



Minutes of ADSO Board Meeting

17 December 2012

**Committee Room 5, Islington Council Town Hall, Upper Street, N1
2UD**

In Attendance:

John Austin	Chairman	P
John Quinton	Vice Chairman and Director for Government Consultation	P
Sue Keogh	Director for Regional Developments and Events	P
Laura Latham	Director for Communications	P
John Lynch	Director for Finance	P
Mark Towers	Director for Training and Yorkshire & Humberside	A
Tom van der Hoven	Company Secretary	P
Gareth Davies	North East	P
Helen Gee	North West	P
Matt Kane	East Midlands	A
Becky Owen	East Midlands	A
Helen Abraham	West Midlands	A
Tim Revell	London	P

Rosalind Reeves	South West	A
Jo Morrison	South West	A
Clive Parker	South East	A
Susan Farrell	East of England	A

142 Welcome and Introductions

John Austin, ADSO Board Chairman, welcomed members to the meeting. The above apologies were noted.

143 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 September and 22 November 2012 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

All action points from the previous meetings had been completed, with the following exceptions and comments made:

- JA to investigate member benefit sponsors- e-mail received from Nick Randle. Item to be added to next agenda. JA
- Drawing up a specification and quote for financial work to be undertaken. JL
- Revised Director's profiles to be published. SK
- Proposal for incentivising and engaging volunteers to be added to next agenda. MT

144 Association Website

Laura Latham, Director for Communications, provided an update on the ADSO website as detailed in her report. Laura discussed with the Board the statistics from the period 8 November to 8 December 2012.

1463 Absolute unique visitors on the site – this is a slight decrease of 98 visitors on the previous period monitored.

Of the total page views, the most popular continue to be Members Forum, Resources – Democracy Direct, Conference 2012 and Book Your Course

Since early April, effort has been made to ‘tweet’ from the ADSO account at key events (eg MJ Awards) or in the run up to training events, network meetings and to promote the conference.

This is an area which should continue to be developed and using some of the website volunteers from the ADSO Member Survey who may have some technical expertise/interest.

Laura would like to explore:

- Developing regular use of Social Media and a related strategy with support from volunteers.
- How Social Media / news filters etc can be used to vary the content on the ADSO website front page.
- Regional and Director support to promoting all ADSO activities more widely via Social Media.

It was suggested that Laura speak to Wayne LL Chandai to lead on Social Media and to establish a small group to work with.

Since the rebuild in 2010, the format and presentation of the ADSO website has remained largely unchanged.

The page template relies on manual updates and better use could be made of social media / news streams and better linkages within the website itself to create more variety and some functions (ie the interactive in your area map) haven’t been used as widely as originally hoped.

The website will also need rebranding with the new LL ADSO logo.

Web publishers are still required in some of the regions (Yorkshire and Humber, East of England, West Midlands.) It is hoped volunteers with an interest in this area could be brought on Board as a result of the member survey. It was suggested that a role profile and a brief for web publishers be drawn up.

Now that the Standards Regime has changed, it would be useful for members to be able to share cases and good practice. John Austin undertook to discuss this with ACSeS and Weightmans. JA

If Board members still experience problems with using their ADSO e-mail account they should e-mail Laura a screenshot of any messages they receive.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the website statistics provided in terms of monitoring the traffic to www.adso.co.uk, be noted.
2. That the increasing use of social media, development of a social media strategy, including better website integration and more frequent use be noted.
3. That work be undertaken to review the layout and presentation of the website, including refresh with the new ADSO logo and seek costs to develop a refreshed front page to include more 'self-managing' feeds and update facilities. LL
4. That a role profile and a brief for web publishers be drawn up. LL

145 **Conference Update**

Sue Keogh, Director for Regional Developments and Events', set out the feedback from and reflections on the ADSO conference held on 22nd November 2012. 80 delegates completed the

online evaluation form and their feedback had been included as part of the report.

This year's conference was held at Birmingham City Football Club. The venue provided good value for money and organisers were impressed with the support and service provided by BCFC staff.

Most of the comments about the venue were positive although a few found it a bit cramped and cold. Some commented on the wait for taxis but most recognised that the weather had been a factor.

