



# District 91 Council Meeting Minutes

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER ONLINE FROM 10 - 1PM

No.	Item
1	<p><b>Welcome and Introduction</b></p> <p>DD Steve opened the meeting and welcomed District Council Members to the first meeting of the 2024-2025 Toastmasters year. DD Steve 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 Steve introduced the members of the District Leadership Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Program Quality Director - Debbie Williams DTM</li><li>● Club Growth Director - Seema Menon DTM</li><li>● Public Relations Manager - Allen Paul DTM</li><li>● Finance Manager - Sturt Marshall</li><li>● Administration Manager - Janet Alkema DTM</li><li>● Immediate Past District Director - Diane Richardson</li></ul> <p>The District Leadership Team, together with all Division and Area Distrectors, plus Club Presidents and Vice Presidents Education make up the District Council.</p> <p>DD Steve explained the general protocol for the meeting and that only members of the District Council are entitled to speak and vote. The Zoom Masters for the meeting are Jeevan John, Kate Fraser-Smith and Grace Nathan.</p> <p><b>A moment of reflection</b></p> <p>DD Steve asked the meeting to take a moment to reflect on members of D91 who had passed away since our previous Council meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ian Creese, member of both Woking Speakers and Guildford Speakers passed away on 26th June 2024</li><li>● Joyce Rhodes, a former member of Maidenhead passed away in July 2024.</li></ul> <p><b>Recognition of District Service</b></p> <p>DD Steve recognised previous District Directors present at Council and thanked them for their service to the District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Past District Director 2022-2023, Rupa Datta</li><li>● Past District Director 2020=2021, Arnaud Sartre DTM</li><li>● Past District Director 2018-2019, PC Andy Hammond DTM</li><li>● Past District Director 2016-2017, Vanessa King DTM</li></ul>
2	<p><b>District Mission</b></p> <p>DD Steve announced that he was inviting Division C Director Olga Galaiko to read out the District Mission in recognition of her service to the District. Olga has been a Past Area Director and PR Manager, she is currently serving as our Division C Director and has been instrumental in the chartering of our first club this program year.</p> <p><i>“We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.”</i></p>

