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Registered Charity Number 289678

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Dry Stone Walling Association  
held on Saturday 14 March 2026 at the Westmorland County Showground and via Teams**

**Present:** Lord Cavendish (President), Mr. Andrew Loudon (Vice President), Mr. Paul Clayton (Chair), Miss. Lydia Noble (Deputy Chair), Mr. John Broadhead, Mr. Michael Cullen, Mr. Stephen Denham, Mr. Brian Hartley, Mr. Tim Povall, Mr. Jack Taylor, plus 6 other members

**In Attendance:** Mrs. Linda Clarkson (Treasurer), Mrs. Helen Lewis (Office Administrator), Mrs. Kate Dymock (Training & Education Co-ordinator) & Mrs. Helen Robinson (Administrative Assistant)

**AGM26.1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr. Brian Jones (Vice-President), Mr. William Noble (Vice President), Mr. Mike Tighe, Mrs. Beverley Watson, Mr. Lee Watson & Miss. Linda Wilson.

**AGM26.2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2024**

That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14 March 2025 be adopted was proposed by A. Loudon and seconded by P. Isherwood. The minutes were agreed and signed. The report can be found on the DSWA website and is available from the Office.

P. Clayton gave a summary of the Association's achievements and contributions over the last year and the following points highlighted:

- **Awards & Recognition:**
  - D. Goulder awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM).
  - A. Loudon was thanked for his long service as Trustee; now appointed Vice President.
  - J. Gwilliam recognised for work on the South Wales Training Site.
  - Mid-Lancs & West Yorkshire Branch members acknowledged for supporting branch sustainability.
  - Derbyshire Branch for their successful summer fair last year. The event is happening again this year and all members are welcome.
- **Membership:**
  - Membership levels remain stable compared to previous years.
  - Efforts underway to improve retention and attract new members.
  - Gift Aid participation has increased; members thanked for signing up.
- **Branch Communication:**
  - Quarterly branch meetings led by J. Taylor have improved communication with Branch Officers and the ideas generated will help us all going forward.
- **Training & Education:**
  - High demand continues for training programs.
  - Two new Master Craftsmen from Australia and Bulgaria.
  - New qualification test sites to be launched soon.
- **Looking Ahead:**
  - 2028 marks DSWA's 60th anniversary; plans to bring all members together for a celebration.
  - The Society remains optimistic about its future and continued growth.

A Special thank you was given to all members who donate their time and expertise to promote and support the craft, through the many training days, members walling days, shows and events that we do.

**AGM26.3 Accounts**

L. Clarkson presented a brief summary of the annual accounts, highlighting the various restricted funds held, grants and reserves. Some projects during the year had also been completed. Although it was noted that income and expenditure had both risen, it was explained that the DSWA funds held are still healthy.

It was suggested that the Financial Procedures for Branches need to be reviewed going forward.

M. Cullen gave praise for a good set of balanced accounts. Fine margins but we are managing them, but we have to be aware of the external influences such as the Middle East.

That the inspected accounts for the year ended 31 August 2025 as presented by the Treasurer be adopted was proposed by M. Cullen and seconded by J. Taylor.

The accounts were adopted.

**AGM26.4**

**Election of Trustees**

Four nominations had been received, and the meeting was pleased to welcome new Trustees J. Broadhead, M. Cullen, P. Jolley and T. Povall taking the total number of Trustees to 10. Previous to the meeting, B. Hartley had been asked to be co-opted for another year. (This took place at the Trustee Board Meeting afterwards)

**AGM26.5**

**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 2025/2026 was proposed by A. Loudon and seconded by T. Povall.

**AGM26.6**

**Any Other Business**

Lord Cavendish expressed that he continues to regard it as both a privilege and an honour to serve as President of the Association, and that he continues to enjoy the role immensely. Reflecting on the papers presented, he commented that the Association "is not just surviving; it is forging ahead, innovating, nurturing existing links, and developing new ones."

He acknowledged that the country is currently facing challenging times, and that many things are not functioning as they should. However, he emphasized that organisations like ours continue to operate effectively and responsibly.

Lord Cavendish feels strongly that, as the nation recovers and regains its confidence, it will be people like our members, and organisations like ours, who will lead the way. By doing the right thing for their neighbours and communities, we are contributing to the future of the nation and helping shape a self-respecting society once more.

He concluded by congratulating the Association and its members and how much he enjoys being associated with our organisation.

P. Clayton brought the meeting to a close, thanking those attending.

Signed .....

Date .....