

## WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST COUNCIL (WRT) MEETING

Minutes of the WRT management meeting held at Witton-le-Wear Community centre, on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

The meeting started at 19:30PM.

### **Those present**

Kevin Richardson – Chairman  
Bob Dingle  
Peter Kearsley  
Richard Maughan  
Mike Wood  
Paul Wilson –Secretary  
Mark Woodhams  
Tony Slack

### **1 Apologies for absence**

Simon Adams, Gerry Mudd, Steve Raine.

### **Trust Director's approval of Secretary position**

Paul Wilson has offered to take on the vacant Trust Secretary position. This proposal was unanimously accepted by those Directors present at meeting.

### **2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2018 meeting were approved by the Directors with minor corrections.

Item 6            Remove last sentence.  
Item 11          BLT should read - BTL.  
Item 23          BWA should read – BAW.  
Item 29          BLT should read BTL  
Item 31          Next meeting should be 1 October

Proposed: - Peter Kearsley.

Seconded: - Tony Slack.

### **3 Matters arising from the last meeting not covered in the agenda**

Nil

### **4 Identify any other business to be discussed in Item 19**

There was no other business identified.

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

Richard Maughan advised he is now Operations Manager @ Aln Valley Railway.

### **6 Chairman's Report**

Thanks to those who helped in the intervening time by taking minutes and carrying out other tasks normally done by the secretary.

Having decided, at our last meeting, to move to bi-monthly meetings, it is now 2 months since we convened. I was hoping that, in that time, I would be able to report significant progress on our various ongoing projects. Unfortunately, it is disappointing to note that we have not been able to achieve as much as we would have liked. This has been mainly due to the significant other commitments that most of us have had, including covering for holidays and absences within our volunteer workforce. On a positive note, we have managed to crew all the scheduled trains and the extra excursions that have added to our workload. Hopefully, once we complete our program of operating train services at the end of October, we should have more of an opportunity to divert our resources to progressing the outstanding work.

Speaking of special excursions, John Hill is resigning as Commercial Director for WRHSL after the end of the current season. Through his efforts, we have seen a marked increase in trip bookings by tour companies, and he has made some valuable contacts who have expressed a wish to continue to work with WRHSL in enhancing their client experiences. John has developed this role into a very lucrative source of extra income for Heritage

Services (and ultimately the Trust), and it is essential that we quickly find a volunteer to carry on his excellent work.

We have already started to plan for 2019 train operations. WRCIC convened a meeting last week, which we were invited to attend, to lay down the framework of how the railway will be utilised next season. WRCIC are planning to extend their "specials" services and are exploring other means to make the railway more profitable; this will result in both themselves and WRT having to work more closely together to allow everyone to benefit from the use of the railway.

Since this is planned to be the final meeting before the end of the 2018 operating season, I would like to thank everyone who has worked to make the season successful. I am confident that the final financial results will demonstrate that it has all been worth the considerable effort and support that has been contributed by all our volunteers.

Proposed: - Bob Dingle  
Seconded: - Mike Wood.

## **7 Treasurer's Report**

We are still without a Director to pick up the Treasurer position, therefore a detailed financial report was not available for the meeting. Directors were able to discuss the following areas; the potential use of online banking accounts were discussed by Trustees. Bob Dingle advised that banks may not support this due to us having designated signatories, no further action at this time.

To ask Peter Baker for latest financial figure to circulate – ACTION: Kevin Richardson

The cash balances as of the 14<sup>th</sup> September are:

The cumulative amount is £35K within Trust business account, with circa £600 to pay in.

## **8 Trust Shop**

The Trust shop continues to make a good contribution to Trust funds. The recent offer of a railway publication has sold well.

## **9 Secretary's Report**

Paul Wilson thanked fellow Directors for their support in taking up the Trust Secretary position. Two policies/procedures were available for agreement following initial work by Jean Clarke to put into a standard format. Paul Wilson advised that it was his view that all future documents will follow a similar layout to support our corporate image. Significant discussion was held around some of the wording/ dates included within the Purchasing and Harassment policies, to be revised and returned for signing then upload to Trust website.

