



# District Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Saturday 2nd September 2023

Time	Item
10:00	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>District Director (DD) Diane Richardson welcomed the District Executive Committee (DEC) and introduced the District Leadership Team (DLT) members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Administration Manager (AM) Aayushi Jain</li><li>● Finance Manager (FM) Valerija Slavina (online)</li><li>● PR Manager (PRM) Nikita Parks DTM</li><li>● Club Growth Director (CGD) Mo Dawodu</li><li>● Program Quality Director (PQD) Steve Vear DTM</li><li>● Immediate Past District Director (IPDD) Rupa Datta</li></ul> <p>Also joined by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● D91 Parliamentarian Rose Nakibirango DTM</li></ul> <p>DD Diane declared the meeting open and proposed the agenda published be adopted by the meeting. Hearing no objection, DD Diane declared the agenda adopted.</p> <p>DD Diane explained the purpose of the DEC which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● To work together to achieve the District mission</li><li>● To review and approve the District Success Plan</li><li>● To approve the budget and oversee the financial operation of the District</li><li>● To recommend the assignment of clubs to areas and divisions</li><li>● To review the recommendations and reports of District committees, including those of the Audit Committee</li><li>● To perform any duties assigned to it by the District Council</li></ul> <p>DD Diane explained that only DEC members are entitled to speak and vote, i.e. Area and Division Directors and members of the District Leadership Team (DLT). Assistant Area and Division Directors do not have a voice at the meeting.</p> <p>DD Diane advised that the Zoom Masters are Amy Jones and PR Nikita Parks. The Chat Master for the meeting is AM Aayushi Jain.</p> <p>There will be time for questions after each item of business has been presented. If members wish to speak, please raise a hand, in the room, or digitally. When invited to speak, please clearly state your</p>

	<p>name and your role so this can be accurately recorded in the minutes. Kindly, be concise and keep any discussion germane to the business under consideration and relevant to the members of this committee.</p> <p>The meeting will be under Parliamentary Procedure and Robert’s Rules of Order, supported by the Parliamentarian Rose Nakibirango DTM. If a vote is required this will be by Unanimous Consent. This means that members will be asked if there is any objection to adopting a motion or proposal. If none is offered, the motion or proposal is adopted. If there is an objection, we will proceed to a debate, the explanation of which will be given as needed. If a member wishes to raise a motion in excess of twelve words they are to write it out and hand it to AM Aayushi or send a private chat message if you are online.</p> <p>To ensure the meeting runs smoothly, DD Diane may seek to reorganise agenda items or limit the time for discussion. Should that be necessary DD Diane will say “without objection, I will now do X”. If there is an objection the member must please raise it for discussion as detailed above. If there are no objections the meeting will continue.</p>
<p><b>10:06</b></p>	<p><b>District Mission</b></p> <p>DD Diane called upon Division L Director, Sean Dean to read out the District Mission.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>“We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.”</b></p>
<p><b>10:07</b></p>	<p><b>Roll Call &amp; Quorum</b></p> <p>A majority of the DEC shall constitute a quorum. DD Diane called upon the Credentials Chair (CC), PDD Arnaud Sartre DTM, to confirm the quorum,</p> <p>PDD Arnaud reported that there are 48 members of the DEC. 43 had registered and 25 were needed for a quorum.</p> <p>PDD Arnaud therefore confirmed the meeting quorate</p> <p>DD Diane requested AM Aayushi to read out any apologies. These had been received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Area Director L56 Vanessa Pochette</li> <li>● Area Director J11 John Christie</li> <li>● Area Director D21 Tracey Rogers</li> </ul>
<p><b>10:10</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations to fill District Officers vacancies</b></p> <p>Whilst our Area Directors are elected by area councils, and our Division Directors are elected by the District Council, a vacancy in any elective office shall be filled by the District Executive Committee based upon the recommendation of the District Director.</p> <p>The roles of PR Manager, Administration Manager and Finance Manager are also appointed by the District Director.</p>

The following vacancies have been filled since the May meeting of the District 91 Council. DD Diane explained that some of the Area Directors were voted in by their Area Councils but the meetings were not quorate which is why their names appear on this list.

