

## WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at Bishop Auckland Station on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012

The meeting started at 7:30 PM.

### **Those present**

David Scott – Chair  
Dr Mike Wood – Vice Chair  
Trevor Hewitt – Treasurer & Acting Secretary  
John Askwith  
David Bullows  
Richard Maughan  
Gerry Mudd  
John Hargreaves  
Mike Rapp

### **1 Apologies for absence**

Steve Raine, Ruth Carroll, Brian Cox, Clive Elsdon, James Lynn

### **2 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012 meeting were approved with minor corrections and amendments as follows. Item 6 penultimate sentence now to read “Based on the contents of Michael Wilkinson’s comments, the Chairman is to ask WRCIC to make changes to the rule book.” Item 11a final sentence to read, “Trevor has offered to purchase fire extinguishers but no response has been received.” Item 14a/14b 3<sup>rd</sup> line to now read “New tokens are now ready for operation.” The comment on Broken Banks to now read, “BGS have surveyed and the line may need to be reprofiled or moved.” The last sentence to read, “A project team of Brian Cox and Michael Wood are to manage the Santa Specials.”

Proposed: John Askwith

Seconded: Gerry Mudd

### **3 Matters arising from the last meeting**

Re. Item 7, the post is now being received unopened.

Re. Item 13c, one of the entertainers, Colin Bourdieu, has been paid and WRC have been invoiced. “Step This Way” have yet to provide their bank details, when they do their bill will be paid and again an invoice from the WRT to WRC issued.

Re. Item 15, David Scott has spoken to Arthur Temple about his Driver Experience proposal and has advised him that whilst this is definitely a good idea because of staffing difficulties and some remaining uncertainty about timetables a final decision will be deferred to a later date, perhaps in 2013.

### **4 Identify other business.**

None were identified

### **5 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

None.

### **6 Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman, David Scott commented on his previously emailed out report.

**Volunteer working hours**-his proposal to WRC that the 141 unit be used to replace the last train of each operating day has been accepted and this procedure began during the weekend of 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> September. This has reduced the working hours of the steam crew by 3-4 hours.

**WR Youth Team Issues**-meeting held with Donald Heath and Brian Cox and a new updated Ops. Dept. Notice to be issued clarifying the procedure. James Lynn’s proposal for a meeting outside a normal WRT meeting was accepted and a sub-committee comprising of Ruth Carroll, Dawn Gregory, James Lynn and Brian Cox was suggested.

**YT Coach**-some discussion took place regarding the fire safety arrangements with the general consensus being that despite the claim that a conditional fire certificate has been issued we were still unconvinced that the coach offered a safe working environment.

**Between The Lines**- a discussion took place about recent comments that BTL was getting a little predictable and repetitive in content and although no conclusive solutions were suggested it was thought that more robust editing of content might help. Also an encouragement by the Editor to other contributors for more items of interest.

The Chairman's report was approved by the Directors

Proposed: Richard Maughan  
Seconded: Michael Wood

## **7 Treasurer's report**

The Treasurer had previously circulated an emailed report. He reported that income and expenditure last month was distorted by the temporary involvement of the WRT to help with cashflow issues on the Witton-le-Wear platform project. Ignoring the influence of the £18,000 coming into and out of the accounts, income was £5600 with around £1500 coming from Subscriptions and Donations, £1300 from shop sales, £600 from the sale of some brake items from No.40 and a grant from the Witton-le-Wear Parish Council of £2000 for the aforementioned platform. Instructions as to the disposal of this grant are awaited. Expenditure amounted to circa £2500, with £1600 being vat payments and a total of £550 Sundry Expenses. This was composed of £306 on the prototype point indicator and a £250 payment to a "War-on-the-Line" entertainer; both amounts will be recovered eventually from WRC.

An anomaly relating to a figure on Loss/Surplus for 2011/12 was raised by Gerry Mudd and the Treasurer promised to look into this and report back.

The Treasurers report was approved by the Directors.

Proposed: Gerry Mudd  
Seconded: Richard Maughan

## **8 Shop**

Trevor Hewitt gave a verbal report that goods purchased and fittings had totalled £817 and sales £1484 resulting in a net profit from the 2<sup>nd</sup> August until the 9<sup>th</sup> September of £667 which he considered to be very encouraging.

Mike Rapp reported that some staff training was still outstanding and the Treasurer asked if all shop staff could be reminded about the need to keep the shop clean and tidy to encourage footfall. Mike also indicated he was looking at the possibility of branded goods e.g. calendars, mugs etc but was less inclined to get heavily involved in stocking "Thomas" items which offered poor sales margins and spasmodic sales.

Gerry Mudd commented that WRC had asked if the shop could be open during Polar Express events and it was agreed that subject to there being enough willing volunteers to man the shop, that we would consider this.

It was also agreed that Mike should be included in the Weekly Operating Notice circulation list so that he could receive prior notice of charter trains with a view to opening the shop on the days that these operated. The Acting Secretary agreed to ask Graham Isom to add Mike's name to the list.

