



# **District 91 Council Meeting**

## **AGENDA & COUNCIL PACK**

**10:00 Saturday 2 May 2020**

**Online Meeting**

- 1** Call to Order / Welcome  
District Mission, Introductions, Apologies, Procedure
- 2** Review of the Meeting Agenda
- 3** Credentials Committee Report
- 4** Acceptance of Minutes of 21 September 2019 Council Meeting
- 5** Alignment Committee Report and Assignment of Clubs to Area and Divisions for the following year
- 6** Leadership Committee Report and Elections
- 7** 'How we use our money' - Mid-Year Audit and update on District Budget
- 8** 'How are we doing?' – District Leadership Team reports
- 9** Future District Conferences
- 10** Speeches by International Director Candidates for Region 10 (Europe)
- 11** Any Other Business
- 12** Announcements and Adjournment

# 1. Credentials Committee Report

For the meeting to be quorate, 1/3 of Club Presidents & VPEs in good standing of clubs in good standing must have registered to attend.

Club Presidents & VPEs	327
Quorum 1/3	109
Registered to attend	164
DEC Members registered	41

## 2. Acceptance of Minutes of 21 Sep 2019 Meeting

### Call to Order / Welcome

Florian Bay, District Director

"We empower individuals to become more effective Communicators and Leaders"

"We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence"

Supporting docs sent to all ahead of meeting - to be found on District Website. FB forwarded links to meeting attendees on Chat feature

Florian proceeded to introduce the members of the District Team and guests.

- Immediate Past District Director (IPDD) - Andy Hammond, DTM
- District Finance Manager (FM) Violet Karamagi
- Public Relations Manager (PRM) Susan Rayner
- District Administration Manager (AM), Ruth Ribeiro
- Club Growth Director (CGD), Helena Bowden Brewer, DTM
- Programme Quality Director (PQD) Arnaud Sartre
- District Director (DD) of D95 Germany and Scandinavia – Tobias (as Observer/yet to hold their meeting/helping each other in Toastmasters across Europe)
- Parliamentarian – Sarah Beckwith – 2016 National President for Junior Chamber Intl UK, a very similar organisation to Toastmasters International (TI)

1 min silence held: to remember deceased Toastmasters from D91 since May 2019.

### Explanation of Protocol

"We are now ready to begin business and I will briefly explain the general protocol for addressing the council and voting

1. Only members of the District Council are entitled to speak and vote at a virtual meeting. Members of the council are the DLT, Division and Area Directors, Club Presidents and VPEs. Proxies are not permitted.
2. If you would like to speak, please send a message via the chat feature to be recognised by me. Once called to speak and unmuted, and this is important, please clearly state your name, and club officer or other role so that our Administration Manager can record this correctly.
3. Since we are on a tight schedule, I request that you try to limit your responses and be as clear and concise as possible within the time allowed.
4. It is vital that any discussion should be germane to the question under consideration, and relevant to the members of council.
5. As District Director, I will be putting forward a number of motions for approval by this District Council. Under Robert's Rules of Order, something must be proposed and seconded in order to be discussed. Once I have proposed a motion, I will ask for somebody to second the motion. If you wish to second a motion, please say "I second" in the chat feature. Once a motion has been proposed and seconded, it will then be explained in detailed and the floor will be opened for discussion.
6. Regarding any items on which a vote may be required, we have several options that we may use. In cases of business requiring approval, I will request a vote by Unanimous Consent, whereby I will ask if there is any objection to adopting the motion or proposal. If no one objects, then the motion or proposal is deemed as adopted. If even one member objects, then we will proceed to take a vote.
7. If the meeting is quorate, each council member registered will be invited to vote via the polling function of Zoom – the options will be "Yes" or "No".
8. If the meeting is not quorate, we are required to conduct a vote by email to all Council members.
9. Additionally, if anyone would like to raise a motion in excess of 12 words, please write it in the chat feature to pass on to me."

## Review Agenda

**Florian Bay, District Director**

"Our first item of business is to review the agenda for the meeting as it stands. Timings are conservative and I am hoping to finish before 12h00 if possible. Are there any objections of the adoption of the agenda as it stands?"

**There were no objections so the agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.**

## Credentials Committee Report

**Florian Bay, District Director**

"One third of all club Presidents and VPEs in the District shall constitute a Quorum. I will now call our Parliamentarian Sarah Beckwith to confirm the role-call and the extent to which we are quorate."

**Sarah Beckwith, District Parliamentarian**

"So the total number of Presidents and Vice Presidents in the District is 348, which means that the Quorum is 116. We had 121 Presidents and Vice Presidents registered for the meeting in advance, which means that the meeting is Quorate and therefore in order for a motion to pass on a majority vote, we would need 61 people with votes. A voting strength of 61 means that the motion will pass."

In addition, we are 30 members of the DEC who are registered.”

175 Clubs in Good standing

348 Presidents & VPEs

116 Required for a Quorum

121 Registered

30 DEC Members registered

**Therefore, the meeting was quorate!**

## Acceptance of Minutes of 4th May 2019

Florian Bay, District Director

“Our next item of the Agenda is the acceptance of the minutes of the Previous Council meeting. These minutes are available to view on the District Website. Are there any objections to the acceptance of the Minutes of the Previous Council Meeting? If you wish to object, say so in the chat.

Hearing no objections, I declare the acceptance of the Minutes of the Previous Council Meeting to be agreed by the Council by unanimous consent.”

## Confirmation of Appointed District Officers

Florian Bay, District Director

“As some of you may know, our Area Directors are elected by Area Council, which are the Presidents VPEs and VP Membership in an Area, however, that is not always the case and a vacancy to fill any elected office is filled by the District Executive Committee based on the recommendations of myself as District Director. The roles of PR Manager, Administration Manager, and Finance Manager are also appointed by myself, as District Director.

I would like to propose that we fill some District vacancies for the PR manager, Administration role, Finance Manager role and a number of Area Director. Would anybody like to second this motion?”

**Proposed by Florian Bay, District Director.**

**Seconded by Chris Boden, Club VPE Maidenhead Speakers.**

There were no questions nor any objections so the motion was passed by unanimous consent.

Role	Appointment
PR Manager	Susan Rayner
Finance Manager	Violet Karamagi
Administration Manager	Ruth Ribeiro

Area Directors Appointments

A	14	Tugce Yilmaz
A	46	Deborah Wallace
B	29	Adam Flisiak
C	2	Sarita Yadav
C	5	Anja Eichen
C	33	Rakesh Patel
C	45	Richard Fallon
H	15	Adenola Olayide
H	37	Mo Dawodu
H	53	Vaneshen Mootoosamy
H	55	Ellis Byrne
J	4	Diane Richardson
J	10	Bryan Gunton
J	22	Carrie Baker
K	13	Andrew Morgan
K	31	Avni Vij
K	59	Francis Itoadon
L	9	Andy Blake
L	16	Monika Swiderska
L	47	Rosy Holt

## District Budget Approval

**Florian Bay, District Director.** Our next item of budget is the approval of the District budget for the 2019/2020 Toastmasters Year.

The details of the budget have been emailed to everyone in advance, in addition, to the narrative.

**Chris Boden, VPE Maidenhead Speakers – When were these sent?**

These were sent in the 2<sup>nd</sup> notice of the email 2 weeks ago, contained as links, 7<sup>th</sup> September 16:00hrs.

This year's budget has been put together and reviewed by the District Executive Committee, known as the DEC. It has also been provisionally approved, by Toastmasters International to ensure that what we have budgeted for meets existing financial rule, priorities and protocol.

I would like to propose the District Budget 2019/2020 Toastmaster Year as circulated, for approval by the District Council.

**Proposed by Florian Bay, District Director.**

**Seconded by Mike Burrows, Division A Director.**

I will now be presenting the budget very briefly.

The income figure that we based our budget on, that is the Membership income figure, is provided to us by Toastmasters World HQ.

It is typically based on the Previous year and is a very conservative estimate. Some expense categories are limited by Policy, so for example if you wanted all of the District Budget to be spent on Club Officer Training, not allowed to do that because only up to 30% of our Budget can be spent on training and education, however some categories like Marketing are unlimited, Conferencing is unlimited as well. So there are these categories that we need to fit into and we are well within these categories in the D91 budget.

Expenses are based on actual expenditure from the previous year.

We have a good idea of how much things costs and we have some detailed narrative that we keep from year to year and because we know where the money was spent, we can then estimate how much we are going to spend this year. Last year's actuals were used as a baseline to draw up this year's budget.

The main costs that the District incurred are the incentives, the Pizza challenge for example are very well known and something we are doing as a team is to check how we are doing in terms of actuals against this budget every month. Once the budget is approved, we will start this monthly check process within our team. We have started doing it a bit as I will show you later. Now there might be some room for budget flexibility later in the year. If we get more money that we expect, and if we spend less, we may have some new initiatives. So, it is a budget and not a straightjacket.

#### Income figures for the 2019/2020 year

Membership Income	£87,000	25% of Membership dues
Conference tickets	£30,000	Includes sponsorship for the Conference
Fundraising events later in the year towards 2020 – ticketed Workshop Events	£4,500	Some of surplus from these events will be reinvested in the District.
Income from Division Contests	£2,100	(Budgets to be set by Division Directors)
District Store	£3,150	Planning to run a self-funding district store
Budget vs Actuals for July – August 2019	~£3,200 budgeted ~£6,800 actuals	Budgeted from HQ In reality

Currently, 25 % of money paid to World HQ in dues is given back to the District. Finances of Division Contests are managed by the District and we plan for ticket sales to cost 50% of the contests. There is a set budget the Division Directors are working on and I trust them to do a good job.

Renewals coming up nicely and in July we recruited more new members than expected. We are doing really well in terms of new members this year, which is raising more income for the District.

**Debra Wallace, Area 46 Director asked what the District Store is?**

She was asked to keep questions until the end of the call for Arnaud as he will be elaborating on this later in the call.

Expenses – big spread sheet that shows how the money was spent last year, how we plan to do it this year, as you can see there are some differences in some categories on which I shall elaborate. Florian is aware it is a kind of big spreadsheet so he does have visuals as well. In total projected to spend about £140,000. The big-ticket items are the conference and travel. That is travel for the Areas and Division Directors to support the clubs. For the Trio to go overseas, on Training in the US and Media training as well. Planning to spend a fair bit of money on Marketing.