DD Diane listed the District Officers who needed to be confirmed:

- Public Relations Manager Nikita Parks
- Finance Manager Valerija Slavina
- Administration Manager Aayushi Jain
- Area Director A1           George Weller
- Area Director A17       Pawar Pallavi
- Area Director A46       Bradley Courage
- Area Director A62       Veronika Frydrychova
- Area Director B6         Chris Jolly
- Area Director B8         Audrey Graham
- Area Director B9         Natalie Kay
- Area Director B18        Marijana Bosnjak
- Area Director B52        Rafal Jablonski
- Area Director C5         Greg Smith
- Area Director C34        Ranjith Shergill
- Area Director C58        Ranjitha Justin
- Area Director D14        Patrick Thomas
- Area Director D21        Tracey Rogers
- Area Director H15        Pearl Cadogan
- Area Director H32        Rachel Norris
- Area Director J11         John Christie
- Area Director K3         Apoorva Agarwal
- Area Director K13        Tina Plamadeala
- Area Director K31        Kalyani Rishabh
- Area Director L16        Mohammed Al Bayati
- Area Director L47        Charlotte Malmberg
- Area Director L61        Jesus Parada-Rivero

DD Diane asked if there were any objections to these appointments.

Hearing none DD Diane confirmed that these appointments will be presented to the District Council later this month for final approval with this committee's recommendation.

**10:13**

**Presentation of District Success Plan**

DD Diane reminded the DEC that the District Success Plan (DSP) was circulated via email prior to the meeting. DD Diane advised that a summary of the DSP would now be presented by CGD Mo Dawodu and PQD Steve Vear.

**PQD Steve Vear**

- Goal 3: Smedley Distinguished (91 Distinguished Clubs based on current base)
- How to get there
  - Focus on Pathways educational program with Pathways Ambassador Juli Chapman and her team as the district “Continues to Stroll to Smedley” a theme carried over from last year.
    - Monitor adoption rate/ investigate barriers to new members
    - Identify a Pathways Champion in each Division to support the team
  - Club Excellence key at Club Officer Training, in communications and promoting the benefits of the Club Success Plans/Moments of Truth
  - Continued focus on 1 education award per member (part of the District Vision)
    - District Vision 1:10:100
      - 1 education award per member
      - 10 net members growth per club
      - 100% Pathways Adoption
  - Continue webinar sessions and Speaker to Trainer workshops to ensure members can take advantage of additional training
  - Continue to provide separate Corporate Club Officer Training and set up a WhatsApp group allowing them to freely exchange ideas and best practice
  - VPE drop-in sessions for ideas/tips and best practice

**CGD Mo Dawodu**

- Goal 1: Distinguished (would be 8,733 payments with current base numbers)
  - With additional focus on 5,000 unique members across the District with the Net 8 Club Growth target aiming for 5,000 unique members and a Smedley Distinguished District for Membership Growth.
- Goal 2: Distinguished (164 clubs based on current base) but goal is for 173 clubs (Smedley Distinguished)
- District Vision focus 1:10:100 Goals achieved by

- Support from CGD extended team
- Focus on bringing back former Toastmasters
- Marketing/PR (working with PRM)
- Find A Club response management
- Communicating the District goal of 5,000 unique members/and why
- Rebuilding clubs with fewer than 20 members
- Renewals management

DD Diane thanked the PQD, and CGD for their work on the DSP and thanked the other members of the DLT for their support.

DD Diane invited members of the DEC to ask any questions about the District Success Plan.

AD L16 Mohammed Al Bayati: with reference to acknowledging achievements, how does the District propose supporting ADs in doing this?

DD Diane explained that there are allocations for ribbons and marketing materials in the budget to be used for this purpose.

PQD Steve Vear added that Clubs are encouraged to look at their own Club Success Plans and Finance Plans as to how they could recognise individual members' achievements. ADs also have budgets available to them. The Halls of Fame slots at Division contests is a forum for highlighting members' milestone achievements. We ask ADs to let the DLT know of specific anniversary dates or significant member service achievements to include in this event. Recognition of members' successes starts at Club level.

After no further questions were raised DD Diane asked if there were any objections to the approval of the District Success Plan.

Hearing none, DD Diane declared the adoption of the District Success Plan approved by the District Executive Committee by unanimous consent and that it will be presented to the District Council later that month.

