



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF BRIGADE COUNCIL

held at Lighthouse Church, Salford, Manchester
on 2nd September 2017

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There were present: The Rev Dr Lord Griffiths of Burry Port, Brigade President and 190 leaders and guests of the Brigade.

1. Welcome

The Brigade President (Chairman) welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened proceedings with prayer.

Members who were attending for the first time were asked to stand to be welcomed.

The Brigade Secretary intimated that a total of 528 votes had been registered. These were comprised of 133 Company / Battalion, 332 Proxy and 63 Postal votes

2. MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, PATRON OF THE BOYS' BRIGADE

The Chairman read the message of Loyal Greeting sent to Her Majesty the Queen:

"Members of The Boys' Brigade wish to convey to Your Majesty, our Patron, loyal and affectionate greetings on the occasion of our Annual Meeting of the Brigade Council in Manchester on 2nd September 2017.

As we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the founding of The Boy Reserves, the forerunner of today's Junior Section we greatly appreciate your continued interest in our movement.

The Reverend The Lord Griffiths of Burry Port, President"

Her Majesty graciously replied as follows:

"Please convey my warm thanks to the Members of The Boys' Brigade for their loyal greetings, on the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the Brigade Council which is being held today in Manchester.

As your Patron, I was interested to learn that you are celebrating the One-Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of The Boy Reserves and in return, send my best wishes to you all for a successful gathering.

ELIZABETH R."

3. ADOPTION OF BRIGADE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Copies of the Standing Orders for Brigade Council had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman proposed the adoption of the Rules and they were adopted by acclamation.

The Chairman explained the voting procedure should a ballot be needed.

4. COMMEMORATION

The Chairman led the commemoration to remember BB members who had passed to higher service during the year. Special mention was made of Margaret, Lady Thurso (Honorary Vice President) and Iain Neilson (past Brigade Secretary).

5. MINUTES OF MEETING OF BRIGADE COUNCIL – BELFAST 2016

The minutes of the Brigade Council meeting held in Belfast on the 3rd September 2016 were approved and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

6. REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Council members viewed a video presentation which highlighted key events and achievements from the 2016/2017 Session. Printed copies of the annual review were also available.

7. PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2016-2017

The audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2017 were presented by the Brigade Treasurer, Mr Clifford Bygrave, who proposed that they be received.

Our Auditors Whiting and Partners had given an unqualified Report on the Accounts and the supporting disclosures and documentation.

The Treasurer explained that administration costs were higher this year but, after transfers from restricted funds and gains on investments, a surplus of £27,836 was the final result.

The Balance Sheet showed that the Brigade had total assets of £4,616,287 at 31st March 2017. The deferred income item of around £366,290 relates to capitation fees received prior to March but for the year to 31st August 2017.

The Treasurer indicated that the current financial position was still difficult and there was now evidence that the overall reduction in numbers in the past years has had an effect on other income streams as well as capitation fees.

The Treasurer recorded his appreciation to Gina Alderson and her finance team for the dedicated service and expertise which they continue to give to the Brigade on a day-to-day basis.

The presentation of the Accounts was seconded by Mr Paul Haggan, Brigade Executive who also paid tribute to the Treasurer for all his leadership and work during the past year.

8. ANNUAL CAPITATION FEES FOR THE 2018/2019 SESSION

In proposing the Annual Capitation Fees Mr David Sneddon, Brigade Executive, explained that the capitation fees for the current session agreed in Belfast at last year's Council were being confirmed and that the Executive were now proposing the fees for 2018/2019 session.

The proposals included the removal of the company fee and moving leaders / helpers fees to the same level. Mr Sneddon intimated that these changes were part of the process of moving to a system of two tier capitation fees. The changes proposed were revenue neutral in that the overall income being produced would not increase. These proposals were seconded by Mr Lee Hiorns, Brigade Executive who felt this would lead to a fairer and more equitable arrangement.

