



**OutdoorLads.com**

OutdoorLads Annual General Meeting 2017 – Draft minutes

**OutdoorLads Limited  
Binks Building  
30 – 32 Thomas Street  
Manchester  
M4 1ER**

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[www.outdoorlads.com](http://www.outdoorlads.com)

## **OutdoorLads 2017 Annual General Meeting**

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Date:** Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**Location:** The Station  
Silver Street  
Bristol  
BS1 2AG

**Opened:** 1402

**Closed:** 1551

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### Board and Staff Attendance

#### Board Members:

Peter Walter (PW) Chairman  
Matt Tennant (MT) Vice Chair  
Daniel Burford (DB) Secretary  
Andrew Henshall (AH)  
Danny McKeown (DM)  
Steven Allen (SA)  
Alastair Warner (AW)  
Craig Owen (CO)

#### Co-opted Members:

Neil Sharp (NS)  
Brett Monaghan (BM)

#### Staff members in attendance:

Liam Russell (LR)  
Harry Prosser (HP)

#### Apologies:

Will Forshaw

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Peter Walter opened the meeting and thanked all for attending. The meeting was being streamed live on Facebook.

PW outlined the proceedings of the meeting, and introduced the trustees and staff members present to the audience. A special welcome and thanks for attendance was given to Craig Owen and Tom Smith.

### **Review of the Year**

Peter Walter addressed the attendees and gave an overview of the year, including the organisation's progress since the last AGM.

- Significant increase in paid membership – grown by 30%. Direct debit is seen as a key part of this.
- Delivery of 1200 Events – around the same number as last year.
- Indoor climbing and day walk comprise the biggest proportion of events. The goal of increasing diversity of event types has been achieved. PW gave particular thanks to leaders that have put on these alternative events.
- Leadership grew by 27%. 275 registered leaders, but a significant number are inactive leaders. The board will be looking to re-engage these leaders wherever possible.
- Commissioning of a revised website, Web3.0, has commenced.

Peter outlined the organisation's values, which are:

- Friendly and welcoming
- Fun
- Adventurous
- Professional

PW handed over to Matt Tennant, who gave an overview of why OutdoorLads is needed – the purpose of the charity is to support the mental and physical wellbeing of gay, bisexual and

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trans men. Statistics were produced regarding mental health within the gay community. Stonewall research has shown that gay, bisexual or transgendered people are twice as likely to suffer from depression or to self-harm. OutdoorLads goes some way to addressing these issues.

OutdoorLads' performance against these aims was measured with the results of the annual members survey. Results highlighted included:

- 85% agreed that OutdoorLads was friendly and welcoming
- 86% had tried new things with OutdoorLads
- 73% had made new friends
- 53% felt less isolated
- 75% said OutdoorLads provided positive role models
- 68% were proud to be a member
- 49% said they were fitter as a result of joining.

Areas where the organisation still needs to develop included members feeling more positive about the future (51% currently) and being fitter (49%.)

Questions and comments were then invited from those present:

Q: There is an insignificant change in the results as compared to last year's surveys. Why haven't the scores gone up?

A : PW: We are quite consistent year on year, many scores were already high and in many cases we are unsure of how to do it even better.

60% feel less isolated – meaning a significant proportion do feel some isolation. Perhaps we should have 'ambassadors' meeting and greeting new members before first event?

Q: We should be paying attention to only 85% saying that we are Friendly and Welcoming, if that implies that 15% feel we are not.

A: PW – It is a question to which people actively agree. The remainder could be neutral, not necessarily disagreeing.

Q: This suggests that one third are not proud to be members?

A: It could be that they answered neutrally, rather than saying they are not proud.

## **OutdoorLads Foundation**

Matt Tennant moved on to talk about the OutdoorLads Foundation, saying that it had been a challenge. Some successes have been achieved, but not everything we would have liked to have done has been possible.

Income to the Foundation to March 2017 is £11367 in restricted funds.

Spend has been on discounts off event, totalling £1,127, and grants totalling £689.

From April 2017 to present, £500 has been spent on providing discounts off events to concession members, and £770 spend on grant. Additionally, a handful of LGBT charities have been supported with services for their service users.

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In total, around a third of the funds have been spent with the remaining funds totalling £7879. This does leave reserves for continued operation of the Foundation.

Looking to the future, financial support for members who need it will be more accessible. We will continue to develop partnerships with other organisation to mutually support individuals. An example of this was given, which is a sailing week next year in conjunction with another charity, and which OutdoorLads will support through the Foundation.

