

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at the RAFA Club Crook on Tuesday 12th September 2006

The meeting started at 7:30 PM

Those present

Kevin Hillary – Chairman
Mike Wood – Vice Chairman
John Askwith
Dave Butler
Brian Cox
Dave Foxtton
Ian Gardner
Frank Holmes
Trevor Horner
Graham Lord
Gerry Mudd
Steve Raine
Norma Richardson
Arthur Temple
James Lynn – Secretary

1 Apologises for absence

Tim Hall, Trevor Hewitt, Julian Shepherd

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the 8th August 2006 meeting were accepted as a true record (after corrections to 8c, 8e and 8g) and signed by the Chairman Kevin Hillary

Proposed by Dave Foxtton
Seconded by Mike Wood

3 Matters arising from the last meeting

None

4 Identify other business.

- Heritage Stock Group (discussed in Chairmans Report 5(b)).
- AGM Directors nominations reminder (Secretarys Report).
- Request for documentation/meeting minutes from Jenny Robinson ECT (Secretarys Report).
- Secretarys request for expenses to cover printing consumables (Secretarys Report).
- Santa Specials/Community Rail Festival (discussed in section 8c).
- Clock for Stanhope Station (AOB section 10).
- 2D nomination (AOB section 10).

5a Chairman's Report

The Chairman (Kevin Hillary) gave a brief oral report. He commented on the meeting held to discuss heritage rolling stock issues with the various groups and the outcome was summarised in Dr Mike Woods letter (which was circulated to all Directors before the meeting). The Chairman commented that Trust members are uncertain about Weardale Railway Limited (WRL) future strategy in relation to heritage railway issues.

The Chairmans report was approved by the Directors.

5b Heritage Railway Stock Group (Ref 13 points contained in Dr Mike Woods letter)

The Directors expressed concerns whether the Trust could negotiate on behalf of other groups or charities and whether the Trust Directors who hold trusteeship of these groups would be considered to have a conflict of interest. The Secretary commented that the Trust has the powers to work and negotiate with other groups in furtherance of its objects. For the Trust to negotiate on behalf of these other groups, the Trust would require that these groups be constituted (with a formal constitution) and formally confirm (in writing) that they wish the Trust to negotiate on their behalf with Weardale Railway Limited (WRL) and ECT. The Secretary reminded the Directors that they are duty bound to declare any conflicts of interest should any arise.

Steve Raine (on behalf of WRL) commented to Dr Mike Woods 13 points as follows:

Points 1, 2, 3 & 4 Due to the conditions set by the funders of the railway (and CVA conditions) the Weardale Railway will be a heritage or tourist railway. (Note - A community railway has different requirements, legal definition and a different funding regime mostly through statutory bodies). The railway is currently a not for profit company but its structure will change to a community interest company (CIC) shortly. The business plan for the railway operations is to break even within 5 years based on minimised operational costs. To achieve this aim a balance has to be struck between a heritage railway with the attendant restoration project work and a commercially viable railway.

An ideal example of minimising cost is if the Trust, railway or associated groups could come up with 2 rakes of Mk1 TSO rolling stock with a restaurant and or buffet car which allows the railway company to minimise operating costs by not paying out rental fees for rolling stock and just funding base maintenance. An example of a similar situation is the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway (see also item 6).

Heritage railway projects can co-exist within this low operating cost regime if separately funded by grants and not through railway revenue. The railway company would welcome additional facilities for restoration work such as a coach shed if the Trust could co-ordinate funding and project manage works using volunteers.

Point 5 The structure of the railway will remain as it is with the Trust having 3 directors on the railway board. If heritage issues are a priority to Trust members a Trust Director needs to write a paper setting out these heritage issues which can be reviewed by the Trust Directors and the railway board.

