



# DISTRICT 91 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING



SATURDAY  
7 FEB 2026



10AM- 5PM



CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL  
READING EAST RG41 5TS

Attendees -

Name	Role	Name	Role
Debbie Williams DTM	District Director	Rob Dewing	AD A42
Seema Menon DTM	Program Quality Director	Kelvin Lam	AD A62
Lynne Gayer DTM	Club Growth Director	Beverley Daniel-Blugh	AD B8
Allen Paul Pulikkal DTM	PR Manager	Sarah Beckwith	AD B18
Guler Cortis	Finance Manager	Eleni Kyrtsia	AD C5
Steve Vear DTM	Immediate Past District Director	Pearl Cadogan	AD C25
Deborah Stevens	Administration Manager	Afreen Kansal	AD C34
Rupa Datta DTM	Parliamentarian	Milica Bennett	AD D14
Olga Galaiko DTM	Credentials Chair	Ana Sampaio	AD D20
Barbara Saph DTM	Alignment Chair	Rafael Guzman	AD D53
Yogendra Paranjpe	Div A	Kanti Doshi	AD D61
Mary-Anne Ledger	Div B	Celia Edwards DTM	AD H15
Richard Jones	Div C	Johnathan Kaye	AD H32
Smita Narayan DTM	Div D	Andrew Smith	AD H35
Monica Dragnescu	Div H	Malcolm Braganza	AD H55
Alison Morris DTM	Div J	Dominic Heaney	AD J7
Elena Bella	Div L	Adrian Lane	AD J11
George Weller	AD A1	Rajan Jesuraj	AD L23
Kevin Harrington	AD A17	Muriel Teisseire	AD L27
John Christie DTM	AD A19	Sarah Ndebele	AD L56

Apologies -

Name	Role	Name	Role
Sergey Kornev	AD C2	Sarah Pantry	AD J10
Rosemary Dzikunu	AD H37	Andrew Graner	AD J22
Helyn Ashford	AD J4	Adalgisa Mazzone	AD L16

Item	Notes
<b>Introduction and District Mission</b>	<p>District Director (DD) Debbie Williams DTM 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> <p>Division A Director Yogendra Paranjpe was invited to read out the district mission. “We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence”.</p>
<b>Roll call, Quorum and Apologies</b>	<p>Credentials Chair Olga Galaiko confirmed: 48 DEC members, quorum requirement 25, 39 registrations and 35 present therefore quorum is met.</p> <p>District Administration Manager (DAM) Deborah Stevens read apologies from various members. The apologies are listed at the start of these minutes.</p>
<b>Adoption of Agenda and Previous Minutes</b>	<p>The agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.</p> <p>Minutes from the last DEC meeting on 22 November 2025 were adopted with unanimous consent.</p>
<b>Finance and expenses update</b>	<p>DD Debbie called upon Finance Manager Guler Cortis to provide an update on the D91 financial position.</p> <p>The update included:</p> <p><b>Audit Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All financial documents have been submitted to the audit team (Bob Nesbitt, Marta Gojchek, Anthony McKenzie).</li> <li>• Audit reports will be issued before the May District Council meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Underspend Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District underspend reduced from £14,000 to £9,000.</li> <li>• Mid-year actuals (July–December) confirm a £9,000 underspend.</li> </ul>

Item	Notes
	<p><b>Full-Year Forecast</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year-end forecast (June) currently shows a £9,000 variance; January claims partly processed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Education &amp; Training Underspend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largest underspend remains in Education &amp; Training due to low Area Director claiming.</li> </ul> <p><b>Education &amp; Training Budget Basis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget set at £250 per Area Director per half-year (~£5,000 per period), plus venue costs for training.</li> </ul> <p><b>Spending Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expense claims must be submitted within 30 days, especially ahead of 30 June year-end.</li> <li>Leaders encouraged to claim for venue hire, refreshments, materials, printing, and club incentive awards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Remaining Funds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Division Directors urged to fully utilise contest budgets.</li> <li>Clubs are reminded to submit claims for incentive awards, even for small amounts.</li> </ul> <p>DD Debbie asked for questions from the DEC.</p> <p>Richard, Division C Director asked why speech contest expenses appear in the budget when people are told they cannot charge for contests. Guler clarified that Speech contest funds are only allocated to Division Directors, not Area Directors. Each division has £750 to run the division-level contest.</p> <p>Richard, Division C Director asked if the District could provide an alternative view of the budget which outlines what budget is left of that allocated to Area and Division Directors, as the main budget splits this across different categories. Guler took this question away to look into further as the budget is currently presented in the way required by Toastmasters International.</p> <p>Rajan, L23 AD asked if any district budget could be allocated to support venue hire for area level contests as in areas where there are a lot of corporate clubs this can be a challenge. Guler clarified that this would require a separate meeting to review whether budget changes could be made as currently it has been agreed that there is no venue funding for area level contests.</p> <p>Kanti, D61 AD asked how the education and training budget was calculated given the high variance and large underspend displayed. Guler explained the Budget is</p>