**10:23**

**2022/23 Year End Finance and Audit**

DD Diane invited the Immediate Past Finance Manager (IPFM) Eddy Quah to present.

IPFM Eddy reported a summary of the 2022/23 financials, confirming that the Audit Committee was provided with all relevant supporting information to complete the audit process by late August. The Audit Committee found that all transactions were in accordance with policies and made some small recommendations to streamline the process by reminding everyone to submit their claims within the 30-day time limit.

2022/23 Budget was for a planned revenue of £108,482, the actual revenue was £97,916 due to fewer than expected Conference Ticket sales. This was offset by lower than expected Conference costs. The district made a small surplus of £1,945.

	<p>IPFM Eddy asked if there were any questions. No questions were raised relating to the audit.</p> <p>DD Diane thanked IPFM Eddy for the report.</p> <p>DD Diane called upon the District Audit Chair, Heidi Pocock, to present the 2022/23 Audit Report.</p> <p>DAC Heidi confirmed that the Audit Team approved the Finances for the year 2022/23. She also asked that training be given to ensure that District leaders claim within the 30-day time limit set out in the Finance Guidelines.</p> <p>DD Diane thanked Heidi and asked for approval to recommend the report to the District Council. There were no objections and it was approved.</p>
<p><b>10:32</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation of District budget</b></p> <p>DD Diane invited FM Valerija Slovenia to present a summary of the District Budget. The District Budget was sent to all DEC members prior to the DEC meeting.</p> <p><b>FM Valerija</b> emphasised that the District budget is specifically focused on funding activities that support the District mission. FM Valerija explained that the allocated membership revenue in our budget is always 25% of the previous year’s revenue from membership payments to TI.</p> <p>FM Valerija identified budgeting factors and key considerations, including the impact of membership growth &amp; revenue vs. pre-pandemic levels. including the 5 priority areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Education and Training,</li> <li>II. Marketing outside Toastmasters,</li> <li>III. Club Growth and Club Retention,</li> <li>IV. Membership Growth and Membership Retention, and</li> <li>V. District Communication and Public Relations.</li> </ul> <p>FM Valerija shared the 2023/24 budget summary before explaining the limits and parameters set by World HQ on how the District can allocate funds. Key messages for the Budget proposal are that policy requires a minimum 5% spend on Marketing Outside Toastmasters, and varying maximum % spend in other expense categories.</p> <p>To reduce Travel costs the milage allowance would be reduced to 40 pence/mile down from 45 pence/mile, as petrol had decreased in cost from £1.90+ per litre when the .45 pence rate was set to £1.45 per litre.</p> <p>Lodging was the only budget category above the Toastmasters International Policy limit. However, we had a dispensation as it is less than 1% and we have three DLT members traveling to the convention compared to only two last year.</p> <p>FM Valerija also explained that prior to the pandemic contests were often ticketed events and expects Division Directors to be mindful of this. To draw in the crowd, organisers are advised to organise</p>

Educational Events as part of the Speech Contests. FM Valerija referred to the District Mission and advised that in a financially tight environment, funds allocation to Contests remained at a lower priority.

#### 2022/23 Budget Figures

- Allocated membership revenue is £77,458
- Total forecasted revenue is £114,308
- Total forecasted expenses £114,231

DD Diane thanked FM Valerija for her work on the budget.

DD Diane called for questions.

IPDD Rupa Datta: in light of the Past District FM's presentation and the fact that the conference made a loss last year, I'd like a little more clarity on how we've arrived at the figures for this year's conference and maybe ask the Trio to review these if necessary.

FM Valerie replied: in terms of this year's conference, regardless of the fact that last year's conference made a loss we are confident enough that one year does not define how the next year's conference is going to play out. We have learnt lessons from last year's conference; we are revising our planning and starting much earlier with regards to getting sponsorship; we are looking at venues outside London; working on a different way of charging for the conference and the gala dinner; having quality content and speakers at the conference to generate interest from members.

AD C58 Ranjitha Justin: A comment for the consideration of the DEC. I have been on the club committee as president and have noticed that the Club Officers are not necessarily attending these District conferences even though they are eligible for it. Therefore I would like to propose that the District Committee can consider an early-bird discount or some sort of incentive that will encourage them to attend the conference.

