



## **Minutes of ADSO Board Meeting**

**11 July 2014**

**Room 310, Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, London**

### **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	A
Mark Towers	Director for Training	A
Tom van der Hoven	Company Secretary	P
Linda Scott	North East	A
Helen Gee	North West	P
Brendan Martin	Yorkshire and Humberside	P
Matt Kane	East Midlands	P
Georgina Atkinson	West Midlands	P
Tim Revell	London	P
Jack Latkovic	South West	P
Clive Parker	South East	P

**1 Welcome and Introductions**

John Austin, ADSO Board Chairman, welcomed members to the meeting. He extended a special welcome to Jack Latkovic – South West representative.

The above apologies were noted.

**2 Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2014 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

All action points from the previous meetings had been completed or included in the agenda for this meeting.

**3 Association Website**

Laura Latham, Director for Communications, provided an update on the ADSO website as detailed in her report. 1902 Absolute unique visitors on the site. Of the 2689 overall visits to the website 12.3 % were new visitors.

On 17 June 2014 a session took place between Richard Vize (public policy and communications consultant) and a small number of Directors plus Wayne Chandai who has been taking the lead on ADSO's Social Media Work.

The aims of the session were to identify ADSO's strengths as regards its work / knowledge and insight into local authority governance and look at how these could be communicated to key stakeholders and partners with a view to influencing at local, regional and national level. It was acknowledged that resource is not plentiful and that activity needs to commence at low level whilst capacity builds over the coming months and years in order for it to be sustained and successful.

This is a key area of ADSO's future development as outlined in the Business Plan.



description of what would be expected from a lead member.

Creating our own news – through surveying members and presenting their views / evidence more widely

Creating press releases will be part of the lead members' role. Let's see how it develops.

Website Improvements

1. Twitter Feed on front page

Agreed. That Laura Latham will send round a template to update Board member profiles.

2. Blog visible and on front page

ADSO e-mails for Board Members to be pursued.

3. More developed Board Member profiles

Speaking at Events

Long term aspiration. Could offer to run workshops.

Laura undertook to draw up a plan with deadlines and who does what. We could make more use of volunteers. LL

Board agreed that a question should be included on membership application forms to identify volunteers. The Company Secretary will ask Sunderland to include it in their membership lists. LL/TvdH

The Board recognised the good work Wayne Chandai had been doing on social media. This will run in parallel to the general communications work and provide the platform for communicating activity to a wider sector.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the website statistics be noted.
2. That the actions outlined in the report and above as the Association's approach to Communications for the next 12 months be agreed.
3. That the actions be translated into an action plan so the work can be monitored at future Board meetings LL

#### 4 **Conference 2014**

Sue Keogh, Director for Regional Developments and Events provided an update on arrangements for the 2014 Conference.

The Board endorsed the proposed programme and discussed possible themes, keynote speakers and topics for the various workshops.

Board members were asked to identify topics for the facilitated discussions which are to be discussed at the next Board meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September. ALL

Matt Kane will pursue sponsorship of £500 for the drinks reception. He will also speak to 'We love local Government' and PAS to see if they'd be interested in running a workshop. MK

Noted that the Chairman had contacted the Mayor's Office at Birmingham Council to see if he/she could attend as a guest at the dinner. The Mayor's diary was fully booked for that evening. John agreed to contact the Mayor's Office again to see if the Deputy Mayor could attend the Awards Ceremony. An alternative could be a representative from Birmingham FC. JA

Regional representatives were asked to encourage entries for the Awards. The Board agreed to extend the deadline till 15<sup>th</sup> August. Regional Reps

A representative from SLCC and Jaap Paans as IIMC Region XI Director will be our guests and be offered free accommodation and dinner.

The Board agreed to pay the travel costs of presenters. Sue Keogh to investigate whether any other costs could be covered by ADSO SK/JA

It was RESOLVED:

The Board endorsed the proposed programme and gave direction as set out above.

## **5 Directors' Reports**

### **5.1 Chairman's Report**

#### DCLG Openness Agenda

The Chairman and John Quinton visited DCLG in June to discuss with them ADSO's comments on the plain English guide produced to support the regulations. DCLG were very appreciative of the constructive comments and advice received from ADSO and has since requested our further assistance in finalising the guidance.

#### Democratic Services in Wales

The Chairman and Sue Keogh visited the Welsh Democratic Services network in June to raise their awareness of ADSO and to discuss with them options for membership. Approximately 30 members of the network attended the meeting, which was hosted by the Welsh LGA.