A new co-opted board member is being sought to drive the Foundation forward.

A question was received from the floor:

Q: How much communication has there been to leaders regarding reaching out to other charities?

A: We haven't done enough. Would be good for leverage within organisations for our leaders to make the introductions.

A member commented that he felt that the organisation was being hard on ourselves, and that the good efforts made so far should be praised. A suggestion was made that an option to add donation to Foundation when booking events could be made available?

### **Web 3.0 Update**

Peter Walter gave an overview of progress with the Web 3.0 project, starting with a review of what has taken place so far.

An expert team of people has been assembled to lead on this work, comprising of Peter Walter, Dan Burford, Matt Tennant, Matt's partner Richard Reid and Jeff Seddon, who has been instrumental. Peter invited attendees to give a round of applause as thanks to Jeff.

Lessons have been learnt from last time in how we approach this process and there is determination not to make similar mistakes again!

The history was recapped as follows:

- Autumn 2016 - Two documents prepared, a business case to review feasibility and suitability, and a request for information – outlining what we want.
- Spring 2017 – RFP document was prepared.
- Three suppliers then invited to present proposals to us, following which Microserve were selected as supplier.
- ODL project manager, Jonathan Moore, was appointed. Jonathan has had daily conversations with supplier, Microserve, and they are now in the process of building the website.

This is a large project, due to be launched next year. The release will be in two phases - 80% functionality in phase 1, with the remainder following in phase 2. The site will be mobile responsive, much faster, easier to find and create events. It will have a refreshed but familiar design, leader credits will be managed far easier, and improvements made to the early bird discount system. The cost will be £70,000, with possible extra costs for extra benefits delivered outside the original scope.

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Comments and questions were received from members present. A comment was made that £70k is actually a good deal for such a website.

In responses to questions, it was confirmed that events will be able to be cloned, including historical events from the current site, site messages will be able to be read within e-mails, and that there will be a user acceptance testing process involving volunteer members.

The supplier to write the user acceptance test, which will be used as a starting point, but we will review this document. It was confirmed that mobile functionality is that it is responsive, rather than being a separate app.

Comments were raised regarding the early payment discount, especially that those that are less well off have the most difficulty in booking events so far ahead. In response, PW confirmed that the new website will have a part pay process to split it up into smaller instalments.

A question was asked about looking for pics for events, as they are not indexed well. This may not improve on the new website and indexing photos would require a manual process. Volunteers could come forward to undertake this.

## **Financial Accounts**

Alistair Warner, treasurer, spoke to the April 2016 – March 2017 accounts, which were made available to members prior to the meeting.

Net expenditure had been £3169. Event income went up by 8% but event costs were up 27%. Accommodation costs, and especially YHA hostels, are a large factor in this.

Membership income was up by 39%, largely due to having more members, and more members paying by direct debit. Overheads were down by 4%.

Charts to illustrate the finances were shown to members. Overall, we have more money despite expenditure. This is due to a slight lag in figures. The organisation is in a very stable financial position. A considerable amount of money has been diverted to website development, however.

Going forward, we are paying greater attention to operating margins and event costs. We are aiming to grow the profit from BSC, to help fund other events, especially the smaller hostels and camps.

Members asked several questions on the finances. In response to a question, it was confirmed that a large proportion of the “other” income was from Big Spring Camp.

A question on the organisation’s financial resilience was raised. There is a £60k reserve for unanticipated events, which we will still have part of once the website has been paid for, and will continue to work on building this up.



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A member questioned if membership can be gift aided? Unfortunately, it cannot, as the value of the benefit of membership is greater than the donation.

A member queried how staff will be paid if reserves are being spent on the website. It was clarified that the website will not empty the bank account. This is money held in reserves.

It was asked how will we increase cash reserves by £30,000? We are working on this and a large part is increasing profitability from BSC.

It was asked if membership fees can be reduced? Given that 90% of respondents to the survey see membership as good value, and the group does need money to run, this was not being considered. The priority needs to be ensuring there is sufficient money in reserves.

Regarding event cost, it was queried if we can rent premises from Airbnb? This may be viable, and we are actively looking at alternatives. On profitability it was suggested that we try to fill more empty beds. In response, it was said that it is a balance of event price vs. people filling spaces. We do monitor paid events that are struggling and make efforts to ensure that most events are full.

In relation to hostel events, a member commented that the food and drink budget is too low – doesn't account for inflation and the need to cater for different dietary requirements. This is something we are aware of and we will be working on it.

It was suggested that where events are not full, places could be opened up for free to concession members. It was agreed that this was a good idea!

