



# District Council Meeting Minutes

Hybrid: Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024

No.	Item
1	<p><b>Welcome, Introduction and District Mission</b></p> <p>DD Diane opened the meeting and welcomed District Council Members to the Annual Business Meeting of the 2023-2024 Toastmasters year. DD Diane reminded members that the Council serves as the administrative governing body of District 91 and as such is responsible for conducting and approving the business of the District.</p> <p>DD Diane reminded members that the DC comprises:</p> <p>The District Leadership Team (DLT): (the District Director, Programme Quality Director, Club Growth Director, District Finance Manager, PR Manager, Administration Manager and the Immediate Past District Director), plus Division Directors, Area Directors, Club Presidents and Club Vice Presidents Education</p> <p>DD Diane explained the etiquette of using the Zoom platform in the hybrid environment and the voting procedure.</p> <p>DD Diane introduced the members of the District Leadership Team, members supporting the meeting, VIPs and Past District Directors (PDD)</p> <p>Immediate Past District Director (IPDD): Rupa Datta Program Quality Director (PQD): Steve Vear, DTM Club Growth Director (CGD): Mo Dawodu District Finance Manager (FM): Valerija Slavina District Administration Manager (AM): Janet Alkema, DTM District Public Relations Manager (PRM): Nikita Parks, DTM, was absent from the meeting having submitted her resignation prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting is run under Robertt’s Rules of Order and our Parliamentarian for the meeting is Rose Nakibirango, DTM, and our Credentials Chair is PDD Arnaud Sartre, DTM</p> <p>Technical Support is provided by Grace Nathan and Rob Dewing, with our Zoom host, Fran Nguyen. Alistair Marston and Helena Boden-Brewer are managing the Timers desk. Our online Chatmaster for the meeting is Bob Nisbet, DTM, who will open the chat when required.</p> <p>We are also joined by the current Region 10 International Director and Past D91 District Director, Jean Gamester, DTM, the current District 71 Director Dr. Elizabeth Jordan and the current Region 10 advisor, Piotr Chimko.</p> <p>We also have a number of our past District 91 Directors joining us today either in person or online:</p> <p>DTM Florian Bay DTM Helen Boden-Brewer DTM Arnaud Sartre DTM Andy Hammond DTM Pedro Casillas DTM Vanessa King DTM Hillary Briggs, and DTM Freddie Daniells PDG D71</p>

DD Diane called upon Area A42 Director, Christine Wallach to repeat the District Mission:

*“We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.”*

And the Toastmasters International Mission:

*“We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.”*

AM Janet read out the following apologies received prior to the registration deadline.

Marie Mulet	Melting Pot Toastmasters	Diana Despa	Google UK
Sean Dean	Society Speakers	Keri France	Sutton Speakeasy
Douglas Lafferty	Solent Speakers Club	Stephanie Oliver	London Public Speakers
Joel Morales	London Cardinals	Dominic Heaney	Oxford Orators
Janet Fuchek	Battle Speakers Club	Karisma Parkinson	Connected Speakers
Mark Hankins	Wessex Speakers Club	Jason Bull	Farnham Speakers
Patrick Thomas	Farnham Speakers Club	Ian Edwards	Voice of Wales
Greg Turner	Thame Speakers	Laura Spezzaferri	Toast Titans
Ariane Allin	Legacy Speakers Brixton	Andra Pirvu	Oxford Speakers
Nick Bailey	Burnham Speakers	Heidi Pocock	Reading Verizon
Janet Milnes	Paddington Speakers	Tania Clentworth	Reading Verizon
Jacqueline Omoregie	Lloyds Banking Group	Lorraine Hamilton	Maidenhead Speakers
Robert Evans	Verizon EMEA Online		

DD Diane called for acknowledgement of members who have passed since the last Council meeting in September 2023:

- Philip West from Northavon Speakers who had won the Division A Humorous Speech Contest and was due to compete this weekend.
- Philip Gomes and Janette Winnick, Excalibur Speakers
- Twila Stout, DTM, Battle Speakers
- Helen Thomas

DD Diane requested a moment of silence to reflect on those people who have crossed our lives and added something special.

#### **Explanation of the Meeting Protocol and Review of the Agenda**

DD Diane explained the general protocol of the meeting, that only members of the District Council who had registered before the cut-off date of 6pm on 1<sup>st</sup> May were entitled to vote. DD explained how members could participate in the meeting, the protocol for raising objections and the importance of remembering our core values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence.