Points 6 & 7 If rolling stock is provided by ECT the depreciated cost of this equipment would have to appear on the railway company's P&L as a charge (this is a complex financial transaction). As the commercial aim of the railway company is to operate at low cost it would make sense to use rolling stock from any group which meets the requirements in Points 1, 2, 3 & 4. Steve agreed that commercial arrangements/agreements for rolling stock have yet be worked out.

Point 8 A DPIC (a suitable qualified volunteer) will have to be in charge and supervise volunteers working on rolling stock restoration. This is to meet Health and Safety requirements.

Points 9 & 10 The railway is short of space for restoration work (see comments in 1, 2, 3 & 4), however it was pointed out that 1/3rd of the Trust activities will be heritage restoration work (requirement of the Trusts charitable objectives). The railway company will try to accommodate this work in conjunction with the Trust.

Point 11 The railway company has no long term plans for the Gun Barrel Shed and working with the Trust needs to find a volunteer champion (working with Gerry and Arthur) to fund raise and project manage the restoration of this building. However the building is on an 18 year lease which may make grant funding difficult. It may be more cost effective in the short term to find other locations for rolling stock restoration work.

Point 12 Survey results will be made available to the Trust.

Point 13 The Gun Barrel Shed needs a more detailed survey including the roof structure in order to see if the structure can be made safe cost effectively for vehicle maintenance and restoration work (this requires the hire of a road rail cherry picker – the Trust will fund this see proposal)

Proposal: The Trust is to ask Dave Ramsey (a Trust member) to undertake a full structural survey of the gun barrel shed. In order to facilitate this survey the Trust will fund a road/rail cherry picker (Trevor Horner agreed to supply costs)

Proposed: Dave Butler
Seconded: Mike Woods

The Directors approved this proposal.

Proposal: Arthur Temple to obtain prices and sizes of poly tunnels suitable for restoration work (For example the ones in use at the National Railway Museum York).

Proposed: Arthur Temple
Seconded Dave Foxtan

Dave Butler asked how the Trust Directors will respond to interested parties/Trust members about these questions. It was agreed that approved minutes from this Trust Council meeting will be sent to the members of the Heritage Stock Group.

6 Treasurer's report

The Treasurer was not at the meeting and had previously circulated accounts for the previous month. Gerry reported that Trust income this month was £5000 made up from the transfer of stock from the shop to the railway company and he as agreed had made a matching donation of £5000. The Directors thanked Gerry for his generous donation.

The Directors approved the Treasurers report.

7 Secretarys report

No report was presented

AGM – The Secretary reminded the Directors that nomination forms for the Trust Council need to be completed and returned by 7th October.

Secretarys request for expenses to cover printing costs – The Secretary asked whether he could recover the cost of a laser printer cartridge which has been used to print the Trusts meeting and other documentation (such as the Charity return/annual reports). The Directors approved payment.

Request for documentation/meeting minutes from Jenny Robinson ECT – The Secretary reported that Jenny Robinson (ECT Company Secretary) had asked to be included in the C/C list for any of the Trusts meeting minutes. The Directors approved this request (any meeting minutes are public records as the Trust is a Charity) however it was agreed that minutes will only be made public after approval at the following Trust Council meeting.

8 Other Reports from Trust Directors

8a Update of WRL Administration (Steve Raine WRL/ECT)

Steve Raine had met with Government Office on the issue of outstanding grant funding. Government Office requires a report to be completed covering the project. Steve has so far completed the commentary, project achievements and revenue shortfall.

Line purchase – No response has been received from Network Rail solicitors. Company/Trust documentation has been completed.

Wolsingham Depot – Boundaries have been marked out and a site drawing is being prepared.

Volunteers/railway operation – Steve reported except for a DPIC (Depot person in charge) every volunteer post has been filled.

Wolsingham Station – A container has been purchased to act as a ticket office. A new electricity supply and meter has been installed by NEDL.

Railway Board – A set of railway operating management accounts are being prepared.

Shop – A report has being prepared on what items could be sold in the shop however the Trust and Railway Company need to get together to decide on what Trust items should be sold in the shop and the level of revenue sharing – this matter is to be referred to the Marketing sub-group. A volunteer is currently manning the shop.

