



# District Council Meeting Minutes

Saturday 13th May 2023 London Conference  
The Barbican Centre/Online

Time	Item		
10:00	<p><b>Introduction/District Mission</b></p> <p>DD Rupa opened the meeting and reminded District Council Members of the</p> <p><i>Toastmasters International's Mission: We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.</i></p> <p><i>District's Mission: We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.</i></p> <p>DD Rupa introduced the members of the District Leadership Team, members supporting the meeting, VIPs and Past District Directors (PDD)</p> <p>Immediate Past District Director: DTM Helena Boden-Brewer District Finance Manager: Eddy Quah District Administration Manager: Amy Jones District Public Relations Manager: Chris Arning Club Growth Director: Debbie Williams Program Quality Director: Diane Richardson</p> <p>Parliamentarian: DTM Steve Vear JP Credentials Chair: PDD DTM Arnaud Sartre Technical Support: Alistair Marston and Olga Byrne</p> <p>2nd Vice President of Toastmasters International, Aletta Rochat DTM</p> <p>DTM Jean Gamester - PDD D91 DTM Freddie Daniells - PDD D71 DTM Andy Hammond - PDD D91 DTM Pedro Casillas - PDD D91 DTM Florian Bay - PDD D91</p> <p>AM Amy shared the following apologies received prior to the registration deadline.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>           Rachel Stott   Club VPE            Caroline Atkinson   Club President            Mark Hankins   Club VPE            Jacqueline Omoregie   Club President            Julia Meister   Club VPE            Adam Guy   Club President            Vesse Koleva   Club President            Robert Stallwood   Club VPE         </td><td>           Emmanuelle Rodrigues Nunes   Club VPE            Antonio Salituro   Club VPE            Rosie Wainwright   Club President            Matthew Davey   Club VP Education            Eleni Lavaridou   Club President            Anthony Garvey   Club President            Dorothy Margison   Club President            Toby Wilson   Club VPE         </td></tr> </table>	Rachel Stott   Club VPE Caroline Atkinson   Club President Mark Hankins   Club VPE Jacqueline Omoregie   Club President Julia Meister   Club VPE Adam Guy   Club President Vesse Koleva   Club President Robert Stallwood   Club VPE	Emmanuelle Rodrigues Nunes   Club VPE Antonio Salituro   Club VPE Rosie Wainwright   Club President Matthew Davey   Club VP Education Eleni Lavaridou   Club President Anthony Garvey   Club President Dorothy Margison   Club President Toby Wilson   Club VPE
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	<p>Rick Cooper   Club VPE  Charlene Francourt   Club President  Janet Bramwell   Club VPE  Judith Roberts   Club President  Jamie Wu   Club President  Emmanuelle Rodrigues Nunes   Club VPE  Tracey Rogers   Club President  Alison Millin   Club VPE  Bryan Gunton   Club VPE  Lewis Kyriacou   Club President  Hazel Glennie   Club President  David Howarth   Club VPE  RISHI GAUTAM   Club President  Jason Gray   Club VPE  Hilary Benoit   Club President  Ana Rosales Damil   Club President  Erica Mackay   Club President  Clare Obeng   Club President  Ibon Terrazas Velez   Club President  Amatare Oki   Club VPE  Tony de Souza   Club VPE  Ron Mayne   Area Director  Grant McNeill   Club President  Sarah McGuire   Club President  Vanessa Pochette   Club President  David Howarth   Club VPE  Rachel Carruthers   Club President</p>	<p>Charles Harmer   Club VPE  Paul Le Page   Club President  Alister Trendell   Club President  Soumya Singh   Club VPE  Russell Searle   Club VPE  Jon Collin   Club VPE  Alero Arueyingho   Club VPE  Jumana Kapasi   Club VPE  Janet Fuchek   Club VPE  Pukar Shah   Club VPE  Sue Hollingshead   Club President  Hewan Wole   Club President  Meline Alibert   Club VPE  Piotr Wilczynski   Club VPE  Michelle Soedal   Club VPE  Rachel Carruthers   Club President  Grant McNeill   Club President  Sarah McGuire   Club President  Vanessa Pochette   Club President  David Howarth   Club VPE  Sue Hollingshead   Club President  Hewan Wole   Club President  Meline Alibert   Club VPE  Piotr Wilczynski   Club VPE  Michelle Soedal   Club VPE  Heidi Pocock   Club VPE</p>
	<p>DD Rupa called for acknowledgement of members who have passed since the last meeting in September 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lucinda Brooks, President Sussex Online Speakers recognised Liz Stephens who had past and was a member of Sussex Online Speakers (previously a member of Worthing Speakers)</li> <li>• Guler Cortis, AD H15 recognised David Longley</li> </ul> <p>A moment of silence was taken out of respect for these members.</p>	
10:12	<p><b>Review of the Meeting Agenda</b>  The meeting agenda was adopted by unanimous consent of the Council.</p>	
10:15	<p><b>Credentials Committee Report</b>  CC Arnaud gave the credentials report  Clubs in Good Standing: 161  Total DEC members: 50  One third (1/3) of all Club Presidents &amp; Vice-Presidents Education in the District shall constitute a quorum = 108  211 Presidents and VPEs and  46 DEC members registered by 7pm 12 May 2023  Total votes available to be cast today: 257</p>	
10:18	<p><b>Acceptance of Minutes of 24 September 2022 Council Meeting</b>  The minutes from the 24 September 2022 were adopted by unanimous consent of the Council.</p>	