DD Diane asked if there were any further questions, hearing none she declared the adoption of the District Budget be approved by the DEC by unanimous consent. It will be presented at District Council later this month with this committee's recommendation.

**10:42**

#### **Progress reports on 2022/23**

DD Diane called on each Division Director to present their 3-minute reports on the work which has been carried out to support District Success. Division Directors are requested to deliver the reports based on the reports provided by their Area Directors and combine these into one report per Division.

Time will be called at 3 minutes for those in the room and you will be muted at 3 minutes if you are joining online. We will go in alphabetical order of Divisions.

**Division A Director: Andy Righi**

- Positive start, membership growth around 10% with one-third of clubs having already reached two goals.
- Joint COT and TLI training completed with Division J. Well attended. 19 clubs had minimum of 4 club officers trained
- Challenges: contests to organise and renewals. Looking at Open House and other strategies.

**Division B Director: Luca Graziani**

- Large area with 25 clubs, including 1 pre-charter club. Most meeting in person except two fully online, ZigZag, and Sustainable Speaker, just chartered two weeks ago.
- Training: 22<sup>nd</sup> July we delivered successful TLI hybrid meeting in co-operation with Division L Director Sean at Kings Cross. 2 COT with Area Directors in Division B who helped organise this on 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August.
- To acknowledge clubs who have distinguished themselves already: London Olympians, London Toastmasters, Data Science Speakers, Cardinals and Excalibur all had 7/7 club officers trained Also pre-charter club, Meditations, which is a corporate club in Medidata Solutions.
- Two top Toastmasters did public speaking workshop on 23<sup>rd</sup> August
- London Toastmasters club have recently re-opened near Southwark Bridge after period of suspension related to the pandemic.
- DCP: London Cardinals already on 5 goals, thanks to their growing member base and multiple Pathway Level completions.
- We have interesting corporate club, PA Consulting with 135 members and 3 sessions running in parallel.

**Division C Director: Erika Oteri**

- 4 Areas and 17 clubs, one which is ineligible but hoping to revive it. 404 members with average size of 21 members per club.
- Successful TLI and COT. 70% clubs had minimum 4 officers trained, 3 had 7/7. Only two clubs with no officers trained.
- Challenges: Majority are corporate clubs so high turnover and lack of involvement with club officers. The focus with Area Directors is to increase and strengthen membership via adoption of Pathways. To run Open House and direct them with the partnership of HR or talent development to increase the pool of members they can acquire.

**Division D Director: Tom Bailey**

- Comprises 19 clubs. Sadly lost two during the last programme year.
- Two pre-charters: Sky Central and Jasper Alliance Toastmasters Academy.
- Continued to make steady growth having gained 80 members giving current membership of 520.
- 15 clubs have 21+ members.



- Challenges: Pathways enrolment. Area Directors working on this during their COTs. We hope new LMS system which we are confident will take our Pathways enrolment figure closer to 100%.
- My ADs are: Patrick Thomas, D14 and Tracey Rogers D21 with Assistant AD Gillian Prior for D53. We need to appoint full ADs for D53 and D29.
- Training: successful turn out for COTs and TLIs with large proportion of clubs reaching at least 4 officers trained. Except for one club and I have reached out to them to find out why.
- Thank you to the outgoing ADs: D29, Bonnie Wong; D21 Jacqui Hogan; and D53 Mani Tulasi for their assistance during the transition phase.

**Division H Director: Guler Cortis**

- We have 23 clubs and 5 areas around Kent, South London and East Sussex
- Engagement with Area Directors is strong with good turnout for COTs. 16 out of 23 had minimum 4 trained. One Area at risk with engagement, one corporate club is not communicating which is the only club we might lose. I'm working with the CGD and ADs on that.
- 582 members in the Division, and only 3 clubs under 12. They qualify for club coach and working the CGD to engage with these clubs to increase membership.
- We need to appoint one Area Director.
- Good success story: Lewisham Speakers were in trouble last year but with help of Julie and Alan Chapman the club has reached 6 DCP goals to date, which is the strongest in the Division. Big thank you to all.
- One Open House with Liberty Speakers coming up.

