



DISTRICT 91 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING



SUNDAY
7 SEPT 2025



10AM - 5PM



HILTON HOTEL
GATWICK RH6 0LL

Attendees -

Name	Role	Name	Role
Debbie Williams DTM	District Director	Sarah Beckwith	AD B18
Seema Menon DTM	Program Quality Director	Afreen Kansal	AD C34
Lynne Gayer DTM	Club Growth Director	Milica Bennett	AD D14
Allen Paul Pulikkal DTM	PR Manager	Ana Sampaio	AD D20
Guler Cortis	Finance Manager	Ian Rex-Hawkes	AD D29
Deborah Stevens	Administration Manager	Rafael Guzman	AD D53
Rupa Datta DTM	Parliamentarian	Kanti Doshi	AD D61
Olga Galaiko	Credentials Chair	Celia Edwards DTM	AD H15
Yogendra Paranjpe	Div A	Johnathan Kaye	AD H32
Mary-Anne Ledger	Div B	Rosemary Dzikunu	AD H37
Richard Jones	Div C	Helyn Ashford	AD J4
Smita Narayan DTM	Div D	Sarah Pantry	AD J10
Monica Dragnescu	Div H	Adrian Lane	AD J11
Alison Morris DTM	Div J	Andrew Graner	AD J22
Elena Bella	Div L	Adalgisa Mazzone	AD L16
John Christie DTM	AD A19	Rajan Jesuraj	AD L23
Rob Dewing	AD A42	Muriel Teisseire	AD L27
Beverley Daniel-Blugh	AD B8	Sabeer Peerbaccus	AD L47
Martina Fisk	AD B9	Sarah Ndebele	AD L56

Apologies -

Name	Role	Name	Role
Steve Vear	Immediate Past District Director	Sergey Kornev	AD C2
Yassin George	AD A1	Eleni Kyrtisia	AD C5
Kevin Harrington	AD A17	Pearl Cadagan	AD C25
Blake Rumfitt	AD A46	Monica Sood	AD D21
Kelvin Lam	AD A62	Andrew Smith	AD H35
Riccardo Ginevri	AD B6	Malcolm Braganza	AD H55
Fedor Herbatschek	AD B52	Dominic Heaney	AD J7

Item	Notes
Introduction	<p>District Director (DD) Debbie Williams opened the meeting, introduced the District Leadership Team, and outlined the meeting protocol and procedures, including voting and speaking rights.</p> <p>Consent for recording was noted, with the purpose being to assist the Administration Manager in taking accurate minutes. Recordings will not be shared publicly.</p>
Roll call, Quorum and Apologies	<p>Credentials Chair Olga Galeko confirmed quorum: 51 DEC members, 37 registrations, 31 present (in-person and online).</p> <p>District Administration Manager (DAM) Deborah Stevens read apologies from various members. The apologies are listed at the start of these minutes.</p>
Adoption of Agenda and Previous Minutes	<p>The agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.</p> <p>Minutes from the meetings on 12 April 2025 and 22 July 2025 were reviewed. Corrections were noted (e.g., spelling of Eleni's name). Minutes were adopted with corrections.</p> <p>Division C Director Richard Jones asked if it was customary to record attendance at the sessions on the minutes, it was noted that it is not however, this has been included in this document.</p>
Confirmation of District Officers	<p>DD Debbie Williams reported on appointments to fill vacancies and confirmed the list of appointed officers.</p> <p>Administration Manager, Deborah Stevens Finance Manager, Guler Cortis PR Manager, Allen Paul, DTM Elected Division J Director, Clare Lawrence had to step down for personal reasons, therefore Alison Morris, DTM was appointed as Division J Director A19 John Christie, DTM A46 Blake Rumfitt A62 Kelvin Lam B52 Fedor Herbatschek C2 Sergey Kornev C5 Eleni Kyrtisia C25 Pearl Cadogan C58 Hephzibah Emereole D20 Ana Sampaio D21 Monica Sood D29 Ian Rex-Hawkes D61 Kanti Doshi H55 Malcolm Braganza J4 Helyn Ashford J7 Dominic Heaney J11 Adrian Lane J22 Andrew Graner L23 Rajan Jesuraj L47 Sabeer Peerbaccus L56 Sarah Ndebele L27 Following the resignation of the elected Area Director Eric Jones, Muriel Teisseire has been appointed.</p>