Education and training is the cost of District Officer Training and Club Officer Training, so twice a year Club officer training for you are leaders, but also District Officer training for our District Leaders. These can be weekend events, Presidential events, where we really train the Area Directors.

Communication and PR (CPR): Facebook (FB) Advertising to promote our initiatives, to the members of the District.

It would also cover the incentives Videos that we make. We need to pay for someone to film and edit this video. That is a CPR expense. Quite high this year as we are planning to do more video-based content, a lot more stuff on Facebook, the incentives catalogue that some of you may have seen, the 8-page booklet that has all the fancy pages about the initiatives. This was not budgeted for last year. This year it has been included in the PR budget. The catalogue will be issued quite soon. This is what is in the PR budget. The detail narrative is available on the website.

#### **Paul Rees Taylor, VPE Legacy Speakers Brixton – Why are the Travel expenses down this year?**

Very good question. The reason why the travel expenses are down this year is because we have reduced the mileage rate that we pay for District Leader Travel. Previously we used to pay 30p per mile, but Toastmasters World HQ have instructed us to reduce this to 14 US cents, which is about 12p a mile. This is a reduction that we would rather not have done because our Area Directors and our Leaders work hard to support our clubs, but we had to do this as instructed by HQ because Toastmasters international, as an organisation was not compliant with International Revenue Services Rules, which is the US equivalent of the HMRC. That's why travel expenses are a little bit down on last year. We are in the UK though, Clive, however the District is part of Toastmasters International. We as a District are considered to be part of the main Toastmasters International Organisation, which is based in the US and therefore, we have to follow American rule on that. Yes it is going to have a huge impact on the people who travel, but unfortunately we have to follow Toastmasters International rule on that.

What happens if we do not follow the rules you may ask? We could get prosecuted, because we would be disobeying instruction from the US HMRC and as district leaders we are agents of Toastmasters International. We sign a form that says we are an agent of the Corporation and your actions have to abide by what you do. I have pushed back with HQ in the strongest terms but there is a limit to what I can do. I actually asked them in Denver what would happen if I defy the rule and they said you would be prosecuted. It is that simple.

Now you might be interested in where does that leave us in terms of the Net position?

Last year we budgeted for about £23,000 worth of losses. In actual terms we only made £19,000 worth of losses. This year we are budgeting for £12,500 worth of losses. Now you might be

wondering, we are budgeting for a loss, does it mean that we are going to run out of money eventually?

We cannot technically run out of money. So let me explain. Of that income that we get from the membership dues, that £87,000, we have to retain 25% of this as a reserve. This is how we set the budget. So 25% of 87,000 is about £21,000. This is what we have to keep as a reserve. But if we have money in addition to this £21,000 in reserve, say for example we have £35,000 in the bank, as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, we are required to produce a budget that reduces this back to £21,000. Because as a District we are a not for Profit organisation, Toastmasters is a not for profit organisation, everything we do needs to be reinvested into the members. In actual terms, because the income figure from HQ is very conservative and we tend to spend quite a bit less than we actually budget for. I would actually expect that by the end of the 2019/2020 Toastmaster year, our net position might raise up to be very close to zero and this is something that the District Leadership team will be working towards.

If you have any questions on the budget, please fire your questions away in the chat.

Detailed questions are very welcome.

**Nick Westall, President Excalibur Speakers – Will 12p per mile leave the Area Directors (A.D.s) out of pocket?**

We have calculated that 12p per mile is enough to cover diesel and fuel costs in the UK depending on the type of car, but only the petrol and diesel costs, so for example, that will not cover wear and tear of the car and all these things. I do agree with you Nick that 12p per mile is way too little. We have asked HQ to review this. They have said that they will be discussing with their lawyers and will come back to us after a certain length of time. Unfortunately, it takes HQ a lot of time to come back on questions like these, but they operate, dare I say in a very American frame of mind.

**Debs Wallace, Area A46 Director – I find it hard to imagine the threat of Prosecution. Can you imagine the uproar?**

I can very well imagine the uproar Debs, however, we have to abide.

**Simon Naylor-Smith, President TJXpressions – If we do get down to zero, then what happens if we go into the Red the year afterwards?**

Simon, say at the end of the year we make a loss that is greater loss than we expect, maybe £15,000 or £16,000 and as such our District reserve goes to £21,000, which is the minimum we have to keep basically. What it would mean is that next year's District Leadership Team would have less flexibility in its budget, because they may have more income but they would have to spend a bit less so that their net position lends more towards zero basically.

**Roger Slattery, President London Athenians – What is the TI target for budget reserve as a percentage of operating income?**

We have to keep 25% of our Membership income as a reserve. That was set in the budget setting process. And this means this year that we need to keep a reserve of £21,000 at the end of the year.

**Nick Westall, Club President Excalibur – Can an Area Director claim actual expenses?**

Yes they can. They can reclaim reasonable travel expenses and if they pay the room hire for a COT there is a strict finance guide that they have to follow. Any expense has to be backed up by a receipt and is subject to approval by myself, as District Director, and Violet Karamagi. We have a rule that any expense must be claimed by 30 days at the most.

**Roger Slattery, Club President London Athenians – Does the proposed budget increase the fees, which members must pay?**

No it does not increase the fees. As far as we are concerned Toastmasters has no plan to increase the fees beyond 7.5 USD per member per month.

**Richard Warburton, Club President South West Speakers – As a club we pay TMI in USD and TMI transfer budget back to us in Sterling. Are we not losing out on multiple exchange transactions here?**

The District bank account is held by Toastmasters HQ and hosted in the US and it is a bank account in Sterling, and when we get some income, we get that income in dollars and then it changes. Are we losing out on multiple exchanges on transaction rates? Yes we are. Especially when we incur expenses Richard, so for example, say that I would be organising the District Conference and it costs £20,000, and I have to pay £20,000 by wire transfer or by credit card, typically I would incur fees of about 5-6% of that. This is something that we actually discovered very recently as a District Leadership Team, that we had to pay fees that are much higher than we would like on this. I am not happy about this at all. And something we are investigating is, we may have to have a discussion about opening a UK bank account. This is at a very early stage at the moment.

**Florian Bay asked Clive Stocker**, do you wish to open a motion that the District opens a UK based bank account? If you wish for the motions to be amended please say so. Clive, I have unmuted you. Clive has been discussing with my Parliamentarian and this would be a separate motion so when we have an AOB do you or a motion later, do you wish to raise a formal motion later that we open our own bank account?

**Clive Stocker, Club President Bath Spa Toastmasters.** It think it is worth discussing.

Florian Bay: Lets discuss it after the budget then.

Clive: Ok.

Upon hearing no further questions, Florian Bay asked: Are there any objections to the 2019/2020 District budget as proposed and explained by me?

If you wish to object, please say so.

**Florian Bay** mentioned that we have had one objection in the reduction of the travel budget. Therefore the budget as it stands will be put forward for a vote. Only the people, who are members of the council can vote that is Area Directors, Division Directors, Club Presidents, VPEs or Members of the District Leadership Team (DLT)

**Florian Bay** explained that the impact of a no vote would mean that the District Leadership Team would have to re-do this budget completely, and put forward a different budget for approval, we would have to have another District Council Meeting to formally approve this budget. **Florian Bay** highlighted that we have already logged with the Chief Financial Officer of Toastmasters International that we have strong concern about the reduction to 12p mile. They have promised to get back to us within 60 days. This is 60 days as of a month ago. Therefore, they have 30 days left. The 12p a mile was used as values in putting forward the District Budget. I have not had any change in the vote so far for a few minutes. .

## **Voting Results**

Do you approve the District Budget for the 2019/2020 Toastmasters Year.

**Yes votes: 94 – that is 88% in favour.**

**No votes: 13 – that is 12% against.**

**The majority was 61%. The budget for the 2019/20 Toastmasters Year is passed.**

## Finance Manager Report

Violet Karamagi, District Finance Manager

I would like to present my figures for the 2018/2019 period. The Toastmasters year runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> June. We were a little bit late with getting the figures for this year and that is because we have had yearlong issues with HQ having moved their Headquarters to Denver. They had new staff so that has had a big impact throughout the year. We finally have audited figures, which I will now present. As you can see from my screen, we expected revenue from our Membership to be £78,000 but we ended up with £85,000, which was great. Overall we were budgeting for £108,708 but we finished the year in a better position with 109,746 then in terms of expenses we were expecting to spend £131,775 but we spent less and the final figure came in at £129,059 so overall we had budgeted for a deficit of £23,067 but our deficit was under by £19,304 and as a reminder, although we do budget for a deficit, it is because we always have results and we take the results figure into consideration, so it is not like we budget for a deficit as DD Florian Bay, said but we have to factor in our results again. I will now look at the main issues with where the big variances were. And the biggest ones were. Membership Revenue was higher because we had growth within the District. There were new clubs. So, the more members we have within the District, the more revenue we get. Conference Revenue was less and as expected because conference attendance was low. It was lower than expected and that was due to marketing our activities later than planned and a whole load of other issues such as People could not afford the higher fees but that is because the conference this year had a lot more events so that contributed in the fees being higher and that directly impacted on the attendance and also the conference expenses were higher again because although it was easier paying for payment of the suppliers using the Credit Card, the Credit Card fees came in higher than expected and had not been included in the budget and then also Eventbrite fees had not been included when the budget had been put together. So that impacted on the variance in the Conference expenditure line.

TLI expenditure was lower than budgeted for and that is because venue costs were less, we had a couple of Divisions combining their event and that resulted in lower expenditure on room hire. Administration expenses were higher and that's because we had to change the voting equipment, which ended up costing more than planned for, but overall as you can see, we really did better than expected. I will present to you the auditor's certificate. There is an Auditor Committee that goes through every single expenditure with a fine-tooth comb. The Audit Committee is made up of an audit chair and two members so they go through the audit and sign off what has been approved. The Audit committee is independent. It has nothing to do with the District Leadership Team. Although I liaise with them. Nobody else is in contact with them. They are purely independent. I would like to welcome any questions if any.

**Question from Paul Rees Taylor, Club VPE Legacy Speakers Brixton – What action is being taken this year to promote higher attendance whilst still delivering a Quality Spring Conference?**

We have a section about the Conference later in this call so please bring your question back to later in the call please Paul.