10:19	<p><b>Confirmation of appointed District Officers vacancies</b></p> <p>The following appointments were agreed by the Council by unanimous consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Director - B8 Aneeta Philip</li> <li>• Area Director - B18 Gabriel Cedismondi</li> <li>• Area Director - B52 Luca Marengo</li> <li>• Area Director - J22 Helyn Ashford</li> <li>• Area Director - K13 Barry O'Connell DTM (resigned)</li> <li>• Area Director L16 Aayushi Jain DTM</li> <li>• Division B Director - Andy Hessey DTM</li> <li>• Division D Director - Janet Alkema DTM</li> </ul>
10:20	<p><b>Mid-Year Audit and District Budget Report</b></p> <p>FM Eddy presented a summary report, the full report is published in the DC pack.</p> <p>Mid-Year Audit Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit Chair and committee completed the Mid-Year Audit, which was signed off on the 24 February 2023 and submitted to WHQ</li> <li>• Found claims to be generally in order, apart from one duplicate entry</li> <li>• Delays observed, request that those raising claims raise them within 60 days and respond in a timely manner to any queries sent back to avoid delays</li> <li>• USD-GPB Forex conversion impacts based on processing dates</li> <li>• Clear receipts and invoices are required</li> <li>• AD travel claims should clearly include which club, to align with visit reports</li> </ul> <p>District Finance Update P&amp;L</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership numbers recovering</li> <li>• Conference transactions appearing blank, will appear in May P&amp;L statement but looks that we will run a loss on this conference</li> <li>• Incentive claims at 71% claimed vs 54% previous year</li> <li>• Education and training spend, costs reduced due to prudent venue sourcing and virtual training events</li> <li>• Delayed/deferred spending <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Admin (Google project deferred)</li> <li>◦ Travel (higher spending in Feb/Mar/Apr)</li> <li>◦ Lodging (Feb/Apr DECM cost to come in)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Overall P&amp;L looks healthy, good position for the rest of the TI year</li> </ul>
10:27	<p><b>Alignment Committee Report and Assignment of Clubs to Areas and Divisions for the 2023-24 Toastmasters Year</b></p> <p>District Alignment Chair, DTM Barbara Saph presented a summary of the alignment report that was shared in the DC packs prior to this meeting. The full report can be <a href="#">found here</a> including the proposed realignments.</p> <p>Divisions A, D, H and J - summary on alignment decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PC NHS Berkshire moved from D29 to A46 to avoid overcrowding</li> <li>- 4 suspended clubs (Div A - Oracle, Div D - KBS and Long Ditton and Div H - Spirited Speakers)</li> <li>- PC clubs in A, D and J along with Division D steady membership growth means that this should be addressed in next year's alignment review</li> </ul>