3	<p><b>Review of the Agenda</b></p> <p>DD Steve presented the agenda for the meeting and asked if there were any objections to its adoption. There were none and the agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.</p>																																												
4	<p><b>Credentials Committee Report</b></p> <p>DD Steve called upon our 2024-2025 Credentials Chair, Past District Director Rupa Datta, to confirm the roll call and the extent to which the meeting was quorate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clubs in Good Standing: 177 (1 vote per President and 1 vote per VPE)</li> <li>● Total DEC members: 47 (1 vote each)</li> <li>● One third (1/3) of all Club Presidents &amp; Vice-Presidents Education in the District shall constitute a quorum = 118</li> <li>● 185 Presidents and VPEs and</li> <li>● 30 DEC members registered by 6pm 13 September 2024</li> <li>● Total votes available to be cast: 205</li> </ul> <p>CC Rupa confirmed the meeting was quorate</p> <p>DD Steve called upon Administration Manager Janet Alkema to read out any apologies received by 6pm Friday 13th September:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="204 801 1503 1370"> <tr><td>Christopher Bacon</td><td>Alex Forrow</td><td>Eleni Lavaridou</td><td>Matthew Reubens</td></tr> <tr><td>Timothy Bailey</td><td>Yassin George</td><td>Natalia Li</td><td>Svitlana Samko</td></tr> <tr><td>Angelie Bharwaney</td><td>Peter Grandcourt</td><td>Yan Ru Lu</td><td>Sushil Shah</td></tr> <tr><td>Pearl Cadogan</td><td>Charles Harmer</td><td>Alison Millin</td><td>Naveed Sheikh</td></tr> <tr><td>Carol Cadogan</td><td>Jacqui Hogan</td><td>Lisa Moore</td><td>Joseph Thrush</td></tr> <tr><td>Rick Cooper</td><td>Marilena Hough</td><td>Ryan Olden</td><td>Joanne Tory</td></tr> <tr><td>Barry Corber</td><td>George Jenkins</td><td>Kemisola Oloriegbe</td><td>Sofie Verhelst</td></tr> <tr><td>Daniel Crossley</td><td>Christopher Jolly</td><td>Sabeer Peerbaccus</td><td>King Shan Wai</td></tr> <tr><td>Ben Duffy</td><td>Napat Kiatjaroonlert</td><td>Megan Poveda</td><td>George Wallace</td></tr> <tr><td>Martina Fisk</td><td>Shun Kit Kwan</td><td>Gillian Prior</td><td>Luca Whiteway</td></tr> <tr><td>George Folley</td><td>Cheuk Ho Lam</td><td>Maria Quintana</td><td>Casper Willcock</td></tr> </table> <p>Additional apologies had been received from Krystyna Zarzycka, Ruth Adekola, Andreea Floroiu and Qaya Qorons.</p>	Christopher Bacon	Alex Forrow	Eleni Lavaridou	Matthew Reubens	Timothy Bailey	Yassin George	Natalia Li	Svitlana Samko	Angelie Bharwaney	Peter Grandcourt	Yan Ru Lu	Sushil Shah	Pearl Cadogan	Charles Harmer	Alison Millin	Naveed Sheikh	Carol Cadogan	Jacqui Hogan	Lisa Moore	Joseph Thrush	Rick Cooper	Marilena Hough	Ryan Olden	Joanne Tory	Barry Corber	George Jenkins	Kemisola Oloriegbe	Sofie Verhelst	Daniel Crossley	Christopher Jolly	Sabeer Peerbaccus	King Shan Wai	Ben Duffy	Napat Kiatjaroonlert	Megan Poveda	George Wallace	Martina Fisk	Shun Kit Kwan	Gillian Prior	Luca Whiteway	George Folley	Cheuk Ho Lam	Maria Quintana	Casper Willcock
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5	<p><b>Acceptance of Minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024 Council Meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes from 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024 which had been circulated on 1st September were adopted by unanimous consent of the Council.</p>																																												
6	<p><b>Confirmation of appointed District Officers</b></p> <p>DD Steve explained that whilst some of the Area Directors are elected by area councils, and Division Directors are elected at our Annual Council meeting, a vacancy in any elective office shall be filled by the District Executive Committee based upon the recommendation of the District Director.</p> <p>Accordingly, the following appointments have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● DLT Public Relations Manager – Allen Paul DTM</li> <li>● DLT Finance Manager – Stuart Marshall</li> <li>● DLT Administration Manager – Janet Alkema DTM</li> <li>● Area Director A1 – Yogendra Paranjpe</li> <li>● Area Director A17 – Pallavi Pawar</li> <li>● Area Director A46 – Kate Jones DTM</li> <li>● Area Director A19 – Bev Hepting</li> <li>● Area Director B6 – Casper Willcock</li> </ul>																																												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Area Director B8 – Sabeer Peerbaccus</li> <li>● Area Director B9 – Mary Anne Ledger</li> <li>● Area Director B18 – Krystyna Zarzycka</li> <li>● Area Director C2 – Sergey Kornev</li> <li>● Area Director C5 – Arek Dudek</li> <li>● Area Director C34 – Ivone Sima</li> <li>● Area Director C58 – Richard Jones</li> <li>● Area Director D21 – Keith Mons</li> <li>● Area Director H37 – Monica Dragnescu</li> <li>● Area Director J4 – Alistair Marston</li> <li>● Area Director J11 – Alison Morris DTM</li> <li>● Area Director K3 – Harshit Agrawal</li> <li>● Area Director L61 – Joana Colaso</li> </ul> <p>There were no objections to these appointments and they were agreed by unanimous consent.</p> <p>DD Steve noted that we have five area director vacancies: D29, K12, K13, K31 and L56 and called on the District Council to contact him should they know of any member interested in taking on an Area Director role.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>2023-24 Year End Finance and Audit Reports</b></p> <p>DD Steve called upon the Immediate Past District Finance Manager, Val Slavina, to deliver the Year End Report, which had been circulated to members in the Council Pack prior to the meeting, and were presented on screen for members to view.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● income for the year was £114,197</li> <li>● expenses for the year totalled £90,000</li> <li>● the net surplus was some £24,000</li> </ul> <p>DD Steve opened the floor for questions:</p> <p>Simon Toon, VPE Berkhamstead Speakers, queried the notation on the left side which is labelled as month ending whereas on the right side it's also labelled month ending but contains different figures. Val explained that was the way the Toastmasters International accounting system was set out. On the right hand side are the figures for the month of June. On the left hand side they are for the entire year of 2023-24. The very left column says Actual, which reflects a net income of £24k. DD Steve thanked Val for her detailed explanation but agreed that the labelling wasn't particularly clear and he would raise this with WHQ.</p> <p>Simon Toon then queried whether the surplus £24k was going to be reinvested into club and membership growth this year. DD Steve clarified that the £24k had been diverted to our reserves. The reserve would only be available to the District if we were to go over budget this year. Alternatively, it could be used for a significant project or expenditure where we could justify releasing back the £24k. That money is not available to us to use in our new budget.</p> <p>There being no further questions, DD Steve called upon member of the Audit Committee, Sarah Brisley, to present the Audit Report, which had been circulated in the Council Pack prior to the meeting. In summary, Sarah reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the claims were generally in good order but claimants must please adhere to the Report naming protocol as it wastes time going back and forth from the approvers to the members to correct.</li> <li>● new district officers should receive training on the system</li> </ul> <p>DD Steve thanked the members of the Audit Committee for their work during the year and called upon any member who would like to serve on this committee for the current year to please contact him.</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>2024-25 Presentation of District Success Plan</b></p> <p>The full District Success Plan can be found in the District Council Pack on the D91 website. DD Steve highlighted the fact that the Success Plan focuses on the three goals that Toastmasters International sets districts across the world:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the number of clubs in good standing</li> </ol>

