



# District Executive Committee Meeting

Saturday 12th April, DoubleTree by Hilton, Victoria Way, Woking

## Minutes

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| 2 | <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>District Director (DD) Steve Vear declared the meeting open and issued a warm welcome to the fourth and final District Executive Committee (DEC) meeting of the 2024-2025 Program Year. He introduced the District Leadership Team (DLT):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program Quality Director (PQD) Debbie Williams, DTM</li><li>• Club Growth Director (CGD) Seema Menon, DTM</li><li>• Public Relations Manager (PRM) Allen Paul, DTM</li><li>• Finance Manager (FM) Stuart Marshall</li><li>• Administration Manager (AM) Janet Alkema, DTM</li><li>• Immediate Past District Director (IPDD) Diane Richardson has presented her apologies</li></ul> <p>DD Steve then welcomed and called upon the Area Directors who have elected to serve in the Program Year 2025-2026 to introduce themselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yassin George A1</li><li>• Kevin Harrington A17</li><li>• Martina Fisk B9</li><li>• Celia Edwards H15</li><li>• Johnathan Kaye H32</li><li>• Sarah Pantry J10</li><li>• Eric Jones K12</li></ul> <p>The DLT, together with all Division and Area Directors, make up the District Executive Committee, often referred to as the DEC. DD Steve referred to Protocol 7.1 which states that the purpose of the DEC is to ensure that the District leaders work together to achieve the District mission. Specifically,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the DEC reviews and approves the District Success Plan.</li><li>• it approves the budget and oversees the financial operation of the District.</li><li>• it recommends the alignment of clubs to areas and divisions.</li><li>• it reviews recommendations and reports of District committees, including those of the Audit Committee.</li><li>• and, finally, it performs any duties assigned to it by the District Council.</li></ul> <p>DD Steve explained the protocol for addressing the DEC and voting: that only members of the DEC are entitled to speak and only those who registered before 18:00 on Thursday 10th April are allowed to vote. The Zoom Master for the meeting is Rob Dewing and members were advised that by entering and participating in the meeting, consent had been given to the meeting being recorded. The recording would</p> |

