Branch Management Committee Meeting

Wednesday 23rd March 2022
(Meeting via ZOOM)

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees
Adam Saxty       MWeldI CEng       Southern Counties (Vice Chair)
Alan Shand       AWeldI           Eastern Counties
Alan Smith       MWeldI CEng       North Scottish
Don Atkinson     TechWeldI Eng Tech Teesside
Hugh McPhillips  MWeldI IEng      South Western
Ian Fraser       AWeldI           North Western
John Chance      AWeldI           Highlands and Islands
Mark Roughsedge  MWeldI           Sheffield
Martin Boyd      MWeldI CEng       East Midlands
Miles Goodwin    TechWeldI Eng Tech South Wales
Peter Mullen     TechWeldI EngTech West Midlands
Ray Sheldon      MWeldI IEng       London
Stephen McCullough MWeldI CEng     Northern Ireland (Chair)
Claire Kimpton   MWeldI CEng       Professional Board Chair
Catherine Leahy  AWeldI           Younger Member Chair
Lois Appleyard   AWeldI           The Welding Institute
Kate Day         AWeldI           The Welding Institute (Secretariat)

Apologies
Alan Denney      FWeldI CEng       Technical Group Chair
Colin Galbraith  AWeldI           Northumbria
Peter Boothby    FWeldI CEng       Northumbria
Iain MacLeod     SenMWeldI CEng    Scottish Branch
John Hill        The Welding Institute (Director)

Please Note:  Merseyside, Manchester, Leeds and Kent were not represented and are not operational

1 Welcome, Introduction and Apologies
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Alan Smith who was deputising for North Scottish Branch, and noted apologies as above.

2 Meeting protocols, confidentiality and security
Lois Appleyard outlined the current online meeting protocols (i.e. participants to remain muted, no recording, safe environment for all) and noted that all participants should have signed and should abide by The Welding Institute’s Confidentiality Agreement.
3 Remembering Matt Inglis
The meeting observed a minutes silence to remember Matt Inglis, a member of this committee and previous Council and Professional Board member. Matt gave many years of service to The Welding Institute and Scottish Branch in particular. Members have been invited to sign an electronic card which will be forwarded to his family to mark their recent loss.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting
Minutes of the Branch Management Committee held on 23rd October 2022

4.1 Corrections
It was noted that Julian French, the new Chair for TG1 - Structures and Infrastructure works for Messrs Sandberg, Consulting Engineers and not Sandvik. Correction to be made to paragraph 10 of the previous minutes
It was noted that paragraph numbering is out of order after Paragraph 11
ACTION: Corrected minutes to be forwarded to the Chair for signature.

4.2 Matters Arising

4.2.1 Closed
Minutes forwarded to Chair for signature
i. Revised Terms of Reference have been approved by email and circulated to Branches
ii. Chair and Vice Chair have been approved by Professional Board by email
iii. Branches and PAG to continue to offer online meetings, especially for Overseas members and others who cannot access meetings face to face.
iv. PAG to respond to the YMC re complimentary Associate members
v. London Branch to forward comments on complimentary memberships for wider circulation
vi. Item to be included in the next Members Bulletin re recordings and slides that are now available
vii. Professional Board are to be invited to consider recommendations for engagement in overseas areas. Update:- Working Group has been formed - see Agenda Item 7
viii. Branch Programme Master Plan to be added to the members’ area of the website
ix. Circulate YMC report with minutes.