8b Weekly Lottery/Fund raising (Arthur Temple)

Arthur reported that there is now a £500 roll-over – The Trust Directors discussed how this could be distributed. It was agreed to publish an amendment to the rules in BTL allowing the first 2 numbers drawn to win the roll-over prize. A special Christmas draw will be held under these new rules.

Arthur reported that 15 litres of paint had been donated for Bishop Auckland Station.

8c Marketing sub group report (Tim Hall)

A Marketing Group meeting has held last week to discuss the operation of the Santa Specials and Rail Fest. Proposed dates for Santa Specials are 2,3,9,10,16,17,23,24 December - 2 trains per day will depart from Wolsingham at 10:00 AM and 13:15 PM (1 train only will operate on December 24th). Need to check on the availability of a Class 37 diesel. John Askwith is to write a short report. Next meeting will be held on 21st September.

Rail Fest

Trevor Horner, Dave Butler, Kevin Hillary and John Askwith attended the last meeting. Next Rail Fest meeting will be held on Thursday 14th September. Attractions at Bishop Auckland will include a miniature railway, steam launch, Traction engine, classic cars and photographic displays. A traffic management plan (including a location plan for activities) will have to be sent to WVDC (This will cost the Trust £25/hour consultants fees). 1,000 Rail Fest Northern Echo supplements will be ordered for Bishop Auckland Station.

8d Management Group – (John Askwith)

Meeting 3 minutes have been sent to Steve Raine for review. Next meeting will be held on 26th September usual location

8e Major Projects and Funding Sub Group – (Gerry Mudd/Arthur Temple)

Last meeting was postponed - new meeting will be held on 26th September at 2:30PM.

8f Educational Activities/Talks/Publications/Magazine – (John Askwith)

John Askwith attended a Train Trail meeting. The organisations behind this idea are looking for Trust support to obtain funding for these activities.

Education – An offer of help with teaching aids has been received from Tyne and Wear Museum. John to follow up.

Talks

23/24 th September	Locomotion
27 September	Ferryhill History Society
24 October	Bishop Wearmouth
30 October	Guisborough
13 November	Middlesborough
20 November	Shotton ???

Publications – Rebirth book to reprinted – the author is to update and printing costs to be obtained

Between The Lines Contributions 19th October and dispatch 4th November to meet AGM deadlines.

8g Membership Secretarys Report (Frank Holmes)

Frank reported that due to technical issues (member pass words) a members only section of the website is not feasible. Frank reported on email correspondence/enquiries which have been handed over to Steve Raine as they concern the Railway Company.

8h Volunteer Training

Trevor Horner reported that he has had some response for track walkers (2 definite volunteers).

8j New fund raising ideas – Ian Gardner

Gerry reported on the 'Friends of Weardale Railway' proposal.

9 Restoration Activities

9a Locomotives

Both 0-6-0 shunters are under repair

9b Carriage and Wagon restoration activities

No activities were reported.

9c Infrastructure

Some track clearing work has led to the Weardale Environmental Trust inquiring if the railway has a wildlife plan. The Trust is to liaise with other interested groups to develop a plan.

Trevor Horner commented on third party statements made over the condition of the track work between Wolsingham and Broad Wood. Trevor reported that the Geismar UK track inspection trolley had inspected the track between Wolsingham and Broad Wood and had found no faults.

10 Any other business.

Station Clock for Stanhope Station

Julian Shepherd reported (via the Secretary) that he had found a source of railway style clocks which may be suitable for Stanhope Station. The Directors approved this idea and asked Julian to get quotes and specifications.

2D Nomination – Steve Raine

The Directors approved Steve Raine to act as a Director of 2D on behalf of the Trust and the nomination form was signed by the Chairman.

Meeting closed at 10:25 PM

12 Date/time of the next meeting is 10th October 2006 7:30PM at the RAFA Club Crook.