Item	Notes
	The committee approved the appointments by unanimous consent. These will be presented to the District Council for final approval.
District Success Plan Presentation and Approval	<p>The District Success Plan was presented by the Club Growth Director (CGD) Lynne Gayer and Program Quality Director (PQD) Seema Menon.</p> <p>This is a document which outlines our overarching strategy of how we intend to perform against the District Mission.</p> <p>Specifically, it focuses on the three goals that Toastmasters International set Districts across the world. This is</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The number of clubs in good standing b. The number of membership payments c. The number of distinguished clubs <p>DD Debbie paid tribute to Lynne and Seema for their work to bring the District Success Plan together.</p> <p>Club Growth goals and updates -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net increase of 6 new clubs (target: 180 clubs; 20 new clubs needed to offset closures). • Club mentors for new clubs, club coaches for those with 12 members or less and guidance sheets for those with 13 to 19 members. • Minimum 3% increase in membership payments (target: 9,729 payments). Included within this as a minimum growth of 4% to achieve 400+ new unique members. • 80% of clubs at charter strength (144 clubs with 20+ members). • Incentives include Smedley Award, Talk Up Toastmasters and Beat the Clock. • There will be recognition for early renewals in September and March, and incentives for clubs to reach 20 members. • There will be three external marketing campaigns: another campaign on the London Underground; a bus campaign in four university towns of Reading, Bristol, Cardiff and Brighton; and a digital campaign. <p>Programme Quality goals and updates -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2024/25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 99 clubs, (57%), were distinguished, enough to achieve Smedley Distinguished recognition for distinguished clubs. ○ However, 31 clubs submitted only one or no educational goals. Nearly 60% of these clubs are corporate clubs. ○ 16 clubs achieved 5 or more DCP goals but did not reach distinguished status due to membership levels ○ Pathways adoption stands at 84%. Yet, 6% of our club officers and a number of members remain outside Pathways ○ COT training - 71% of clubs trained 4-plus officers in Round 1, and 62% in Round 2. • For 2025/26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pathways adoption to increase, with incentives for clubs and members. Aiming to reduce non adopters from 16% to below 5% ○ Will launch a Mentor Buddy programme to support members with personalised guidance.

Item	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A trainer's bureau will help close skill gaps and deliver interactive drop-in sessions on contests, club success planning, and officer roles. ○ Our goal is for 90% of the clubs to submit their club success plan with a stretch goal of 100%. These plans should be living documents, revisited throughout the year. ○ We will also host a mid-year District Humorous and Table Topics contest on 23rd November, with our annual conference on 2nd and 3rd May. ○ Distinguished clubs target: 120 by year-end. <p>The plan was approved by unanimous consent and will be uploaded to Toastmasters International Headquarters by 30th September 2025.</p>
Global Advertising Campaign	<p>DD Debbie outlined the Global Advertising Campaign.</p> <p>Toastmasters International is offering Districts the opportunity to participate in a Global Advertising Campaign. Each participating District will have its own advertisement, targeted specifically within its geographic boundaries. The campaign is designed to drive prospective members to areas with a strong number of clubs, increasing the likelihood that a lead will find a convenient and appealing club to visit or join.</p> <p>Each ad will link to a Toastmasters-designed landing page that includes multiple "Find a Club" links. Clubs in the user's local area will automatically populate if location services are enabled. Toastmasters International will manage the landing page for consistency and effectiveness.</p> <p>Participating Districts will receive monthly reports with metrics and analytics. While personal information of prospective members cannot be shared due to privacy policies, reports will identify which clubs were contacted and on what date, so District leaders can encourage club officers to follow up promptly.</p> <p>TI offered two cost tiers to accommodate different budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 90-day campaign at \$30/day — Total cost: \$2,700 USD · 90-day campaign at \$65/day — Total cost: \$5,850 USD <p>To participate the District Executive Committee must approve participation and the amount included in our budget. A motion was laid to participate in the Global Advertising Campaign at a cost of \$2,700.</p> <p>The committee approved the participation by unanimous consent.</p>
2024/25 Year End Finance & Audit Report	<p>Stuart Marshall (Past Finance Manager) reported on the previous year's finances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District closed slightly over budget by £4,000, reversing a trend of underspending. • Investments included marketing, technology to better support hybrid meetings, and support for future initiatives. <p>Flora (Audit Committee Chair) presented the audit report:</p>