**Division J Director: Andy Hessey**

- Training: 20 of our 23 clubs achieved minimum 4 officers trained and one 7/7 from Tame.
- Challenges: one club against training, 3<sup>rd</sup> time zero training. I am determined to resolve this at the next round of training.
- We have 5 fantastic Area Directors, plus an assistant area director spanning the area.
- New members: Cheltenham have 7 new members already with 25 new members across the Division so clubs starting to see real growth. Average 22 members per club. A couple need a boost, such as Abingdon with 12 members, but time to work on that.
- 15 clubs already submitted their dues and expecting all 23 by end September
- Focus now is on education awards. So far on 17 in the Division. Plan for 90% by Christmas. Have strong Area Directors and Presidents.

**Division K Director: Nick Ronald**

- Started the year positively. 4 ADs in place, 20 clubs. Organised joint Division C and Division K TLI in July and COT in August. 86% of clubs have minimum 4 officers trained. Some corporate clubs didn't attend any training and looking to get support with those clubs.

- Focus is now membership and contest planning.

**Division L Director: Sean Dean**

- Based in north London with 20 clubs and one pre-charter, Wembley Stadium Speakers who hope to charter in next few months. All cubs in good standing although 3 have fewer than 12 members. We will contact them to ask if they want a club coach. Grateful to have a strong team of Area Directors in Mohammed, Jesus and Vanessa. The fourth is on extended leave at the moment so looking for someone to step in for L47.
- Membership: started with 436, now 472. Particular mention to Winchmore Hill Speakers who have added 11 new members taking them over 30 members.
- Training: successful hybrid joint TLI with Division B. For COTs L16 and L56 organised individual COTs. 12 clubs had minimum 4 officers trained. All 20 sent at least one so room for improvement there.
- Particular mention to L61 who sent 25 of their 28 officers to training.
- Educational awards: submitted 12.
- Contests: almost ready to announce all dates.

That completes the reports from the Division Directors.

DD Diane called upon members of the District Leadership Team for their 2 minute reports on their progress so far this year:

**IPDD: Rupa Datta**

Looking back, last year we finished once again Smedley Distinguished for distinguished clubs and I'm sure it will happen again this year. For the first time ever in the history of District 91 we finished Smedley Distinguished for membership payments so a big shout out to our Immediate Past CGD Debbie Williams. We were disappointed not to finish Smedley Distinguished overall as a district but we were recognised in the Convention Hall of Fame for District club strength. Overall our clubs, as a District, grew by 14.43% which shows we did finish the year in a much better place.

My invitation to all of you is to ensure that this year we finish in a stronger place than last year.

Moving ahead, my role is godmother, not only to the DLT but to the whole DEC in coaching, mentoring and supporting. As of 1<sup>st</sup> November the formal process for District Leadership roles will commence but I would like you to start thinking about that now. What will you be doing?

**PRM: Nikita Parks**

You need three legs for a stool to stay upright, and in PR we have three legs: social media, email and web.

For email we have moved from Constand Contact to Active Campaign, which is full CRM system which will integrate with our website and, for the first time, we will be able to deliver personalised content to our members. We hope this will improve member engagement and progress through Pathways.

Our website: this has been decaying recently with parts falling off. Now working on that.

**CGD: Mo Dowadu**

We now have 167 clubs, one is new. Currently have 368 new membership payments which puts us in line to be over 2000 which is what we achieved in the last year.

Currently the Club Growth team is growing and open to new members: John Drinkwater, Emmanuel Karamagi, Sadiq and Andrew. Our focus is on coaches mentors and sponsors.

New clubs: Sustainable Speakers has just chartered. We have 6 clubs in the pipeline. The TMI lead generated 9 leads between July and August which is not quite enough. 3 are closed, we are still talking to 6.

The District marketing plan is our plan and will be shared with the Division Directors to have a review and contribute and also the Area Directors as we need more leads and prospects to be able to build new clubs to achieve the 15 new clubs we are looking for by the end of the year.

The key things we are going to focus on is Prospecting and Presenting (at club level for demo meetings and Open Houses) and following up.