**Question by Kemi Follarin, Area K3 Director – What drove the increase in admin expenses?**

As explained before we had to change the supplier for the voting equipment and that had quite an impact on the admin expenses. The budget is compared to the Actuals every quarter but as Florian mentioned this year, we are going to do it on a monthly basis and as a District we shall be reviewing what is going on.

## **District Success Plan for the year 2019/2020**

**Helena Boden-Brewer, Club Growth Director**

“As you are all aware Club Growth is responsible for 2 main parts of the District Success Plan. Club growth is responsible for the paid clubs and membership payments.

Our budget is set and is based on our Membership Payments from TI. Our overall strategy therefore has been based on the monies that we are due, to come in and also the fact that we anticipate club growth to continue in the year ahead. With that in mind we have reviewed the previous years activities and we have taken steps to change those for the year ahead. Mainly splitting that into focus on new club activity and on membership payment activity.

For new clubs we have been building on the Pipeline. We already have a pipeline in place and thank you for continuing to support that with your new club activity this year. We have so far this year already established our club extension committee. We have materials for our demo boxes and we have budgeted this year for 25 demo boxes to help support new club activity and we are also putting on workshops for club sponsors and mentors. These are all fully budgeted to continue with our District Mission of building new clubs, which is a fantastic place to be, and provide resources for all of the individuals that wish to take part in this activity with the sponsors and the mentors. We are also obviously supporting all clubs and this allows us to provide the supporting marketing materials as in previous years.

We have had a fantastic response to the information booklets we have put out. Florian has already mentioned the Incentives Guide that we are putting out and various other materials, which we are providing that just help with our brand and our awareness of our brand across the District. We are also providing information for open house meetings, which is similar to the information provided in the demo boxes but not exactly the same. We also have some funding available to allow those clubs who are putting on open house meetings claim some funds back for their venue and/ or for their marketing activities. Please remember that this is the Marketing part of the budget that we are looking at here.

We are also going to be focusing on Struggling Clubs and providing them with support and that is when we then appoint club coaches. A club coach role is different from a new club sponsor and a new club mentor. With looking at supporting new clubs, this is an activity with which we will be able to hopefully bring clubs back that are low on membership. A club coach is usually appointed when clubs have 12 members or less and we are looking to bring clubs back into good standing. Then we focus on Membership and Membership payments.

As you can see from my screen, 30 is the new 20 and you will be hearing that a lot from me this year. I think for healthy clubs we need to be rather than just to from DCP 20 and getting it higher to make healthy club meetings and activity and sharing experience and it ties in with retention figures that we are looking to achieve this year. With membership we have 5,323 members according to my download of yesterday. This does not take into account people who are dual members and we have a number of those. They are members of 2 or more clubs.

We are looking to increase the membership at this stage. We are in a renewals period at this moment in time so therefore we know how many have renewed as of yesterday we are looking to renew at least 4,200 members in this renewal period.

The incentives is our 80/20 Pizza challenge and this has been fully budgeted for as explained by Florian. We have now got into a situation where it is 20 members to be renewed and 80 % of your retention base to be renewed. So that is just something that we need to bring on as well and thank you to all the clubs that have already achieved that goal. Membership retention, while it is not a DCP point, we have added an initiative this year for Membership retention. We are looking to have the 10+ which means that clubs increase their membership base from the beginning of the year plus 10. So hopefully that ties in nicely with 30 being the new 20, which I am quite excited about. We are also looking for opportunities to support members who are established Members and providing them with opportunities to run Youth Leadership, Speaker to Trainer and Speechcraft courses. If you are looking to go beyond your club, as with all of these things there are plenty of opportunities there to get involved with and we will be looking to support much of this activity going forward. As highlighted, our website, our information for our Workshops will appear for those that are interested. The first workshop for Sponsors and Mentors is on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, this coming Monday. If you are interested there is an eventbrite link available. Bob Bowes, my Club Extension Chair is hosting that in London. If you need more information on that please do let us know after this call. "

### **Florian Bay, District Director**

"Thank you very much for this overview Helena, really comprehensive.

I will now hand over the meeting to our Programme Quality Director Arnaud Sartre"

### **Arnaud Sartre, Programme Quality Director**

"Good Morning Everybody. Can you hear me and can you see my Powerpoint slides?"

Over the next few minutes I will take you through the third element of the District Success Plan as related to the Distinguished Clubs. The way I am going to do that is simply to follow the specific order, in which we do our club success plan, area division and district success plan.

That is first of all to start with our Situation Analysis

I'd like to say that historically we have been far exceeding the Smedley Distinguished Criteria which is 55% of our Clubs being distinguished and as of last year we even achieved 74%, which is a phenomenal achievement and we certainly expect to do the same if not better this year as well. In terms of recognition, as well, I would like to put forward and really thank all of you club leaders for having achieved this for us, and that is that we are 3<sup>rd</sup> in the World for having the highest number of clubs with 20 plus members. This is an outstanding achievement that we are very proud of and have

been getting for quite some time now and I definitely encourage you to continue building strong clubs with a very strong Membership as Helena pointed out just a moment ago.

In terms of the situation there is also, and we are very well aware that there is some perceived reluctance to engage with Pathways. Right now, I use the word perceived because this is something, I will get onto in my Programme Quality Director (PQD) Update later on.

Overall last year we also achieved 3.7 Club officers trained per club, which on average is slightly below the 4 minimum trained per club in order to get the DCP point. I will get onto this in more detail in my PQD update later on.

In terms of the Strategy what are we going to do? You have heard over the past several months the 1/70/100 vision for our district. The one that is really of clear and specific interest to me is the number 1. One Educational Award per year per member. This is an aspiring goal. This is not a target. This is an aspiration that we hope to have every single one of our members to achieve at least one (1) Educational award and a lot of the work that we are putting in is certainly pushing towards that goal.

The way we are going to do all of that is to look at continuing the development of the Toastmasters Leadership Group (TLIs) as the Primary mechanism for Officer Training to better connect our officers across the Division and foster some links that go far beyond the club and the area. But at the same time, we are also focusing and ensuring that Areas and Corporate Clubs do not feel disempowered, by also offering Area and Corporate Club, Club officer training that will help and foster the partnership across the clubs and the areas.

There is also an informal target out there to have all of our Club officers enrolled into Pathways by 31<sup>st</sup> October, with all of our members, hopefully, becoming Pathways enrolled and active by 31<sup>st</sup> December. Why 31<sup>st</sup> October for Club officers? This is very simple. The 1<sup>st</sup> November is the date at which the next window will open for club officer training to commence. This is a month ahead of the regular schedule in previous years.

This is something that is very important so that we can encourage all of the clubs to have the best experience within Pathways.

In terms of actions: We'll continue to develop the promotion of educational awards with the Triple Crown Award, the Pathfinder Award, the Pathways progress award, that are really there, and designed to recognise and really shine the spotlight on our members who are achieving within our programme, whether it is the Legacy Programme for some, but also the Toastmasters Pathways programme, that is our current programme.

A couple of other things I wanted to point out. We are to continually improve the training opportunities and restarting the Trainers bureau. This is an initiative that will continue to develop and refine the District sponsored trainings that we have provided, at Corporates, and at COTS and TLIs over the past couple of rounds, and a Trainers bureau is going to be a mechanism by which there would be, couldn't call it vetted but most certainly very experienced members able to deliver training in the most relevant fashion.

We'll also be opening up, starting later this month, 30<sup>th</sup> October, some webinar series, so watch out for that. I am currently targeting a weekly webinar series. Maybe more if we can, that will target a number of different topics. Whether it is Pathways, basecamp, PR, Club roles etc. There will be a range of different topics that will be covered on a regular basis and I definitely will encourage you to

attend as a mechanism to share your knowledge but also to hear what others are doing in that space.

We'll continue with focussed Corporate Training. We have had two sessions this year for the first round of officer training and we'll continue to do that for the second round. And last but not least the TLLs and autumn division conference will provide high quality training as I am sure you have all or at least many of you have experienced, so far this year with our various TLLs across our District.

So that's in a nutshell the few updates that I wanted to share with you that form part of the Distinguished Club Section of our District Success Plan. Over to you Florian."

**Florian Bay, District Director**

"We are now going to have a 5-10 min discussion on the District success plan. Please keep your questions and intervention brief in the interest of time. If you wish to ask a question, type it in."

**Question from Daniel Klinberg, Club President Lloyds Banking Group Toastmasters London – Is there any way that COT could be done remotely?**

**Arnaud Sartre, Program Quality Director**

"This is a very good question. Thank you for asking. Yes, to an extent. Now this is something that we haven't done so far in our district but I do know that many other Districts are in some instances providing online club officer training. Now I am not saying that this will become the Primary mechanism for club officer training because this has to be requested and approved by TM HQ on a case by case basis, but certainly for the next round of club officer training that start on the 1<sup>st</sup> November to the end of February 2020. I'll be looking for opportunities where we may be able to provide such a delivery mechanism."

**David Horne, Club President Trojan Speakers – Can we talk about the 80% target for retention at each renewal period?**

**Helena Boden-Brewer, Club Growth Director**

"Yes the District vision for the year is: 1/70/100 and the 70% in there is the retention target that we are aiming for. And to help support that vision we have come up with the incentive 20/80 so that we can actually have a look at the retention side of this. So, the retention side is the 80% and we believe during the renewals period that should level out at the overall 70% that we are looking for within our District vision. It is one of those figures that currently isn't measured in terms of DCP points but will potentially be in the future so therefore we are getting ahead of the game by collecting data on retention as soon as we can and we also have a piece of research going on as well behind the scenes as well. We shall continue to come up with the figures that we have done to answer David's question. We are going to be looking at retention as a bigger picture, so its not just about your club membership and getting Pizza, there is a bigger piece of work going on in the background."

**Anja Eichen, Area C5 Director – Can the Competent Communicator Manual be reintegrated into Pathways?**

**Florian Bay, District Director**

"I am afraid that the Competent Communication Manual will be gone on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. World HQ is making some changes and some tweeks to Pathways and especially the Interface but the CC Manual will sadly not be folded into Pathways."

### **Arnaud Sartre, Program Quality Director**

"The current Educational Programme, Pathways is a very comprehensive programme that does incorporate many of the elements of the Legacy Competent Communicator Manual throughout the different levels and there are no plans to integrate or reintegrate the Competent Communicator Projects into Pathways at this point."