2. the number of membership payments
3. the number of distinguished clubs

the numbers associated with these goals is based on our 1st July 2024 status and full details can be found in the District Council pack.

Club Growth Director, Seema Menon, described the plan to achieve goal nos. 1 and 2. Seema described the incentives in place to reward members for their support in achieving our goals. Full details of the Incentives programme can be found on the D91 website. CGD Seema shared the pledge the DLT took at the International Convention in Anaheim in August for all members to Bring a Friend to our club meetings and encouraged members to embrace that challenge. Our hero goal this year is to have 5,000 unique members from a base of 4,525. This could be achieved by every club showing a net increase of just five members. The CGD team are dedicated to supporting struggling clubs with a renewed focus on club coaching, mentoring and training, providing tailored support for every club to succeed.

Program Quality Director, Debbie Williams, spoke of the plan to achieve goal no. 3. The aim is to foster a culture of collaboration and learning amongst all members and ensure that club officers are well trained. Two key goals for our members this year are:

- Educational Achievements: we aim for each member to reach at least one education milestone this year, and
- Pathways Enrolment: we are working towards full Pathways enrolment across all clubs.

To support members the PQD team are offering additional educational opportunities, including weekly webinar sessions and specialised training for corporate club officers.

## 9 2024-25 Approval of District Budget

DD Steve explained that in order to achieve our District mission in accordance with the District Success Plan, Finance Manager Stuart Marshall, has prepared a budget for the 2024-25 program year. The budget was circulated to members prior to the meeting and has already been reviewed and unanimously approved by the District Executive Committee. It is now being presented to the District Council for final approval before being submitted to World Headquarters. In order to assist FM Stuart with questions, DD Steve yielded control of the meeting to PQD Debbie.

PQD Debbie called upon FM Stuart to present the District Budget.