4.2.2 Ongoing
i. A review of membership benefits (including the diary) is to be undertaken to support existing members and attract new ones has been added to PAG Business Plan 2022
   Ongoing
   Update:- Lois Appleyard explained that Membership now has a new Director (John Hill) who will be reviewing and implementing a new strategy for growing membership which will require a review of the whole membership package, including all benefits. Lois explained that the minimum order for the diaries was 1000 of which only 130 were requested by members, Branches made some of use of the diaries as a promotional tool but there was still significant waste.
ii. Minutes of Branch Management Committee to be added to the website
   Update:- In progress as part of re-design of Members Portal - see item 8.
iii. Subject to the agreement of Professional Board, a revised process for delivering Branch Grants to be drafted with Branch Treasurers for implementation in April 2022
   Update: Changes were agreed in principal - See Agenda Item 4
iv. PAG to continue to liaise with TWI IT over implementation of Office 365 and Branch emails
   Ongoing
   Update:- Lois Appleyard acknowledged that this issue has been ongoing for over 2 years now and will be raised at Professional Board on the 24th March. It is also now on
the TWI Risk Register as part of wider matters relating to GDPR. Email addresses have been created for all Branches but the implementation is waiting on TWI to roll out Office 365. Adam Saxty reported a loss of contact with members in Southern Counties Branch and whilst the branch has a Linked In account, its numbers are small. Adam asked if other non-TWI options could be explored to facilitate communication between Branch Members. Southern Counties have purchased their own Office 365 Licence to create their own email account details of which have been shared with Branch Members and added to the Branch page on the website. Hugh McPhillips and Miles Goodwin echoed Adams concerns explaining that is very difficult to develop the hubs around the South West and to run events without being able to contact members directly. Martin Boyd reflected that the continued failure to deliver by TWI is having a very negative impact on Branches, members and their relationship with The Welding Institute/TWI. Stephen McCullough and Claire Kimpton both recognised and endorsed the concerns raised and will re-visit this at Professional Board on behalf of Branches.

**ACTION:** Non-TWI options to be considered for branch communication.

**ACTION:** Issue to be raised again with TWI at Professional Board.

vi Any Branch who would like a branded Welding Institute Linked In account should contact PAG.

**Ongoing Update:** Several Branches now have a Linked In account and they are still available if required. Don Atkinson pointed out that the Institute Linked In accounts have less followers that members individual accounts. Teesside Committee are using their personal Linked In accounts which have a larger following to promote Branch activities.

vi A working group is to be formed to review and update the Manual. Proposals to be brought to the next BMC meeting in April 2022 - See Agenda item 8

3 **Future BMC meetings**

The Chair invited feedback from members on the format and location of future meetings. All agreed that online meetings offered significant, time, environmental and costs savings but at the expense of networking opportunities, vital to the health and development of the Institute. It was agreed that the Branch Management Committee should try to meet in person once a year. In order to off-set the cost of face to face meetings it was suggested that the meeting be accompanied by a technical talk and/or a site visit in the morning with a social dinner the preceding evening. It was noted that a Hybrid meeting format should remain available for those who can’t travel.

**ACTION:** Autumn will be arranged at TWI Sheffield or NAMRC Sheffield with a tour of the facilities in the morning.

4 **Branch Grants and Funding**

Members of the Committee reviewed the proposed changes to Branch Grants noting that a £5000 maximum threshold for the Number One accounts would be more realistic than the £2000 proposed in the paper. Martin Boyd queried the payment of Branch Grants over the previous 2 years. In 2020, Grants were delayed due to staff changes and the move to home working Notional grants were paid to all those Branches actively offering online meetings. In 2021, all Branches were invited to bid for Grants but in light of the lack of expenditure due to Covid, no grants were requested.

**ACTION:** PAG to confirm the details of Grant payments to East Midlands Branch.
Members of East Midlands Branch have queried how membership subscriptions are used. Claire Kimpton said this has been raised at Professional Board and a Budget Report will be going to Professional Board on the 24th March 2022. It was suggested that Branch Treasurers should be involved in this discussion to help deliver a workable solution. Mark Roughsedge and Ray Sheldon (both Branch Treasurers) volunteered to join a working Group to progress this.

**ACTION:** Grants paper to be revised (as above) and distributed to Branch Treasurers.

**ACTION:** Branch Treasurers Working group to report back to the next meeting.

### 5 Branch Programme and events

Members discussed opportunities for further support on branch events. The online events have been very well received and the majority of Branches will be continuing to offer both face to face, online and hybrid meetings. All agreed that Good Practise Guidance would be helpful including advice on the purchase of equipment. It was noted that London Branch had invested £500 in media equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings. It was suggested that there might be discounts available given the number of Branches who might be interested in this.

**ACTION:** Guidance note from London Branch on equipment for hybrid meetings to be circulated with the minutes

**ACTION:** TWI IT to clarify if any discounts might be available and whether TWI could make IT purchases on behalf of Branches and to aid auditing.