Item	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts in order; improvements noted in pre-approval and documentation processes. Minor exceptions reported (missing pre-approval forms, small claims without documentation). Recommendations: continue pre-approval, clarify claims, timely submission of receipts, and work with HQ on credit card expense reporting. <p>DD Debbie invited questions from the committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kanti Doshi (D61 AD) asked a question about lessons learnt in terms of the proposed budget matching the actual spend in each category - this was answered as part of the Finance Manager Guler's presentation of the district budget. Smita Narayan (Division D Director) asked a question about variances in the profit and loss account and how these could be managed - as above, this was to be answered as part of the presentation of the district budget. Sarah Ndebele (L56 AD) asked a question on behalf of her club Woodford Green Speakers about issues claiming an incentive payment on concur. Finance Manager Guler agreed to look into this. <p>DD Debbie thanks Stuart and Flora for their hard work and service to District 91.</p>
Presentation of District Budget	<p>Finance Manager Guler Cortis presented the budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guler clarified that Toastmasters International set a maximum allowance for each category of the budget. All activities within the budget relate to the district mission "we build new clubs and support our clubs in achieving excellence". Revenue based on membership dues: projected at £96,000 (5% increase). Expenditure allocations: education/training (up to 15%), travel (up to 25%), recognition (12.9%), marketing (5-10%). Focus on face-to-face meetings, club growth, and incentives. The May conference is expected to break even. <p>Questions were invited from the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryanne Ledger (Division B Director) asked for clarity on whether the £96k on membership fees was true as at today or projected. FM Guler explained that this was the projected figure based on the membership growth. Sarah Beckworth (B18 AD) asked a question around incentives and whether these were shared ahead of the meeting as they were mentioned in the District Success Plan and Budget sections. DD Debbie clarified that the detail of the incentives was included in the District Success Plan circulated ahead of the meeting and more information would be shared to clubs to explain them. Smita Narayan (Division D Director) asked about the February training expense of £6,825. DD Debbie clarified that this was for District Officer Training scheduled in February.

Item	Notes
	<p>The budget was approved by unanimous consent; to be ratified by District Council 21st September.</p>
<p>Reports on progress so far in 2025/26 year</p>	<p>Area Directors provided one-minute updates about their areas and the Division Directors provided a one-minute update about the Division as a whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates included - club officer training, club success plans, contests, membership growth, and challenges. • Reports highlighted strong engagement, new club charters, and ongoing support for struggling clubs. <p>Public Relations Manager Allen Paul Pulikkal outlined the PR strategy, communication channels, and upcoming podcast.</p> <p>CGD Lynne provided updates on club growth, new clubs, and membership incentives.</p> <p>PQD Seema reported on officer training, club success plans, contests, and new initiatives (Mentor Buddy program, Trainers Bureau, podcast).</p> <p>DD Debbie emphasised the vision to reignite, rebuild, and thrive and acknowledged previous team's contributions.</p>
<p>Update from international Convention</p>	<p>DD Debbie explained her responsibility to attend the International Convention to fulfill two key duties: casting our District's votes at the Annual Business Meeting and participating in the Board Briefing, where essential updates from Toastmasters International are provided.</p> <p>In addition, comprehensive training for District Trios comprising District Directors, Program Quality Directors, and Club Growth Directors from around the world is conducted two days prior to the Convention. This training equips District leaders with the knowledge and resources required to effectively serve their members throughout the program year. Key updates from the Annual Business Meeting are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From District 91, Jean Gamester, DTM, was elected Second Vice President of Toastmasters International. • Next year will bring exciting updates to Pathways, with new features that draw on the much-loved Competent Communication and Advanced manuals. • Sabyasachi Sengupta is the new World Champion of Public Speaking. Sengupta from District 59, Region 10, won with a speech titled, "Just Nod." • Membership dues for existing members remains the same, however it was announced that new member fees will increase from \$20 to \$25 in October 2025 and we will provide further communication to all clubs in advance to support a smooth transition.
<p>Remote District Leaders</p>	<p>DD Debbie explained at the Toastmasters International Annual Business Meeting in 2024, a clarification was made regarding Remote District Leaders in Article VII (b)(2) of the governing documents.</p> <p>This clarification applies to the elective officers of the District: the District Director, the Program Quality Director, the Club Growth Director, and Division Directors.</p>