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	<p>based on £250 per Area Director per half-year, totalling around £5,000 each period. Additional funds are added for venue hire for district training events and as such, the slides do not include the majority of spend for the second training round of this Toastmasters year.</p>
<p><b>Reports on progress so far in 2025/26 year</b></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> <p>Highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Division A: All 26 clubs in good standing; COTs, open houses, and contests underway; progressing toward 17+ distinguished clubs.</li> <li>● Division B: Clubs generally stable and growing; COTs and contests scheduled; vacancies in B9 and B52 remain key challenges.</li> <li>● Division C: Steady progress with strong corporate–community collaboration; COTs and contests on track; focus on membership growth and club retention.</li> <li>● Division D: Largest division with ~800 members; strong performance and several new clubs expected; emphasis on training, contests, renewals, and succession.</li> <li>● Division H: 22 active clubs with stable status; ~75% officer training; membership expected to rebound; preparing for contest season.</li> <li>● Division J: Strong division performance; several distinguished clubs; supporting clubs under 20 members; contests and renewals progressing well.</li> <li>● Division L: 22 clubs with one near good standing threshold; COTs delivered online and in person; contests scheduled; membership-building efforts ongoing.</li> </ul> <p>Leadership Updates</p> <p>Immediate Past District Director Steve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Praised leaders’ work, stressed self-care, and acknowledged the positive impact on clubs and members.</li> </ul> <p>Administration Manager Deborah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preparing April DEC and May Council meeting materials</li> <li>● coordinating division updates, deadline for updates to follow</li> <li>● reminding leaders to ensure club officers attend District Council to meet quorum.</li> </ul> <p>PR Manager Allen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reported strong engagement from campaigns</li> <li>● website updates and social growth continue</li> <li>● encouraged PR submissions and use of design/social media workshops.</li> </ul> <p>Club Growth Director Lynne:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Campaigns driving interest</li> <li>● three new clubs chartered</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● urgent need for 14 more clubs and more coaches</li> <li>● membership payments behind target but incentives and drop-ins aim to boost growth.</li> </ul> <p>Program Quality Director Seema:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 90% CSPs submitted</li> <li>● strong Pathways engagement</li> <li>● high-performing clubs recognised</li> <li>● officer training still low</li> <li>● continued support through contests and Pathways sessions.</li> </ul> <p>District Director Debbie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Emphasised urgent focus on club growth</li> <li>● highlighted need to fill three AD vacancies</li> <li>● encouraged action on success plans to keep the district on track for distinguished status.</li> </ul>
<p><b>District Council Meeting</b></p>	<p>DD Debbie mentioned that she was changing the order of the items on the agenda to give the update about the District Council meeting before the conference update.</p> <p>DD Debbie reminded leaders that the Annual District Council Meeting will take place on 2 May 2026, where club presidents, VPEs, and district leaders will vote on district business, including the election of 2026–27 district officers.</p> <p>All district leaders must attend (preferably in person) to ensure quorum, and club officers should also be reminded of their voting responsibilities; registration for the meeting is separate from conference registration and must be completed via the formal notice link before the deadline.</p> <p>DEC members attending District Council at conference will be eligible for a reimbursable cost-based conference rate (£110 full weekend / £60 Saturday only), claimable via Concur after purchasing a full conference ticket; the single day ticket excludes the separately ticketed dinner.</p> <p>Division C Director Richard double checked that the discount is via a reimbursable amount in Concur rather than a discount code. DD Debbie confirmed this is correct.</p> <p>Division D Director Smita asked if the quorum for the meeting was for members in the room and online, DD Debbie confirmed this is correct. Smita also checked that if District Council members travel to the conference to only attend the District Council meeting then they don't have to buy a ticket, DD Debbie confirmed this is correct.</p>
<p><b>2026 District Conference Update</b></p>	<p>DD Debbie invited PQD Seema Menon to give an update about the annual conference. PQD Seema invited Conference Director Pearl Cadogan to give an update.</p>

