

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at Bishop Auckland Station on Tuesday 15th May 2012

The meeting started at 7:30 PM.

Those present

David Scott - Chair
Dr Mike Wood – Vice Chair
Trevor Hewitt – Treasurer
John Askwith
David Bullows
Richard Maughan
John Hargreaves

1 Apologies for absence

Ruth Carroll, Gerry Mudd, Steve Raine, Michael Wilkinson, Brian Cox, Clive Elsdon, James Lynn – Company Secretary, Jo Brown (who had previously agreed to attend the meeting but could now not do so for personal reasons)

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the 17th April 2012 meeting were approved with minor corrections and amendments

Proposed: Trevor Hewitt
Seconded: David Scott

3 Matters arising from the last meeting

Richard Maughan reported that the availability of refreshments for the train crews had improved. There then followed more discussion on the subject with a suggestion by John Hargreaves that with the long shifts the crew needed to work to meet the timetable that some thought be given to two crews working split shifts of half a day each. However Richard Maughan commented that with only 4 passed out fireman now available this would be difficult to arrange. It has been agreed that John Hargreaves be c-opted on to the Board to provide cover for Steve Raine who will be unable to attend meetings for some time owing to extended family commitments

4 Identify other business.

None

5 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None.

6 Chairman's Report

The Chairman, David Scott commented on his previously emailed out written report. The Chairman discussed the two points raised in his report. The first being the planned Polar Express events which will result in much hard work for the Trust in our support for Jo Brown and the Marketing team. There then followed a lengthy discussion about the updated list of "Aims and Objectives" previously circulated by the Chairman, no firm conclusions were reached but it was agreed to move the Wolsingham Station Crane rebuild from Short to Long term. John Askwith raised the subject of replacing or repainting the "Running In" boards at Wolsingham and Frosterley, it being believed that two new "Wolsingham" boards were stored in Wolsingham Depot. It was suggested that John approach Doug Collins who had previously conducted work of this nature.

Proposed: Richard Maughan
Seconded: Mike Wood

7 Treasurer's report

The Treasurer had previously circulated an emailed report, which was briefly summarised at the meeting. He reported that income last month was £2200 the main elements being subs £330, Number 40 appeal £200 and

No.40 Hire Income £1300 Expenditure was £1950 with £1140 being spent on transporting the redundant ex. La Farge diesel shunter to Thomson's Scrap Merchants. £295 was also paid in prizes to the Easter Draw Winners. The payment from Thomson's for the scrap loco of circa £8000 plus vat is still outstanding but is expected by the end of May. The vat will need to be repaid to HMRC. £1200 resulting from Gift Aid Tax recovery from HMRC has recently been received and this together with the payment from Thomson's should result in the Second Loco Fund reaching around £8500 during May. Gerry Mudd has offered to loan up to £30k when we reach a total of £10k to enable a more meaningful search for a loco to take place. The loan, as previously, will be subject to an agreed market rate of interest.

Proposed: Richard Maughan

Seconded: John Askwith

8 Secretary's report

The Secretary had previously sent a brief written report stating that the required reporting deadlines for both Companies House and the Charity Commission will be met in all respects.

9 Number 40

Richard Maughan gave a brief verbal report. Although the loco was continuing to run reliably two recent problems gave cause for concern. The first relates to a possible problem with horn guides or wheel side play and a meeting at Wolsingham Depot has been arranged for Wednesday 16th May with amongst others Richard Campbell attending for his technical advice. Also, a severe problem with excessive clinker was experienced on Sunday 13th May and this was thought to be the result of open cast mined coal dust contaminating a recent delivery of steam coal. Richard will discuss this with Steve Race during the 16th meeting. Richard also commented that existing fire irons were too short and it was agreed to consider purchasing a new "Slicer", "Pricker" and Skart Shovel. Mike Wood agreed to give a quotation for this work, which is expected to be circa £300.

Trevor Hewitt reported that the annual boiler inspection would be taking place during w/c 21st May, with the cold examination on the 22nd and the "in steam" examination on 24th.

Proposed: David Scott

Seconded: David Bullows

10 Restoration activities Carriage & Wagon

Carriage restoration – Mike Wood reported that the BCK is undergoing extensive restoration at Shildon.

Infrastructure

Station benches – Trevor reported that timber for two benches had been purchased and that painting had commenced. Unfortunately the remaining bench at Wolsingham has now been vandalised and rendered unusable, this will now need a complete replacement of timbers.

11 Projects

No report

12 Volunteering

A written report had previously been sent by Ruth Carroll with the following items included: -

Volunteers Inducted: -

2 new adult volunteers inducted with one, Geoff Rutherford having considerable experience in rolling stock maintenance. His details have been passed to Steve Race.

An analysis of the value of the volunteering effort showed that this was slightly down compared with 2011.