### **Gbemi Akojenu, Club VPE London Public Speakers – When will the Webinar Series Commence?**

#### **Arnaud Sartre, Program Quality Director**

"The Target is the Autumn, very likely to be on the last Sunday of September.

All of the Webinars that we will be having are going to be recorded, just like this meeting today and will be made available on our District Youtube page."

## **District Leadership Team Reports**

### **Florian Bay, District Director**

"We are now going to move onto the Reports of the District Leadership team. I will ask each member of the DLT to report their progress against our District Success Plan for 2 minutes in the interests of time. The first person I would like to present is our PR Manager Susan Rayner. Susan over to you."

#### **Susan Rayner, PR Manager**

"My role as District PR Manager is to help your clubs deliver marketing. So, what have we been doing to help deliver that so far? We have sent out 2 monthly newsletters, which goes to all members. It tells you what is going on with the District. It focuses on some success stories because we all love a success story. It also gives you up and coming events and articles that you may find interesting. Because it goes to over 5,000 members, we currently only have a 34% open rate. I would like to see that increase because it is our way of staying connected on the ground to your members. So, if you can ask your members to look out for the Newsletter that would be great. I welcome any questions or any information they would like to give about it. We also have a Facebook page, which also relates to what we are creating within the District. I would like to ask all members to think about how and what content they can help provide to make that a little bit more engaging. Creating "My Why Videos" Telling us what successes they have had would be very beneficial. On our face book page, we are seeing some great engagement but I would like to see more. The final focus that we are looking at is our District 91 Website page. Currently we do have low engagement on our Website page but it is picking up month on month. That is where, your members if they want information about the District Success Plan, the Budget, any extra information about Pathways, information about our District Leaders, there is a whole host of information for you to review. We are undertaking a rework of that to look at what the content is and to try and refine it and present it with more information of what is useful. If you want to get in contact with me to look at how I may help you or your clubs, you can just drop me an email at: [Susan@d91toastmasters.org](mailto:Susan@d91toastmasters.org). Thank you."

### **Helena Boden-Brewer, Club Growth Director**

"As already mentioned we have had a really good year so far and we have re-established the Club extension committee. For those of you who have not engaged with members of the Extension Committee now. They are Bob Bowes, who is My Club Extension Chair and Seema Menon who is my club retention chair and each division has a representative on that Committee. Some are the Division Directors and others are appointed members so it is really great that each Division has somebody who you can go to who is aware of what's happening, not just on new club activity but also on Clubs that are needing club coaches and we are dealing with other marketing matters and making sure that materials, such as demo boxes, and open house meetings are supported by members of the Club Extension Committee and other people that wish to be involved. We have a really fantastic year ahead already. We have chartered 3 clubs, and we have so many more just teetering on the edge, about to charter and it is just fantastic to see that hard work. But not being complacent because obviously this is a renewals period, and we are looking to make sure that all our Membership figures are there. We renew members and are giving good service to our Members and supporting them in reaching their educational goals and by that giving opportunities to our experienced members is what we are focusing on. Speechcraft for those that have run those courses, they know how fantastic they can be and see the results. Speaker to Trainer is a really interesting workshop that some member on this call will have attended or even run that particular course and it does change how people focus on their training abilities. And then just having the youth leadership programme, I mean, it is one of those that has not really been picked up by many people but those who have run it have really been singing its praises over the last couple of years. So really think about the opportunities we are presenting, and that you can come to us with because we are more than happy to support your activities and picking up on what Susan has just shared, if you have events going on, let us know. We want to know what is going on and the more that we know what is going on, the more that we can support you so use your social media well and make sure that you get our branded materials. They are available. You can go to the link on the D91 website. You can get the materials there. Helloprint is still set up to grab business cards, banners, leaflets. Everything is already there. The templates are done, so do have a look at what materials are out there to help support your club, your branding and good luck and as I say to everybody 30 is the new 20 so carry on with great membership building."

FB: Thank you Helena.

### **Arnaud Sartre, Program Quality Director**

"District Officer Training (DOT) was the primary and first action that we had to take from our perspective. I am pleased to report that we have managed this year to train 100 % of our District Officers, that is, Division and Area Directors. It is a phenomenal achievement and I would definitely like to congratulate and thank all of our Area and Division Directors for attending that event way back at the beginning of June, so thanks for that again and I thought it was well worth recognising these efforts. In terms of Club Officer Training, we and I believe, Florian and myself earlier, pointed out some very good points at the start of the year. We have trained 758 Club officers. That is an average of 4.3 across all of our clubs. That is in relation to 3.7 across last year, which is definitely an improvement. Thanks again for your leadership in ensuring we have many more officers attending our COTs and TLIs so that's again for that, Club Presidents, VPEs and everybody else supporting us. We have 132 clubs, having 4+ officers that is 75% of our clubs. Thanks again for your achievements, 27 of our clubs have achieved what I call the magic 7 of Club officers trained this first round. That is again a very good achievement from that perspective. We have had 2 Corporate COTs sponsored by 2 of our Prominent Corporate sponsors. One the City of London hosted by Gartner and 1 in the Thames Valley hosted by Microsoft and we want to recognise those achievements because we had 2

fantastic events that allowed in excess of 50 Corporate officers to be trained during those events. So that is definitely a good event. We will certainly be looking to do that again at the second round of Club Officer Training perhaps expanding to a 3<sup>rd</sup> and maybe even a 4<sup>th</sup> Corporate Club Officer Training to service all of the Corporate Clubs that we have in the Canary Wharf area that may not have been able to join us in the City events earlier in August. And perhaps also looking at the South Coast especially the border area of 32 and 55 where we also have a small cluster of Corporate clubs. That's the Club officer training and the last slide that I had was also a recompilation of educational awards, as I mentioned earlier during the District Success Plan we have some perceived challenges related to Pathways adoption, but I'm actually very pleased to report that as of 16<sup>th</sup> September, earlier this week, We have had 350 educational awards, recorded for our members so far this year, which is a massive increase when compared to last year. But also, if you look at the numbers, two thirds (2/3) of our awards are actually Pathways awards. Which means on average more of our members are engaging with the Pathways Programme. So, this is very positive indeed. I am much looking forward to receiving greater progress as we go through the year. So that's my report on the Programme Quality side of things for now."

### **Violet Karamagi, Finance Manager**

"Yes just to report that the Concur system is working very well. Previously all expenses had to be done on Paper but then in the last two years we adopted the Concur system which is an online system for claiming expenses, however we have had a few teething problems but there is a finance guide that details the views of Concur so that has made the re-imburement of expenses very easy and there is a process. Some find it difficult to follow the procedure but we are getting there so rejections are getting less and less. This is just a reminder that I am happy to support everyone, if they let me know. Please look at the Finance guide, keep your receipts, keep your invoices, and claim your expenses within 30 days. Overall it is going well."

### **Ruth Ribeiro, Administration Manager**

"I'd just like to say that it is an honour and a joy to have been invited to represent the team in an administrative capacity. I've stepped into the role at relatively short notice, however in that time, I have familiarised myself with the District dropbox files. I have this week been in touch with Isabella Takacs in Romania via Whatsapp and she is supporting me as I get to grips with what this role entails and I took the minutes at the recent DEC training and obviously I am taking the Minutes in this meeting this morning. For those people who do not know me, I am the Immediate Past President of Riverside Communicators. A very successful club in central Twickenham and that concludes my report. Thank you."

### **Florian Bay, District Director**

"Thank you very much Ruth. And thank you very much for stepping up at short notice. I'd like to take up what she said about being mentored and supported by someone from Romania. D91 has assumed a bit of a central position in the European Union, in the sense that we have a lot of links, a lot of friendship with them, a District Director from Germany is on this call today. So we have been helping them a lot. The Pizza initiative was copied by the Italians, believe it or not and they are helping us in return with their expertise so we are really at the Nexus of the Region, which is really exciting from my perspective."

### **Andy Hammond, Immediate Past District Director**

"Firstly, I would just like to say what a pleasure it is not to be running the meeting this year. Much easier from this end. It is a tough task. I appreciate what you are doing Florian. There are two parts to my role as Immediate Past District Director. It is similar to Immediate Past President of a Club. I am still part of the Leadership Team. There to guide, mentor and support in helping the team achieve their goals this year. It is great to have such a dedicated, committed team to support. Thanks for all the work you are doing. My big task coming up is as Chair of the District Leadership Committee. Now it may seem a bit early in the year for people to be thinking about next years appointments, but the Committee has to be formed ready to do its work in the coming months. I have appointed representatives from each of the 7 Divisions on the Team, and just to let people know, the roles for Nomination are the Trio, the District Director, the Programme Quality Director and Club Growth Director and the 7 positions for Division Directors. We will be seeking nominations starting from October. The closing date is 15<sup>th</sup> December. We then interview all those candidates and put forward our nominated candidates for election at next May's Council Meeting. There is one significant change, people should be aware of. That is, unlike previous years, only those candidates who have been through our Leadership Committee Process, are entitled to stand as floor candidates at the moment in May. If you do not go through our Leadership Committee Process you cannot stand as a floor candidate and that is quite a significant change. So, if you or anybody else is interested in any of those roles, in the coming year, look out for the formal notice, coming up next month. If you have any questions, then do please talk to me about the Process. That's me for now Florian."

### **Florian Bay, District Director**

"It is an honor for me to be your District Director this year because, Toastmasters has really changed my life. Some of you have listened to my speeches, they know my story a little bit, of being transformed from a shy introvert into the person I am today and this really when I look back on what Toastmasters had done for me is a journey that I wish every single one of our members could experience for themselves. Whenever I get a mentor, a mentee or somebody that tells me, you have helped me, look at what I can do now, it really means a lot to me. We are all Leaders on this call and as Leaders, we have Power. We have the Power to change lives and to really support others in becoming extraordinary. As my good friend, Sarah, our Parliamentarian would say, "choose extraordinary", because frankly, "Why would you want to be ordinary?" "So, choose extraordinary!" Now the reason why we have this 1/70/100 vision is precisely because we would like everybody to become transformed into a super hero of public speaking. One award, per member per year! Why? Because when you complete an award, you have given speeches, you have been working hard, behind the scenes, attending meetings and the awards are evidence that the transformation is taking place. Seventy (70): – Seventy Percent (70%) of retention across the year. To get 70% we need 80% in each renewable period cycle. So that's where the 80 comes from. It took time for Toastmasters to work its magic on me. A year after I joined in, I was a bit more confident, I could speak with loads of notes, extensive notes, always like a script. Then two years after, I stopped doing that. It takes time for this transformation to work.

