

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST

Minutes of the management committee meeting held in Spennymoor on Tuesday 8th June 2010

The meeting started at 7:30 PM.

Those present

David Scott - Chair
Dr Mike Wood – Vice Chair
Trevor Hewitt – Treasurer (Who also took the minutes in the absence of the Secretary)
Fred Ramshaw
Malcolm Simpson
Peter Shields
Brian Cox
Arthur Temple
Gerry Mudd
David Bullows

1 Apologies for absence

James Lynn, John Askwith, Dave Foxtton, Steve Raine, Dave Million, Michael Wilkinson, Kevin Hillary.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the 11th May 2010 were approved with some minor amendments.

Proposed – Arthur Temple
Seconded – Gerry Mudd

3 Matters arising from the last meeting

Item 6, re Kevin Hillary's comment about ticket machines, training to take place.

Item 9, re. No.40 statistics, this has been actioned. Also, Malcolm Simpson and Peter Shields confirmed that the rear windows to No.40 had now been refitted.

4 Identify other business.

1 item were identified:

- AGM date & venue.

5 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None.

6 Chairman's Report

The Chairman David Scott had previously emailed out his report. The Chairman commented that the Railway Inspectorate had passed the line for passenger operation. He has also expressed his thanks personally to Ed Ellis and his team for their hard work and the achievement of reopening the line to Bishop Auckland on time. He also thanked all those Trust Directors, adult and junior volunteers for their part in making this happen. The initial signs are that the Community Service is well patronised.

He went on to comment that the very large amount of paperwork, which hit them at short notice, had put intense strain on the time and skills of the team involved in the opening and the running of the new service. He said that he had expected briefing and training sessions on the new procedures but despite the many confusions created by this, the volunteers managed and "the money was taken".

He also expressed his concern that the new 3-shift roster system is stretching volunteer resources.

Gerry Mudd commented that paid employees were also working very long hours.

The Chairman's report was approved by the Directors

Proposed: Trevor Hewitt
Seconded: Brian Cox

7 Treasurer's report

The Treasurer had submitted a report prior to the meeting, which was accepted by those attending.

Proposed: Gerry Mudd
Seconded: Brian Cox

8 Secretary's report

No report was presented.

The Secretary had sent a message prior to the meeting regarding the date and venue of the AGM.

The preferred date of 20th November 2010 was not available at St Thomas Church Hall Stanhope. However, the 13th, which was the weekend of Remembrance Sunday, and the 27th were available. An alternative venue for the 20th suggested by John Askwith at the Stanhope Masonic Hall was discounted because of the increased cost, this being double that of St. Thomas's Hall.

It was agreed that we would hold the AGM on Saturday 13th November despite possible objections from a minority of members because of a perceived "clash" with Remembrance Sunday

9 Number 40

- Malcolm Simpson asked who had authorised No.40 for use to Bishop Auckland, he was concerned as to whether the wheel bearings were able to cope with this longer journey in view of the recent "hot box" problem. Gerry Mudd pointed out that the bearings that had been previously been restored to their "as built" format had not caused any problems and that the new problem related to those bearings which had been modified by the previous owner at Colne Valley. He had no reason to doubt that when all the bearings had been modified that "hot box" problems would become a rare event.
- Gerry Mudd asked again that Malcolm Simpson and others with suitable knowledge of steam engines review the "hit-list" previously identified, identifying, prioritising and costing the improvements and modifications suggested so that a judgement could be made prior to the planned overhaul in October 2012.
- Peter Shields expressed his concern as to whether WRC would continue to hire No.40 after the Trust had spent large amounts of money on the loco. Trevor Hewitt commented that he had no reason to believe that the Company would not continue to hire it, but in the unlikely event that this did happen then No.40 would be hired out to other railways.
- Gerry Mudd thanked Arthur Temple for his monthly donation towards the No.40 fund and also commented that we had had a recent Gift Aided £500 donation from a member who wished to remain anonymous.
- Peter Shields also commented that unsubstantiated and untrue rumours were circulating regarding the operation of NO.40. The Chairman promised to investigate and take any necessary action.

10 Restoration activities

Nina – The Chairman thanked all those who had worked on the restoration to ensure the coach was ready for the 22nd may opening particularly Steve Race. It was suggested by Mike Wood that a plaque be commissioned by the Trust in recognition of the gift of the coach to the Trust by Julian Shepherd, who was, until last November a Trustee. Trevor Hewitt agreed to prepare a draft of the wording for the plaque and submit it to the next meeting for consideration. It was also agreed that ownership plates need to be purchased for "Nina" and if necessary any other item of rolling stock owned by the Trust. Trevor Hewitt agreed to pursue this.

Infrastructure – Gerry Mudd commented that when the temporary platform at Bishop Auckland West had served it's purpose, then it could be re-used at other locations, e.g. Witton-Le-Wear, Kingfisher Caravan Park, Stanhope show ground etc.

11 Volunteering (Dave Million)

No report was received.

Weardale Railways CIC Reports

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

Gerry Mudd reported the following:

- Recent brief Board Meeting ratified the £1.5 million loan from Chase Manhattan Bank
- The importance of the coal movement contract to the Project was stressed to the DCC attendees at the Board Meeting
- There has been no management group meeting for some time due to the extreme demands on the availability of potential participants, but it is intended that these recommence within the near future.
- The consequential loss claim from Wolsingham Steel resulting from the electricity cable damage has been withdrawn but the encroachment issue is still under discussion.
- The land encroachment by a private landowner at Witton-Le-Wear is still under discussion, but it is hoped that a possible compromise may be agreed to settle the dispute.
- The objection by the Durham Tourism Partnership to the proposed coal loading facility at Wolsingham has been amended to an expression of concern after discussion between BARS and the DTP.
- Natural England expressed some concern about the effect of our Project in general on the otter population but after an investigation no evidence was found to support their misgivings.
- The Planning application for the coal loading was initially delayed from mid-May for 2 months by DCC Planning Department but after a further approach this has been brought forward slightly to early July.
- Another Class 141 DMU will arrive by road on Thursday 10th June. This is on hire from the Midland Railway, Butterley and will supplement and support our existing 141 set.

12c Report from the Marketing Group meeting (Wendy & Clive Elsdon with input from John Askwith)

- New Marquee used at Teddy Bears Picnic, very useful
- St. John's Ambulance used at same event for First Aid Cover, successful, to be repeated.
- Difficulties in conducting a raffle at this event due to lack of volunteers, more needed for Father's Day.
- New fare structure too complex, to discuss with Malcolm Dean.
- New leaflet, more discussion needed re. Timetable etc.
- Better signage to BA West needed
- Over due invoice payments by WRC proving to be embarrassing.
- Rail Charter expected on the 20th June, potential clash with regular service, timetable amendments possibly needed.
- War On The Line-agreement with North East Theatre Organ Association for joint marketing to both promote our event and theirs at Howden-Le-Wear featuring the mighty Wurlitzer on the preceding Tuesday.
- Appeal for more volunteers, particularly for special events.

13 Other Reports from Trust Directors

13a Weekly Lottery/Fund raising (Arthur Temple)

Ongoing, more contributors from outside the Project recently.

13b Major Projects and Funding Sub Group – (Gerry Mudd/Arthur Temple)

No report

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

John Askwith reported the following: -

1. Talks 17/06. Hartlepool Men's Club may be in jeopardy due to time pressures.
2. Publications. Heritage Railway Magazine will be doing a follow up to current mag in their next mag. Robin Jones thinks railway is worthy of support.
3. Publications. Best of British are doing a feature on Driving experience for their September magazine. Contribution required now (£ cost to advertise).
4. Magazine. BTL68. Contributions by 22/07/10. Despatch 06/08/10. To include AGM agenda notices.
5. Magazine. 3 enquiries received for back issues of BTL.
6. Archives request. Please copy JA in on G. Mudd fortnightly update. (Update 40 not received).
7. Archives. Photos from recent events gratefully received.

13d Membership Secretary's Report (Frank Holmes/Trevor Hewitt)

Frank emailed out a report. Membership: 765 members paid up to date.

The change in Junior membership will be made from the issuing of the next batch of renewal reminders, i.e. August. From then, all under-16s will be recorded as Juniors and will receive their own mailings, magazines, etc.

Website: Visitor numbers have always been good, but it's been unusually popular since the announcement of the B Auckland extension.

In the week Fri 21st - Fri 28th nearly 6,000 visits were made to the timetable page, and over 2,000 downloaded it.

The "info@..." email address has also been busy - replying and forwarding was taking almost 2 hours per day through the second half of May.

13e New fund raising ideas

Peter Shields commented that he is willing to commission and produce a new DVD showing the line "Then and Now" but needed access to a DVD produced by a John Hutchinson, he has asked John Askwith to obtain the mobile number of JH so that this can be progressed.

14 Any other business.

Trust objectives – The Directors were reminded to complete David Scott's forms with ideas on future objectives for the Trust.

- Malcolm Simpson asked whether the Trust could purchase a satellite driven speedometer for No.40. T. Hewitt to investigate.

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Meeting closed at 20:50

15 Date/time of the next meeting is 13th July 2010 7:30PM at Bishop Auckland Station.