



## **Minutes of ADSO Board Meeting**

**20 September 2013**

**Committee Room 4, 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	P
Tom van der Hoven	Company Secretary	P
Gareth Davies	North East	A
Helen Gee	North West	P
Matt Kane	East Midlands	P
Helen Abraham	West Midlands	A
Tim Revell	London	P
Rosalind Reeves	South West	P
Clive Parker	South East	P

## 1 Welcome and Introductions

John Austin, ADSO Board Chairman, welcomed members to the meeting.

The above apologies were noted. It was also noted that Helen Abraham and Gareth Davies had stood down as representatives of West Midlands and North East respectively. The Chairman undertook to write to them to thank them for their contributions to the Board. JA

## 2 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 March and 22 April 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:

- Drawing up a specification and quote for financial work to be undertaken. Not urgent. JL
- Member Benefit Sponsors. Deferred to next meeting TvdH

## 3 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 9 August to 8 September 2013.

1411 Absolute unique visitors on the site. Of the 1912 overall visits to the website 19.07% were new visitors.

Of the total page views, the most popular continue

to be Members Forum, Resources – Democracy Direct, Conference and ADSO training/booking pages.

Following approval by a sub-committee of the Board in April 2013 Barsbank were commissioned to rebuild the site based on a refreshed look and feel.

The site went live on 24 May 2013 as a skeleton site and all users were issued with new passwords.

The site, based on Wordpress is much more visitor (and administrator) friendly and comments about the new style have been positive.

The second stage build was commissioned in July 2013 once the bulk of the initial tweaks have been made on the skeleton site and content had been supplied for all the key areas.

The second stage build will include:

- Social media stream (linking to the social media strategy below)
- Polls Facility to enable instant views to be gathered on topic issues based on Yes / No criteria or a selection of (a), (b), (c) choices
- Permanent space for advertisements / sponsors information on the front page
- Enhanced use of existing calendar on front page to flag up ADSO regional events and training.

As soon as the stage 2 build has been completed LL support administrators (Tom and Sue) and Regional Web Publishers will be issued with new permissions to add content as required to the website.

The new ADSO website is fully social media compatible and the aim is that members (and non-members using the public site) will begin to use social media functions to broaden the impact of

ADSO discussions and promote the association more widely.

Once the second stage build has been completed, the social media strategy will be finalised with the aim to formally launch it at the conference when there will be an increased number of members and interested individuals accessing our social media channels.

ADSO will again be taking advantage of the skills of Wayne Chandai, LB Lambeth as volunteer Tweeter and Blogger for the 2013 Conference.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the website statistics be noted.
2. That the website rebuild update for Stage 1 and projected timescale for completion of Stage 2 be noted.
4. That the update on the Social Media Strategy be noted and its launch at the ADSO Conference 2013 be approved.
5. That the arrangements for conference communications be noted.
6. That social media training be arranged for LL Board members.
7. That the cost for subscription to LinkedIn be LL investigated.
8. That the social media strategy be circulated LL to Board members when ready.
9. That members of the Board be more active ALL on Forum discussions.
10. That the next report include the figures for LL how many members actually access the weekly Bulletin.
11. That the Board's appreciation be extended to Laura for her work in restoring the website.

## **4 Conference Update**

Sue Keogh, Director for Regional Developments and Events', tabled a draft programme for the conference. The Board discussed possible themes, keynote speakers and topics for the various workshops.

The Chairman has invited the Leader of Birmingham City Council as keynote speaker as there had been no response from Hilary Benn.

Workshop on Constitution – consider 'danger zones' with 2 or 3 topical issues. SK

So far there has been no response from ICO. Tom will discuss it with his DPO.

Post Conference Reception – Public-I might be interested to sponsor. To be held between 4 and 5 pm and attendees asked if they will stay behind to ensure a good turnout. MK

Matt reported that three companies had agreed to sponsor the conference – Modern.gov, CMIS and Sennheiser Audio.

Tasks will be allocated to Board members. They will also facilitate the 'facilitated' discussions. SK

It was RESOLVED:

That the arrangements for the 2013 conference at Birmingham City Football Club on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 be noted.

## **5 Directors' Reports**

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

The Chairman had recently been advised that

Weightmans, our partner in the MJ awards, had decided to sponsor their own legal category and would therefore not be continuing their association with the Democratic Services award.

The Board discussed whether to continue to support the MJ award or to hold our own event.

The Board had discussed the Business Plan previously and in particular the views expressed by some Board members that the plan was in need of review and reformatting. JA

It is important that our business plan is relevant, up-to-date, coherent to the general membership and aligned to our budget. The Chairman proposed that a 'root and branch' review of the plan be undertaken by a small core-group comprising himself, John Quinton (vice Chairman), Tom van der Hoven as Secretary, and John Lynch as Director of Finance, with organisational support from Sue Keogh. Other Directors will be brought in to the discussions as they work through their respective sections to ensure maximum involvement of the Board. The group will report back to the January meeting with a revised draft plan for the Board to consider and agree.

Sue Keogh, Robert Sheppard (London Branch) and the Chairman had met with representatives of the ICSA on 2 July. It was very much an information exchange and fact finding meeting, with the ICSA very interested and generally impressed with the progress ADSO had made, There could be possibilities for joint working and the dialogue will continue. JA/SK

The Chairman had been invited to meet the new President of the IIMC, Marc Lemoine, when he visits London in October.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the Chairman's Report be noted.

2. That, subject to sponsorship, the MJ Award for Democratic Services be supported for 2014. If sponsorship fails, then it be delegated to the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Company Secretary and Director Finance to make arrangements to include an award as part of the 2014 ADSO conference arrangements. JA
3. That the Chairman be authorised to negotiate a reduced cost for the Democratic Services award with MJ. JA
4. That the proposed review of the Business Plan by a small core group as set out above be endorsed.