100%: Why do we want all clubs to have 20 or 30 members? It is not because we like the numbers, it is because, we need our clubs to be large. To become communities for the transformation to take place. So as Leaders, let's ask ourselves, will what we are doing today, help our members achieve more? Will this meeting? The things we have discussed today, will they help our members to be more, will they contribute towards membership retention? By making it easier for us? By enabling us to have more resources? To inspire our members to remain with us for 3 or more years? And will our actions help grow our community? The PR stuff that Susan is doing. The advertisements on

Facebook, the Webinars, this is all about growing our communities and making it bigger, which is why we always want to develop new clubs, because “a rising tide lifts all boats”.

Now if you only have to concentrate on one thing as Leaders, because I know you are all very busy. I have a life outside of Toastmasters, I know some people do not believe me when I say that but I do have a life outside of Toastmasters. I will be seeing somebody this afternoon, for example, so I do have a life, outside of Toastmasters. If you really had to focus on one thing this month and this week as a leader, it is simple. It is renewals and retention. I am still treasurer at my club level, I have been phoning and chasing up people. It takes a bit of time, but then I get to know, why people renew or do not renew. This is really important. So, if people do not renew, find out why and see how you can help. Finally, a big thank you to all of you. We started the year with a bang! We are the best District in Europe so far! Record numbers of Leaders trained! Record numbers of new members coming through our doors! Record numbers of Educational Awards and all of these amazing efforts are down to you guys! So, Kudos to you for choosing the extraordinary!

## Toastmasters International Updates

### Florian Bay, District Director

“I will now be presenting a quick update on Toastmasters International and what happened in Denver. The District collected a number of awards in Denver, for example, we are a select Distinguished District. Third in the World for having the largest number of clubs with 20+ members. We got the Excellence in club growth award, because we built 16 new clubs last year. We got the Excellence in Programme Quality because thanks to you over 73% of our Clubs were Distinguished. Some Districts are not getting anywhere close to that. We got to go on stage, we got some nice awards and a lot of people really look up to us in District 91 to ask about the strategies to what we do and we are an inspiration for many others in Europe and beyond, and we are good at using flags. We do like our flags. I got to carry the Union Jack on stage at the opening ceremony and it really meant a lot to me.

A quick update so Pathways onboarding on Path selection is to be made easier. There are some changes in the work by the IT team and you might be thinking that the IT teams do not use Pathways and do not know anything about it, but they are actually. A lot of members of the IT, they are Toastmasters. They are members of the onsite Toastmasters Club. So, they design the system and they use it as well. I have seen a little bit of the work they are doing. I have glanced at a few computer screens in WHQ. Some people will know me and they know that I am a little bit curious and I liked the look of what I was seeing. There is simplification for users, simplification for managers. We are already able to see all the projects in one path for our users. So, there is some great work going on. There are some other changes coming out. The visibility of all projects in a Path. That has already been acted upon. Sarah is nodding to remind me that that is the case. The simplification changes should be released within a couple of weeks at most. Stay tuned to us. Stay tuned to the Toastmasters Website and the Magazine. There is a lot of information coming through the magazine. As Arnaud mentioned, winter COT season will begin earlier. Let me say, the IT team in Denver is open to feedback. I think some people might be a bit intimidated in not giving them feedback. If you have an issue, pick up the phone and complain to HQ. Send an email. They do listen to constructive feedback. When we were sorting the budget I was on the phone a lot with HQ. They do listen to us. They like us in District 91. They have got meeting rooms named after England, Scotland and Ireland after all.”

## District Conference Update

**Arnaud Sartre, Program Quality Director**

"The key information I would like to share with you in regard to our Conference in May 2020 is Friday, 1st to Sunday, 3rd May 2020. As discussed and proposed at the previous council meeting back in May earlier this year. The location will be London. There is no further information on the venue at this stage. The initial venue we looked at is not really in a position to handle the size of event that we have in mind. So we are currently looking to send out proposals to other locations and the expectation here is that we shall have a confirmed location by the end of October. We also had to deal with another little set back earlier this month, with our Conference Chair Barry O'Connell, who had to step down temporarily. We are hoping he will be back later end of September, beginning of October. This is something that I am looking into in detail. The Conference Team will be formed by the end of October so that we have plenty of time to deliver this essentially world class event. We will be looking for corporate sponsors, great trainers, great keynote speakers, so any help that any of you can provide. Whether it is with sponsors or contacts to specific locations in London where we could have a fantastic event in London, please let me know in the next few days and I will make sure that the RFP is sent to them. If you are willing to help directly in supporting the conference, as an active team member, again please let me know, in the meantime or until a new conference chair is here for us or Barry gets back to us. And all in all if you are willing to just support us, in any way shape or form, you work in a corporation that may be willing to provide some sponsorship, do let me know as well and we will be reaching out in some way shape or form to deliver on that promise to bring some Corporate sponsors, but also create this world-class event.

That is in a nutshell the updates that I have from a conference perspective and it is by no means as much information as I was hoping to have at this point, in the year but, we shall double our efforts and make sure that next couple of month are giving us the phenomenal conference that we all expect in May 2020. Last but not least, I just wanted to put out there the couple of notes that were put forward at the end of the Council meeting in May earlier this year. We have bids for the 2021 and 2022 Conferences, so I just wanted to put it out there and to essentially ask whether there were any bids for future conferences as well and to seek confirmation that two bids are still out there. That's it from me on the Conference side and as always please drop me an email, or give me a call. I will put my details in the chat, if you have any willingness to help out on this phenomenal event. "

## New Business

**Florian Bay, District Director**

"We are now moving to the section of the meeting about new business. We have not received any advance of new motions to be put forward by this council, if anybody wants to put forward a new motion now, they can. Somebody earlier was suggesting putting forward a motion about the District looking into opening a UK bank account. Clive if you wish to put forward a motion, now is your time.

Clive you are unmuted."

**Clive Stocker, Club President Bath Spa Toastmasters**

"I would like to put forward the motion that, we have a UK bank account for Toastmasters in the UK."

**Motion proposed by Clive Stocker, Club President Bath Spa Toastmasters.**

Florian Bay, District Director

“To give you a bit of background, we know it is possible because we asked World HQ yesterday. Not all of our income would be transferred to this account, but conference income, event income is something that could certainly be transferred into this account, would give us a bit of margin or credibility. Given these constraints do you still wish to propose, that the District looks into opening a UK banking facility for its needs?”

**Olatokunbo Durojaiye, Club President PMI UK Toastmasters Club – So in terms of opening a bank account in the UK, what benefit will a UK bank account bring?**

**Florian Bay, District Director.** Any income from Eventbrite, Division Contests, Conferences and fundraising events, they could go straight into a UK bank account and we would have the funds available in this bank account as soon as the funds are reversed. Some invoices could be paid by wire bank transfers and everything directly without incurring any fees.

**Motion seconded by Paul Rhys-Taylor, Club VPE Legacy Speakers Brixton**

Florian Bay, District Director

“Is there anything that anybody wants to discuss in terms of the District opening a bank account in the UK?”

**Simon Naylor-Smith, Club President South West Speakers – Can you give us some details on how this might work?**

Florian bay, District Director

The DLT would need to look into everything, very closely over the next few weeks. While I believe it might work, and I might be wrong, is that we would open a bank account in the same way that a new toastmasters club opens an account. The District trio members would become signatories of this account, alongside our Finance Manager Violet Karamagi and HQ would also be added as a signatory to the account as per the requirements. Potentially if we have a District store. Depending on how the District Store is run, it would be run, it could be run via this District bank account. Any proceeds from conferences and events could go into this account and we could potentially feed money that we get from the Membership fees into this UK bank account to obviously run it to pay for invoices and so on, whenever the need arises.

**Jenny Robertson, Club President Guildford Speakers Club – Do we know how much this would save us in transfer and exchanges?**

Florian Bay, District Director

“At the moment it means that we are paying about 5-6% in fees when we use the District Credit card or Wire Transfer from HQ to pay for our venues, for example. This would obviously be a saving if we were to pay these things from a UK bank account. How does it work today regarding conferences? At the moment everything is run by the District account. Previously conferences had their separate account.”

**Andy Hammond, Immediate Past District Director remarked that we can not decide to implement today as no information is available. We could agree, however, to investigate.**

Florian Bay, District Director

“Investigation is a good idea. In the interests of time and because there seems to be a consensus, I would like to ask, are there any objections for the District to investigate the possibility of opening a UK bank account. If there are any objections, if you object, please say so now.”

**There were no objections. The motion that D91 investigates opening a UK bank account was passed by unanimous consent.**

## Any other Business

Is there any other business that anybody wants to discuss? I have received notice of only one AOB from, Carrie Baker Area J22 Director, regarding the Division J contest.

**Carrie Baker, Area J22 Director.**

It is to remind people that we have got our Division J Contest and conference coming up on 19th October. We really need people to push it please. Everything is on Eventbrite, our Facebook page, if not email me if you have got any questions. We are also looking for volunteers for all the roles please as well and if you can push this whilst you are going round to all the club contests, and area contests that are being held at the moment that would be much appreciated thank you.

**Florian Bay, District Director** thanked Carrie for her contribution.

What I will say is that none of the Division Contests will be clashing with each other, so you can attend all of them if you wish to.

**Caroline Brewer, Club President Casterbridge Speakers – What news on the District Store please?**

Arnaud Sartre, Program Quality Director. Very briefly, the District Store. Again I am looking for a very small pilot to open up in the Autumn time frame. I am not going to be any more specific than Autumn. One thing that will come out over the next few days, or perhaps even by the end of tomorrow will be a survey to a select group of Club officers. Certainly Presidents, VPEs and I will probably include VPPR as well, to essentially ask a few very specific questions on what specific supplies might be of interest to clubs. And a pilot will be run on the basis of these early answers to see how we may be able to make it happen, in terms of logistics perspective and paying perspective, a bank account in the UK could be helpful. There is a bunch of topics that will need to be looked at, and that is coming very very shortly. The Pilot will start in the Autumn sometime.