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|   | <p>only be used by DAM Janet to take accurate minutes and that it would not be shared or published on social media.</p> <p>DD Steve advised that if anyone wished to speak they were to raise their hand or use the Zoom symbol to be recognised. Once recognised, members were to clearly state their full name and role so that DAM Janet could record accurate minutes. DD Steve further requested that, as the meeting has limited time, interventions are short and as concise as possible. There would be opportunities for questions after each item of business had been presented. It was vital that any discussion should be germane to the topic under consideration, and relevant to the members of this Committee. The meeting was to be run under Parliamentary Procedure and Robert's Rules of Order, supported by our District Parliamentarian, DTM Vanessa King. DD Steve clarified the fact that although he, as District Director, has appointed the Parliamentarian, Vanessa's role is to serve both the chair and the meeting. Therefore if any member wished to speak, but wasn't sure of the protocol, they could ask Vanessa for assistance.</p> <p>DD Steve then called upon Parliamentarian Vanessa King to clarify what an amendment is and explain the process of proposing an amendment to any motion which may be tabled.</p> <p>If a vote were required, DD Steve would request a vote by Unanimous Consent, whereby he would ask if there were any objections to adopting the motion or proposal. If none, the motion or proposal would be deemed to be adopted.</p> <p>However, should even one member object, then there would be a debate, the explanation for which would be explained at the time. If a delegate wished to raise a motion in excess of twelve words, they were to pass it physically or send a private online chat message to DAM Janet.</p> |
| 3 | <p><b>District Mission</b></p> <p>DD Steve noted that in this program year the Trio have offered this role to individual members in specific recognition of their outstanding efforts, loyalty and contribution to the work of the District. Previously this role has been taken by AD Pallavi Pawar, Div D Olga Galaiko, AD Harshit Agrawal and AD Andrew Graner. For this meeting, DD Steve wished to recognise DAM Janet Alkema for her service to the District in the role for the last two years. DAM Janet read the District Mission:.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>“We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence”</b></p>   |
| 4 | <p><b>Quorum and Apologies</b></p> <p>DD Steve called upon the 2024-25 Credentials Chair, Past District Director, Rupa Datta, to confirm the roll call and the extent to which the meeting was quorate. PDD Rupa declared that In accordance with Article 11 Section A3 of the District Administrative By-laws a majority of the committee shall constitute a quorum. In view of the numbers below the meeting is quorate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEC currently has 46 members</li> <li>• Quorum required 24 registered members</li> <li>• Registered members: 29</li> <li>• 31 members in attendance at the start of the meeting at 10am</li> </ul> <p>DAM Janet reported on apologies received:</p>   |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diane Richardson IPDD</li> <li>• Olga Galaiko Div Dir C</li> <li>• Helen Ashford Div Dir J</li> <li>• Yogendra Paranjpe AD A1</li> <li>• Sabeer Peerbaccus AD B8</li> <li>• Serena Salvatore AD A62</li> <li>• Arkadiusz Dudek AD C5</li> <li>• Ivone Sima AD C34</li> <li>• Keith Mons AD D21</li> <li>• Jatinder Randhawa AD H15</li> <li>• Sam Lloyd AD H55</li> <li>• Alistair Marston AD J4</li> <li>• Clare Lawrence AD J7</li> <li>• Rishi Gautam AD L56</li> <li>• Joana Colaso AD L61</li> </ul>   |
| 5 | <p><b>Adoption of Agenda &amp; Minutes -</b></p> <p>DD Steve stated that the agenda for this meeting had been provided in advance and called for any objections to its adoption. There were none and the Agenda was adopted.</p> <p>DD Steve said the draft minutes of the previous DEC meeting held on 1st February 2025 had been circulated on 29th March 2025 and asked if there were any corrections. There were none and the minutes were adopted.</p>  |
| 6 | <p><b>Finances &amp; Audit Report</b></p> <p>DD Steve called upon District Finance Manager, Stuart Marshall, to provide the financial updates.</p> <p>DFM Stuart called upon Toastmaster Flora Ruffin, Chair of the Audit Committee to present the Audit Report.</p> <p>TM Flora explained that she is Chair of the Audit Committee and supported by Anthony Mackenzie and Vanessa King. The purpose of the Committee is to review the Mid-Year and Final Year of profit, loss, and the account statement to ensure that it correctly reflects the District income and expenditure. These reports have to be filed with Toastmasters International. The scope of the review covered the period 1st July 2024 - 31st December 2024 and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profit and loss statements</li> <li>• Monthly bank statements</li> <li>• Receipts and district approvals</li> <li>• Concur and non-Concur transactions</li> </ul> <p>A big part of this review is actually going line by line through all of the expenses claimed by members to ensure that every penny is spent in accordance with the District Mission. Additionally the Team had to ensure that pre-approvals for expenditure over £350 had been submitted. This review was submitted on time, on 15th February this year.</p> |

