

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at the RAFA Club Crook on Tuesday 14th February 2006

The meeting started at 7:33 PM

Those present

Kevin Hillary – Chairman
Mike Wood – Vice Chairman
Trevor Hewitt - Treasurer
John Askwith
Dave Butler
Brian Cox
Ian Gardner
Tim Hall
Frank Holmes
Trevor Horner
Graham Lord
Gerry Mudd
Norma Richardson
Arthur Temple
James Lynn - Secretary

John Hummel attended the meeting by invitation of the Directors

1 Apologises for absence

Dave Foxton, Steve Raine, Julian Shepherd

The Chairman Kevin Hillary was delayed and the Mike Wood (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the 10th January 2005 meeting were accepted as a true record (after corrections to the Treasurers report – item 6, & items 8a, 10b, 11a) and signed by the Vice Chairman Mike Wood

Proposed by Ian Gardner
Seconded by Dave Butler

3 Matter actions not covered on the agenda

None

4 Identify other business.

- Loop at Woslingham Station - Trevor Horner (to be covered in Infrastructure)
- Directors feedback on posters
- Transport Festival – John Askwith
- Priority on repayment of debt – Gerry Mudd
- Follow up on fund raising ideas - Ian Gardner
- Trust shop

5 Chairman's Report

The Chairman (Kevin Hillary) gave a brief oral report (based on his report previously emailed to all Directors)

The Directors accepted the Chairmans report

Proposed – Frank Holmes
Seconded - Graham Lord
The motion was accepted unanimously.

6 Treasurers report

The Treasurer reported that January's income was £7741 and the expenditure was £3355. This cash flow was mostly due to the canopy project. From Gerry Mudd's loan of £7,500 (which is being used as cash flow for the canopy) £2,500 has been spent and volunteer time on the canopy project has been valued at £13,000. The £20,000 loan from Steve Raine has been paid to the Administrator to cover the Trust costs of the Railway CVA. This loan has an interest rate of 4% per annum which accrues daily to be paid from 1st February 2006 (As required by the Trust M&As on loans from Directors to the Trust).

Another £10,000 loan is required to cover the settlement with Weardale Castings giving the Trust a potential debt of £37,500

The Treasurers report was accepted

Proposed – Dave Butler
Seconded – John Askwith

The motion was approved unanimously.

7 Secretarys report

The Secretary discussed his proposed motion and explained that this motion would cover the actions taken by the Treasurer to meet the payment schedule required by the Administrator in-order to complete the Railway CVA.

The motion read as follows:

'The Directors approve the actions taken by the Treasurer to meet the Trusts agreed obligation to fund the Weardale Railway Company Administration to the amount of £37,500 (payments are to be made at dates and amounts determined by the PwC administrator Sean Hamilton). The Directors further agree that these payments are in line with the Trusts Memorandum of Association Clause 3 and its policy as stated in the Trust Council minutes detailed below'.

This proposal is based on the following motions approved by the Directors

From the 13th December 2005 Trust Council meeting

Proposal – It was proposed that the £40,000 be re-designated as funds for use to get the railway back into operation (Secretarys proviso – subject to this being acceptable under the relevant Charity/Company Acts and accounting practices).

Proposed - Trevor Horner
Seconded - Ian Gardner

11 Directors approved the proposal 1 abstained.

From 10th January 2006 Trust Council meeting

Proposal: The Directors agreed to the loan of £15,000 from Gerry Mudd and accept the terms and conditions which are attached to this loan.

Proposed – Ian Gardner
Seconded – Brian Cox

The Directors approved the motion unanimously – John Askwith expressed his disappointment over the reduction of the loan amount and the conditions attached.

The Secretary reminded the Directors that the Trust must have enough funds to cover its charitable aims.

8 Other Reports from Trust Directors

8a Update of WRT Administration (Steve Raine/John Hummel)

Steve Raine could not attend the meeting due to illness – he had previously emailed the Directors a report on the status of the CVA. Gerry Mudd reported that the Revenue and Customs would be undertaking a VAT audit of the old railway company covering the period 1st Jan 2003 to 1st March 2006 (at the completion of the CVA). Trevor Hewitt suggested that Nicola (finance officer WRC) be employed (by ECT/PwC) to sort out all the old financial records.

John Hummel reported that ECT is now paying the bills. The conveyance line with Network Rail will be completed after the completion of the CVA. Weardale Castings have signed the Heads of Agreement over land at the depot. John discussed with the Directors the options for running trains in 2006:

Option 1 – Passenger trains running before CVA is completed – not seen as a good idea.

Option 2 – Complete CVA continue driver training, complete track work repairs before running trains – the Directors agreed with this approach. Trevor Horner asked about the conveyance of the over bridges to DCC – this will be completed at the same time when the line is conveyed to the Railway Company.

John also confirmed that the lease of the gun barrel shed had been signed.

8b Weekly Lottery/Fund raising (Arthur Temple)

Arthur Temple reported that the lottery ready to run. He reported that he had 3 donations from the Directors amounting to £1050 (with 28% Gift Aid £1300).

8c Marketing sub group report

Tim Hall reported that the new Railway Company's Marketing Manager is in hospital having suffered a stroke. Minutes of the last meeting are to be mailed out. Next marketing sub group meeting will be held on 28th Feb at Tims home.

8d Management Group – John Askwith

Meeting minutes 000 have been issued. Next Management Group meeting will be held on 21st February at 7:15 PM at Dr Woods Surgery.

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

Gerry Mudd issued minutes from the meeting and reviewed the progress to date.

Leader + - Revenue only registered an expression of interest.

Lafarge – Possible grants for canopy and Eastgate.