**A.O.B by Dennise Hilliman, Club President Legacy Speakers Brixton.**

My AOB is just to thank you for the support I have had with the journey, of chartering Legacy speakers Brixton from PQD, Arnaud Sartre and DD, Florian Bay and Paul Rees Taylor and all the other members and I think the learning from the journey is that there are some greys in the picture with respect to clubs, and starting clubs from Toastmasters International and I think we all learn from it. I just wanted to say thank you that we have finally chartered. The charter party is scheduled for 4th November. More details to follow. Thank you.

**Florian Bay, District Director**

If there are no other AOBs from anybody, I will move to adjourn the meeting.

The next meeting will be on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May in London. Please stay in touch with us by checking the District Calendar and opening the Newsletters when you receive them, if possible. We will look

with Susan into the issue of the Newsletter going into the Spam folder. One issue I am aware of with Gmail is that the Newsletter goes into a folder called promotional by Gmail. I have had this issue myself before, but I now have everything going into a single inbox.

Thank you everybody for a great meeting. It has been a great and a new experience for me. I believe we have learnt a lot together. Thank you for challenging us on the budget. And we will investigate as a team the possibility of opening a UK bank account. Thank you very much everybody and enjoy your day. Bye.

**Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 on 21 September 2019**

### 3. Alignment Committee Report

Report by Janet Alkema and Monika Swiderska of the District Alignment Committee in consultation with Florian Bay, the District Director, Helena Boden-Brewer, the Club Growth Director, Bob Bowes, the Club Extension Chair, Rupa Datta, the Division B Director, Ken Essien, the Division C Director, Nadya Hamedi, the Area Director K58.

To be read in conjunction with the spreadsheet.

#### Overview

Because of new club growth in the District we are suggesting the creation of a new division, Division D, which will cater for those clubs at the junction of Divisions A, J, H and B.

All Divisions will have changes, some more than others. The result is a more equal distribution of clubs to align with the Toastmasters requirements for maximum Division and Area size to allow all Area Directors to comfortably serve their clubs. We also have to build in capacity for club growth.

The TMI policy requirements are for areas to have between 4 and 6 clubs (maximum) and a division to have a minimum of 3 areas.

As at the beginning of the current TM year, District 91 had 7 Divisions and 37 Areas.

After this realignment, the District will have 8 Divisions and 38 Areas.

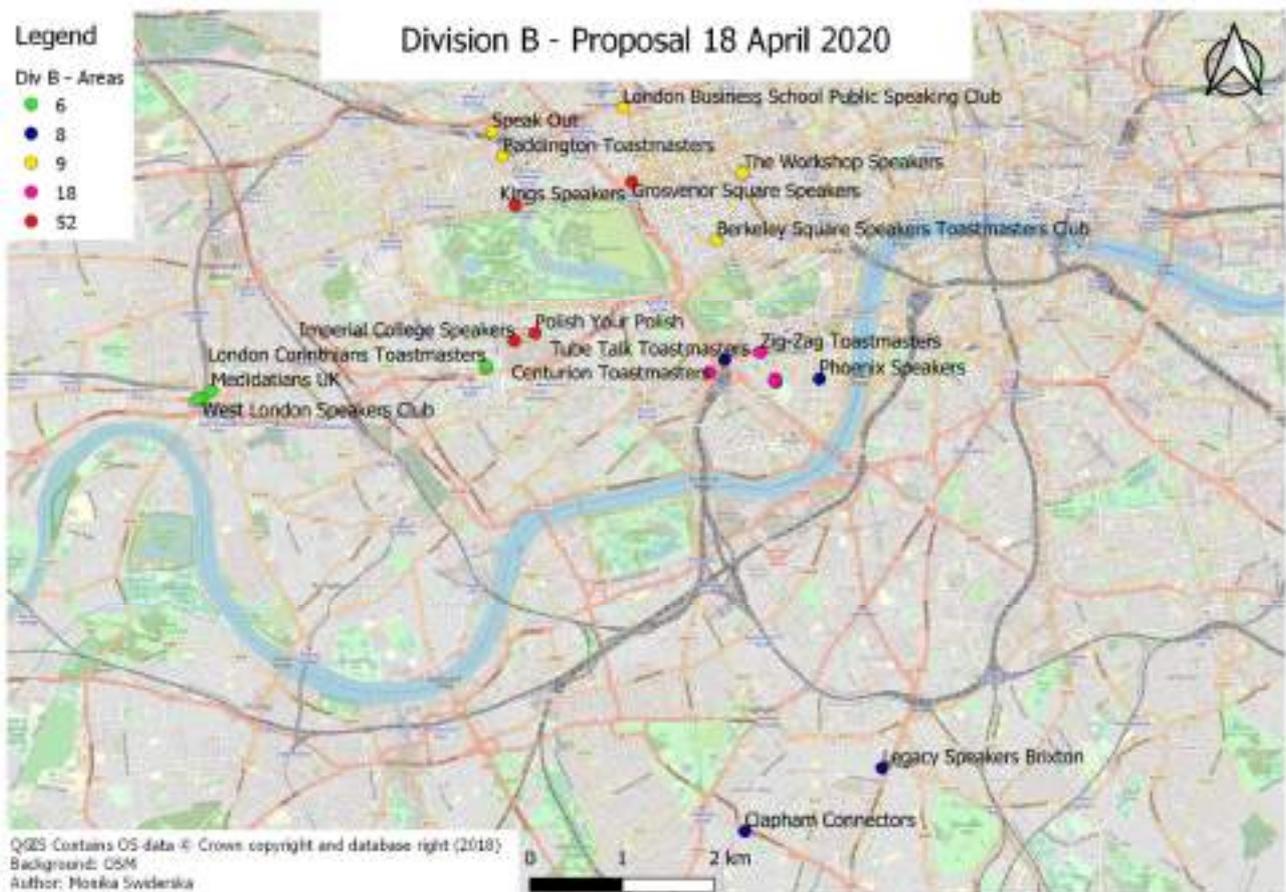
More importantly, the number of Areas with 6 clubs will be reduced from 13 to 6 which is a far better distribution of clubs within Areas and far more manageable for the Area Directors.

Summary		
Divison	Areas	Areas with 6 clubs
A	4	1
B	5	2
C	5	
D	4	2
H	5	
J	5	
K	5	1
L	5	

This Alignment Proposal is subject to the approval of the District Council at its Annual Business Meeting in May and must be reported to Toastmasters International by July 15. Changes cannot be made after the approval by the Council on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, so it's important to ensure that the alignment is correct and will prove a strong base for the coming Toastmasters year.



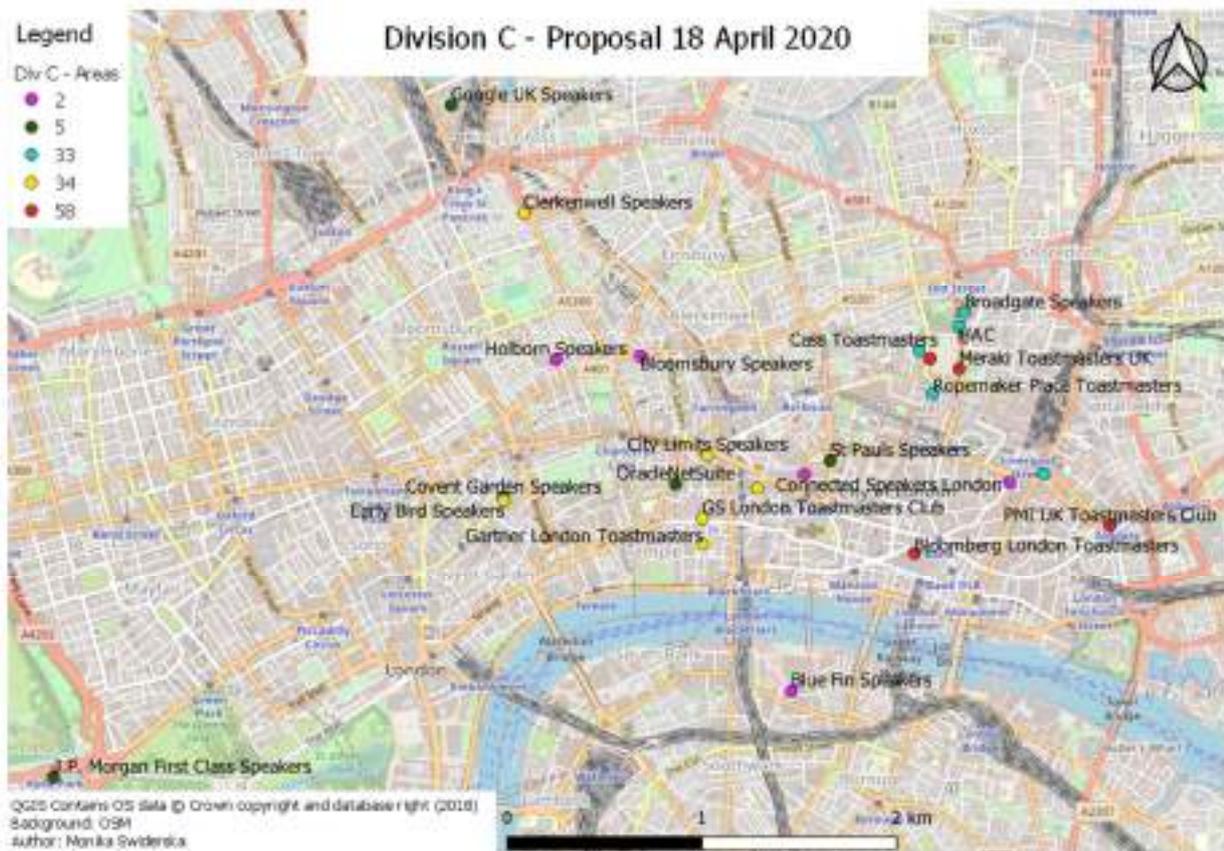
## Division B



### Proposals

1. B29 to D29 (BMW Uxbridge, GSK, Riverside and Trojan)
2. Meditarians from B29 to B6
3. Legacy Speakers Brixton and Clapham Connectors from H15 to B8
4. L9 to B9 (Berkeley Square, London Business School, Paddington, Speak Out and The Workshop Speakers)
5. 104 London Debaters from B52 to B18
6. Centurion, London Cardinals and Zig-Zag from B8 to B18

## Division C



### Proposals

1. St Pauls from C33 to C5
2. Broadgate K58 to C33
3. HAC from L16 to C33
4. Barings from C33 to C34
5. City Limits from C5 to C34
6. Early Bird from C45 to C34
7. K58 to C58 (1<sup>st</sup> London, Bloomberg, City of London, PMI and Meraki PC)
8. ACCA from C33 to L45
9. Deloitte, Society and Strand from C45 to L45
10. Kings Cross from C34 to L45

