

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at Bishop Auckland Station on Tuesday 10th May 2011

The meeting started at 7:30 PM.

Those present

David Scott-Chair
Trevor Hewitt – Treasurer (Who also took the minutes in the absence of the Secretary)
Gerry Mudd
Brian Cox
David Bullows
Dr Mike Wood
Clive Elsdon

1 Apologises for absence

James Lynn; Steve Raine; John Askwith

Absent

Michael Wilkinson, Malcolm Simpson

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the 12th April 2011 were approved with one correction to item 3 Para 3, the word “report” changed to “rumour”.

The minutes of the 12th April 2011 were approved by the Directors
Proposed Gerry Mudd
Seconded Brian Cox

3 Matters arising from the last meeting

Junior club coach exterior colour. David Scott had discussed with David Million a rumour that the coach would be painted black and had expressed the Trustees concerns that this would not blend very well with the liveries of existing coaches. David Million commented that the final colour for the junior coach had yet to be decided and whilst black had been considered this was now unlikely to be the final colour and our standard “Blood & Custard” was a strong possibility.

4 Identify other business.

Closer ties with the Bishop Auckland Station Trust-Clive Elsdon
Persistent absence by Trustees from board meeting, action to be considered?-David Scott
Co-option of additional trustees-Brian Cox & Gerry Mudd

5 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None.

6 Chairman’s Report

The Chairman circulated a written report indicating the following points: -

The trustees present joined the Chairman in congratulating James Lynn and his partner Jane Ascroft on the birth of their daughter Hannah on the 28th April 2011.

He confirmed that Mike Fairburn, the BARS Group General Manager would attend tonight’s meeting to discuss the trustee’s concerns about a number of matters.

Ron Enticott who is a Trust member and a major contributor towards the purchase of No.40 has suggested that the board consider naming No.40. He further suggested that we name the loco after Sir Bobby Charlton who originated from Ashington. This was discussed by the Trustees and rejected, it was agreed that we would retain No.40 as an unnamed locomotive.

Trust objectives, need to be costed and prioritised after discussion with WRC to ensure there was no conflict with their plans.

The Chairman's report was approved by the Directors.

Proposed David Bullows

Seconded Trevor Hewitt.

7 At approximately 07:50 Mike Fairburn joined the meeting and proceeded to discuss and comment on the concerns raised by the Chairman following the April 12th Meeting.

Depot Security-examples of finding the depot insecure were provided and MF promised to speak to the Depot Staff to ask them to pay more attention to locking doors and general security. Also he explained that when the coal loading pad and approach road were completed two sets of gates would be installed, one at the main entrance and further set providing security to the running shed area.

Rolling stock Storage-with space within the Depot about to be severely constrained due to the coal handling facility it will be necessary to move some of the rolling stock to another site, the whereabouts of this is yet to be decided, but Wisersley and Eastgate were two possibilities. It was though unanimously agreed that covered storage was essential and the availability of second hand storage units was under investigation.

Heritage Service- the next item on the agenda following the imminent completion of the coal handling facilities was the increased promotion and development of the Heritage Service.

Gun Barrel Shed Development-funding was being sought for the development of this building into a Visitor Centre although this was likely to be more long term. In the meantime any rolling stock stored there could remain. Pointwork and track alterations were planned to maintain the rail access to the building although funding could be a problem in the short term.

Communications between WRC/BARS & the Trust-concern was expressed by Trevor Hewitt about the lack of formal notification regarding management changes and movements, e.g. Head of Finance at Stanhope, General Manager departure and appointment. MF agreed that this area of our business needs to be improved. Brian Cox commented that he did not understand why the Class 73 locomotive was removed from Weardale, seemingly at short notice without any information being passed on to the Trust either prior to or even after the locomotive's departure. His other concern was that there was now no back up for No.40 which had resulted in recent unsatisfactory alternatives being attempted e.g. use of the Sentinel and static coaches at Stanhope. MF responded by saying that this loco was used as part funding to facilitate the purchase of working Class 56 loco which will be operating within the mainline registered freight fleet. A replacement was being actively sought with another 73 or possibly a Class 20 being possibilities.

Wolsingham Depot Development Plans – Mike Wood's coach to be repainted following the graffiti attack, WRC to fund this. It is planned to separate the dirty engineering activity from a clean area required for painting.

MF went on to praise the volunteers who helped to change the wheels on a Class 08 Shunter in record time.

Station news – Bishop Auckland, £100k to be spent on new siding & platform. BA Station footpath, Network Rail have sent our plans to Northern Rail for opinion and feedback. Private funding is being sought for Witton-le-Wear and Witton Park. WLW Parish Council is running a monthly cash lottery to raise funds.

Other News-mineral extraction in the Harperley area was a strong possibility and the preferred method of transporting this would be rail, which would benefit the Weardale Railway Project.