2.	<p><b>Review of the meeting agenda</b></p> <p>The agenda was circulated in advance of the meeting and DD Diane called for agreement or any objections.</p> <p>Hans Winkler, VPE of London Public Speakers wished to record that he had raised the fact that he had submitted a motion that would allow Area Directors to charge location fees for contest to be charge. This had been ruled out of order by the District leadership team and he didn't understand why. DD Diane explained that it would be dealt with under Item 11 Any Other Business.</p> <p>There were no further objections were received and the agenda was adopted.</p>																																										
3.	<p><b>Credentials Committee Report</b></p> <p>CC Arnaud explained the voting procedure for establishing the quorum according to the District Bylaws, Article 10, Council meetings, quorum and voting Paragraph C. He then gave the credentials report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clubs in Good Standing: 164</li> <li>● Quorum of members: 110</li> <li>● Members registered by 6pm 1<sup>st</sup> May: 158</li> <li>● Total available votes: 193</li> </ul> <p>CC Arnaud confirmed the meeting was quorate</p>																																										
4.	<p><b>Acceptance of Minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023 Council Meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes from the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were adopted by unanimous consent of the Council.</p>																																										
5.	<p><b>Confirmation of appointed District Officers</b></p> <p>The following appointments were agreed by the Council by unanimous consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Administration Manager: DTM Janet Alkema</li> <li>● Division D Director: Russell Searle</li> <li>● Area D53 Director: Jeevan George John</li> </ul> <p>DD Diane called for the approval of the above appointments. There were no objections and the appointments were approved by unanimous consent.</p>																																										
6a.	<p><b>District Leadership Committee (DLC) Report</b></p> <p>DLC Chair/IPDD Rupa Datta presented a summary of this report which was published on the D91 website and sent to all DC members four weeks prior to this meeting. Below are the nominated candidates.</p> <p><b>District Leadership Team Candidates</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="199 1422 1452 1635"> <tr> <td>District Director</td> <td>Steve Vear</td> <td>Wessex Speakers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Program Quality Director</td> <td>Mo Dawodu</td> <td>Kent Speakers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Program Quality Director</td> <td>Debbie Williams</td> <td>The Speakers of Croydon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Club Growth Director</td> <td>Andy Hessey</td> <td>Berkhamsted Speakers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Club Growth Director</td> <td>Seema Menon</td> <td>Harrovian Speakers</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Division Director Candidates</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="199 1736 1452 2105"> <tr> <td>Division A Director</td> <td>Mike Burrows</td> <td>Northavon Speakers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division B Director</td> <td>Lynne Cantor Gayer</td> <td>Excalibur Speakers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division C Director</td> <td>Olga Galaiko</td> <td>City of London Toastmasters Club</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division D Director</td> <td>Deborah Stevens</td> <td>Thame Speakers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division H Director</td> <td>Pearl Cadogan</td> <td>Liberty Speakers Club</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division J Director</td> <td>Helyn Ashford</td> <td>Cardiff Toastmasters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division K Director</td> <td>Sabrina Aici</td> <td>Bloomberg London Toastmasters</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division L Director</td> <td>Jesus Parada-Riveiro</td> <td>Harrovian Speakers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Division L Director</td> <td>Sushil Shah</td> <td>Harrovian Speakers</td> </tr> </table>	District Director	Steve Vear	Wessex Speakers	Program Quality Director	Mo Dawodu	Kent Speakers	Program Quality Director	Debbie Williams	The Speakers of Croydon	Club Growth Director	Andy Hessey	Berkhamsted Speakers	Club Growth Director	Seema Menon	Harrovian Speakers	Division A Director	Mike Burrows	Northavon Speakers	Division B Director	Lynne Cantor Gayer	Excalibur Speakers	Division C Director	Olga Galaiko	City of London Toastmasters Club	Division D Director	Deborah Stevens	Thame Speakers	Division H Director	Pearl Cadogan	Liberty Speakers Club	Division J Director	Helyn Ashford	Cardiff Toastmasters	Division K Director	Sabrina Aici	Bloomberg London Toastmasters	Division L Director	Jesus Parada-Riveiro	Harrovian Speakers	Division L Director	Sushil Shah	Harrovian Speakers
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	<p>DD Diane called for two (2) practice votes to be cast. Upon completion of each test vote the results were shared.</p> <p>Following the test votes, DD Diane moved that complaints during the formal voting related to non-working links are not to be investigated and any votes missing due to technical problems lying on the voters end will not be cast. DD Diane called for objections. Hearing none DD Diane declared the election tool tested and ready for the formal elections of District Leaders for 2024/25.</p> <p>DD Diane then declared that, for uncontested roles, there would not be a secret ballot but she would instruct AM Janet to cast a single ballot for the candidate. For the contested roles, each candidate would be given 2 minutes to present their case, after which the vote would be held.</p> <p>DD Diane called upon AM Janet to cast one vote for the uncontested candidate District Director, Steve Vear DTM and declared him elected for 2024/25.