Council then considered an amendment in the name of East Lancashire Battalion to maintain the helpers fee at the same level as agreed for 2017/2018, namely, £14. The amendment was proposed by Mr Geoff Smale and Mrs Margaret Battrick both of East Lancashire Battalion. They advocated there was no need to increase the helper's fee by such an amount and thought this might reduce the number willing to assist in companies. Mr Paul Haggan responded on behalf of the Brigade Executive and indicated that the proposals would also have allowed helpers to receive the BB Gazette.

It was agreed that Brigade Staff members would act as the scrutineers for this and any subsequent ballots.

After a vote the amendment was carried by 319 votes for and 133 against.

Council then agreed the following fees for 2018/2019 by a large majority. .

Category		Fee
Annual Company registration fee		Nil
Fee per young person		£19.50
Adult fee	Officers / Leaders	£19.50
	(second officer at the same address)	£15.00
	Battalion & District Officers not on Company roll	£15.00
	Officers in receipt of state retirement pension	£15.00
	Officers in full time education or training	£15.00
Helper Fee		£14.00

The fee in respect of an Associate Member is £27.00

The maximum fee that a Company may pay in respect of young people is £1750.00.

9. BRIGADE AUDITORS

Mr Bygrave proposed on behalf of the Executive that Whiting and Partners be reappointed as auditors of The Boys' Brigade and that the Brigade Executive be authorised to fix their remuneration.

Rev Dr Trevor McCormick, Brigade Executive, seconded the proposal.

The motion was carried.

10. TO APPOINT BRIGADE OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2017/18 SESSION

Mr Michael Elliot proposed on behalf of the Executive that the following office bearers be re-appointed for the 2017/2018 session and Mr Leslie Buttimer, Brigade Executive, seconded the proposals.

President: The Rev The Lord Griffiths of Burry Port

Vice President: Mr David Aubrey Q.C.
Mr A S Burrow

Treasurer: Mr C Bygrave FCA

Following a show of hands the above office-bearers were re-elected.

11. MOTION IN THE NAME OF BRIGADE EXECUTIVE

A number of amendments to Brigade Regulations had been published in the name of the Brigade Executive. Alistair Burrow, Vice-President proposed these amendments and indicated that a number of them had been drafted to bring regulations in line with the Companies Act. Following a discussion with the Church of Scotland it was also proposed to amend various clauses with a view to better describe the relationship between a BB company and the local congregation in the church. A number of amendments also related to serving notice for Brigade Council, and others were designed to tidy up and clarify various points. David Aubrey, Q.C., Vice President, seconded the motion.

After a vote the amendments to Regulation 5 (which in terms of Regulation 88 required a two thirds majority) were lost by 228 votes to 284.

Council then considered the other amendments in various groups:

Group 1: A number of amendments relating to Regulations 6, 13.2, 25, 31, 34, 35, 49, 50, 51,41 and 53, 63, 66 and 69 had been published. After a vote these proposals were defeated by 227 votes to 285.

Group 2: These proposals suggested changing the wording of Regulations 10, 11, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24.

The Rev. George McLellan, Belfast Battalion spoke against these proposals indicating that it was very much the view of companies in Northern Ireland that they consider themselves to be part of the church and not a separate organisation. Leigh Maydew 2nd Wednesday Company also spoke against these amendments. After a vote these proposals were lost by 228 to 287.

Group 3: The suggested amendments to Regulations 78.83 related to publishing notice of Brigade Council and allowing electronic notice to be served. Following a vote these proposals were defeated by 228 votes to 287.

Group 4: Amendments had been tabled to Regulations 64 and 81.3.3.

Fraser Boyd, Stirling Battalion said he was disappointed and puzzled that those exercising proxy votes to defeat amendments appeared unwilling to give any explanation for doing so.

Ron Reid, Wirral and West Cheshire Battalion also spoke to say he was not in favour of members of Regional Committees having individual votes at Council.