FM Stuart explained that the budget had been drawn up to maximise expenditure in the key areas of club growth and recognition in support of the District Mission and the goals outlined in the District Success Plan. He highlighted key facts:

- the vast majority of our revenue comes from membership dues
- the District is allocated 25% of the membership dues for members in our district
- the only other real revenue source is the Conference Revenue.
- WHQ sets a policy on the maximum expenditure allowed on a category basis, as detailed in the budget
- we have made every effort to prioritise and budget for face-to-face meetings where possible, e.g. the District Officer Training held in June this year.
- budget revenues for the term are £91k, a 17% increase on the last program year
- our extensive Incentives programme has been designed to encourage members to support the District in achieving the District Success Plan goals.
- we have reduced the spend on an external agency for marketing outside of Toastmasters in line with District 71 with whom we share the contract.
- we have listened to members' requests and have increased the maximum allocation for area directors by 20%, i.e. to £300, for the program year.
- we have budgeted for our District Conference to break even, despite running at a loss for the last two program years.

PQD Debbie thanked FM Stuart for his report and called for questions.

Arnaud Sartre, President, Experience French, asked for more detail on the reduction in external marketing spend. FM Stuart explained that a particular marketing agency, shared 50/50 with D71, was costing the districts close to £5,000 each. Last year's District Leadership Team did not believe we were getting full value

	<p>for that investment and renegotiated the contract so that each district will only pay for three articles per year. The balance of the funds allocated to marketing will now be used for marketing initiatives led by our Public Relations Manager, Allen Paul.</p> <p>Simon Toon, VPE Berkhamstead Speakers, referred to the comments made earlier in relation to the surplus in last year’s accounts and noted that the budget reflects a much smaller surplus this year. He wanted to know what controls are in place to ensure the District doesn’t find itself with a huge surplus again. DD Steve replied that the budget will be closely reviewed on a monthly basis, line by line, in order to pick up any areas of underspend and re-allocate them to other activities in the program year. It is our intention for the District to benefit 100% from the income generated by the District. FM Stuart added that there is a WHQ policy requirement for each district to have a surplus so the goal is never to reach a surplus of £0 in the program year but we will work towards making that surplus at policy level, rather than above.</p> <p>There were no further questions and PQD Debbie yielded control of the meeting back to DD Steve. DD Steve asked if there were any objections to the approval of the 2024-25 budget. There were none and DD Steve declared the District Budget approved, by unanimous consent.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Division Director &amp; District Leadership Team Reports</b></p> <p>There followed reports by the eight Division Directors and the District Leadership Team. Full details are included in the District Council pack.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Division A Mike Burrows DTM</li> <li>● Division B Lynne Cantor Gayer DTM</li> <li>● Division C Olga Galaiko</li> <li>● Division D Debrah Stevens</li> <li>● Division H Pearl Cadogan (apology but report delivered by AD Lucy Brooks)</li> <li>● Division J Helyn Ashford</li> <li>● Division K Sabrina Aici</li> <li>● Division L Sushil Shah (apology)</li> <li>● Immediate Past District Director (IPDD) - Diane Richardson</li> <li>● Public Relations Manager (PRM) - Allen Paul DTM</li> <li>● Club Growth Director (CGD) – Seema Menon DTM</li> <li>● Programme Quality Director (PQD) – Debbie Williams DTM</li> <li>● District Director (DD) – Steve Vear DTM</li> </ul>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Toastmasters International Update</b></p> <p>DD Steve reported back on key points of the Toastmasters Annual Business Meeting held at the International Convention in August.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Luisa Montalvo was crowned the new World Champion of public speaking whose speech can be found on YouTube. During this year's competition two competitors were disqualified for going overtime!</li> <li>● Radhi Spear DTM was elected as the new International President</li> <li>● Francesco Fedele DTM was elected the new International Director for Region 10 now that DTM Past District Director Jean Gamester’s term has come to an end</li> <li>● Several changes to the Distinguished Club and District program were announced but as this does not come into effect until next year, I won't go into detail on those</li> <li>● There will be an option for the District Council next year to decide how to manage the eligibility and operation of remote district leaders – again I shall not go into detail at this stage.</li> <li>● Finally, it was announced during the board briefing that there will be a significant realignment of Districts within Regions across the world which will at this time mostly affect the Americas. There are many districts around the world with less than half of the clubs in District 91 and as such are below the minimum number to be financially self-sustaining. This program could see several districts merge over time. As I said, at this time it does not affect Region 10 and therefore not District 91.</li> </ul>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>Contests update from the DEC</b></p> <p>DD Steve explained the recent changes in policy for speech contests. In January 2024 the Toastmasters International Board of Directors announced that all contests from the Area level must be held in person only, removing the previous exceptions to allow a remote option. The Board have given the option for districts to</p>