</p> <p>For the role of Programme Quality Director, both Mo Dawodu and Debbie Williams gave a 2-minute speech, after which the vote was cast. Vote result: Mo Dawodu – 36% Debbie Williams – 64% DD Diane confirmed that the Programme Quality Director elect for 2024/25 is Debbie Williams</p> <p>For the role of Club Growth Director, both Andy Hessey and Seema Menon gave a 2-minute speech, after which the vote was cast. Vote result: Andy Hessey – 47% Seema Menon – 53% DD Diane confirmed that the Club Growth Director elect for 2024/25 is Seema Menon</p> <p>Moving on to the election of the Division Directors, DD Diane confirmed that there was only nominated candidate for all divisions, except for Division L. She therefore requested that AM Janet cast a single ballot for each of those roles.</p> <p>For the role of Division L Director, both Jesus Parada-Riviero and Sushil Shah were invited to give a 2-minute speech. Sushil gave his 2-minute speech, however Jesus Parada-Riviero experienced technical problems and passed his speech to Seema Menon to read it.</p> <p>Mervyn Jenkins, President of Valleys and Vale Speakers, queried whether it was fair that another person should speak on the candidate’s behalf. DD Diane confirmed that this was allowed and had been done according to the Toastmasters rules. Vote result: Jesus Parada-Riviero – 38% Sushil Shah – 62% DD Diane confirmed that the Division L Director elect for 2024/25 is Sushil Shah.</p> <p>DD Diane congratulated the newly elected leaders and thanked them for taking on the leadership roles for the next Toastmasters year.</p>
7	<p><b>Mid-Year Audit &amp; Finance Report</b></p> <p>FM Val presented a summary report, the full report has been published in the District Council pack.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net income of just over £17k in for first half of the year.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenses were submitted in a timely manner and in good order.</li> <li>• For the Q3 we finished slightly over £45k in net income.</li> <li>• Q4 is one of the heaviest in terms of expenses and those are still coming in.</li> <li>• New incentives totalling £11,500 for the last quarter had been launched, full details on the website</li> </ul> <p><i>Question from Simon Toon, President of Berkhamsted Speakers: regarding absence of any mention in the District Council pack regarding the concern around some meal expenses at the Annual Convention in the Bahamas.</i></p> <p>FM Val explained that the expenses hadn't been submitted on time due to technical difficulties with the Concur accounting system and Toastmasters International. In addition, that the expenses for attendance at the Convention fell within the budget previously agreed, so there was no concern around the expenses of the Leadership Team</p> <p><i>Question from Luca Graziani, Division B Director: regarding the strategy of the District Finance reserve, whether the goal is to keep increasing the reserve each year or to use the money for initiatives to support our clubs, conferences and perhaps even more budget allowances for Area and Division contests next year.</i></p> <p>FM Val explained that we have to keep at least 25% for the new incoming team and it is for the incoming leadership team to set the budget for the new year.</p> <p>IPDD Rupa Datta called for a 5-minute recess to consult in private with the FM Val and DD Diane after which FM Val added that once the April financial statement has been received she is very happy to share this with District Council members. And that any increases in Area and Division budgets will be set by the incoming team. However there are certain percentage limits set by World HQ that we have to comply with.</p> <p>DD Diane then moved to change the order of the Agenda to have the District Alignment Committee Report ahead of the District Leadership Team Reports and that the end of the meeting be moved to 1:15pm. This was seconded and agreed.</p>
8	<p><b>2024-25 Presentation of District Alignment Committee Report</b></p> <p>District Alignment Chair, DTM Barbara Saph presented a summary of the alignment report that was shared in prior to the meeting. DAC Barbara explained that the report is dated 17<sup>th</sup> April and that it is an amended version of the report tabled at the District Executive Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> April which was agreed subject to further consultation regarding Division D. The revised report was circulated to the DEC members and approved on 18<sup>th</sup> April.</p> <p><i>Question from Beverley regarding the re-alignment of Excalibur Speakers which DAC Barbara confirmed will move from B52 to B9.</i></p> <p><i>Request from Olga Galaiko, Area C2 Director, that the two clubs which have incorrect numbers please be amended. DAC Chair Barbara requested the correct details in writing.</i></p> <p>DD Diane proposed that the Alignment Report, with correction to the two club numbers, be approved by the District Council. There were no objections and the Report was approved by unanimous consent.</p>
9	<p><b>District Leadership Reports</b></p> <p>The full District Leadership Reports are included in the District Council pack.</p>
10	<p><b>Future District Conference</b></p> <p>DD Diane called upon any member who would like to run a future District Conference to please write to District Director elect, Steve Vear.</p>
11	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>DD Diane referred to the motion raised by Hans Winkler, VPE of London Public Speakers, with regards to increasing the Area Director budget and restated that this is an issue for the incoming District Leadership Team to consider and was not germane to the District Council meeting.</p>

Point raised by Anthony Garvey, President of Shilling Speakers: in reference to the fact that his concern over the new directive from the International Board that all contests above Club level should be in person had been ruled out of order as it was not germane to this District Council meeting. Toastmaster Garvey wished to record in the minutes that 63% of District 91 club members who are members of online or hybrid clubs are disappointed by this decision and that they will be working to reverse that decision over the coming year.

So noted.

There was no further business raised and DD Diane declared the meeting adjourned at 1:15pm.