Alistair Burrow again explained that the current Regulations gave these members an individual vote but prohibited the vote being exercised by proxy which was in breach of the Companies Act 2006. The amendment to Regulation 81.3.3 was necessary to bring arrangements for individual proxy votes in line with the Companies Act 2006.

After a vote the proposals were lost by 245 votes to 270.

12. Motion in the name of Alan Ayling 12th Dublin, Paul Christmas 25th Stirling, Tim Dundee 4th Newtownabbey, Phil East 53rd Manchester & Alen Pasley 21st Cardiff.

Phil East from 53rd Manchester proposed the motion as published in the order of business. In doing so he explained that the proposers felt there was a need to reduce the size of the Executive and also to increase the pool of leaders who could serve as a trustee. These new proposals would also introduce the concept of direct elections which would allow more members to participate in electing the Executive.

Jim McVean, Glasgow Battalion seconded the motion and spoke about the benefits Glasgow Battalion had gained in moving to a skills based trustee board.

On behalf of the Brigade Executive David Aubrey, Q.C., Vice President, proposed a number of amendments. The Executive had concerns about some aspects of the motion and felt it should still allow for some Vice-Presidents to be members of the Executive and protect a sufficient number of places for each region.

When seconding these amendments Alistair Burrow, Vice President drew attention to the executive's concerns about proposed new arrangements for electing Under 26 members.

After a show of hands the amendments proposed by the Executive were carried.

A number of other members also spoke in favour of the amended motion.

The amended motion was then put to the vote and was defeated by 320 votes to 178.

13. Motion in the name of Northern Ireland District.

On behalf of the Northern Ireland District David Blevins proposed the following motion.

“Council instructs the Brigade Executive, in order to maintain the bond and benefits of a national organisation, to bring to Brigade Council 2018 proposals to provide accountable autonomy in Regions for the management of resources and delivery of support to Companies and Battalions in accordance with Brigade Policies and regulations.”

In doing so he indicated that this was the result of many hours of discussion in Northern Ireland and that the motion had the full support of the District Executive. He also thanked David Aubrey, Q.C., Vice President for his work to improve relationships with the District. He stressed that Northern Ireland District were seeking accountable autonomy but not independence and that he hoped the Brigade would be able to recognise the diverse work in different regions.

Paul McCarroll, Belfast Battalion seconded the motion and invited Council to support the motion.

A number of members then contributed to the debate that ensued. Among the contributions the following points were made:-

Alistair Burrow, Vice President reported that the Executive were content this was not a special resolution and that by its nature all Executive members had a conflict of interest. He encouraged Council to support the motion.

Fraser Boyd, Stirling Battalion questioned the suggestion that other regions were diluting Christianity and queried what were the real motives behind the motion.

Trevor McCormick, Chairman NI Region noted that the Scotland Region had previously tabled a motion calling for a federal system. In his opinion different political, legal and church systems in the Regions all supported the argument for greater autonomy.

Leigh Maydew, 2nd Wednesbury felt that decisions flowing from the Resourcing the Regions report would deliver what the NI District were asking for and therefore questioned the need for this motion.

After a card vote the motion was carried by 423 votes to 94.

14. AOB

- a. Sam Lindridge, 3rd Gateshead spoke about the need to keep the real values of the Brigade, our young people and our object at the heart of all our discussions.
- b. Programme Review
The Brigade Secretary gave a short report on the working and thinking of the two Programme Review Groups. It was hoped that the Executive would soon consider proposals to improve the various award schemes.
- c. Thanks to Organising Team
The President thanked Natalie Whipday Director for England and Wales, members of the planning group and all the staff team for making all the arrangements for conference.

15. INVITATION TO CONFERENCE 2018

All present were invited to attend Brigade Conference in Edinburgh from the 31st August – 2nd September 2018.

16. Closure

The meeting was closed with the doxology.



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