**PQD: Steve Vear**

Training: currently reached 78% of 85% target and expect to reach our target today. Special thanks to District Training Manager, Amy Jones for all of her effort in all of our training programme. Recently completed the first round of COT and thank all Division and Area Directors for their dedication and leadership in this area. Particular call out to Division J Director, Andy Hessey for having the foresight for the Last Chance Saloon mop up COT which attracted 100 people to the Zoom room. 119 clubs have had minimum 4 officers trained, 19 have had all 7 officers trained. During the two weeks in July we supported our Corporate Clubs with corporate officer training which was ten 1-hour sessions offering credit to anybody who attended 3 or more sessions. Over 100 officers received their credit through this method. Thanks to all trainers and zoom masters who made that a success.

In support of clubs achieving excellence we have our Pathways Champion team under the leadership of Juli Chapman and have arranged a series of different training sessions now available on the District calendar to push 870 members that haven't yet registered on Pathways to do so.

Contest season: we have training for our DEC later today and webinar this coming Monday which please advertise to all members to increase registrations

For VPEs we have had one very successful drop-in session with monthly ones planned. Members of the DEC were invited to DEC training and I'm very grateful to Alistair Driscoll who also hosted our first Area Director Huddle as we continue to support our District officers.

Congratulations to all members who have already received an Education award (175) and especial call out to Immediate Past CGD, Debbie Williams, on becoming the first DTM of the year.

DD Diane yielded control of the meeting to PQD Steve Vear in order to deliver the DD report.

**DD Diane**

It's been a great year so far, one club already chartered and a strong pipeline. 119 clubs with minimum 4 officers trained – this is important as stats show those clubs are more likely to become Distinguished.

Thank you to all for your hard work as Area and Division Directors, putting on events and training opportunities. The quality of the training has been very well received.

We are optimistic for success this year and despite the fees increases the message is that we are still offering fantastic value for money.

**Update from the International Convention and District Leader Training.**

**DD Diane**

Last month at the Toastmasters International Convention during the business meeting the following announcements were made:

- Reduced costs during the pandemic were not sufficient to cover the reduced income from the membership reduction.
- Worldwide 60% of clubs are holding hybrid meetings, 20% in-person and 20% online.
- Globally in-person clubs recruited an average of 8 new members and online clubs 5 new members.
- The number of paid clubs fell by 3.2% last year, however this year 47 districts chartered 68 new clubs in July, compared to 28 clubs in July 2022.
- The average club size grew from 17.2 members per club to 21.2.
- 129,000 members paid in July to renew in October a rise of 123,000 from last year.
- A new customer service team has been recruited to extend the contact hours to as near 24/7 as possible and to improve service levels at TMI HQ. The times will be revealed after the team have been fully trained.
- As many of you may know District 91 is part of Region 10 which covers the whole of Europe and parts of North Africa. Currently there are 9 regions based in the North American continent and 5 for the rest of the world. To ensure that each region has less than 15% of paid clubs, following the growth of Toastmasters in India, Africa and other parts of the world from 1st July 2024 the regions will be split into 7 in North America and 7 for the rest of the world.

## **Update on the Reformation of District 71 and 91**

### **DD Diane**

At their respective District Council meetings in May 2023, both Districts agreed that the District Directors should write to the International Board of Directors to request that a joint reformation committee should be established to examine the possibility of establishing a third district in the UK & Ireland.

On the 14th August Distinguished Toastmaster Matt Kinsey, the international President, and Dan Rex, CEO of Toastmasters International, wrote to the current and Past Trios of both Districts to say that a decision to reform both Districts had been postponed to March 2024 at the earliest as neither had reached its expected club growth target of 200 clubs for D71 and 170 for D91.

PQD Steve handed back control of the meeting to DD Diane.

### **District contests**

DD Diane called upon PQD Steve Vear to talk about the Area, Division and District contests:

**PQD Steve:** The Board of Directors of Toastmasters International have decided that all speech contests in the area, division and district level may be conducted either in person or hybrid or online for the 2023/2024 programme year. In person contests are defined as everyone attending the same location with no contestants, judges or other functionaries being able to be online.

Hybrid contests are defined as those with participants, whether it be contestants, judges or audience members, being on site and others being online.

We are asked to consult and make a decision on what District 91 should do for the new program year.

The District Leadership Team consulted with members of the District Executive Committee and on behalf of those I, as Program Quality Director, move that we adopt an approach that, for the 2023/2024 program year, contests from the area level upwards are conducted in a hybrid format.