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|  | <p>TM Flora then presented the outcome of the Audit process, reporting that the accounts were mainly in order, there was no misuse of funds although several transactions needed further investigation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transactions without the Pre-Approval of the District Director: several transactions above £350 did not have pre-approval attached to the claim and we had to chase for this.</li> <li>2. Missing supporting documentation for some transactions which were non-compliant with documentation standards.</li> <li>3. One duplicate expense had been identified, followed up and settled with claimant</li> <li>4. Some transactions lacked clear documentation and the reason for the claim</li> <li>5. Some Incentive vouchers had been submitted without club names, risking multiple use.</li> </ol> <p>TM Flora then presented her recommendations for the incoming District Leadership Team to improve, simplify and speed up the work of the Audit team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit the Audit team early</li> <li>• Perform regular bill register checks</li> <li>• Ensure pre-approval documents are submitted where necessary</li> <li>• Clearly state the purpose of the expense in the claim</li> <li>• Include club names on the incentive vouchers to avoid duplication.</li> </ul> <p>DFM Stuart thanked TM Flora and her team for the Report and invited questions from the meeting. There were none and DFM Stuart continued with the Finance Update.</p> <p>In terms of the surplus in income reported at the last meeting DFM Stuart reported that, because of this surplus, the DLT had been able to hold this DEC in person, with members staying overnight. In addition, the DLT are considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overhauling and refreshing the District 91 website</li> <li>• Investing in the technology to run these hybrid meetings</li> <li>• Continuing membership growth campaigns, such as the recent Tube Campaign, to include not only social media channels but radio and podcasts, reaching out to a 25-40 year old audience</li> <li>• Running a Corporate summit to better engage with our corporate clubs</li> </ul> <p>In response to a question as to whether the surplus funds could be used to reduce the price of conference tickets, DFM Stuart explained that there were strict budgetary guidelines set down by Toastmasters International for the Conference: it has to break even and cover its own expenditure. He agreed that the expensive ticket price could be a barrier to attending for some members - and that the team have kept the costs to an absolute minimum. Additionally, the District has paid for items directly related to District business. DFM Stuart reminded members of the DEC that they can claim £100, from District finances, against the cost of attending the conference, if they attend the District Council meeting.</p> <p>DD Steve added that, whereas Toastmasters International had reduced to one the number of conferences members could hold to run the four contests, and the District Council meeting, they are now saying that we can hold two events for District contests. So, to avoid fitting in four contests and the District Council meeting into one weekend, we will be able to split that out into two events, which could significantly reduce the cost of attending.</p> |

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|   | <p>There were no further questions and DD Steve called upon the Division and Area Directors to present their reports, followed by the remaining members of the DLT.</p>  |
| 7 | <p><b>Progress Reports for the year to date</b></p> <p>Each Area and Division Director gave a 1-minute update on the success and challenges for their Areas and Divisions. Members of the DLT gave their reports:</p> <p><b>District PR Manager, Allen Paul:</b></p> <p>DPRM Allen called upon members to like and engage with our social media channels, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instagram: 633 followers</li> <li>• Facebook: 6,500 likes</li> <li>• LinkedIn: 13,000 followers</li> <li>• YouTube: 914 subscribers</li> </ul> <p>In addition to social media updates, our Newsletter goes out regularly at the end of each month and is full of interesting and useful information about what is happening in our District, with key updates on club and member activity. Please read this as it will answer many of the questions you have around, for example, who won the incentives, what's happening, etc. We are considering whether to continue using PanPathic in future as, out of the 3 submissions we had received for articles, only one had been approved.</p> <p><b>Club Growth Director, Seema Menon</b></p> <p>CGD Seema reported on the four areas she has been focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club Growth</li> <li>• Retaining and Growing Membership</li> <li>• New Clubs</li> <li>• Nursing and Reviving clubs in need</li> </ul> <p>CGD Seema encouraged all members to engage with the membership and club growth campaigns, such as the Ditch the Nerves Tube Campaign, the imminent campaign for out of London clubs, running Open Houses, etc.</p> <p><b>Program Quality Director, Debbie Williams</b> presented her report, highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the excellent progress on educational awards to date</li> <li>• the receipt of many Area Director reports - and request that these are done and submitted as soon as possible as the 31st May deadline is not far away.</li> <li>• All Division contests have been successfully held, with the finalists ready for the Conference in May</li> </ul> <p>DD Steve yielded control of the meeting to PQD Debbie Williams to deliver his report</p> <p><b>DD Steve Vear</b> presented his report, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thanked all members of the District Executive for their support and commitment to the District this year.</li> <li>• encouraged all DEC members to inspire the next generation of leaders</li> </ul> |

