

## **WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST COUNCIL (WRT) MEETING**

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at SDRYT Coach Stanhope Station Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016.

The meeting started at 19:30PM.

### **Those present**

Kevin Richardson – Chair  
Steve Raine  
John Askwith  
Ruth Carroll  
Peter Kearsley  
Peter Baker  
Paul Wilson  
Tony Slack –Secretary

### **1 Apologises for absence**

Gerry Mudd, Richard Maughan, Mark Woodhams, Mike Wood

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

The minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 meeting were approved by the Directors with the following correction:

Item 7 The first line of Par 1 should read, - ....the Trust's... and not te Trust's  
Item 15b The Talks dates should read:

25/04. Tudhoe Local History Society.  
06/06. Sedgefield LHS,  
11/10. Spennymoor Probus.  
17/10, JA will need support - Wensleydale Railway Assoc.  
Plus one other talk to confirm a date.

Item 16 last line – resopect should read respect

Proposed: - Ruth Carroll  
Secoded: - Paul Wilson

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

The third nominated Council member on the CIC Board to be agreed.  
Approval of expenses for attendance at a Conference.

### **4 Identify any other business to be discussed in Item 18**

The relationship between the WRT and SDRYT in light of recent legal advice.

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

Steve Raine declared a conflict as he is also a Director for the G5 Locomotive Company.  
Kevin Richardson and Ruth Carroll declared a conflict in that they were employed by the Company's agent for certain services for Polar Express.

### **6 Charities Commission**

**Confidential**

### **7 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman gave a verbal report.

February has continued to provide many challenges to the Trust as we prepare for the upcoming heritage season.

The reinstatement of Witton-le-Wear station continues at a fast pace. Under the leadership of Trevor Horner, our volunteers have just finished installing the new decking to the platform. There is still some work to do, but there is a vastly noticeable improvement. Once all of the work is complete, we will need to advise the ORR of our intention to re-commence services to Witton-le-Wear, and provide the necessary paperwork to certify compliance.

The Sunday gang have now moved their track-side clearing operations to the west of Witton-le-Wear.

Plans are in hand to prepare the class 122 "bubble car" for service. Once this is complete we will start route knowledge and driver refresher training, prior to the start of the season.

I am in regular contact with Evan Green-Hughes as he continues to review the rule book and other compliance paperwork which will ensure that the WR operates to the satisfaction of the ORR. One issue of particular relevance to the Trust is WRCIC's stance on allowing young people to act as volunteers. Recent guidelines from the HRA have cast doubt on the legality of allowing under 16 year-olds to volunteer.

During a recent conversation with the Wolsingham Depot manager, he brought to my attention the need to provide paperwork in the form of method statements, risk assessments and COSHH information, prior to starting any Trust work in the depot. I am awaiting input on this issue from CIC Management.

Raffle tickets for the May Draw were dispatched with the latest edition of BTL, and the steady stream of mail in response is very encouraging.

I am advised that the recent "Class 47" weekend was very successful. I have been asked to extend appreciation to our operations volunteers. Without them, the event would not have been possible.

Also a sincere "thank you" to all of our hard-working outdoor volunteers who have braved the cold weather to ensure that we can be ready for the upcoming season, and to those who are working tirelessly behind the scenes to prepare for this year's visitors.

Proposed: - Ruth Carroll  
Seconded: - Steve Raine

## **8 Treasurer's report**

The Income and expenditure and balance sheet showing the current position were circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting.

The Finance Director presented a verbal summary of the Treasurer's Report.

It is the time of year when, historically, many memberships have come up for renewal. Added to this we have started to receive monies for the May Draw. We have also received a donation from Witton le Wear Parish Council of £3953 - this being half the cost of the new platform at Witton-le-Wear. Expenditure in the last couple of weeks has included the £2000 from our restricted fund for the Witton platform, £653 to Lintons (BTL and Raffle tickets), £156 HRA subs, £31.43 Web hosting and the usual £67.20 to Elliotts for the container at Wolsingham.

Balances:       £6979.60 in Barclays  
                  £30,261.55 in DBS  
                  £671.57in hand.

Proposed: Paul Wilson  
Seconded: Steve Raine

The Finance Director explained that the QuickBooks accounts computer package that the Treasurer uses to record the Trust's accounts is in need of an update. The new version is available on line for a subscription of £7/month and it was recommended that this would be a way forward for the future. This new version is backed up to the Cloud which will prevent the loss of information that occurred with the current version when the Treasurer upgraded to Microsoft Windows 10.

The Directors discussed the recommendation and approved the acquisition of the online edition of Quick book.

Proposed: Peter Kearsley  
Seconded: Paul Wilson

The proposal was approved unanimously by the Directors.

## **9 Trust Shop**

The shop was opened for the weekend of the 47 event and turned over £260.

The shop manager has requested a budget of £500 to restock in preparation for the forthcoming Heritage Season.

Proposed: Peter Baker  
Seconded: Ruth Carroll

The request was approved unanimously by the Directors.

## **10 Secretary Report**

Trust correspondence.

A letter of thanks has been sent to the member who presented the video shown after the AGM of the Wickham trolley ride up the line to Eastgate.

An e-mail had been sent to BARS to request a response to the Trust's ambition with the line between Stanhope and Eastgate. The Company responded advising that it had a project to utilise the railway west of Stanhope and therefore could not agree to the Trust leasing the line at this time.

