required if there is a high demand for places. There is a need to look at the Training & Education Coordinator role, which L Clarkson is currently covering in a "caretaking" capacity . It would be beneficial for DSWA to look for funding to cover a more permanent solution.	L CLARKSON
TB21.15 TB21.15a	<u>Coordinator Reports</u> Environmental Land Management Scheme: DSWA has been able to contribute to the development of this new scheme through links with DEFRA and has also registered to be part of the test and trial pilot of the scheme. It is possible that landowners will be "rewarded" for having walls on their land, which is encouraging.	
TB21.15b	Grants: As mentioned in item TB21.06a, new National Lottery Heritage Fund opportunities are now available and DSWA should explore options for funding. Other funding sources might include the Esmée Fairburn Foundation, the Ernest Cooke Trust and Awards for All, which would be followed up. In response to a query, it was noted that funding is unlikely to be available to support branches attending shows and events.	E YATES/ L CLARKSON
TB21.15c	International : Nothing to report	
TB21.15d	Pinnacle Awards: Nothing to report.	
TB21.16 TB21.16a	<u>Any Other Business</u> Christmas Cards and Year Planners: It was agreed that these items were linked into earlier discussions about marketing and would be followed up by that group.	P CLAYTON/ J TAYLOR/ E YATES
TB21.16b	Game Fair 2021: Attendance at this event, scheduled for 23-25 July at Ragley Hall had been previously agreed. Members of the Ellwood Branch had offered to attend. Costs for previous shows were requested.	A SHAW

- TB21.16c Waller & Dyker: As had been agreed at the last meeting, there would only be two printed copies in 2021 and it was further agreed that these would be in March and September, with copy dates of 1 March and 1 September respectively. A request was made that this should revert back to three printed copies in 2022 as members saw the magazine as a value benefit to membership.
- A SHAW
- A lively discussion took place on the possibility of producing an electronic newsletter and the benefits of this means of communication. Further consideration would be given to this and reported back in due course.
- J TAYLOR/
A SHAW
- TB21.16d Durham Legacy: A report had been submitted by the Northumbria Branch of a project that could fit the criteria of the Enid Rowell legacy, working with the Friends of Stockton & Darlington Railway. A lively discussion took place and it was suggested that if the project could incorporate a higher level of creative walling as well as some training opportunities and interpretation then it might be an appropriate use for the legacy funds. It was agreed that G Hicks would report back to the branch and get in touch with the railway society to discuss matters further. It was also agreed that L Clarkson would contact the group to see if National Lottery Heritage Funds might be available to them for some of the work. A report would be given at the next meeting.
- G HICKS/
L CLARKSON
- TB21.16e Local Housebuilding Projects: In response to a suggestion that DSWA should put efforts in to guiding the development of new housing estates that have dry stone walling elements, it was noted that some work had been started on this subject and would be reported back in due course. There is a need for planners and architects to understand the value of good quality walling within new developments as a way of showcasing the craft.
- B HARTLEY
- TB21.17 Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting will take place on Saturday 26 June 2021 at the Westmorland County Showground at 10am. Please note change of date to allow an in-person meeting if possible and financial figures to be produced.
- ALL
- Agenda items and papers should be sent to the office by Friday 28 May at the latest.
- Remaining Meeting dates for 2021
All meetings will take place at the Westmorland County Showground, Cumbria, commencing at 10am unless otherwise stated:
Saturday 4 September
Saturday 4 December

SignedP Clayton
A Shaw/18 March 2021

Date26 June 2021.....

ref: dswa/tbmtg/march21mins