## Division D



### Proposals

1. A14 to D14 (Guildford, Fluor, Farnham, Godalming, Camberley and Woking)
2. J21 to D21 (Ascot, FM Global, Burnham PC, Maidenhead, Windsor and Wokingham)
3. B29 to D29 (Except for Meditations which has gone to B6)
4. H53 to D53 (Epsom, Mole Valley, Reigate Rhetoric PC, Surbiton and Sutton)

## Division H



## Proposals

1. Legacy Speakers Brixton from H15 to B8
2. Clapham Connectors from H15 to B18
3. H53 to D53 (Epsom, Mole Valley, Reigate Rhetoric PC, Surbiton and Sutton)

## Division J



## Proposals

1. J21 to D21 (Ascot, FM Global, Burnham PC, Maidenhead, Windsor and Wokingham)
2. HCL from J21 to L61

## Division K



## Proposals

1. Broadgate K58 to C33
2. K58 to C58 (1<sup>st</sup> London, Bloomberg, City of London, PMI and Meraki PC)

## Division L



### Proposal

1. HAC from L16 to C33
2. ACCA from C33 to L45
3. Deloitte, Society and Strand from C45 to L45
4. Kings Cross from C34 to L45
5. HCL from J21 to L61

## 4. Leadership Committee Report

### Process

The District Leadership Committee (DLC) is governed by Toastmasters International Protocol 9.0 District Campaigns and Elections.

In accordance with the Protocol, my appointment as Chair of the DLC was approved by District Director Florian Bay DTM and subsequently my recommended appointments of the seven Division representatives on the DLC were also approved by the District Director. The members of the DLC were: Janet Alkema; Steve Birch; Carrie Gow; Deborah Johnston; Tazud Miah; Brad Revell; and Amanda Zwarts.

I would like to thank the members of the District Leadership Committee for their excellent work and integrity throughout this process.

The timescale for nominations and applications ran from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019 to 5<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The first notice was published in the District 91 Newsletter on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and details were also published on the District 91 website at that time. A further notice was included in the District 91 Newsletter on 18<sup>th</sup> December. The timetable was also reported to the District Executive Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> November and all current Division and Area Directors were directly emailed with details on 13<sup>th</sup> December. In accordance with the DLC's remit to "Identify and seek qualified candidates for each elected position" a number of potential candidates were also contacted directly.

### Results

Following the close of the period for nominations and applications all candidates were assessed to ensure they met the candidate qualifications. Qualified candidates were then invited to be interviewed by members of the DLC. The feedback from all the interviews was collated for the DLC members who voted on which candidates will be nominated. The results are as follows:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Nominated Candidates</b>	<b>Club Name (and number)</b>
District Director	Arnaud Sartre	Kent Speakers (9934)
Program Quality Director	Helena Boden-Brewer	Aylesbury Speakers (762)
Club Growth Director	Bob Bowes	Ace of Clubs (7143140)
Club Growth Director	Rupa Datta	Trojan Speakers (589261)
Division B Director	Shane Snow	Phoenix Speakers (1592500)
Division C Director	Michael Crane	Meridian Speakers (762850)
Division C Director	Chris Walker	Experience French (2684362)
Division C Director	Sarita Yadav	Lloyds Banking Group (5101315)
Division H Director	Vaneshen Mootoosamy	The Speakers of Croydon (625647)
Division J Director	Jackie Preuss	Worcester Speakers @WGTA (7084351)
Division J Director	Diane Richardson	Chiltern Speakers (4827)
Division K Director	Nadya Hamedi	Ace of Clubs (7143140)

## Floor Candidates

Toastmasters International Board announced some exceptions to Protocol 9.0: District Campaigns and Elections regarding floor candidates:

All floor candidates are required to declare their intent to run for election at least one (1) week (7 days) before the meeting for any and all positions they are considering running for, regardless of the validity of the DLC report.

No nominations from the floor will be allowed during the council meeting.

Any candidates who have been interviewed by the DLC but are not nominated by the DLC may stand as floor candidates.

There were no candidates for Division A so that role was open to suitably qualified floor candidates.

The only nominated candidate for Division L has subsequently withdrawn, so that role was open only to eligible floor candidates.

I am aware that the Realignment Committee is recommending a new Division D from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. That information was not known before the DLC nomination period closed and therefore no applications were received. If approved, the role of Division D Director was open to suitably qualified floor candidates.

Andy Hammond DTM

Chair, District 91 Leadership Committee

## Elections

The deadline for floor candidates to declare was 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Therefore all potential candidates for each elected District Officer role are now known.

Elections for are held in the following order: District Director; Program Quality Director; Club Growth Director; and Division Directors.

Because nominated Division Director candidates may stand from the floor for subsequent roles, elections for Divisions with more than one nominated candidate will be held first, followed by the remaining Divisions, in alphabetical order.

The order of elections and list of candidates for each role is available on the next page.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Club Name (and number)</b>
<b>District Director</b>		
Nominated Candidate	Arnaud Sartre	Kent Speakers (9934)
<b>Program Quality Director</b>		
Nominated Candidate	Helena Boden-Brewer	Aylesbury Speakers (762)
<b>Club Growth Director</b>		
Nominated Candidate	Bob Bowes	Ace of Clubs (7143140)
Nominated Candidate	Rupa Datta	Trojan Speakers (589261)
<b>Division C Director</b>		
Nominated Candidate	Michael Crane	Meridian Speakers (762850)
Nominated Candidate	Chris Walker	Experience French (2684362)
Nominated Candidate	Sarita Yadav	Lloyds Banking Group (5101315)
<b>Division J Director</b>		
Nominated Candidate	Jackie Preuss	Worcester Speakers @WGTA (7084351)
Nominated Candidate	Diane Richardson	Chiltern Speakers (4827)
<b>Division A Director</b>		
Floor Candidate	Mike Burrows	Northavon Speakers (8580)
Floor Candidate	Antonia Harrison	Solent Speakers (5774)
<b>Division B Director</b>		
Nominated Candidate	Shane Snow	Phoenix Speakers (1592500)
<b>Division D Director</b>		
Floor Candidate	Jackie Preuss	Worcester Speakers @WGTA (7084351)
Floor Candidate	Diane Richardson	Chiltern Speakers (4827)
<b>Division H Director</b>		
Nominated Candidate	Vaneshen Mootosamy	The Speakers of Croydon (625647)
<b>Division K Director</b>		
Nominated Candidate	Nadya Hamedi	Ace of Clubs (7143140)
<b>Division L Director</b>		
Floor Candidate	Diane Richardson	Chiltern Speakers (4827)
Floor Candidate	Sarita Yadav	Lloyds Banking Group (5101315)

# 5. Mid-Year Audit and update on District Budget

**TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL**

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL  
 Certification for  
 Dec  
 2019-2020

DISTRICT 91

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Complete all sections on the Narrative tab.
2. Fill in the white cells below with the appropriate information and print out this page.
3. Obtain related signature below. **Electronic signatures are not acceptable.**
4. Distribute monthly reports per Toastmasters International protocol B.4, to the district governor and Resonant governors within 30 days after the end of the month.
5. **Quarter reports due to World Headquarters:**
  - September Report: **October 31**
  - December (Audit) Report: **February 15**
  - March Report: **April 30**
  - June (Audit) Report: **August 31**
6. Submit approved narratives and certification page to World Headquarters by email or fax:
  - Scan and email the PDF to [District/FinancialReports@Toastmasters.org](mailto:District/FinancialReports@Toastmasters.org)
  - Or fax to (949) 589-3456

**NOTE:** This certification form must be complete for the report to be accepted by World Headquarters. **Reserve funds will not be released until World Headquarters receives the completed report.**

In Base Currency	OBP
Monthly Net Income/(Loss)	<u>(4,022.73)</u>
Year to Date Net Income/(Loss)	<u>(6,597.66)</u>
Total Available Funds	<u>6,444.27</u>

1. We, the undersigned, certify that all district financial records have been made available to the audit committee for inspection and that any unpaid bills or other outstanding obligations for the 2019-2020 term have been reported to the audit committee and included in accruals section of this audit. We further certify that there are no other outstanding district obligations incurred for the 2019-2020 term.

Dated this 14 day of February

[Signature]  
 District Director (for the year audited)  
 Expiry Date: 2020-02-14 13:23Z

[Signature]  
 District Finance Manager (for the year audited)

Complete only for the Mid-year Report and Year-end Report:

2. We, the undersigned members of the Audit Committee, have examined the records of District 91 for the 2019-2020 term in accordance with the Audit Committee Guidelines\* and believe that this report properly reflects the operation for that term.

Dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of February 2020

[Signature]  
 Chairman

[Signature]  
 Member

[Signature]  
 Member

\* Audit Committee Guidelines are available at the District Finance Corner: [www.toastmasters.org/AuditGuide](http://www.toastmasters.org/AuditGuide)

NOTE: Audit committee members cannot be members of the district executive committee (e.g., district director, program quality director, club growth director, immediate past district director, secretary, finance manager, public relations officer, division directors, area directors).