The conference was initially sold out at the end of the early bird offer in August, before a programme had even been publicised. We were later able to release 10 more places, most of which were taken up. There were 153 paying delegates. The IML survey showed that 54% of delegates were attending for the first time, 40% were from the South, 24% from the North and only 13% Central – interesting when it was being held in the Midlands!

97.5% of respondents would recommend the ADSO conference to their colleagues in future which bodes well for future attendance.

The feedback was generally positive on the programme and range of speakers and workshops. A number of delegates felt that the day was a bit rushed and they would have liked more time for networking and talking to sponsors.

Matt Kane had circulated feedback from the sponsors to Board members. It was suggested that Matt meet with Xpress to explore what could be done to give them greater exposure. It was suggested that regions could consider inviting them to regional events. MK

Consideration was given to arrangements for the conference in 2013. It was the unanimous view of the Board that the venue at BCFC provided excellent facilities at reasonable cost and that feedback did not indicate a need to consider

another location or venue for the 2013 conference.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the 2013 conference again be held at Birmingham City Football Club, subject to satisfactory negotiations with regard to costs. SK
2. That the Chairman liaise with ACSeS about a proposed date of 14th November to prevent a clash with the ACSeS conference. JA
3. That the Early Bird offer be repeated and that the same day rate be charged as in 2012. SK
4. That a sponsored drinks reception after the conference be investigated. SK
5. That Matt Kane negotiates with IML to provide their facilities again. MK
6. That provision be made for more structured networking opportunities as part of the programme. SK
7. That the Board's appreciation be extended to all involved with the arrangements.

146 Directors' Reports

145.1 Chairman's Report

There was not a separate report from the Chairman for this meeting.

146.2 Finance Report

John Lynch presented the Finance report and updated the Board on ADSO income and expenditure.

The Chairman undertook to contact people on the recent list of cancelled members to find out the reasons for not renewing their membership. JA

It was RESOLVED:

That the Finance Report be noted.

146.3 Company Secretary Report

Tom reported that the changes to the Articles agreed at the Annual General Meeting and the Company's Annual Report had been submitted to Company House.

147 Business Plan update

The Chairman reported that he had asked the Vice Chairman to lead on this. JQ

It was important that the 5 priority areas identified during the Away Day translated into projects. The following lead Board members were identified for each of the areas and requested to provide the Vice Chairman with action plans by the end of January:

- Enhancing knowledge and learning opportunities for all members – Mark Towers MT
- Influencing central Government and raising the Association's profile nationally and internationally – John Austin JA
- Increasing the number of members and strengthening the benefits of membership – Tom van der Hoven TvdH
- Developing regional activity in the Association and supporting regional representatives in their role – Sue Keogh SK
- Increasing financial income and commercial JL

support for the organisation – John Lynch

It was RESOLVED:

1. That lead Board members provide an action plan for each of the priority areas to John Quinton by the end of January. MT/JA/TvdH/SK/JL
2. That the front pages of the Business Plan be updated by Sue Keogh and then circulated to John Lynch and then to John Quinton to finalise the Business Plan. SK/JL/JQ

148 **Member Survey**

Sue and Laura briefed the Board on the results of the Member Survey undertaken between 12 November and 7 December. The survey will assist with development of the Business Plan and future direction of the organisation.

67 people expressed an interest in becoming more involved in ADSO across a number of key areas. This is brilliant news for ADSO and it is hoped that many of the expressions of interest can be converted into fully fledged volunteers both nationally and regionally. The key areas identified were:

- Input into consultations
- Training and qualifications
- Branch activities (this was the most popular area)
- Website support.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the results of the survey and the extremely positive progress ADSO has made to date be noted.
2. That the key findings be published in the Weekly Bulletin with a summary on the SK/LL

website.

3. That an action plan be developed by lead Directors (linked to the Business Plan) to move forward the four key areas identified:

- Input to consultations- JQ JQ
- Training and qualifications – MT MT
- Branch activities – SK SK
- Website support - LL LL

4. That SK co-ordinate with regional representatives to provide personal responses to volunteers and to take forward expressions of interest. SK

5. That regional representatives work with Sue Keogh on developing regional activity / action plans based on the results for their regions. Regional Reps/SK

6. That feedback on future areas for training and development for team members and managers be considered by the ADSO Qualifications and Development Centre as part of future training course provision.