**Objection** raised by Division B Director Luca Graziani. Luca, speaking on behalf of his Division and his Area Directors, explained the very different situations for all clubs and areas and they are of the opinion that each area should be allowed to conduct their contests in a way that best fits the needs of their clubs.

PQD Steve fully supports these concerns but stressed we cannot have a mixture of styles.

Division C Director Erika Oteri: seconded the point raised by Luca in that we should not force members into circumstances they are not comfortable with

Division H Director Guler Cortis: has a concern with idea of charging members to come to Division contests whereby members may opt to stay online and not pay.

At this point IPDD Rupa moved to extend meeting to 1pm. Agreed

Jacob: believes hybrid is not a single solution and that each area should decide for themselves

PQD Steve reiterated the edict from TI that doesn't permit a mixed approach according to the preferences of each area or division

AD B18 Marijana: illustrated the challenges faced by some clubs bearing the costs of contest and not being reimbursed.

IPDD Rupa reminded the meeting of managing contests pre-pandemic, before hybrid, when clubs, areas and divisions managed to share costs.

AD K3 Apoorva Agarwal: In support of objections raised by Luca, Olga and Marijana, demonstrated the challenges faced by her clubs which are mixed community and corporate. For contests, it's only the community clubs who participate, and they are completely in person.

Division J Director Andy Hessey: we shouldn't just consider the logistics but remember that we are creating the best quality environment for our contestants and we need focus on that.

PQD Steve reminded the meeting that at the Regional level, contests are in hybrid.

Division K Director Nick Ronald : on his observations of hybrid meetings with an empty room and all members online.

PQD Steve proposed an amendment to the motion because the meeting has to make a decision as to the contest format at each level: area, division and district. Having heard the feedback he moved that we table three motions:

1. Contests should be in person only
2. Contests should be online only
3. Contests should be hybrid

He is not proposing that we take each of those options at each level, unless there is an amended motion to the proposal.

Division B Director Luca Graziani: objected to the proposal of voting on the same mode of execution for all levels because Division Directors have budget to help with cost of venue and equipment rental for hybrid contests. Area Directors do not. He believes that the motion should be considered separately for Area.

DD Diane clarified if the meeting would consider two votes, one for Area and one for Division and District.

PQD Steve further moved that the DEC take a vote focusing on the Area level contest as to whether they should be:

1. In person
2. Online, or

### 3. Hybrid

Then the same vote for Division and District.

AD Olga: expressed caution on the wording of the motion

AD ?: stated budget concerns for Area and can they get financial support

PRM Nikita Parks: believes the conversation has become about organisational structure when it should be about members. We have 142 members abroad, 3% of our membership. Do we want them to be included?

AD D14 Patrick Thomas: asked if we had data on the makeup of areas and how many exclusively in person or online.

DD Diane said 8 areas where members would be excluded

PQD Steve requested further extension of meeting to 1.20pm. Agreed.

DD Diane requested the meeting take a vote.

PQD Steve suggested sending new motion to be voted on

After voting, DD Diane declared there had was no overall majority

PQD Steve moved to vote again removing 3<sup>rd</sup> option.

*Meeting adjourned for lunch.*

DD Diane opened the meeting and asked if all had voted.

The result for Area contests is 60% online and 38% hybrid. Therefore for the programme year Area contests will be held online only.

PQD Steve proposed that Division and District contests be held in a hybrid medium.

DD Diane, hearing no objections it was agreed that for the programme year 2023-2024 Division and District contests will be hybrid by unanimous consent.

PQD Steve recommended that in case all contests need to be moved online, the District Director has the permission to do this without the need for calling an Extraordinary meeting of the DEC.

CGD Mo seconded the motion.

Hearing no objections. DD Diane declared the motion carried.

### **Conference Update**

DD Diane called upon PQD Steve Vear to give an update on the 2023 District Conference.

PQD Steve: We need a Conference Director and request volunteers please – this is a great opportunity to use for an HPL project. With a small team Steve has already started sourcing venues and costings.

## **Review of Advance motions**

DD Diane called for motions.