### 6 Discussion Paper - CPD

Eastern Counties Branch tabled a paper on CPD and the opportunity to engage TWI more in Branch activities in order to gain CPD. The paper outlines opportunities for staff as speakers and through networking. The paper proposed all TWI staff should have something in their individual annual appraisals about contributing to Branch events to gain CPD. Lois asked if this was a specific issue for TWI Cambridge or potentially a wider opportunity for all Branches to gain more support from local industrial members. Alan Shand Offered to discuss the idea with the new Director of Membership, John Hill.

**ACTION:** PAG to put Alan Shand in touch with John Hill to discuss CPD opportunities available via Branches.

### 7 Overseas Membership Update

Members considered an update from the Overseas Membership Working Group. All agreed that Overseas Groups will have similar challenges to those based in the UK. UK Branches were supportive of the need to share knowledge and experience between all branches and members recognising regional differences. Hugh McPhillips suggested working with Rotary International may be another avenue for making connections. Hugh also suggested making use of some of the recorded webinars in the webinar archive. Alan Smith offered support from North Scottish Branch who have some good connections in Perth, Western Australia.

### 8 Branch Manual and Branch Resources

Members considered a report outlining opportunities to update the Branch Manual and website resources for Branches. All recognised the need to have easily accessible, readable and updateable information for Branches and acknowledged that the work on the website and Manual would need to progress in tandem. It was noted that the proposed new sections were appropriate other than ‘Heritage’ which was better placed on the website as a resource. Revisions will need to be completed in stages but to a tight deadline to ensure the whole project does not impact on the smooth running of Branches. Members were invited to join a reference Group to help progress and ‘sign’ off each stage of the work. Adam Saxty volunteered to contribute to this group.
**ACTION:** Project Plan and group of volunteers to be established in order to progress these revisions by the next meeting.

9 **Branch reports**
Branch reports were circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair invited members to comment on the reports tabled. Ray Sheldon gave a verbal update from London Branch (written report to be circulated with the minutes). Hugh McPhillips outlined the local sub-groups that are emerging in the South West and highlighted the newly created South Western Branch Committee position for Women’s’ Representative.

8 **Report on Technical Groups activities**
Alan Denney (Technical Group Co-ordinator) was unable to attend the meeting in person. His report was noted by members with thanks

9 **Report from Younger Members Committee**
Catherine Leahy (Chair) presented a report on behalf of the Younger Members Committee. Of particular note is the Apprentice of the Year Award which is being developed along the same lines as Northumbria Branch’s Apprentice Award. Other Branches run similar competitions. It is proposed to recognise all the Branch Award winners with one national award winner in August/September. The YMC are currently looking for sponsors for this award.
**ACTION:** Don Atkinson to share information on the Teesside Branch Apprentice Award with the YMC
Branch YMC representatives do a significant amount of work with schools and colleges to support STEM activities, Regional YMC representatives are having difficulty in progressing this work as they are having to use personal email addresses. Branch email addresses would overcome the safeguarding concerns associated with private email addresses and the YMC requests and quick resolution to the Branch email address problem - See paragraph 2.2.2(iv)

10 **Report on Membership Statistics and Branch Associate memberships**
The report was noted

11 **Revised Terms of Reference**
The adoption of the revised Terms of Reference was noted

12 **Branch Discount Codes**
Branches were reminded of new Branch discount codes for Associate Membership for 2022

13 **Any Other Business**
   i. Claire Kimpton gave a brief update on the new Institute Journal, Welding Matters’ the first issue of which will be published later this spring. Claire emphasised the need for content and feedback from readers. Claire confirmed there will be a section called, ‘Ask the Expert’ for which the Editorial Board needs questions. Kate Day noted there are Branch correspondents and PAG will actively encourage their contributions for the journal as we go forward.
   ii. Ray Sheldon gave an update on the work he is doing with former Kent Branch Chair, Norman Baldwin, to provide support for members in Kent as part of London Branches activities.
   iii. Alan Shand asked when conference facilities might be available for Branch meetings at TWI Cambridge. Lois Appleyard confirmed that the Granta Conference Centre is now closed and there are currently no large meeting rooms available at TWI Cambridge for the next 12 months.
iv. Hugh McPhillips reminded members that registration is now open for the WorldSkills competition 2022 and encouraged Branch representatives to promote this to their local colleges. With over 75,000 attendees, this a good event to showcase our skills and expertise.

v. Kate Day reminded members that for the next round of Loyal Service Award Nominations, Branches can consider posthumous nominations for members who have recently died.

**Date of next meeting:** 5th October 2022 Sheffield