Division B, C, K and L - summary on alignment decisions

- Over the last 3+ years, a large amount of change with new clubs; suspended clubs and clubs changing venues this year
- Boundaries are blurred between Areas and Divisions, goal to make Areas more geographically realistic and avoid clubs being isolated from their area clubs

#### Questions from DC members

Mohammad Kalam AD K12 | Commented that it has been challenging previously and that this alignment would be much easier for Area K12 Director.

Loukas K AD C2 | Asked about having corporate clubs in one area, if not why not?

Barbara DAC | Advised that TI advises that specific areas for corporate or advanced clubs are not permitted, it is not intentional when this occurs.

Rose N DivD K | Proposal for clubs in K31 all being corporate, is that something that couldn't be helped?

Barbara DAC | Advised that these four clubs are geographically aligned.

Richard Honeyman VPE Lewes Speakers | *Richard was online and his sound was not working. Richard asked the Chatmaster "A general question on online clubs in D91 falling under general Divisions as members can be anywhere. Why not an online Division within D91 for example?"* (this question has been answered in follow up)

DD Rupa moved for the report to be adopted by the DC. Hearing no objections, the District Alignment for the 2023-24 program year was declared adopted by unanimous consent.

#### 10:46 **DLC report and elections**

DLC Chair/IPDD DTM Helena presented a summary of the DLC report that was published on the D91 website and sent to all DC members four weeks prior to this meeting. Below is a summary of nominated candidates.

##### District Leadership Team Candidates

District Director	Debbie Williams	The Speakers of Croydon
Program Quality Director	Steve Vear	Wessex Speakers
Club Growth Director	Suhas Kumar	Basingstoke Speakers
Club Growth Director	Steve Vear (withdrawn)	Wessex Speakers
Club Growth Director	Mo Dawodu	Kent Speakers

##### Division Director Candidates

Division A Director	Andrea Righi	Bristol Central Speakers
Division B Director	Luca Graziani	Bloomberg London Toastmasters
Division C Director	Erika Oteri	Bloomberg London Toastmasters
Division D Director	Tom Bailey	Farnham Speakers Club
Division H Director	Guler Cortis	The Speakers of Croydon
Division J Director	Andy Hessey	Berkhamsted Speakers Club
Division K Director	Nick Ronald	MLP London Bridge Speakers
Division L Director	Sean Dean	Society Speakers

DD Rupa called for two (2) practice votes to be cast. Upon completion of each test vote, the results were shared.

DD Rupa confirmed that a question was asked online about why the number of votes registered today didn't match up to the total votes cast in the practise. 257 votes registered, under 200 votes cast for each test vote. She confirmed there are reasons why such as people not voting, abstaining from voting and not voting in time.

DD Rupa raised a motion.

*Motion: I move that complaints during the formal voting related to non-working links will not be investigated and any votes missing due to technical problems lying on the voters end will not be cast.*

Simon Toon VPE Berkhamstead Speakers | Asked whether we had checked with council members if anyone is reporting difficulty casting their vote. Asking if we could be comfortable that anyone struggling has had time to ask for help.

DD Rupa | Asked if anyone was having issues and needed help, reiterating that members needed to raise their hand in the room or online.

Mohammed Kalam AD K12 | Suggested a time warning to be given before the vote closes.

DD Rupa | Rupa confirmed we have a timer for 5 minutes and that is enough.

Rupa reread the motion previously stated.

Hearing no objections to the motion moved, the election tool was declared ready for the formal election to proceed.

DD Rupa advised the DC that as well as the nominated candidate for District Director, an eligible floor candidate for District Director had made themselves known in accordance with the required deadline. She called for a formal nomination of the floor candidate.