A request has been received from Stanhope and Rookhope Parish Council for assistance to promote the Celebration of Flowers planned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> July. Floral displays for WR Stations were discussed.

Council resolved to provide a Family Rail ticket for the Heritage service as a Raffle Prize.

A request to support an awareness event for The Young Epilepsy Charity has been received and a Family Rail Ticket Voucher has been sent as a Raffle Prize.

## **11 No 40 Report**

The boiler for No 40 is at McEwen's works still awaiting the report from the boiler inspector indicating any additional work. Until such times as any additional work has been identified we are not in a position to request that McEwen's proceed.

## **12 Projects/Restoration Activities**

Work on the restoration of the Stanhope Station canopy is on hold at the moment. Small grant funding is not available for what is in effect a repair.

The use of Platform 2 for the Heritage Service was briefly discussed but was deemed unsuitable as it would require a substantial amount of work to bring it up to the required standards.

Richard Maughan suggested that the CIC should be approached with respect to contributing to the repair of the station structure. The Company use the canopy and other station fabric to support the decorations for the annual Polar Express event together with the use of the station rooms.

It was suggested that the County Durham Foundation be approached but Gerry Mudd counselled that other issues should be resolved before this was progressed.

John Askwith suggested the Bishop Auckland Technical College be approached to possibly provide painting and Decoration Training to Danial and Chris.

## **13 Projects**

Witton-le-Wear Station Platform

Witton-le-Wear Parish Council have commenced the clearance work of the bank directly in front of the platform and have started to treat the fencing with wood preservative.

The Polydeck platform surface has been installed and is a vast improvement on what was initially installed. Work continues over the next few weeks to install the new fence at the west end of the new decking, continue weeding the run up to the ramp and progression of the required documentation.

#### **14 Volunteer and Membership Secretary's Report**

Membership Report.

The membership currently stands at 536 with many renewals coming in. There are 19 Complimentary Members at the current time. There are now 12 Youth Team members, 51 Life Members with the rest of the Membership being made up of Full, Concessionary and Joint Membership. One returning volunteer arranged to have his medical examination on 26/03/16.

Volunteer Report

Medicals.

The Company is responsible, as the Licence holder, for providing medical examinations. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that their personal medical card is kept up to date. A review of current medicals shows that 12 operational volunteer medical cards expire between now and September 2016. Dr Ron Pounder has been approached and has agreed to assist in performing medical examinations.

A list of drivers and guards has been compiled for those requiring route refresher training to operate the extended service to Witton-le-Wear.

The Company has decided that competencies will be on a 3 year period for refresher training.

There was a further request for Directors to indicate what content they want on the website.

#### **15 Heritage Service 2016**

As the company holds the train operating licence the Heritage Service and its volunteers must comply with the Company's rules and regulations. The Company is in the process of updating the Safety management System (SMS) and plans to issue the new document in the next few months. Once the SMS is completed the next document for review is the Rule Book. It is planned to have this updated in time for a re-training programme between the end of the Heritage Service and the commencement of the 2016 Polar Express event.

The 122 Bubblecar is required to have had an M examination as part of the Fitness to run examination prior to the start of the Heritage Service at Easter. It is planned to move the Bubblecar into the depot shortly to facilitate the examination.

The brochure and timetable have been produced and sent to the distributors Aha.

The first day of operation to Witton-le-Wear is Easter Sunday. Route refresher training for drivers and guards is planned.

Two extra days of operation to Witton-le-Wear were included at the last minute in the brochure. These dates coincide with the "Flying Scotsman Shed Bash" at the Locomotion museum at Shildon and the eleven Arches Kynren performances at Bishop Auckland. A vintage shuttle bus is under consideration to link Bishop Auckland to the service at Witton.

#### **16 Weardale Railway CIC reports.**

There have been no Management meetings since the last Council meeting.

As reported in the Chairman's report the Company is reviewing its policy towards young people volunteering on the railway. This has a potential impact on the relationship between the WRT and the SDRYT. The Company is currently taking a very strict line following advice to the HRA by Legal Counsel. This is an ongoing issue.

Council discussed the nomination for the third Trust representative on the WRCIC Board. Steve Raine had indicated that he was willing to stand as a nominee. Steve was proposed by Peter Baker and seconded by Tony Slack. The Trustees voted unanimously in favour of nominating Steve Raine as the third Trust representative on the CIC Board.

#### **17 Other reports from Trust Directors**

**17a Weekly Lottery/Fund Raising**

There have been three new members join the Lottery.

**17b Educational Activities**

- Talks (Dates/locations)  
As reported last month.
- Publications.
- Magazine (Publication dates/content deadlines)  
BTL90 distributed next edition in May.

**18 Any Other Business**

John Askwith once again asked what the plans were for the Trust promoting itself in 2016. Planned attendance at events making public aware of the railway and Trust existence. There needs to be a designated leader on this with a brief to attract more members to the Trust.

Website. Plans to update it in 2016. Directors need to review with some urgency which content is required to transfer from old website.

Action: All

Ruth Carroll had requested financial support to attend a HRA Conference in Wolverhampton on utilising social media and the web to promote the railway. The request was approved unanimously by the Directors

The meeting closed at 22:30PM

**19 Date of next meeting**

**Next WRT Council meeting: - Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016 venueTBA**