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encouraged all clubs to be distinguished, or better, by protecting and prioritising our core activity.</li> </ul>   |
| 8  | <p><b>District Conference Update</b></p> <p>PQD Debbie Williams called upon our 2025 Conference Director, Bolu Olubajo from Holborn Speakers, to give a brief update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>we are 20 days away from the conference</li> <li>we have 12 speakers, including keynote presenters and a range of dynamic workshops which will showcase excellence in leadership and communication skills across our membership</li> <li>please could all members promote the conference and secure their booking as soon as possible</li> </ul>  |
| 9  | <p><b>District Alignment Report</b></p> <p>DD Steve called upon District Alignment Chair (DAC), DTM Barbara Saph, to provide an update on the work of the Alignment committee:</p> <p>DAC Chair Barbara reminded members of the changes to the alignment protocol in that there is now a cap of nine for the number of divisions in a district and that a division has to have a minimum of 4 areas, whereas previously it was 3, and areas to have no more than 6 clubs, excluding pre-charter clubs.</p> <p>In her report, DAC Chair Barbara went through the proposed changes in detail, emphasising that these will only come into effect at the beginning of the next program year.</p> <p>The full breakdown of proposed club/area changes, together with the maps, will be sent to all members for reference. If there are any changes to the status of clubs, to please contact DTM Barbara as soon as possible. DD Steve thanked Barbara and her team for the work they do on this important aspect of managing growth in D91 and called for any questions before approving the Proposal. There were none and the DAC Proposal was approved for ratification by the District Council meeting in May.</p>  |
| 10 | <p><b>District Council meeting - May 2025</b></p> <p>DD Steve reminded members that the District Council meeting will take place on Saturday, 3rd May, during the Conference. For operational reasons we have to start the meeting at 9am instead of the previously notified time of 10am. A notice will be sent out to all DC members in the next couple of days.</p> <p>This is our Annual Business Meeting and is the most important one of the program year. We will be voting on the District Alignment Committee proposals as well as voting for the district leaders for the program year 2025-26. So please do remind your club presidents and VPEs that they are members of the District Council and it is their governance responsibility to attend. The meeting will be hybrid but it is critical that as many district leaders attend in person, where possible, to support the conference.</p> <p>DD Steve reminded members that registration for the District Council meeting is separate from registration for the conference. Registration for the Council meeting must be by using the special registration link which will be sent out with the advance notice of the meeting.</p> <p>DD Steve confirmed that those members of this committee who attend the conference and the Council meeting, will be able to claim back £100 towards the cost of the conference ticket. The £100 is in addition to</p> |

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|    | other expenses that can be claimed. Unfortunately this offer cannot be extended to the club presidents and VPEs so please do not give them that expectation.  |
| 11 | <p><b>District Leadership Committee Report</b></p> <p>DLC Chair Andy Hammond reminded the meeting that the report had been sent to all members prior to the meeting. He went on to explain the difference between a Valid and Complete report. The DLC report is valid as all criteria and conditions of the process had been met. However, it is not complete as Divisions D and H have no nominated candidates. DLC Chair Andy then explained the difference between a candidate being eligible and one being qualified. Eligible candidates are those who have been through the DLC assessment process. A qualified candidate is one who is qualified to hold the role of division director but may not have been through the DLC process.</p> <p>This means that for those two divisions, D and H which are incomplete, both eligible and qualified candidates may stand from the floor. For all other divisions, only eligible candidates may stand from the floor. However, in both cases they have to declare their intention to do so to the District Director at least 7 days prior to the election, i.e. by 26th April.</p> <p>Also, if there is any protest related to the DLC report, it must be submitted no later than 2 weeks prior to the election, i.e. by 20th April.</p> |
| 12 | <p><b>Advance Motions</b></p> <p>DD Steve reported there were no Advance Motions.</p>   |
| 13 | <p><b>Any Other Business for the District Executive Committee</b></p> <p>Division B Director, Lynne Cantor Gayer, asked whether the DLT were going to reintroduce the system for advanced notice of Conferences. Previously the location had alternated between London venues and country venues - and divisions had been encouraged to host the conference in turn.</p> <p>DD Steve replied saying that there is a section at the District Council meeting to invite effective tenders from those who wish to take on the responsibility of Conference Director and he encouraged members interested in doing this to prepare their proposal and make it known to him that they are considering doing so.</p> <p>Division B Director, Lynne Cantor Gayer, reminded the meeting that there had been a proposal to hold a First Chance COT online meeting for the incoming Club Officers. It was agreed, by a show of hands, that this would be a good idea and DD Steve asked those interested in doing this to coordinate it together.</p> <p>There was no further business for the meeting and DD Steve adjourned the meeting at 13h05.</p>   |