Not surprisingly, many present commented on the differences between the English and Welsh local government structures. This was clearly an obstacle for them. We responded by saying that if there was interest, ADSO would be prepared to offer some investment to tailor material and services to Wales. We emphasised that we would need their time and expertise to help us do that. Subsequent correspondence has shown that, whilst there is interest in the qualifications in particular, there is a reluctance to put the time and effort in to develop anything with us.

Six people have since however asked for guest access to the website and this has been provided.

The Chairman had also been approached by an awarding body in Wales who expressed interest in ADSO developing qualifications relevant to them. Discussions will

continue.

### North Yorkshire & Humberside

Brendan Martin has arranged a region meeting at Doncaster on 14 July. The Chairman and Sue Keogh will attend to support Brendan in his efforts to get the region off the ground.

### East Midlands Seminar

The Chairman attended this event on 4th July. The opening speaker was John Robinson, Chief Executive of Gedling Borough Council. John had been a committee administrator earlier in his career and would be an ideal role model for aspiring senior managers amongst our membership. He may also be able to help us in raising ADSO's profile within the Chief Executive network. The Chairman has written to John to ask for his help and advice.

It was RESOLVED:

That the Chairman's report be noted.

## **5.2 Finance Report**

The Chairman presented the Finance report in John Lynch's absence.

Since the last Board report in March until end of June there have been a further 19 job adverts bringing in an additional £8,760. Since the beginning of January this gives us a total of 31 job adverts and £14,340 income.

The final accounts for 2013 were attached as Appendix to the report. They showed that after tax and expenses the Association made a profit of £28,792 for last year which was slightly down on the amount we made in 2012.

As the Board will be aware the £60k we previously invested in a fixed rate bond with Raphaels Bank does not mature until March 2015. We have also invested a further

£50k in a fixed rate bond paying 1.80% interest until August 2015. This was agreed by urgent action on the 13th May 2015 by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Company Secretary and Finance Director as this was a limited offer for the Bond and we needed to move quick before applications were closed.

The Board agreed that the usual offer of extended membership apply to those new members who join between August and October 2014.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the annual accounts for 2013 be agreed for circulation to the Membership.
2. That the decision taken under urgency procedures to invest £50k with Raphaels Bank in a fixed rate bond paying 1.80% interest until August 2015 be noted.
3. That the usual offer of extended membership apply to those new members who join between August and October 2014.

### **5.3 Company Secretary Report**

#### IIMC Bulk Membership Scheme

The Board previously supported the IIMC bulk membership scheme in principle and asked the Company Secretary to produce a marketing plan for consideration.

TvdH

In his opinion it was premature to give consideration to this matter at this stage. We have had a very successful IIMC Region XI Symposium. Once the feedback from those that attended has been analysed, further consideration can be given to the matter. He will report to the next Board meeting.

#### Elections

The Board endorsed the proposed timetable for the 2014 election of Chairman and Vice Chairman. The closing date

TvdH/LL

for nominations will be noon on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

Members Benefit Scheme – Wider Wallet.

There was initially good uptake of the scheme but that has decreased. The Company Secretary is due to do a review of the Scheme in January 2015 following the Christmas period. Sustained promotion through the Weekly Bulletin should continue and Wider Wallet will be asked to do a special promotion in the autumn. TvdH

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a marketing plan for IIMC bulk membership be considered at the next Board meeting.
3. That the schedule of dates for the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman be agreed.

**6 Business Plan update**

The Board considered the updated Business Plan and gave direction in a number of areas

The first campaign for 'Recruit a New Member' is to be launched in July 2014.. The application form to include a section to identify if the applicant has been introduced by an ADSO member. Sunderland to be requested to include this information in the membership lists LL/TvdH

It was agreed that each Board Director will produce some practice/guidance notes as to what their role actually involves at the next Board meeting in September. This can then be used as the basis to train other staff or use as the basis for drawing up a specification if the role or part of it were to be outsourced.

The Board was of the opinion that a review of the organisational structure at this stage would be premature. The review of commercialisation of the organisation will provide a better picture of the structure that would be required to carry us forward.