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	<p>Two categories of Remote District Leaders are defined:</p> <p>Fully Remote District Leader: A District Executive Committee member whose registered domicile is outside the boundaries of the District they serve and who does not attend onsite events as required by the District.</p> <p>Partially Remote District Leader: A District Executive Committee member whose registered domicile is outside the boundaries of the District they serve but who does attend onsite events as required by the District.</p> <p>By default, the bylaws do not provide for the election or appointment of remote District Leaders. However, the District Council may choose to allow the election or appointment of fully or partially remote District Leaders for specific roles. Any such decision remains in effect until changed by the council. Changes to this decision must be made before November 1 of the program year in which the elections or appointments will occur.</p> <p>DD Debbie explained that at the current time, the D91 DLT were not proposing a motion to change this saying this approach provides clarity, consistency, and alignment with Toastmasters International expectations. My responsibility is to inform you of this clarification and our position.</p> <p>Questions from the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smita Narayan (Division D Director) asked a question about a current remote officer in D91. DD Debbie clarified that this change was made effective from 1st July 2025 so anyone elected before this date is not affected. Smita asked if it meant that this individual would not be able to serve as an elected division director in D91 and DD Debbie explained that was true for the next programme year and it can be revisited by each district team year on year. • Richard Jones (Division C Director) asked for clarification on the definition of domicile as it normally recognises a country or legal state. DD Debbie clarified this meant the boundaries of the district. Richard then asked if someone's postcode is not in D91 but in the United Kingdom, would they be classed as a remote district leader. DD Debbie clarified that they would be classed as a partially remote leader.
District Alignment	<p>Barbara Saph introduced the alignment process and the emphasis on balancing club/area sizes.</p> <p>She explained that the alignment for next year will be voted on at the April District Executive Committee meeting and then May District Council meeting.</p> <p>Barbara also informed the committee that the Alignment committee is formed of the division directors and the alignment chair. Barbara also explained that although the CGD does not have a formal role on the committee, they are part of it on an advisory basis.</p> <p>Smita Narayan (Division D Director) asked if membership numbers were also taken into account when looking at area/division boundaries. Barbara said they were not usually but there are lots of things that are taken into consideration to try and achieve a balance.</p>
2026 Conference Update	<p>PQD Seema gave an update about the November 2025 District contests and 2026 District Conference.</p>

Item	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Humorous Speech & Table Topics Contest will be held on Sunday 23rd November 2025 in London • District Conference on 1st May bank holiday that is 2nd & 3rd May 2026 Venue details to be confirmed (more information will follow soon) Committee members were asked to mark their diaries and spread the word.
Advance Motions & Annual Business Meeting Council Format	<p>DD Debbie confirmed there were no advance motions received by members of the District Executive Committee ahead of the required deadline of 6pm, Monday 26th August 2025.</p> <p>She then said, in accordance with Protocol 7.1, Section 5C this committee must determine the method of attendance for the Annual Business meeting of the District Council – due to be held in May of next year.</p> <p>In order to maximize attendance and ensure quorum, Debbie laid a motion that the meeting be held in hybrid format. This was approved unanimously by the committee.</p>
Any Other Business	<p>DD Debbie asked the attendees if they had any other business.</p> <p>Mary Anne Ledger (Division B Director) asked whether they would receive more information about the upcoming Pathways enhancements in October 2025 to communicate these with the clubs. DD Debbie said yes and this information would come directly from Toastmasters International.</p> <p>Elena Bella (Division L Director) asked for clarification that the area and division budgets would be confirmed once the budget was approved at District Council. DD Debbie confirmed this is correct.</p> <p>DD Debbie adjourned the meeting at 12.26pm</p>

Dates of next meetings -

District Council Meeting - 21st September online.

DEC meeting - Saturday 22nd November 2025 online.