Alison Morris DTM AD J4: Madam District Director I wish to nominate Diane Richardson as an eligible floor candidate described in the District Administration by-laws. She is currently PQD, held Club Growth; Division and Area Director roles as well as Club President. Madam District Director.

DD Rupa asked Diane Richardson if she accepted this nomination.

Diane Richardson accepted the nomination. Rupa declared the nominations for District Director closed.

Floor candidate Diane Richardson followed by nominated candidate Debbie Williams both gave a 2 minute speech. DD Rupa called for the vote to be cast.

Vote results

Diane Richardson - 96 votes, 55%

Debbie Williams - 80 votes, 45%

	<p>DD Rupa confirmed that the District Director elect for 2023/24 is Diane Richardson.</p> <p>DD Rupa asked AM Amy to cast one vote for the uncontested candidate for Program Quality Director, Steve Vear DTM and declared him elected for 2023/24.</p> <p>DD Rupa advised the DC that one of the two nominated candidates for Club Growth Director, Suhas Kumas DTM had withdrawn his candidacy and called for AM Amy to cast one vote for Mo Dawodu for Club Growth Director elect for 2023/24.</p> <p>DD Rupa confirmed that only one candidate stood for each Division Director role and called for AM Amy to cast one vote for the following elected candidates.</p> <p>Division Director Elects 2023/24</p> <p>Division A    Andrea Righi</p> <p>Division B    Luca Graziani</p> <p>Division C    Erika Oteri</p> <p>Division D    Tom Bailey</p> <p>Division H    Guler Cortis</p> <p>Division J    Andy Hessey DTM</p> <p>Division K    Nick Ronald</p> <p>Division L    Sean Dean</p>
11:46	<p><b>District Leadership Team reports</b></p> <p>DD Rupa called for reports from the DLT.</p> <p>AM Amy reflected on her journey to the District Leadership Team, learning how the District works. She encouraged people to speak to the District Director elect about opportunities and stated she looked forward to supporting the new DLT in the handover process. Amy thanked the members of the DEC for their support in ensuring business could be managed this year.</p> <p>FM Eddy reflected on his two years on the District Leadership Team - from challenges to celebrating success. He summarised achievements including simplifying claims process for incentives, evident by improved percent of claims claimed as well as putting together a platform for Area and Division directors to monitor budgets. Eddy has also developed an incentives dashboard for all clubs to monitor. He confirmed he would finish out his duties in September 2023 delivering year end financials and audit review.</p> <p>IPDD DTM Helena summarised her 9 years experience serving the District from Conferences to District Executive Committee and District Leadership roles. She spoke about the opportunities beyond our clubs and the district, with the International Convention as an example. She thanked the members for their support and wished the new team the best for the years ahead.</p> <p>PRM Chris noted his journey straight from Club level to the District Leadership Team, acknowledging the leadership lessons learned. Chris reflected that TI states that “Good public relations is the practice of creating, promoting, and maintaining a favourable image of an institution among its audiences through the use of a variety of</p>