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	<p>Pearl shared plans for the District Conference on 2–3 May at De Vere Latimer Estate, highlighting affordable ticket pricing, flexible payment options (including paying for accommodation on arrival), and encouraging all leaders to buy tickets and promote attendance.</p> <p>Key announcements included confirmed keynote speakers (Region 10 International Director Francesco Fedele DTM, and Toastmasters International Second Vice President Jean Gamester DTM), strong volunteer involvement, and availability of posters and digital materials for promotion; leaders were urged to support ticket sales and engagement across the district.</p>
<p><b>District Alignment</b></p>	<p>DD Debbie invited the Alignment Chair Barbara Saph to give an update.</p> <p>Barbara outlined the annual requirement to review and realign clubs, areas, and divisions in accordance with Toastmasters International protocols, ensuring each area has 4–6 clubs, at least 4 in good standing, and each division has at least 4 areas.</p> <p>She noted that alignment is a dynamic process, influenced by club closures, new clubs forming, venue changes, and varying levels of club health, and that decisions must prioritise overall district sustainability.</p> <p>A draft alignment proposal was presented, based on early discussions with Division Directors; several areas and divisions may require adjustments depending on April renewal outcomes.</p> <p>Barbara highlighted risk areas, including divisions with clubs close to losing good standing, potential area mergers, and possible reassignment of clubs to maintain compliant area structures.</p> <p>Clubs will be formally consulted after the alignment is finalised, with more clarity expected once renewal figures are confirmed in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Division and Area Directors were asked to provide timely information—especially impending venue changes—to support accurate final alignment decisions.</p> <p>Division D Director Smita asked what the suggested timeline is for consulting clubs which may be impacted by the alignment. Barbara confirmed this will be after the 12th April DEC when the alignment proposal is voted on by the DEC.</p> <p>Division C Director Richard clarified that in C34 it was Moorhouse that had closed, not Connected Speakers.</p>
<p><b>District Leadership Committee Report</b></p>	<p>DD Debbie invited District Leadership Committee Chair Steve to give an update to the DEC.</p>

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	<p>Steve gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The DLC is responsible for sourcing, interviewing, and nominating candidates for all elected district roles (Division Directors, Club Growth Director, Program Quality Director, District Director) for 2026–27.</li> <li>● Nominations close 20 February 2026.</li> <li>● Division Directors will be interviewed online, Trio candidates will be in person.</li> <li>● A Candidate Showcase is planned for 23 April 2026.</li> <li>● All candidates must meet Toastmasters eligibility requirements. Division Directors wishing to continue must re-nominate, as no automatic reappointment exists.</li> <li>● DEC members must not endorse or participate in campaigns, but may encourage or nominate suitable candidates.</li> <li>● Committee membership (one representative per division) remains confidential to protect integrity. Members may still contact leaders to encourage nominations.</li> </ul>
<b>Area Director Elections</b>	<p>DD Debbie gave the following update about Area Director elections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Area Directors for the 2026–27 programme year must be elected by their Area Councils in accordance with Protocol 7.1.</li> <li>● Additional training on how to run Area Council elections will take place later in the afternoon.</li> <li>● Eligibility rules for “partial remote” leaders also apply to Area Directors.</li> </ul> <p>DD Debbie proposed without objection that all elections must be completed no later than 18 April 2026. Election results must be submitted in writing within one week using the formal reporting template to be distributed after the meeting.</p>
<b>Advance Motions</b>	<p>DD Debbie confirmed there were no advance motions received by members of the District Executive Committee ahead of the required deadline of 6pm, Wednesday 4th February.</p>
<b>Any Other Business</b>	<p>DD Debbie asked the attendees if they had any other business.</p> <p>Division B Director Mary-Anne raised a question if members who were part of the District Leadership process were able to help at speech contests in a non visible role. District Leadership Chair Steve confirmed that the Toastmasters governing documents are very clear that if you are a candidate intending to run you may not take part in speech contests above club level in any way.</p> <p>DD Debbie adjourned the meeting at 12.12pm</p>

Dates of next meetings -

12th April 2026 - DEC4 in person venue tbc, full day with afternoon training.

2nd May 2026 - DC2 hybrid (zoom and De Vere Latimer Estate)