Medicals and Competencies – have now been completed and this list passed to Graham Isom to action. This is so that we meet the required standards for the operational volunteer files that the document controller has for paid staff. .

Recruitment – This seems to be picking up and several forms have been handed out in the past few weeks.

Training – The First Aid course via Bishop Auckland College costs £16.10 each. So far 6 volunteers have done the training. One person is on Job Seekers Allowance so it is free to them. These people are Guards- John Hargreaves and Peter Baker, Ticket Inspectors Tony Slack and John Hill and Station Staff/Event Staff Ruth Carroll and Rebecca Ashton. I will be arranging more when the next course is available. This is in July and more volunteers are urgently needed. John Hargreaves commented that in his view the ideal first aid person for train crew would be the guard.

Paul Walton has been passed out as guard for heritage trains.

Volunteer Vacancies – We continue to be short staffed which is a concern given that “War on the Line” will shortly be upon us.

Karen Bruce has suggested that we approach Jobcentre Plus for more volunteers and this was discussed with some concerns about insurance cover.

Mike Wood expressed concern about a secure storage facility for medical records. These were currently held by him but he would prefer that the Railway Company took responsibility for them. They will need storing for a period of at least 30 years.

CRB checks - Nothing to report

Weardale Railways CIC Reports

13a/13b Report from the Company Board meetings/ Report from Management Group meetings (Trust representatives)

David Scott reported the following:

Brian Green has replaced Trevor Horner as P-Way consultant. It was agreed that David Scott would write to Trevor expressing our thanks for his work and continued support for the Project

Alan Lee as well as the Safety Director is now Wolsingham Depot Manager

Wolsingham Depot clean up has commenced.

Mike Fairburn and Graham Isom attended a recent forum for a Safety Management system and the Office of Rail Regulators will be checking that this new system has been implemented. Volunteer and Paid Staff will be briefed. More information on financial performance was requested by the Trustees, be it current or last month.

There are plans to make Holebeck 3 an open crossing.

Mike Fairburn as yet unable to source a replacement steam engine for No.40.

Concern about wheel chair access in Mk.1 coaches, with either sourcing a narrow wheel chair or asking wheel chair users to ride in the brake van as possible solutions.

Stanhope station café to be refurbished and reorganised.

13c Report from the Marketing Group

Mike Fairburn has suggested that Santa Special trains continue to run this Nov/Dec in addition to the Polar Express trains. Concern was expressed about overstretched volunteer resources, but Mike Wood suggested that if the Trust Marketing team was to have a heavy involvement in planning, organising and running a Santa Special service then it would seem only fair that the Trust should receive a substantial share of any profit, with this being put towards the planned second loco.

Jo Brown has asked for help in cold calling coach tour companies. Mike Wood suggested that Bishop Trains be considered for this role and also, given David Million's previous experience, some involvement with any 2012 Santa Specials bookings and ticket sales. This would be subject to negotiation between BARS/WRC and Bishop Trains.

A decision on whether we continue with the Rail Card scheme is imminent.

There is the possibility of a charter train visiting the line later in the year subject to agreeing the financial aspects.

Wilf Hume 100th birthday celebration on 16th September, it is planned he will travel in “Nina” catching the 13:25 from Stanhope to Frosterley. John Askwith agreed to speak to John Lewins about the possibility of producing a wooden headboard. A headboard in metal would cost £150. Other details such as wheelchair and Stanhope Silver Band booking will be handled by Jo Brown.

John Askwith reported that with help from Kevin Hillary, the War On The Line event planning was progressing satisfactorily. The Education Room at Stanhope was now almost clear and it was proposed that this be used for the cinema during WOTL

14 Other Reports from Trust Directors

14a Weekly Lottery/Fund raising (Arthur Temple)

To date this had raised £1540.

14b Educational Activities/Talks/Publications/Magazine – (John Askwith)

Talks

12th June-Sedgefield
16th July-South Hetton
2nd November - Stephenson Locomotive Society

BTL

Contributions by 12th July
Dispatch 3rd August

John reported that display boards would be erected and on view during July and August at the Crown Street Library in Darlington. Also a reminder that the Railway Collectors Fair will take place at Richmond Station on July 7th.

John recently attended the Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership meeting. At the meeting a report was given by a local consultancy firm on the proposed development of Darlington Bank Top Station and the implications for the Bishop Line.

He also asked for One North East to be removed from the BTL complementary copy list, this organisation being no longer in existence. TH to contact Frank Holmes and get the database amended.

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

Trevor reported on behalf of Frank that 85 members have not renewed since January 1st and that membership now stood at 710. Frank also reported that a member and his wife would not be renewing their subscription due to poor communication and a lack of gratitude in connection with a donation of model railway equipment last Summer. It was agreed that Trevor would contact the member and express our apologies.

15 Any other business.

None.

The Meeting closed at 21.45

Date/time of the next meeting is 12th June 2012 at 7:30PM Bishop Auckland Station.