John Quinton will now update the business plan before circulating it for comments. Georgina Atkinson and Jack Latkovic were asked to review it prior to circulation. JQ

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the Business Plan be updated in line with the Board's direction and circulated for comments before publication on the public side of the website.. JQ
2. That the Business Plan be reviewed every two years. JQ
3. That lead members regularly provide an update on progress on the Forum to enable John Quinton to update the published Business Plan. Any changes to be reported to every other Board meeting. Lead members JQ

## **7 Training and Qualifications**

Mark Towers, Director for Training, provided an update on training courses.

The ADSO Training Programme has not seen as many courses this last period, as a break was put into the programme due to the European Elections occupying Democratic Services officers.

There has been one completed cycle of course and that is for the 'Planning and the Democratic Process'. Detailed feedback is provided separately to the Director of Training by the London Borough of Richmond, but as previously agreed to respect confidentiality, the report to the Board only covers the main factual information in relation to the events held. Below is a summary of the evaluated course.

A Trainer event was held in Birmingham to receive feedback from Trainers on how the training programme was running and the suitability of the content on the courses. The event was well attended and encouraged a good range of feedback.

At the last meeting of the Board it was agreed to pilot a one day course entitled "Maximising your Management

Impact” with the course subsidised 50% by ADSO. It was agreed that expressions of interest be sought with a representative from each region and with maybe 2 representatives from regions with a high number of members.

The date of 4th July 2014 was agreed. Take up was less than anticipated but there were enough delegates (9) to run the course. Although the evaluations have not yet been received, the course went well. Initial views are that it may work best as part of a Management Development or Presentation Skills course rather than as a standalone workshop.

A diploma network day was held in London at Wandsworth Town Hall on 5th June and it was encouraging to see the enthusiasm of learners making progress and the different approaches to the pathways.

A standardisation meeting was held in Birmingham on 3rd April which was very well attended and for the first time had a number of Specialist Advisers mixed in with the Certificate Advisers.

There are still waiting lists for both qualifications, mainly in the South, so a further induction session will be held for the Certificate in October and the Diploma in December. The challenge, as always, is to ensure that there are enough trained Regional Advisers available to support these new learners.

An External Verifier’s visit is being arranged for August to quality assure the running of the ADSO qualifications centre. A report on the outcomes will be presented to the Board at the September meeting.

It was RESOLVED:

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

**8                    Communications Strategy**

This item was dealt with in conjunction with item 3 – Website and Communications update.

**9.                    Sponsor Partner – Selection.**

The Board was reminded that Modern.gov’s existing agreement with ADSO as Main Association and Conference Sponsor was in place for two years from July 2012. At the last meeting the Board set the cost of sponsorship for the next two years at £3,500 plus VAT for two years and £2,000 plus VAT for one year and invited submissions from interested parties.

The Board considered the two submissions that were received.

After lengthy consideration and debate the Board decided that, based on the information they had in front of them, they were not able to make a decision on the day. Instead, they posed a number of questions which will be taken up with the two companies. MK

The responses will be circulated to Board members who will decide the matter via conference call. MK

It was RESOLVED:

That the responses be circulated to Board members so that the Board can decide the matter via conference call. MK

**10.                  Regional Updates**

Regional Updates were provided by North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, West Midlands, London, South West and South East. These can be found in the regional pages on the website.

There has been one expression of interest so far in the SK

vacancy in the East of England region.

## **11. Working with others**

### IIMC Region XI Symposium

The Chairman reported back on the very successful Symposium held in Brussels. Twelve countries were represented. 18 ADSO members attended and the feedback from them has been very positive. Their comments will soon be published on the website.

ADSO, as one of the organisers of the Symposium, certainly raised its profile.

### Attendance of IIMC Annual Conference

Clive Parker had represented the Board at the conference and the Board noted his report.

## **12. Consultations**

ADSO has worked with DCLG on the Plain English guide and Regulations relating to Openness in Local Government. DCLG has now sent through the final drafts and asked for comments by 21<sup>st</sup> July.

## **13 Sponsorship**

There has been an approach by a company who asked if they could have access to the membership database and if ADSO would be willing to circulate their leaflet to members. It is possible that they may offer sponsorship for the next conference.

The Board noted the request but was not willing to make the membership database available. There was insufficient information about the company to consider their request to circulate a leaflet to ADSO members. Matt Kane undertook to investigate further. MK

**13 Next meeting and dates for 2014**

The next meeting will be held at 11.00 am on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at Islington Council.

Future dates for 2014 and 2015 are 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 10<sup>th</sup> July, 18<sup>th</sup> September and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

The meeting closed at 3.50 pm.