**District 91**  
**Profit & Loss (Actual vs. Budget )**

**1st July 2019 to 31st March 2020**

	Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>District Revenue</b>			
Membership Revenue	70,887.72	74,840.00	(3,952.28)
Fundraising Revenue	69.83	3,000.00	(2,930.17)
District Store Revenue	0.00	2,100.00	(2,100.00)
Speech Contest Revenue	1,465.51	1,650.00	(184.49)
<b>Total District Revenue</b>	<b>72,423.06</b>	<b>81,590.00</b>	<b>(9,166.94)</b>
<b>District Expenses</b>			
Fundraising Expenses	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
TLI Expenses	1,232.03	3,000.00	(1,767.97)
District Store Expenses	0.00	2,100.00	(2,100.00)
Marketing Expense	8,189.70	8,340.00	(150.30)
Communications & PR Expenses	8,836.56	9,682.00	(845.44)
Education & Training Expense	23,460.82	21,575.00	1,885.82
Speech Contest Expenses	3,875.17	3,300.00	575.17
Administration Expenses	6,098.77	4,940.00	1,158.77
Travel Expense	19,719.12	23,103.50	(3,384.38)
Other Expenses	3,528.42	3,240.00	288.42
<b>Total District Expenses</b>	<b>74,940.59</b>	<b>80,280.50</b>	<b>(5,339.91)</b>
<b>Total Net Income</b>	<b>(2,517.53)</b>	<b>1,309.50</b>	<b>(3,827.03)</b>

Key finance successes of the year so far

- ▶ Held a webinar with Brad Revel to support clubs with finance. The webinar is available for replay and can be used as reference guide
- ▶ Most of the district officers can now use Concur and are up to speed with record keeping
- ▶ Completed mid-year audit within the deadline despite the on-going challenges
- ▶ Relationship with HQ is much better and it's a great team collaboration across the board
- ▶ We opened a UK bank account!!! This will save us a lot in exchange rate fees and pay our local suppliers quicker which will strengthen business connections and therefore the ability to negotiate discounts
- ▶ We have a Stripe account which will save on Eventbrite fees for paid events and the money is paid out a lot quicker

# 6. District Leadership Team Reports

## Public Relations Manager – Susan Rayner

### Overview

My role as District PR is responsible for coordinating publicity efforts in the district. By establishing and maintaining lines of communication between the district and its members, as well as between the district and the public. The aim is to increase awareness of Toastmasters through all available channels.

This has been achieved over the last 12 months by mainly utilising Social media and Digital channels to promote District 91 internally and externally.

### Website

It was established early in the Toastmaster year that considerable amount of work was needed on the District 91 website. This began with reviewing the content on the website and establishing what additional content was needed and which content could be removed.

The second stage was to look at the navigation of the site and how to improve how to make it easier for visitors to find content.

The main work of this was completed in November 2019. In making these changes the site has become more relevant and useful to our members and Area and Division Directors.

This is demonstrated in the increase in users on the site. In July 2019 we were receiving 33 daily users to the site, this has increased almost two-fold to 62. With monthly total visitors increasing by 80% from 1046 to 1881. However, some of this is due to the conference.

Row Labels	Sum of Users
Jul	1046.00
Aug	1261.00
Sep	1403.00
Oct	1616.00
Nov	1195.00
Dec	1071.00

Row Labels	Sum of Users
Jan	1640.00
Feb	1591.00
Mar	1667.00
Apr	1881.00



### Branding

Following on from the website rework we are also working on creating a new design for the District 91 website, this design will be mobile friendly more appealing with a renewed look.

At the same time, we will be reviewing our marketing material to create a new fresh approach, to make it less staid and corporate, moving away from the current blocks of colour adding more impactful imagery and big bold text, with simple and single minded messaging.

These designs will be rolled out to clubs and will help them maintain the Toastmasters branding within club communications and provide them with a clear framework to follow.

## Facebook

During 2019-2020 we have increased our number of postings on Facebook with to an average of 2-3 a week. The postings have been a range of club incentives and members stories. As well as re-posting interesting articles or content from Toastmasters International.

Over the year we have seen an increase in engagement with our Facebook page.

- ▶ Page followers increased by 18% from 3,882 to 4,594.
- ▶ Page Likes increased by 18% from 3,824 to 4,523
- ▶ Reach increased from 371% from 494 to 2,328

## YouTube

In total we have 182 videos on our You Tube channel with 59 videos created this year to promote Toastmasters and District incentives. These have generated 28,336 views and 340 subscribers.

## Twitter & Instagram

These channels currently have limited interaction, but this has been increased due to the current content from our District 91 Conference.

- ▶ Twitter - 6079 Tweets 3,838 Followers and 477 Following.
- ▶ Instagram - 121 posts 268 followers and 34 following.

## Newsletters

During the month we are distributing 2 different types – Leaders update and Members Newsletter.

The Leaders Update inspires leaders to improve club quality and club growth and provide hints and tips on how to deliver District incentives.

The members newsletter is proving a great way to connect directly with members, it is about sharing success stories, what is happening in the district and how it might benefit our members.

On average our open rate is 43% which is up by +1% on the previous year.

On average our click rate is 13% which is up by +6% on the previous year.

With the different types achieving on average the following: -

- ▶ Conference Newsletter open rate 34% with 12% clickthrough rate
- ▶ Members Newsletter open rate 39% with 11% clickthrough rate.
- ▶ Leaders Update open rate 51% with a 13% clickthrough rate.

## **Susan Rayner**

## Club Growth Director - Helena Boden-Brewer



The new club activity in our District has been booming throughout the year. To date this has led to 13 new clubs chartering so far, including two during lockdown! Plus, there is another pre-charter club who just voted virtually to charter and are in the process of completing the paperwork. The switch to online has not stopped the flow and the pipeline for new clubs continues to deliver. What has slowed is the planned face to face demonstration meetings. To adapt to the current situation, our District has successfully held its first pilot online demonstration meeting. My thanks to all those that stepped forward to assist with this. Based on how well the format worked there are plans to run more online demonstration meetings in May and June.

As a District, taking the confident decision to move club meetings and events online was nervously received initially and some members doubted it would work. What we have witnessed tells a different story. Members have been joining club meetings around the globe. Guest members from overseas clubs, have been dropping into our club meetings and events. It has been wonderful to view club's social media posts with our members smiling, waving or giving the thumbs up, from their windows on the world. The success of delivering all the Division Contests online and now this District Conference, is proof of this.

Back in the summer of 2019 the incentives for the year were announced. There was a buzz of excitement around the 20+80 membership award, better known to you all as the pizza challenge. This change allowed for focus on membership retention. In the autumn renewals, retention of our members was ~72.5%. This time around the 20+80 was adapted from pizza to Zoom to help clubs adjust to the virtual environment. There have been hiccups along the renewal road and that is ok. Toastmasters International helpfully extended the deadline date to the end of April, which has been beneficial to many of our clubs.

The continued support our Toastmasters community is providing is shining through right now. Let us pause for a moment, to thank all that have worked hard to support members; phoned those living alone or self-isolating, provided an escape for health care workers to do something 'normal' by joining their club meetings and to see familiar smiling faces at online club meetings. It may seem small, but right now, it is priceless.

We have delivered a 'Survival Guide to Online Interviews' webinar to prepare members seeking new roles and developing the skills to help them. In heading towards the end of this year, there's work still to be done supporting our members through these uncertain times. We are a community and we are assisting each other through. For once we can put the dashboard numbers to one side, it is all about you.

Quoting Past Toastmasters International President, Mike Storkey "remember the member". You are the most important part of this organisation. We are here to serve and support you.

**Helena Boden-Brewer DTM**

## Program Quality Director – Arnaud Sartre



### Successes

Online Division Contests have been successful with attendance ranging from ±80 to 200+

Conference planning is reaching a climax, dotting the Is and crossing the Ts

### Challenges

Unknow length of lockdown creating uncertainty and challenges to Clubs regarding Club renewals and committee elections – remind Clubs to check latest FAQ on Club elections

Forward planning for TLIs and COTs, this will become a priority post DCM

## Pathways Enrolment Update

Currently at 73.0% adoption across the District, this is up from 70.7% in February.

- ▶ 99 Clubs with entire Leadership team enrolled (+2 from February)
- ▶ 16 Clubs with 100% of member enrolment (+12 from February)
- ▶ 55 Base Camp managers not enrolled (down from 63 in February)
- ▶ 19 down from 21 Presidents in February
- ▶ 23 down from 27 Secretaries in February
- ▶ 13 down from 15 VPEs in February

## Education Awards

1316 Educational awards from 1096 in February. We're looking to close the year on 1500+ educational awards!

**82 of our clubs currently Distinguished.**

## Looking Ahead

As we reach a new normal of online meetings, let's look ahead to the end of the lockdown and what it means for our clubs. Consider the possibilities offered by hybrid meetings and the new opportunities they could bring to your members.

**Arnaud Sartre**

## District Director – Florian Bay



If I could **define District 91 in three words** they would be **excellence, resilience and innovation**. The Toastmasters year 2019-20 will forever be remembered as the year when the COVID-19 pandemic shook our members and clubs. Yet we took the challenge head-on and we overcame!

### Excellence

Thanks to your efforts and those of our members, District 91 is a District where hundreds of our members become better speakers and leaders one meeting at a time. We are already thriving in the new normal environment of online meetings and I know that we will restart in-person

meetings with a bang when we can.

Nearly 20 of our clubs have already recruited at least 3 new members since they've started meeting online. I look forward to us inviting many more new members to our communities in the coming weeks and months!

Most importantly, our members are achieving more educational awards than ever before. A few clubs are even getting tantalizingly close to fulfilling the District's vision of one educational award per member.

Let's keep this up as we enter the final two months of the Toastmasters year.

### Resilience

Of our nearly 180 clubs in District 91, almost all of them are now meeting online. This is a superb achievement when many businesses had to close their doors as they couldn't adapt quickly enough to the new realities. Obstacles arose during the transition to online meetings but you overcame them one by one.

No story symbolizes District 91's spirit of resilience further than the one of our District Conference. In a very short space of time, gears were switched from organizing a large in-person event to organizing an online conference. Nobody had done this before and there were plenty of unknowns at the start. Yet the team carried on and organized what will probably be the finest Toastmasters's event of 2020.

To the countless members and leaders that truly stepped up in the past few weeks in challenging circumstances. Thank you for your inspirational efforts. You're writing a splendid page of Toastmasters history in gold plated letters.

## Innovation

Even before circumstances forced us to move to online meetings. Innovation was already something that was second nature to us in District 91. Here are some of the things we did this year:

- ▶ Filmed over 50 professional videos to promote our incentives and share our members' stories.
- ▶ Transformed our District Incentives Board into a boardgame used for training our leaders.
- ▶ Ran Club Officer Training online in February 2020.
- ▶ Harnessed the possibilities of geoscience for District Alignment and strategic planning tasks.
- ▶ Opened our own local District bank account, giving us more control over our finances.

Since we moved to online meetings we organized contests attended by hundreds of members coming from all corners of the globe. Organising the District conference meant pushing the boundaries of technology to provide the best experience to our attendees.

Now more than ever is when we need to keep innovating. I would already like to encourage our clubs to seriously look at maintaining online meetings in some form when we can meet again in-person. Why? Because we'll be able to offer unparalleled experiences and opportunities to our members.

As we head into the final two months of the Toastmasters year, **let's keep growing forward together, work towards achieving our 1 – 70 – 100 vision and finish the year with a bang!**

**Florian Bay DTM**