

World Schools Debating Championships Limited

Minutes of a meeting of the board of directors
held between 29 July and 13 August 2011
at 84 Denbigh Street, London, United Kingdom, and online

Present

Taimur Bandey (TB)
Daragh Grant (DG)
Mehvesh Mumtaz Ahmed (MA)
James Probert (JP), chair
Geetha Creffield (GC)
Trevor Sather (TS)
Bojana Skrt (BS)

Apologies

Effie Giannakouri (EG)
Yuri Romanenkov (YR)

1. Methods of working as a board and roles and responsibilities of directors

JP proposed using BaseCamp more as a way of facilitating meetings over longer periods of time than allowed by a Skype call, which received support. BS raised concerns that the procedures for this meeting had not been made clear from the start, which JP accepted.

There was also general agreement amongst members of the board as to the importance of better communication with other stakeholders in the WSDC community.

2. The recent approach from IDEA

TS updated the board on negotiations between the board, the 2012 South African hosting body, and IDEA/OSI. The bursary fund provided by IDEA/OSI will be administered through the hosts for the time being, though Noel Selegzi is keen to continue conversations with WSDC Ltd on working more closely together. The board will now be invited to nominate one member of the committee that will consider applications for support from the bursary funds.

BS reiterated her opposition to the decision to negotiate directly with IDEA/OSI.

3. Adoption of new bye law wording and a membership fee structure

JP proposed the formal adoption of both the wording of the bye laws and the membership fee structure that had been consulted on recently with the membership. There was general agreement, though a strong feeling that the meaning of membership, and the purpose of collecting money, should be outlined clearly to potential members.

There was a sharp difference of opinion as to whether fees should be both canvassed and collected at Dundee, BS feeling this was an opportunity that should not be wasted, in the interests of doing things faster; DG feeling that it would cause administrative problems to launch the system before we were sure we could cope with the paperwork of recording receipt of money, etc.

4. Administrative matters

JP proposed moving the registered address of the company to Trevor Sather's residential address, in the light of the failure of negotiations with the English-Speaking Union for them to become company secretary. He also requested the board's permission to file the company's annual return with Companies House.

5. Contracts with future hosts

JP proposed drafting a contract that would form the basis of legal relations between WSDC Ltd and hosts from 2013 onwards. There was widespread support. MA suggested creating a broader document, a terms of reference for hosts, in addition to a strictly legally-binding document.

6. Policies

JP asked for volunteers to begin drafting organisational policies on fundraising and the website and communications. GC offered to make a start.

7. Terms of reference for committees

JP suggested that all committees and sub-committees of WSDC Ltd should have clear terms of reference, and that for the two top-level committees, the development committee and the tournament committee (with its associated executive members) these should be at the very least approved, and perhaps drafted, directly by the board. It was envisaged that the tournament committee executive would then draft and approve the terms of reference of its sub-committees (motions, complaints and the chief adjudicator's panel). There was widespread support for the idea. TS offered to draft the ToRs for the development committee, which would then act as a template for others.

8. Application for charitable status

JP provided an update on the aspiration to apply for registered charity status when the threshold of income has been reached. GC raised the requirement for an over-arching fundraising strategy to ensure that the required level of income is achieved.

9. Relationships with other parts of the organisation

JP voiced his view that the organisation, its members, officer and stakeholders does not currently feel like a group of individuals working towards a common cause, and raised the possibility that this is because of poor communication, rather than a fundamental difference of opinion within the community about its goals. There was general agreement as to the need for more regular and simpler communication. MA agreed with JP that board meetings should be more regular and that the published minutes of those meetings would provide a start in improving communication; she also offered to prepare a summary of the new structure to circulate to the community.

Summary of resolutions

- I. **that the board adopt as the bye laws of WSDC Ltd the document written for that purpose and placed on this site by way of a proposal, with all the amendments made to it up to 9 August 2011.**
PASSED 6-1 (BS opposed)
- II. **that the board welcome applications from members willing to pay the appropriate fee (as per levels proposed) as soon as payment is technically feasible; and that all unpaid memberships lapse exactly four weeks after the receipt of the first membership fee.**
PASSED 6-1 (BS opposed)
- III. **that the board approve Trevor Sather's residential address as the legal registered address of WSDC Ltd.**
PASSED 7-0
- IV. **that the board empower James Probert to complete WSDC Ltd's annual return and file it with Companies House no later than 5 September.**
PASSED 7-0

Summary of agreed actions

1. **appointment of a delegate to the bursary committee for WSDC 2012**
RESPONSIBLE: ALL
2. **ensure existence of a PayPal account that can collect fees**
RESPONSIBLE: JP and development committee
3. **move registered address and file annual return**
RESPONSIBLE: JP
4. **draft contract for future hosts**
RESPONSIBLE: JP

5. **draft policies for fundraising and website and communications**
RESPONSIBLE: GC
6. **draft terms of reference for development committee**
RESPONSIBLE: TS
7. **draft summary of new structure for circulation to community**
RESPONSIBLE: MA