Peter Kearsley to re-send GDPR policy, to be edited to mirror format of other Trust policies.

The Trust have recently been gifted a Guard's brake van stove from Mr & Mrs Scarr, to be restored. Has been placed into the container at Stanhope, whilst we explore if a volunteer would like to take on as a restoration.

The Sunday Gang continues with the clearing of vegetation along the track and contribute to the Trust's Public Benefit obligations.

## **10 No 40 Report**

There has been no further update on whether McEwen's were coming to collect 40's smokebox and associated items to be added to overall restoration. It is hoped the boiler inspector will be present at McEwen's, however very little progress has been made since Richard's last visit. Disappointingly 40's boiler is not going to be back until 2019.

Richard Maughan will continue to maintain regular contact with McEwen's for an update.

There have been no further steam group meetings.

## **11 Restoration Activities**

There has been no further progress with the planned work at Broadwood and Wolsingham. Two running boards completed with a third in progress.

Mike Wood has kindly donated 10 litres of paint, to be utilised on projects at the railway.

## **12 Projects**

We discussed in October that the crossing gates were present at Wolsingham Depot, awaiting metal work to be added and brackets to be painted. A work plan is to be produced to identify a safe method of working and we discussed contacting Durham County Council regarding the need for road closure. Any work is likely to

occur once the heritage service has concluded. The work will be carried out with support from the CIC staff, a joiner from Grove Reed and our volunteers.

Trustees were advised in October that the furnace which was producing the brake blocks for the 108 is now up and running after a period of non-operation

Purchase of shed for cover for the Villiers Trolley was discussed. There has been some minor damage from its position outside the ticket office at Stanhope. This position is unsustainable once Christmas Trains are running. It was agreed to explore the purchase metal shed to position near to Mk2 Coach at Stanhope.

### **13 Trust Promotion Drive**

Mark Woodhams fed back recent attendance at two local events, Locomotion and Head of Steam. Good levels of interest were shown.

Tony Slack reported Trevor Horner who has links with the Bishop Auckland Community Line, would be a good contact to link in with particularly at Bishop Auckland West.

### **14 Volunteer Liaison Officer's Report**

Bob Dingle has kindly taken on the role of volunteer liaison officer and reported there are currently 4 new volunteers being inducted/ various stages of crossing keeper training.

Bob suggested future planning is key, to help engage a range of new people to volunteer.

Mike Wood reported the work of the Sunday Gang. They have worked at several locations along the line to improve views for passengers/ visitors. On occasion the weather has impacted on productivity.

### **15 Acting Membership Secretary's Report**

Tony Slack highlighted the following key information in relation to Trust membership.

Membership stands at 427; 83 reminders recently sent out; 49 members recently renewed, with 3 new members joining the Trust.

Jean Clarke has kindly agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary.

### **16 Heritage Services**

Tony Slack updated Directors on recent discussions with CIC for planning for 2019 heritage timetable, with a first draft available for viewing. Plan for all trains to run to Bishop Auckland West, from March to November. In addition, there are also plans for an increased service from the CIC.

Sales of heritage service tickets via Bishop Trains has been positive, initial passenger forecast is same as operations in 2017, however overheads have increased.

### **17 Weardale Railway CIC Reports.**

Directors were appraised of discussions at a recent CIC management meeting by Tony Slack. Key points were;

Steve Raine is in process of resolving a land issue at Witton Park. The Mk1 and BG coach have been removed from the Wolsingham depot. A Police inspection of the line was requested due to several vandalism issues. Durham County Council are requesting to work on Latherbrush and Escomb Road bridges.

### **18 Other reports from Trust Directors**

#### **18a Weekly Lottery/Fund Raising**

A draw was conducted on the 20 August, with a pay out of £193. Paul Wilson discussed making potential changes to the format of lottery to improve the luck of winning, more regularly. Following consideration Directors agreed to continue with the current format.

#### **18b Educational Activities**

None

#### **19 Any Other Business**

None

The meeting closed at 22:20PM

#### **20 Date of next meeting**

**Next WRT Council meeting: - Monday 3 December 2018 at 7:30PM at Witton-le-Wear Community Centre.**