Local Heritage/Project Development – 2 to 3 months before grant status is known.

Gun Barrel Shed – Stage 2 survey still to be carried out. Trevor Hewitt to get info on cherry picker located at the Llangollen Railway (may have gone to Main Line Trust).

Office of the Rail Regulator – Paper work ready should be ready in 6 weeks covering Eastgate to Witton-Le-Wear. No trains can run between Witton and Bishop Auckland due to 'operational' interface issues with Network Rail and the WRC.

County Durham Foundation – They have identified other funders and trusts for projects. Gerry needs a prioritised list.

Identified Projects/Other issues

Footpath from Low Barnes Nature Reserve and the Railway – Money available from DCC.

TA are to work at Wolsingham March 4th.

Darlington Turntable (53ft dia) - £1 from Network Rail removal paperwork still to be completed.

Lafarge site/Social Club – Discussed terms of licences. Lafarge may assign lease or ownership after 31/03/2009. It was pointed out that changes to water rates (based on surface area of Trust property) may cause financial issues. There was some discussion about fencing the Social Club site – there are some fencing panels (approx 80) in storage however probably not enough. Dave Butler has a fencing contractor contact and will obtain costs. There will be a site meeting with Lafarge on Wednesday 22nd Feb.

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

Educational Activities - Frank Holmes asked that someone else take the lead due to pressure of other activities. John Askwith wondered if the new membership skills form had educational activities as an explicit item. Dave Butler will approach a friend (retired teacher) to see if he could help.

Talks - Dates in magazine.

Publications – No report

Magazine - The Directors were reminded that magazine content for the next magazine needs to be with John by 20th April for publication by 5th May

8f Membership Secretarys Report (Frank Holmes)

Frank Holmes reported that the Trust had currently 764 members (including 130 junior/corporate members) necessitating the mailing of 634 magazines. 260 members did not renew last year and Frank suggested a special mailing to these members which would cost £65. Directors will review this special mailing at the next council meeting. John Askwith suggested that the Trust should maintain a presence by opening the shop however Trevor remarked that some days last year the shop no customers.

Website – Frank requested news items that could be placed on the web site for public consumption. Gerry Mudd volunteered to send Frank news items for the web site.

8g Volunteer Training

Dave Butler has found a PTS website offering training materials and videos (£14 + VAT). 141 training will start again this weekend. Dave Butler volunteered to act as the Trust Volunteer training co-ordinator.

9 Restoration Activities

9a Locomotives

Negotiations had started on the purchase of a steam locomotive.

9b Carriage and Wagon restoration activities

No report was presented.

9c Infrastructure

Canopy – Trevor Hewitt presented an oral report. The canopy is progressing reasonable pace due to good weather. Glazing bars, lead work and glass are to be ordered. Trevor Hewitt asked about the canopy lighting. John Askwith reported that he had a 1930s photograph and modern copies which had been fitted to the Settle and Carlisle may be similar. Lighting (ordered by WRC) may still be on site – whereabouts are to be located.

10 Any other business

Wolsingham Loop – Trevor Horner

Trevor Horner asked about the length of the loop, its affect on the length of the platform and alterations to the retaining wall at Wolsingham Station. To create the loop would require sluicing the track which would make the platform shorter causing the loop to be shorter than optimal. Trevor Horner asked if the loop could be placed to the east of the station and have only 1 platform at Wolsingham. Gerry Mudd reported that this matter was discussed at the Major funding and Projects meeting however the loop length has yet to be agreed.

Motion – Subject to feasibility the Directors agreed to the installation of a loop at Wolsingham Station.

Proposed – Gerry Mudd

Seconded – Kevin Hillary

The motion was approved (13 for 1 against)

Transport Festival

John Askwith asked about the progress on the Transport Festival and its location. Arthur Temple asked for a list of Transport Festival activities to see if funding was available from Lafarge. Arthur agreed to try to get an agreement from Lafarge to allow use of the Eastgate site before the licences are signed. It was agreed to wait the outcome of the site meeting with Lafarge.

Posters – Trevor Horner

Trevor Horner displayed the new proposed Weardale Railway posters. The Directors expressed their initial approval of these posters.

New fund raising ideas – Ian Gardner

Poster - Trevor Horner

Camping Weekends at Eastgate – Kevin Hillary

Teddy Bears Picnic weekends – Kevin Hillary
Tractor Rally – Mike Wood
Single mark car rallies – Mike Wood
Tea Dances – Ian Gardner
Visit by City of Truro – Kevin Hillary

The Directors agreed to make this an open item.

Prioritising of Trust Debt and Funding – Gerry Mudd

£5,000 In bank account

Debts

£20,000 Steve Raine loan for CVA (£60/month interest payment)
£10,000 Settlement with Weardale Castings
£ 7,500 Gerry Mudd loan for canopy
£37,500 Debt

Money In

£ 5,000 Cash in bank
£20,000 Railway Heritage Trust
£12,000 Lafarge (not confirmed)
£37,000 Total cash in

The question was posed what order does the Trust pay of its debts. It was agreed to pay Steve Raines loan first as it carried interest (as required by the Trusts M&As)

Trevor Hewitt commented that the canopy project may have a cash surplus of £20,000.

Motion Trust revenue surplus should be used to pay off the Trust loans first,

Proposed – Gerry Mudd
Seconded – Trevor Hewitt

The Directors approved the motion unanimously.

The Shop

The Directors agreed to that this issue should be raised at the next meeting

Donations

Kevin Hillary handed over a cheque for £50 from the sale of logs.

The meeting closed at 22:05 PM.

12 Date/time of the next meeting is 14th March 2006 7:30PM at the RAFA Club Crook.