PW thanked AW for going through accounts.

## **Elections**

PW introduced Dan Burford as company secretary and explained how the board and trusteeship works, including the proposal to elect Neil Sharp and Brett Monahan to the board. Trustees then elect a chair, treasurer, secretary and a vice chair.

Dan Burford then presented the motions, which would be voted upon by a show of hands:

The motion to approve the 2016 AGM minutes was proposed, seconded and passed as presented by a show of hands with none against and no abstentions.

The motion to approve the accounts was proposed, seconded and passed as presented by a show of hands with none against and no abstentions.

Motion to appoint Beaver & Struthers as auditors was approved, with none against and no abstentions.

Turning to the election of trustees, members were reminded that Neil Sharp, Brett Monaghan, Steven Allen and Peter Walter were standing for election. There is no fixed number of positions and so the candidates were not competing against each other. Four people are standing and there are up to four positions available.

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Each of the candidates introduced themselves and spoke about their reasons for standing and what they would bring to the board.

A question was put to the candidates about their unique and relevant qualifications for the role.

Neil: Is a leader, inspired by the OutdoorLads journey. Very motivated to help other people undertake that journey too.

Brett: I am a financial analyst of 14 years. Keen to contribute to group and give something back as it has made his life so much better.

Steven: Own a company called Linten, and is a founding member of OutdoorLads. Lots of relevant knowledge and skills.

Peter: Vice chair or chair for past 6 years. Keeping us true to our charitable aims, especially the focus on health.

The motions to approve all four candidates as board members was approved by a show of hands, with none against and no abstentions.

PW welcomed the new and returning trustees to the board.

Thanks were given by Peter to Will Forshaw, Andrew Henshall, and Alistair Warner, all of who were stepping down from the board, for their contributions to the charity. Thanks were also given to Bryan Cosgrove, regional co-ordinator for the North, who is also due to be stepping down shortly.

### **Next steps and Any Other Business**

The next steps and key priorities for OutdoorLads were outlined as:

- Launch of Web 3.0
- Recruitment of younger members
- Make more success of the OutdoorLads Foundation
- Improve financial planning.
- Less reliance on YHA for accommodation

Questions were put to the board as follows:

Peter, what is your biggest concern?

Occupancy levels on events. This is key to profitability and it is difficult to judge what will work and won't. Matt Tennant said it was the Foundation, policy and procedures. We need watertight regulations.

A member suggested that more trips could start from main train stations to help people travel together. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

A suggestions box for events was mentioned. This is a good idea, and leaders and members are encouraged to think of ideas for events and to feed these back.

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A suggestion was made about the scope for more 3 day weekends. Again, this is a good idea but does depend upon having sufficient leaders to lead them. All Scottish hostel events are three days, to encourage people to make the journey north.

In response to a question, the average age of members was confirmed as 43.

A suggestion was made in regards to the Foundation, that the trustee leading on this could make links with local authorities to support vulnerable adults. Child friendly events were proposed as an idea, and an intention to run at least one of these was confirmed.

More events in the midlands were proposed. In response, it was noted that the key to this is having sufficient leaders in the right places prepared to lead events. We will be focussing on increasing leader numbers and engagement.

A question was raised about the aspiration to recruit younger members, and how we define younger members if our average is 43? It was suggested that maybe this is people aged 25-35, and that this would be more attainable. This was a good proposal for developing a brief for this forthcoming work.

Our attendance at Pride events was discussed, with a member suggesting that marketing materials should be refreshed for next Summer's events. Peter confirmed that this has been a big discussion point and that this is being looked at.

In conclusion, Matt Tennant extended his thanks to Peter Walter for his work as chair, and to the staff members, Liam Russell and Harry Prosser. Peter Walter thanked the board for all of their hard work for OutdoorLads over the year.

### **OutdoorLads Volunteer Awards**

The OutdoorLads Volunteer Awards were then presented. There are presented to individuals nominated by members, and then shortlisted by Neil Phillips and Wilco Stekkinger. Thanks were given to Neil and Wilco for considering the nominations for the awards. There were lots of nominations, but only five could be given out. Framed certificates were presented to the following people for their hard work on behalf of the group:

Gavin Blackman  
Steve Sorrell  
Martin Watkins  
Sylvain Royer  
Phil Norris

Congratulations and thanks to the winners of the OutdoorLads Volunteer Award!





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## **Closing**

The closing OutdoorLads video was shown and instructions for the evenings social event given.

The meeting closed at 15:51.