

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST COUNCIL (WRT) MEETING

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at Stanhope Station Café Tuesday 29th March 2016.

The meeting started at 19:30PM.

Those present

Kevin Richardson – Chair
Ruth Carroll
Mark Woodhams
Peter Kearsley
Richard Maughan
Paul Wilson
Tony Slack –Secretary

1 Apologises for absence

Gerry Mudd, Peter Baker, Mike Wood, John Askwith, Steve Raine

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the 22nd February 2016 meeting were approved by the Directors with the following correction:

- Item 5 The first line should read, - ...G5 not G%.
- Item 6 Insert the date of the meeting held with the Charities Commission.
Third para, - Trusts should read Trust's.
Spelling mistake - thire should read their.
- Item 8 2nd sentence Treasurers report should read Treasurer's report.
- Item 10 2nd Para, 1st sentence has should read had and an apostrophe is required in Trusts.
Insert - Floral displays for WR Stations were discussed.
- Item 12 3rd sentence the space in t o should be removed
Add – together with the use of the station rooms.
The following sentence to be removed - It was suggested that Rusby's the decoration shop be approached for sponsorship and supplies.
Final sentence – collage should read college
- Item 14 Replace "last Saturday" with the date
- Item 18 3rd sentence – Reword as - There needs to be a designated leader on this with a brief to attract more members to the Trust.
Penultimate sentence – social should read social.

Proposed: - Paul Wilson

Seconded: - Peter Kearsley

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

There were no matters arising

4 Identify any other business to be discussed in Item 18

There was no other business identified.

5 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The Heritage service hires Mike Wood's 122 "Bubblecar"

6 Charities Commission

Confidential.

7 Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave a verbal report.

March sees the start of our heritage operation and the challenges that brings. Also, as the weather starts to improve, we should now see opportunities to begin catching up on outstanding repair and maintenance work to

our buildings, infrastructure and vehicles. The CIC General Manager has kindly offered the services of his maintenance team, and they have already started to carry out some of the remedial work to Stanhope station canopy.

The reinstatement of Witton-le-Wear station is nearing completion and on Easter Sunday, we witnessed the first passenger train stopping there in around 63 years. The day went very well and interest, both from the residents of Witton-le-Wear and from the travelling public, was very encouraging.

The "M" exam of the class 122 "bubble car" was completed just prior to the start of operations, however timescales were very tight, and we need to better arrange future planned maintenance in order to ensure that we have adequate time in hand prior to the start of running trains. The delay in returning this unit to service meant that training opportunities were missed prior to extending the service to Witton-le-Wear. This delay also highlights the need for us to consider procuring a second train as back-up, should the 122 fail.

We have recently recruited some new volunteers who show great promise, particularly in mechanical engineering disciplines; however we are still short of people who are trained for operational roles, particularly as Duty Managers. This could prove very challenging in the coming months as we try to roster for the heritage operation. I feel that Ruth Carroll, our volunteer co-ordinator, deserves a particular mention here, for her efforts in carrying out this thankless task.

Our mechanical engineering volunteers have started evaluating the 2 Sentinel shunters that are at Wolsingham depot, with a view to having at least one operational this season.

Despite some stressful moments, I feel that we have made a great start to this year. Running our service to Witton-le-Wear is a major milestone in the recovery of heritage operations on the railway. Once the finishing touches to Witton are complete, we can concentrate on renovating the buildings at Witton-le-Wear, Broadwood, Wolsingham and Stanhope, as well as continuing our work at Wolsingham depot. This is going to make huge demands on our people, but I feel that we have demonstrated that, by determination and effort, we can achieve great things and with luck this may inspire others to join us.

A big "thank you!" to everyone who has put in the time and effort to get us where we are today!

Proposed: - Ruth Carroll
Seconded: - Mark Woodhams

8 Treasurer's report

The Profit and Loss accounts for the period since our last meeting and the balance sheet were circulated to Directors prior to the meeting.

The income side is dominated by subscriptions - just over the peak time for renewals, and donations and some of these were quite generous. The income from the lottery also increases bit by bit. Expenditure is still quiet, until the work on 40 begins again. Items to pick out. £193 for the service charge on the postage machine and the training and travel was for the HRA course that Ruth Carroll attended. Balances are shown on the balance sheet. Bank account 1 is Barclays. Savings is our DBS account, interest being due, at last, at the end of this month.

The Treasurer declared himself happy with the state of our funds and asked Council to accept the report.

Proposed: Paul Wilson
Seconded: Peter Kearsley

9 Trust Shop

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

The shop manager is finding enough volunteers to man the shop very difficult. The continued supply of redundant sleeper chairs for re-sale has been agreed with the CIC General Manager.

10 Secretary Report

Trust correspondence.

The Secretary reported that the Office of National Statistics Quarterly Business Survey had been submitted using the Telephone Data Entry service. As the questions all related to the numbers of employees that the Trust has the answers were all zero.