8 Treasurer's report

The Treasurer gave a verbal summary of the financial activity in April. Income being circa £2700, the major part of which (£1300) consisted of a donation from the Weardale Tramway Trust, this organisation having been recently wound up. Expenditure was circa £1500, with the purchase of the postal franking machine and payment to our Accountants for checking and finalising our accounts constituting most of this.

An application to the HMRC for recovery of Gift Aid Tax amounting to just short of £2400 has recently been made with payment expected in May.

The Treasurer then expressed his concern that the list of cheque signatories was overdue for review. Currently we have four signatories, the Treasurer, Steve Raine, Kevin Hillary who is no longer a Trustee and Graham Lord who it is believed has left the Project. After further discussion it David Scott and Brian Cox agreed to replace Kevin Hillary and Graham Lord.

Proposed: Gerry Mudd

Seconded: Clive Elsdon

8 Secretary's report

No report.

9 Number 40

Trevor Hewitt reported that in the presence of the Boiler Inspector today and attempt was made to conduct a hydraulic test on the boiler. However, due to problems with a poorly sealed washout plug, which resulted in a considerable leak, it was not possible for the Inspector to form any opinion as to the state of the boiler. An appointment has been made for a second visit on Friday 13th May by which time it is expected that the troublesome plug problem will have been overcome.

10 Restoration activities

Carriage & Wagon-No report

Infrastructure – No report

11 Volunteering

Volunteering-Mike Wood reported that the "Sunday Gang" continued to be active in a number areas throughout the length of the line. Some attention to overgrowing trees at Stanhope Station car park was needed.

Gerry Mudd circulated a report from Ruth Carroll indicating volunteer reported activity reduced during 2010 in comparison with 2009. The Trustees were encouraged to either continue, resume or commence recording their volunteering hours and pass this information to Ruth. A number of Grant applications are currently being considered and a record of volunteer input into the Project could sometimes improve the chances of an application being successful.

Training Courses update-no report

CRB checks- After a discussion about CRB checks it was agreed that although these were now not a legal requirement for most of our volunteering activity, it was thought advisable that we continued with this process.

Weardale Railways CIC Reports

12a/12b Report from the Company Board meetings/ Report from Management Group meetings (Trust representatives)

No board meetings since last report, but there was a management meeting on Monday 20th May. Gerry Mudd gave a verbal report containing commercially sensitive information.

The new Rule Book was in the process of being printed and it is hoped to conduct briefing courses to all operations staff during the last week of May.

Annual medicals for operating staff were in hand and ongoing.

Installation of wagon weighbridge will necessitate a temporary traffic blockade. October 2011 or Spring 2012 are possible timings.

12c Report from the Marketing Group

- No specific report received, but it was believed there were new innovations in the pipeline.

13 Other Reports from Trust Directors

13a Weekly Lottery/Fund raising (Arthur Temple)

a £1516 collected up to the end of April and further £80 collected at the meeting and additional monies with Arthur Temple awaiting delivery or collection.

13b Educational Activities/Talks/Publications/Magazine – (John Askwith)

John Askwith reported the following: -

Talks: -

- a) 10th May Spennymoor WI-no more talks until November.

Events

“Yesterday belongs to You” at Locomotion on the 14th May, some help would be welcome please.

Publications: -

- a) Work ongoing with “Railways of Weardale” update.
- b) BTL72, Contributions by 21st July please, despatch 5th August to include notification of AGM in November (provisionally booked for the 12th November) and outline agenda.

13c Membership Secretary’s Report (Frank Holmes/Trevor Hewitt)

No report

Website:

Late notice information via the dedicated website now working well.

13e New fund raising ideas

14 Any other business.

- **Closer ties with the Bishop Auckland Station Trust-Clive Elsdon**-the new Chairman of the BAST has made contact with David Million expressing a wish to work more closely with Weardale Railways and confirming that they were now no longer wished to sell rail tickets, leaving the field open for WR. ACTION: David Scott to talk to David Million and agree the next move.
- Restoration of the toilet facilities in 141103 to be investigated, 141113 thought to be broken beyond repair.

- **Persistent absence by Trustees from board meeting, action to be considered? -David Scott**-concern was expressed by a number of Trustees about the frequent absence of Michael Wilkinson, he had attended only 3 meetings during 2009/10 and only 1 so far since November 2010. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to Michael about this.
- **Co-option of additional trustees-Brian Cox & Gerry Mudd**- Brian Cox proposed that Kevin Hillary be co-opted on to the board, after discussion it was agreed to defer a decision for 3 months. Gerry Mudd proposed that Ruth Carroll be co-opted to reflect her recent concentrated efforts in increasing the numbers of active volunteers. This was unanimously agreed and David Scott agreed to write to her with a formal invitation.

The Meeting closed at 22:00

15 Date/time of the next meeting is 14th June 2011 at 7:30PM at Bishop Auckland Station.