## 5.2 Finance Report

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

Since 1 January 2013 there have been 35 job adverts placed on the website providing income of £13,320 including VAT.

As agreed at the last Board meeting, £60,000 has now been invested in a fixed rate bond with Raphael's Bank until 27 March 2015.

The amount of cash in the accounts as of 10 September 2013 is as follows:

Main Account - £37,548.54

Qualifications Account - £116,158.10

It was RESOLVED:

That the Finance Report be noted.

### 5.3 Company Secretary Report

Tom thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend the IIMC conference in Atlantic City. The conference itself was of a high standard and the sessions excellent as always

Jo Straw (LB Richmond) and Lennox Beattie (Blackpool), whom ADSO sponsored, did us proud. They were enthusiastic participants and happy to meet and mix with people and great ambassadors for ADSO!

The Region XI meeting was well planned and managed. Together with Nick Randle, the Region Directors gave comprehensive feedback on what was going on as far as our region was concerned.. As time was limited following the opening ceremony, they had arranged for an additional meeting on the Wednesday and which was attended by the full IIMC Executive.

Key points discussed were:

1. The IIMC Board fully supports the 2014 symposium in Brussels and will make a financial contribution towards it.
  - a. A sub-committee was established to plan the event – Nick Randle (Region XI consultant), Jaap Paans (Region XI Director), Ronny Frederickx (outgoing Region XI Director and host association in Belgium and Vice President of Udite)) and Tom (past Region XI Director).

The IIMC Board had agreed to implement a scheme based on bulk membership for Associations in Region XI. The current individual membership is \$26 (£17). The bulk annual membership scheme will cost \$15 (£10) each per 100 members. Further details will be made available towards the end of the year.

Any marketing plan should include information regarding what benefits IIMC membership would

have for our members.

The Region XI Management Board will meet on 4<sup>th</sup> November in Brussels. The Chairman and Company Secretary serve on the Board and will require authority to attend the meeting.

Nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairman will close at noon on Friday 27 September 2013.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Chairman and Company Secretary be authorized to attend the 4th November Region XI Management Board in Brussels and that their costs be paid.
3. That the IIMC bulk membership scheme be supported in principle and that the Company Secretary produce further information and a draft marketing plan for consideration at the next Board meeting.
4. That the schedule of dates for the election of Officers be noted.
5. That the membership list be shared with region representatives.

## **6 Business Plan update**

Deferred till December Board meeting.

## **7 Training and Qualifications**

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

The ADSO Training Programme has continued in

earnest since the last report in March.

The Structure and Functions of Local Government course is currently being advertised and is due to be held in October. This course will be of particular interest to learners and those new to the democratic process.

At the last meeting it was reported that an external verifier visit had been arranged for 24th April. This was to be the first visit since the approval of the Centre. The Centre received a very favourable report with some recommendations for improvement which seemed largely to be based on the self-assessment produced for the visit, by the ADSO team.

A Centre meeting was held in June 2013 at Birmingham At this meeting a provisional Training Programme for 2014 was agreed and the outline of this is listed below:

Proposed outline training programme for 2014:

- o Presentation skills for DSOs – SK to author (Jan 2014)
- o Planning and the Democratic process – External partner (March 2014)\*
- o Meetings Procedures – MT to update (June)
- o Just a Minute – MT to ‘arrange’ update (Sept)
- o Meetings Procedures plus – MT to update (October)
- o Council and its Governance Procedures – MT to update (Dec 2014)

At the Centre meeting held in June updated business plan objectives for the Centre were also discussed which could link into the Business Plan for the Association

It was RESOLVED:

1. To note the feedback on the training events so far reported upon.
2. To note the feedback from the External Verifier and the proposed comments/ actions from the EV visit be endorsed.
3. To endorse the outline Training Programme for 2014.
4. To note the qualifications update.
5. To agree the draft Business Plan objectives.

**8 Incentives/Benefits for holders of appointed positions within ADSO**

Sue Keogh had prepared a draft scheme 'Business Case: Volunteering for ADSO' as requested by the Board at the previous meeting.

Following Board Approval, the Scheme will be brought to the attention of members in a variety of ways.

It was RESOLVED:

To approve the proposed Scheme of Incentives/Benefits for holders of appointed positions within ADSO.

**9 Member Benefit Sponsors – to appoint a lead**

Deferred to next meeting.

TvdH

**10 Combined London/South East branch**

That the matter be considered as part of the review of the Business Plan.

**11 Regional Updates**

The following Regional Updates were provided. These can be found in the regional pages on the website:

**North West:**

**East Midlands:**

**London:**

**South West:**

**South East:**

**East of England:**

Members in the North East and West Midlands SK regions will be made aware of the vacancies of regional representatives and invited to put their names forward. Also those in Yorkshire and Humberside.

**12 Consultations**

John Quinton reported that ADSO had responded to a number of consultations such as moving the date of elections, pensions for councillors, etc.

**13 Any other business**

The Chairman mentioned that he and Tim Revell had met with Richard Hood regarding a recruitment agency for democratic services. Discussions will continue.

He also mentioned that he was contacted by a recruitment company ( who were currently working with the ICSA) to explore how ADSO might be able to work with them with regard to interim staffing. He was asked to progress.

**14 Next meeting and dates for 2014**

The next meeting will be held at 11.00 am on 13 December at Islington Council.

Proposed dates for 2014 are 21<sup>st</sup> March, 11<sup>th</sup> July, 19<sup>th</sup> September and 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm.