

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held at the RAFA Club Crook on Tuesday 12th July 2005

The meeting commenced at 7:35 pm

Those present:

Kevin Hillary – Chairman
John Askwith
Brian Cox
Tim Hall
Frank Holmes
Steve Raine
Julian Shepherd
Mike Wood
James Lynn – Secretary

John Hummel of ECT attended the meeting (by invitation of the Trust Directors)

1 Apologies

John Chatfield, Dave Foxton, Ian Gardiner, Trevor Hewitt, Graham Lord, Steve Race, Arthur Temple

2 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

The minutes from the 14th June 2005 meeting were accepted as a true record (after corrections) and signed by the Chairman Kevin Hillary

Proposed by Brian Cox
Seconded by Tim Hall

3 Matters/actions not covered on the agenda

None identified.

4 Identified other business

2 items identified

5 Chairman Report

The Chairman Kevin Hillary presented an oral report. He reported that 2 Directors (Pat Brookes and Chris Wilson) had decided to resign. The Chairman thanked both of them for their hard work and support for the Trusts activities. The Chairman commented on the success of the fund raising supper at NRM Shildon and thanked Arthur Temple and Tim Hall for their efforts organising an excellent event.

The railway (Wolsingham Station) will be shown on ITV television coverage of the Great North Walk. The Chairman thanked David and Miriam Ashton for their help.

6 Treasurers Report

The Treasurer reported via the Secretary that it had been a quiet trading month. Trevor asked for the following items to be brought to the attention of the Directors:

6 Treasurers Report (cont.)

1. The Charity Supper profit will be in excess of £2200 (not finalised)
2. Yard of Track appeal had raised £6300 though donations are £2000 down compared with previous years.
3. The key cabinet has been purchased and will be fitted tomorrow (13th July).
4. Trevor had received provision notification from the Heritage Railway Trust of a £20,000 grant towards the canopy for Stanhope Station. The grant award was based on a quote from Pinkneys (£40,000). However this grant is retrospective (spend and reclaim) and may cause cash flow issues for the Trust. Trevor requested that a sub-committee (Dave Briggs, Trevor Hewitt and John Askwith) be formed to manage this project.

Motion – The Trust will support the installation of the canopy at Stanhope Station using the £20,000 grant.

Proposed: Mike Wood
Seconded: Brian Cox

The Directors approved the motion unanimously

Shop Operations – Jerry Hirst & Keith Hutchinson have agreed to run the shop – a key for the shop has been requested by Keith Hutchinson. The Directors requested that Trevor set up a rota. Kevin Hillary suggested that a shop training day be arranged to give the volunteers some training in the operation of the shop. It was noted that some of the books (including second hand books) had not be priced – John Chatfield to action?

Café – John Askwith asked about the café opening times. The Directors requested Trevor liaise with Joanne over opening times.

The Directors approved the Treasurers report.

7 Secretary's Report

The Secretary had no written report to present

Correspondence – The Secretary informed the Directors that Chris Wilson had confirmed his wish to resign as a Trust Director. A letter from Pat Brookes also confirmed her wish to resign as a Trust Director. This letter was passed round the Directors present at the meeting. The Directors approved with some regret the resignation of Pat Brookes and Chris Wilson. The Secretary was instructed to write thank you letters to Pat and Chris to express appreciation of all their hard work on behalf of the Trust.

AGM – The Secretary presented a reports on which directors had to stand for re-election at the next AGM based on the Council rotation provisions in the Trusts M&As. The Secretary also presented a timetable for AGM process including key dates for nomination of members standing for election to the Council Trust. These will be published in the Magazine.

8 Other Reports from Trust Directors

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

Steve reported that he had be requested to update the business plan based on the railway re-starting operation in October 2005. This revision has shown that the railway will make a loss in its first financial year (October 2005 to April 2006). Based on conversations with third parties it has been made clear that the railway will not be able to approach One NorthEast (the regional development agency) for funding until we can demonstrate financial viability.

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

Steve had met with Government Office North East (GONE) who would be keen to fund additional project work (such as completing the line down to Bishop Auckland) but again the railway must prove financial viability after 1 years operation. However any new project must offer a return on investment and be risk free. GONE were neutral on whether the railway decides to go to Eastgate or Bishop Auckland. Steve suggested that if we approach GONE for a grant to complete the line to Bishop Auckland we must ensure completion by 2008 and simplify the project to repairing the land slip and not building any intermediate station platforms. GONE would fund 25% of this project with Heritage Lottery to be approached for funding. However building the line to Bishop Auckland requires planning permission for an initial platform and we need to obtain agreements with Network Rail. It was suggested that if local Parishes/District Council wanted a station platform they may be approached for funding.

Steve also met with Wear Valley District Council (WVDC) who had no preference whether the railway goes first to Eastgate or Bishop Auckland due to slippage in the development work of the Lafarge site. Steve and John Hummel also talked to Sue Dawson (WVDC) about matched funding for the canopy – this is to be reviewed.

Steve confirmed that County Durham will still fund the railway CVA process however there may be a couple of issues which may slow down the completion of the CVA:

1. Access leases have to be sorted out which involves resolving the claim over damage to an electricity cable and moving the railway workshop building off a third parties leased land. John Hummel and Steve have inspected the workshop and it fouls the boundary by 3 panels. We may have to move the NEDL substation onto our side of the boundary. These problems need to be resolved before the CVA process can be completed.
2. PWC to get agreement from the railway creditors to accept 25p in the £.

Steve and John Hummel commented that the revised business plan would require reduced staffing (1 full time track person 1 part time admin and 1 full time fitter). Any extra funds derived from the CVA process would be used to retain Dave Briggs as a project manager. It was suggested that some of the canopy funding could also be used to fund a project manager. With the change in railway company structure the safety case would have to be amended.

The Directors discussed heritage railway versus community railway status. It was stated that Weardale Railway will be a heritage railway and support community transport projects as required.

8b Fundraising Night/Weekly Lottery – Arthur Temple

The Chairman thanked everybody for their help and support for the Charity Supper.

8c Marketing sub group report

The Marketing sub-group have produced an interim leaflet for the Santa Specials however this would require a confirmed operating railway by September 2005. Tim Hall remarked that with the current situation the marketing sub-group had no further activities planned.

8d Planning Group – John Ashwith

John Askwith reported that the draft minutes of the last Battle Planning meeting had be sent for review by the Chairman.

8e Educational Activities – John Askwith

John Askwith reported that the BTCV had met with Arthur Temple about using the training room at Stanhope Station for educational activities.

8e Educational Activities – John Askwith (cont.)

John Askwith wants to set up an education team and needs to find volunteers. John Hummel suggested talking to LEA/County Council (based on his Dartmoor Railway experience). Steve Raine suggested approaching ANOB/Minerals Valley for funding of educational leaflets and materials.

Talks – Dates are in the magazine. Kevin Hillary suggested running a talk at Shildon NRM.

Magazine – 1000 copies have been ordered contributions by 21/7 and publication is scheduled for 6/8. Magazine number 50 is due out in February 2006 need ideas for a special celebration issue.

Events

20 Aug	Romaldkirk Fair
24-25 Sept	1st anniversary event at NRM Shildon
24-25 Sept	County Durham Foundation event County Hall
5-6 Nov	Model Railway Exhibition Stanhope Town Hall

8f Membership Secretary's Report – Frank Holmes

Frank reported that the website had a lot of hits however the content now needed revising. Kevin Hillary asked if the website could be updated every 2 weeks and Frank asked the directors for articles pictures etc.

The membership is now around 800 with 150 due for renewal. The Directors agreed to waive the membership fees for David Hollingsworth Snr and James Hollingsworth as their payment appeared to have been mislaid. Membership forms will be sent out to the Hollingsworths to cover any insurance issues whilst working on the railway.

Kevin Hillary asked if John Hummel could supply some information on ECT. It was agreed to provide hotlinks from the Trusts website to ECT and Dartmoor Railway websites.

8g Volunteer Training

Steve Raine reported that if we owned the line and reached agreement with HMRI we could run training with motive power/rolling stock. Pass out of drivers requires 2 return runs on the line. The first trauche of drivers have been identified.

Brian Cox agreed to review training of volunteers with Chris Wilson.

Chain saw course has been arranged with BTCV. Mike Wood and Steve Race will attend. JCB course has been arranged by Arthur Temple.

8h Restoration/Depot/PW activities

A full ballast rain has run laying ballast at Fosterley platform edge and shoulder. Ballast was also laid between MP11 - Fosterley bridge – Broad Wood Crossing. Ballast trains will run on 28 July and August 2/4/9/11. Brian Cox is to provide details to Frank for the website.

9 Reopening the railway by supporting Weardale Railways Ltd

9a Operations

Julian Shepard raised the issue of what is the Trusts/railways strategy on purchasing or leasing rolling stock (locomotives and coaching stock) and what type of equipment do we require. The Directors agreed to have this issue added to the agenda for further discussions and development of an action/fund raising/purchasing plan.

John Askwith reported that DRPS have a 2MT 78018 which needed a long term operating agreement with a heritage railway before Lottery money could be accessed. Steve Raine agreed to review.

Steve Raine discussed the probable operations for the first year (October 2005 to April 2006) Operate Class 141 for light passenger duties with Class 20 and coaching stock for heavy passenger duties. Steam would be used if costs are similar to diesel operations. It was noted that the 141 is not the most reliable piece of equipment and the BASF loco + exhauster would act as back up.

John Hummel and Steve Raine agreed that the following year (April 2006 to April 2007) would need a new operating and business plans.

9b Finance

No report was presented

9c Marketing

The Directors discussed obtaining more TIP boards – it was suggested approaching WVDC tourism office for funding. Tim Hall reported that the 0845 number was in operation however a new control number was needed and the signs changed to show this new number.

11 Restoration Activities

11a Carriage and Wagon

No report was presented

11b Locomotives

No report was presented

11c Infrastructure

No report was presented

12 AOB

Salmon at Thornaby

Brian Cox had been in discussion with Don Health would suggested the Trust look at a Salmon at Thornaby (possibly Thompsons Scrap Yard) approx cost £4000. Brian is to speak to Trevor about finance and Arthur Temple to speak to Thompsons about reducing the price. The Secretary agreed to act as a go between.

Motion – The Directors agreed to purchase the Salmon subject to inspection and price negotiations.

Proposed – Mike Wood

Seconded – Brian Cox

Directors approved unanimously

Next Open Meeting with the members

The next open meeting will be on Saturday 17 September 2005 venue to be advised.

13 Date/time of the next meeting is 9th August 2005 7:30 PM at the RAFA Club Crook