Division B Director Luca: The motion is specifically relating to the difference between TLIs (Toastmasters Leadership Institute) and COTs (Club Officer Training). TLIs are 5-hour sessions I July, supported by Division Directors and financed by the District budget which is specifically allocated for this training. They yield the same credit training that regular COTs do but they get more in depth content because of the longer time. COTs are supported by Area Directors and they only have the area budget and each division to its discretion will enable its ADs to organise one or more of these sessions. Some of us have individual COTs for each area as opposed to multiple areas joining together. I feel that having both TLIs and COTs offered is redundant. The only incentive for members to participate in the TLIs this year was to be able to attend in person, even though I'm aware some were fully online. The extra incentive is to be exposed to more training. I believe in a well-designed system we shouldn't give users two very similar ways to achieve the same goal, which is, of course, training, but more concretely the DCP point. Why give a 5-hour way to achieve that point and a 3-hour way to achieve that point if there are no tangible benefits.

*The proposal is to either removed the concept of TLI for the winter season and strengthen our COT offering or to consider further incentives for those officers and clubs that participate in the longer TLIs as opposed to the COTs.*

DD Diane called upon PQD Steve to respond.

PQD Steve. The offering of a TLI or a COT is subject to Toastmasters International governing documents. As options they are available to us. As such the motion, as suggested, I would suggest is out of order as not being germane to the power of the DEC. I would emphasise that TLIs are optional in the programme year. In the last few years we have run very successful D91 TLIs. It is the recommended approach by Toastmasters International for such training events and is designed for those districts spread across many, many more geographical miles than we do in D91 to effectively create mini-conferences which are done very successfully in other districts. Because we are geographically a lot smaller, perhaps the impact of our TLIs is very different. If, in conjunction with the Division Directors and the DLT, we determine for future we don't run TLIs, that is within our gift to do so. It's not within our gift not to run COT and we need to find a way to ensure enough opportunity as possible to achieve the training officers need and subsequent DCP points. Therefore the motion as proposed is not in order.

DD Diane: The motion will be set aside – it raises interesting points though and which can be discussed outside of this meeting.

**Action:** PQD Steve: to set up a meeting with the Division Directors to consult and decide on the structure of our TLIs and COTs for the rest of the programme year.

DD Diane called upon DPR Nikita Parks to state the second motion.



	<p>DPR Nikita Parks: Nikita understood decision last year was for D91 not to have a Facebook group. Nikita would like to reconsider this position because from a PR perspective it's important to separate internal member facing PR from external potential member facing PR. We are currently sending mixed messages and don't further our cause by sending member-specific messages to the whole world. District 71 operate a district Facebook group successfully. It is not a networking group (which was the negative side from previous years.) It must be a communications channel which is tightly controlled. In D71 the PRM is responsible for approving and publishing articles.</p> <p><i>The proposal is not to disrespect last year's decision but to revisit the discussion that led to that decision and a way forward.</i></p> <p>DD Diane ruled that the proposal is not germane to the DEC. It is worth considering and can look at and decide whether to form a committee at the DLT level and then take it forward.</p> <p>Division J Director: Andy Hessey: Can we be specific around the wording. Instead of it being a Facebook Group, I suggest it be a Facebook Page. In that way it is controlled by moderators and there is far tighter oversight over how communication is made, rather than a Group which is an open forum.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> to be revisited with PRM and Division Directors.</p>
	<p><b>Disciplinary Session Minutes</b></p> <p>The District Disciplinary Committee Chair, Vanessa King, provided a verbal report to the DEC before proposing the following three actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. That the member be given a written censure by the District Executive Committee</li> <li>II. That the member be suspended from participation in District activities for 12 months, until the 2nd of September 2024</li> <li>III. That the member be suspended from eligibility to be elected or appointed to District office for 12 months, until the 2nd of September 2024.</li> </ul> <p>After a short debate all three actions were agreed.</p>
	<p><b>Meeting adjourned</b></p> <p>There being no further business DD Diane declared the meeting adjourned at 14:04. The next meeting to be online in early December.</p>
	<p><b>Summary of Action Points</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> PQD Steve: to set up a meeting with the Division Directors to consult and decide on the structure of our TLLs and COTs for the next programme year.</p> <p><b>Action</b> PRM regarding District Facebook to be revisited with PRM and Division Directors</p>