	<p>run an online speech contest, all the way to District level. However, the Board did not increase the number of contests available, meaning that each district can only run a total of 4 English speaking contests including the International Speech contest which is mandatory.</p> <p>PQD Debbie wrote to all Area Directors requesting they consult with their clubs as to what contests should be held for the 2024-25 program year. DD Steve reported that, following the recommendations of the clubs which responded, it was put to the District Executive Committee that the contests run in the District remain as we have always done, i.e. the International Speech, Evaluation, Humorous Speech and Table Topics. The DEC voted unanimously to accept this recommendation. This means that the District will not be running an online speech contest in the 2024-25 program year. DD Steve recognised that this decision will be a major disappointment to some members but hopes that members will still make the most of the upcoming exciting contest season. DD Steve called for questions:</p> <p>Arnaud Sartre, President, Experience French asked whether, as in previous years, areas with 4 or fewer clubs could send two representatives to the next level contest. Similarly, could divisions with 4 or fewer areas have two contestants representing them. DD Steve confirmed that would be the same for the current program year.</p> <p>Helyn Ashford, Division J Director, asked how clubs with few members could run their contests in light of the recent ruling. PQD Debbie referred all members with queries regarding the running of contests to the Rule book for this program year and also reminded members of the Contest Masterclass webinar being delivered that evening by Chief Judge, Arnaud Sartre, and which would be available to all members on the D91 YouTube channel.</p> <p>Lynne Cantor Gayer, Division B Director, requested clarification on the number of contestants going forward to the next level in that if an area has 5 or 6 clubs, but only 4 clubs take part in the contest is it the case that only one contestant goes through from each club. PQD Debbie confirmed that, yes, this is the case.</p> <p>Marianne Coop, VPE EMEA Verizon Online, asked how many clubs would be affected by the decision regarding contests. They are an online club with members spread across multiple countries and it is not practical to run an in-person contest. DD Steve replied that about 5% of clubs will be affected by this decision. Members of those clubs who can attend an in-person contest are welcome to do so.</p> <p>In response to further questions related to the running of contests, DD Steve directed members to the resources on the Toastmasters International website, as well as exhaustive resources on the D91 website as well as the recording of the Masterclass which would be posted on the D91 YouTube channel during the coming week.</p>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>District Conference update</b></p> <p>DD Steve called upon PQD Debbie to update the committee on the 2025 District Conference.</p> <p>PQD Debbie reminded members that the District Conference takes place from 2nd - 4th May 2025 in the West London area. She also reminded members that the District is still looking for a Conference Director to run the conference and that it is suitable for a High Performance Leadership project.</p>
<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>AOB and Advance Motions</b></p> <p>DD Steve announced that there were no advance motions received by the deadline of 6pm on Monday 9th September.</p> <p>DD Steve reported that on 1st September the District Executive Committee voted that the next council meeting, to be held on Saturday 3rd May 2025, be held in hybrid format and we looked forward to seeing members there.</p> <p>DD Steve also reminded members of the Basecamp outage from 9th - 25th October and for VPEs to remind members to update their Pathways and prepare for their speeches in advance of that time.</p>
<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>Meeting Adjourned</b></p> <p>DD Steve declared the meeting adjourned at 12h16 and thanked all members for their service and attendance. The next District Council meeting will be on Saturday 3rd May 2025.</p>