Marksman Publications have sent a request for updated information on the railway for their "GUIDE TO BRITAINS STANDARD GAUGE STEAM RAILWAYS 2016-17 edition. This was unsolicited and Council resolved to not proceed with this.

The re-establishing of the station at Witton-le-Wear will contribute to the Trust's public benefit obligation.

11 No 40 Report

The boiler for No 40 is at McEwen's works where it will be inspected by the boiler inspector on the 31/03/2016. Richard Maughan and Kevin Richardson will be in attendance for the inspection.

Two new members/volunteers have expressed an interest in being involved with works in the depot.

12 Projects/Restoration Activities

Work on the restoration of the Stanhope Station canopy has started with resource from the CIC. The main focus of the work has been to repair rotten timbers in the canopy ends and commencing the repainting of all the woodwork and doors.

2 local Builders have quoted prices for the replacement of the canopy roof glazing. Each firm has a different approach. One would undertake the repairs from the portable scaffold and undertake the repairs on days when there was no Heritage Service. The other would scaffold the whole area and train services would be suspended for the duration of the repairs.

There are 2 potential sources of grant funding for the renovation of some of platform 2. The County Durham Foundation is one and the other is Leader funding. Paul Wilson has met with DCC and there are much bigger grants available. It was suggested that a link to coordinate with the South Tynedale Railway be established following the successful Heritage Lottery grant funding that has been awarded to them.

The stock of platform edging copings has been determined as 55 which is insufficient to complete the full length of platform 2. They are in a very inaccessible place in the depot.

In a development on the Stanhope Station Lease, Richard Maughan has held discussions with the DCC Head of Economic Development. Richard and Peter Baker are to have a follow up meeting.

13 Projects

Witton-le-Wear Station Platform

Witton-le-Wear Parish Council have completed the treatment of the station fencing with wood preservative. Work also continues with establishing a floral area in front of the station with Witton-le-Wear spelled out in white painted cobble stones.

The additional fence at the west end of the new decking was in place for the first train on Easter Sunday the 27th March. Limited Clearance and No Passengers beyond this Point signs have been ordered and will be installed at the platform end fences prior to the next scheduled service day.

The Station Project report is well advanced and will be published shortly.

The issue of disabled access still requires resolution.

14 Volunteer and Membership Secretary's Report

Membership Report.

This is a busy time of year for membership renewals and many have been received.

Volunteer Report

There have been a number of new volunteers coming forward with 4 expressing an interest in engineering and maintenance. Three volunteers have come forward at Witton-le-Wear to man the crossing there and training is on-going.

There has been a technical problem with the production of Competency cards

15 Heritage Service 2016

The 2016 Heritage Service commenced on Good Friday the 25th of March and ran the four days of the Easter weekend. As stated earlier Sunday the 27th saw the first scheduled passenger train service to Witton-le-Wear since June 1953. The event was covered by the Northern Echo and the previous week an item on the re-establishment of services to Witton appeared on the Made in Tyne and Wear Bulletin television news programme. This first weekend of operation showed passenger numbers at a good level with excess of £1K being taken. A good start.

16 Weardale Railway CIC reports.

A Management meeting was held on the 14th March. The Trust was represented by Kevin Richardson, Ruth Carroll and Tony Slack.

The updated Safety Management System (SMS) documentation is to be in place by the end of March.

The stock for the 2016 Polar Express is to be made available much earlier to allow sufficient time for preparation. Improvements to the Sound system and two way radios are to be investigated as is the re-instatement of the central locking of carriage doors.

The updated rulebook will be briefed out between the end of the Heritage Service and the start of Polar Express.

A computerised path booking system has been introduced for access to the railway.

The situation with the SDRYT remains unchanged.

Another GP has agreed to undertake medical examinations.

17 Other reports from Trust Directors

17a Weekly Lottery/Fund Raising

There have been no winners in the last period and a number draw will be undertaken.

There are 12 members of the lottery.

17b Educational Activities

- Talks (Dates/locations)

25/04/16 – Tudhoe Local History Society.
06/06/16 - Sedgfield Local History Society.
11/10/16 – Spennymoor Probus.
17/10/16 – Wensleydale Railway Association.

- Presentations

Semi-Permanent Display Boards at Locomotion at Shildon.
Display boards booked for Darlington Crown Street Library

- Publications.

The following all make reference to the Weardale Railway. Some historical information can be gathered from these pages for WR research and archive.

Social Media Pages "I Love Weardale".
Bishop Auckland Station History Group.
History of Bishop Auckland.

- Magazine (Publication dates/content deadlines)

BTL90 Contributions by 21/04/16
Despatch 6th May – to include May Day Draw results.

18 Any Other Business

There was no Any Other Business

The meeting closed at 22:25PM

19 Date of next meeting

Next WRT Council meeting: - Tuesday 3rd May 2016 venue Witton-le-Wear Community Centre