149 Training and Qualifications

Mark Towers, Director for Training, had provided an update on training courses 2012/13. The training programme continued to be a success both financially and from an evaluation perspective.

It was reported that some learners were making very little progress and it was agreed that they be given a deadline to conclude their studies.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the feedback on the training events so far reported upon and the qualifications update be noted.

2. That the School Appeals course be moved to March. MT
3. That learners who have been registered for 2 years be given only one more year of support and that any new learners be given only 2 years of support from date of registration. MT/SK

150 Member Benefit Sponsors – to appoint a lead

It was RESOLVED:

That consideration be deferred to the March Board meeting. JA/TvdH

151 ‘Dods Parliamentary Services’

Laura Latham reported on the 2 week trial period following an initial meeting with representatives from Dods.

Although they provide good quality information there is significant duplication with existing bulletins/alert systems. The Board was not convinced that signing up with them would be of great benefit to the organisation.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the outcome of the trial period be noted and that no further action be taken.

152 Interim Temporary Appointments.

Tim Revell briefed the Board on a draft specification for the provision of interim and temporary democratic services staff. Having considered the options the Board did not wish to pursue this further.

It was RESOLVED:

That the matter not be pursued further at this stage.

153 **Regional Updates**

Regional Updates were provided as follows:

London: Tim Revell reported that their winter seminar was due to be held on 18 January 2013 which will include four workshops – one an unscripted workshop. So far they have 33 bookings from 18 authorities.

A branch meeting was held in October at which future paperless meetings was discussed.

North East: Gareth Davies provided an update. An event was planned and would have taken place 2 weeks ago but unfortunately had to be cancelled. They don't have many members in the large conurbations. Rather than trying to get together in one place they will be looking at other options.

North West: Helen Gee reported that they had nothing planned at this stage. They will be looking at holding a regional learner event in the near future.

South West: John Quinton reported that South West had turned the corner so to speak. An event was held after conference attended by over 35 people. Discussions took place on social media and what democratic services could look like in 5 years. They were starting to establish better contact within the region. Another event is planned for March 2013.

A new regional representative, Rosalind Reeves of Cheltenham BC had been agreed and Jack Latkovic of Bath and North East Somerset had agreed to be the SW web co-ordinator.

South East: Sue Keogh reported that effort was being made to establish a branch. Ten SE members will be invited the London seminar in an

attempt to encourage interest in setting up a branch.

Sue had received a number of apologies from regional representatives and will in future ask representatives to submit a written report if they cannot attend a Board meeting. SK

154 Working with Others

154.1 MJ Awards

John Austin mentioned that he had notified MJ that ADSO will again participate in 2013. Richard Kemp and Graeme Creer have been asked to judge the submissions again. John Lynch offered to represent ADSO.

An article will be published on the website in January. JA/LL

154.2 IIMC

Applications for the IIMC conference sponsorship are being awaited – due by 31st December.

Representation by the Board will be considered at the March meeting. JL

Tom had asked Sam Shippen for feedback on her discussion of the Action Plan with Ronny Frederickx but had had no response.

Laura mentioned that IIMC website will have translation abilities in the near future – this is something Region XI had asked for some time ago.

154.3 Others

Laura Latham will be attending the CfPS event in London

John Austin had received a note of appreciation

from the SLCC representative Kathy Tibbles who attended our conference.

The ACSeS President's lunch is being held in London in February. A number of Board members cannot attend. He will ask for volunteers by e-mail. JA

155 Consultations

John Quinton mentioned CLG's governance review and asked for comments to be e-mailed to him.

Ongoing discussions are taking place regarding Health and Wellbeing. He had used the workshop at conference to tease out issues where councils needed support.

Gareth Davies raised the issue of the current consultation on data transparency and it was agreed that he would let John Quinton have some views on this to enable him to draft a response to DCLG on behalf of ADSO. GD

156 Next meeting and dates for 2013

The next meeting will be held at 11.00 am on 22nd March at Islington Council.

Future meetings are scheduled for 12 July (London) and 20 September (tbc).

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.