	<p>communication channels and tools.” He provided an overview of the activities performed, from LinkedIn Live sessions and beyond. He encouraged people to step forward especially those who have experience/skills in this area.</p> <p>CGD Debbie confirmed we are Select Distinguished on memberships payments, and rank 3rd in the world. With 161 paid clubs, we are 5th in the world. There has been a decrease in the number of clubs, 168 to 161. Optimistic to get back to 168 with a number of clubs yet to renew, clubs due to charter and suspended clubs looking to come back. New Clubs - 5 new corporate clubs, latest being Coutts who launched this week. We have welcomed 1936 new members to date. We have 3531 unique members towards our Road to 5000 unique members. Strong corporate club pipeline. Debbie called out for incentives still available for clubs to achieve.</p> <p>PQD Diane advised that over 1000 club officers showed up to training events in the first round of training alone. Recognised clubs: Many clubs had 4 or more officers trained. Recognised members: DTM awards. Over 1000 educational awards this TI year. Team worked with Massimo thanked as pathways ambassadors. Thanked club officers for their efforts and help.</p> <p>DD Rupa reflected on a statement made by IP Matt Kinsey, DTM, who said ‘it’s one thing to stay in a rocky boat, but it’s another to step into a rocky boat’. Reflecting on the pandemic situation in 2020, knowing that we wouldn’t achieve the district goals. An opportunity to focus on something better and building back stronger. Rupa reflected on 5000 unique members as a goal for us to work towards. Rupa talked about Toastmasters outside of Toastmasters, a new generation of members to come and wished luck to the DD elect.</p>
12:05	<p><b>Toastmasters UK &amp; Ireland Joint Reformation Committee</b></p> <p>CGD Debbie advised that reformation last occurred 9 years ago when we split from D71. The District Executive Committee in D91 and D71 both agreed to submit a letter of inquiry to the CEO of Toastmasters International to form a Joint Reformation Committee with District 71.</p> <p>DD Rupa clarified that the D91 DEC approved this on the 26th of February 2023, the D71 DEC on the 25th of March 2023 and that the letter was submitted on the 10th of April 2023. Acknowledgement of the letter has been received and both Districts await further instructions</p> <p>Questions from DC members</p> <p>Q: Adrian Moore President The Speakers of Croydon   Clarified, is this splitting or merging. And if so why?</p> <p>DD Rupa   Confirmed that the committee would look at reviewing Toastmasters UK &amp; Ireland as a whole, with the idea that two districts will become three districts.</p> <p>Q: Martin Madden VPE St Pauls Speakers   Reformation sounds like the wrong wording, we aren’t at 5000 unique members yet? Question is why?</p> <p>DD Rupa   Confirmed this is TI wording, only to look at it as a whole and the committee's output would determine what happens next.</p>

	<p>Q: AM Amy read out the following question from Rizvana Ahmed VPE HOD Speakers Club   Amy - please read out my Question: Does this mean D71 &amp; D91 have collaborative projects ?</p> <p>DD Rupa   Question is not germane. Yes this will be a joint committee and district collaboration happens all the time.</p>
12:11	<p><b>Future District Conferences</b></p> <p>Diane called for a volunteer to run the District Conference next year. She advised a template is available for the bidding process. Diane called for members interested to speak to PQD elect Steve Vear, DTM.</p> <p>DD Rupa further encouraged people to express interest.</p>
12:14	<p><b>Any Other Business for the District Council</b></p> <p>DD Rupa advised that no advanced motions had been received for the business of the DC and called for any other business.</p> <p><u>Questions from DC members</u></p> <p>David Sutcliffe AD H55   Proposed thanks to the District Leadership Team and a round of applause to acknowledge. <i>Applause was received.</i></p> <p>Sabrina Aici President Bloomberg   Are we going to have any guidelines for hybrid training and events next year?</p> <p>Diane PQD   Confirmed that efforts had been made on collecting data on what has worked and challenges. Chris Walker and Diane to be putting something together on how to set it up and lessons learned, taking advice from relevant members. Diane advised that she hoped to present a webinar or training module before the start of the new year.</p> <p>Alex Spencer-Hill AD A1   Raised an idea that length of service should be acknowledged by Toastmasters International.</p> <p>DD Rupa   Advised that these awards and recognition awards already exist. She advised that all could reflect on whose responsibility this is - club, district or Toastmasters International level?</p> <p>Alexander Cardoza Club President Cardiff Toastmasters   Clarified that his question was specific to Pathways and implementation of Pathways. Raised concern on ease of use and that it is driving away members. Q: Any information on streamlining and improvements to attract new members.</p> <p>DD Rupa   At the last Business meeting in August, WHQ advised work to improve the system was going to occur. She advised that this question was not germane to the meeting. The PQ team provides support to clubs to manage this at the club level.</p>
12:23	<p><b>Meeting Adjourned</b></p> <p>DD Rupa confirmed the next District Council meeting would be sometime in September 2023 and declared the meeting closed at <b>12:23pm.</b></p>