## **9 Secretary's report**

The Secretary being absent sent a written report by email prior to the meeting. He commented that whilst some Trustees had already submitted their reports for the annual report those for Mike Wood, Ruth Carroll and Richard Maughan were still outstanding. Also, a reminder was issued re. Trust Director Nomination forms being required by the 1<sup>st</sup> October and with John Askwith, David Bullows, Clive Elsdon and Trevor Hewitt standing down under the rotation rule and John Hargreaves under the co-option rule there were 5 places to be filled because David Bullows has indicated he does not wish to be re-elected. At the time of the meeting it was thought that these five places would be filled by John, Askwith, Clive Elsdon, John Hargreaves, Trevor Hewitt and Mike Rapp so if this situation remained no election would be necessary.

He also referred to the Youth Team and the need for better management and a more structured approach.

## **10 Number 40**

Richard Maughan gave a brief verbal report at the meeting. Number 40s boiler has now been transported to LMS and as previously reported, work has already started on fabricating a new firebox.

## **11 Restoration activities**

### **11a Carriage & Wagon**

Brake coach being re-upholstered but the issue of paintwork being scratched by lineside vegetation between Bridge 6 and Bridge 8 remains.

### **11b Infrastructure**

Limited clearance for the Polar Express "North Pole" site had begun but concern was expressed by Mike Wood regarding the removal of blackthorn hedging and help from RMS using their equipment was needed. This has been requested but to date there had been no progress.

Problems remain at W-I-W station building and until the agreed financial payment was made to the landowner then little or no progress can be made to clearing the vegetation.

Trevor Hewitt reported that the work on the café modifications was nearing completion and that benches at Wolsingham, Frosterley and one at Stanhope had now been repaired and reinstalled.

**12** -

## **13 Volunteering**

Being absent from the meeting Ruth Carroll had sent a written report indicating that two new volunteers, Sue and Kevin Richardson have been inducted.

Recorded Volunteer Commitment continued to show a decline with August hours down to 697 from the 803 of July. Rates of pay to assess the value of volunteer hours have now been amended to £9.98, £12.83 and £17.16 dependant upon duties.

Vacancies still exist in many areas particularly the ticket office.

Some younger members are now approaching 16 years of age and will need medicals and safety inductions.

Operational crew, Paul Wilson and Keith Goodfellow making good progress with an assessment by Graham Isom imminent. Sam Ireland to begin guard training. John Hill has resumed crossing keeper training and Stuart Booth has returned to this duty, volunteering once per month. Peter Kearsley might be interested in commencing training as a Controller.

**CRB checks** – no further comments this month

## **Weardale Railways CIC Reports**

### **14a/14b Report from the Company Board meetings/ Report from Management Group meetings (Trust representatives)**

Gerry Mudd reported the following:

Operational Safety Issues-GM to write to Ed Ellis expressing his concern.

Steam engine ash disposal-complaint raised by WRC that areas other than ashpit were being used to deposit ash- no conclusive solution to the problem was suggested

Wolsingham Toilet facilities-materials can be provided for the work but no labour is available, volunteer effort requested.

New Safety management System is in place at Dartmoor Railway that at Weardale is now outstanding.

Timetable for 2013 discussed and GM will make a suggestion for amendments on behalf of the WRT to WRC.

Only 30% of the Marketing budget has been spent which suggests that the railway is being under promoted.

BA station building development is being looked at by a new DCC manager.

BA East to West footpath is waiting for a response from WRC to a proposal from Network rail.

Stanhope Booking Office telephone manning problems on-going. GM suggested that a telephone call divert system to volunteers home numbers might be a solution.

Line weed killing has commenced, but comments were made suggesting this was a little late in the Season to judge the effectiveness of the treatment.

Witton-le-Wear weighbridge installation is still ongoing.

Santa Specials will not run this year due to a perceived conflict with Polar Express.

Steam Charter Train expected on the 20<sup>th</sup> October hauled by "Oliver Cromwell".

Control Office telephone problems now corrected.

#### **14c Report from the Marketing Group**

It was agreed to rename this item "Report from the Events Team".

#### **15 Other Reports from Trust Directors**

##### **15a Weekly Lottery/Fund raising (Arthur Temple)**

No report.

##### **15b Educational Activities/Talks/Publications/Magazine – (John Askwith)**

Talks

12<sup>th</sup> September – Bishop Auckland Probus Club

12<sup>th</sup> September – Northallerton Advanced Drivers Association

2<sup>nd</sup> November - Stephenson Locomotive Society

Publications

RCTS "Railways of Weardale" book-still waiting for a response to query relating to cost and minimum order quantity.

BTL

Contributions by 18<sup>th</sup> October

Dispatch 1<sup>st</sup> November

Education room-progress uncertain.

#### **14c Membership Secretary's Report (Frank Holmes/Trevor Hewitt)**

Trevor Hewitt reported that membership now stood at 744. He also commented that during a recent conversation with Steve Raine, Steve had confirmed his wish to resign as a Trustee and it was agreed that on receipt of a written conformation that this would now be regrettably accepted.

#### **15 Any other business.**

None

The meeting closed at 21:45

**Date/time of the next meeting is 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 7:30PM Bishop Auckland Station.**