

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST COUNCIL (WRT) MEETING

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at Witton-le-Wear Community Centre Tuesday 31st May 2016.

The meeting started at 19:30PM.

Those present

Kevin Richardson – Chair
Peter Baker
Peter Kearsley
Mike Wood – (from 20:10 until 21:15)
Paul Wilson
Tony Slack –Secretary

The meeting was not quorate until the arrival of Mike Wood at 20:10 and became inquorate again at 21:15.

1 Apologies for absence

Gerry Mudd, Ruth Carroll, Mark Woodhams, Richard Maughan, Steve Raine, John Askwith.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

Corrections had been supplied by John Askwith prior to the meeting and these formed the basis of the following:

The minutes of the 29th March 2016 meeting were approved by the Directors with the following correction:

Item 3 – WRT promotion and leadership to be an agenda item.

WRT Website feedback and planned action required.

Item 8 – Spacing of last line of 2nd para to be corrected.

John Askwith clarified the source of the income at the meeting.

Penultimate para – “is” to be inserted between £1 and still.

Item 10, para 3 – Comma required after Witton-le-Wear.

Item 14 - Volunteers report section: semi colon required after 122 guard, today should read tidy, stick should read spic, Daniel Browne and Chris Simpson should be named in full, and a hyphen is required between Groundworks and Vaughan.

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 20

WRT membership fees to be reviewed.

A further reprint of the “Rebirth” book to be considered together with potential updating.

Chainsaw training

5 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There were no changes to the conflicts of interest.”

6 Charities Commission

Confidential

7 Chairman’s Report

The Chairman had circulated his report to Directors prior to the meeting and is included in the minutes.

The last few days have seen mixed fortunes in the Trust operation. On the down side, the report on number 40’s boiler is very worrying. The latest tests have revealed that the boiler is in a worse state than originally thought. Consequently we need to review our plans for financing the repairs.

On a brighter note, we have just had our best weekend yet with the operation of the heritage service. The extended run to Witton-le-Wear appears to be the jewel in our crown at present. Revenues have been far better than expected. Visitor numbers in general are also showing signs of improvement.

Plans for integrating our operation with the Flying Scotsman week at Locomotion are also well in hand.

As a consequence of this success, we now need to give serious consideration to adding to our heritage fleet. We have several advance bookings of coach parties in the coming months. Should one of these coincide with a busy day with "walk-on" passengers, we could possibly find that we do not have sufficient passenger carrying capacity to cope. We have been offered the use of a class 108 from the national collection, however this unit is reported to need some remedial work to make it serviceable which could mean that it will not be fully ready for this season. It is our intention to investigate further before making a final decision.

Work continues on preparing the Sentinel shunter in time for the Father's Day "Driver for a Fiver". Evan Green-Hughes has offered to prepare a scheme of operation in time for the event, and has kindly offered to supervise on the day.

Peter Baker has kindly offered to coordinate the planning of the return to service of number 40, and the reintroduction of steam services to the railway. If anyone feels that they are able to assist with this project, please let us know.

A recent inspection of all of the crossings on the railway has identified problems with over 20 crossings, mainly due to restricted lines of sight. Managers at RMS Locotec have requested assistance from the Sunday gang in tackling these issues.

In conclusion, we are facing ever more demands, particularly in the area of finance. Without the heritage service, and the efforts of our band of dedicated volunteers, it would be a difficult task to maintain the viability of the Trust. A heartfelt thanks to all who contribute.

Proposed: - Paul Wilson
Seconded: - Peter Baker

8 Treasurer's report

The Treasurer had circulated his report to Directors prior to the meeting and is included in the minutes.

2 P& L sheets were included in the report, 1 for May and the other the year to date and the balance sheet was included too.

It is now much easier to split the P & L by date, using the new version of QuickBooks.

Cash balances today are:

Bank	£8,267
DBS	£30,587
In hand	£399
Total	£39,253

During the month we made a small surplus. The income was just over £1,100, however Mike Rapp has stocked up in the shop, which of course will bear fruit later. Other expenses were routine BTL and postage etc.

The Treasurer declared his intention to draw up a prediction for income and committed expenditure, as requested by Gerry Mudd as soon as possible. There are some unknowns principally; the cost of Stanhope Station Canopy and the profit of WRHSL for 2015 being two big ones. The treasurer declared that he would be in favour of following up the 108 unit, but delaying committing to it, for now.

Proposed: - Tony Slack
Seconded: - Paul Wilson

9 Trust Shop

Covered in Treasurer's report.

10 Secretary's Report

Trust correspondence.

The Secretary reported that the situation with the County Court Judgment had been followed up with Premier Traffic Management Ltd and had been informed that their Solicitors had been instructed to remove the judgement from WRHSL and that this had been done. Premier Traffic Management had been left with the unpaid invoice and additional legal costs. Whether the WRHSL credit rating had been affected was unclear.

There had been a request for a birthday gift in the form of a card and a ticket, this was produced and supplied.

11 SDRYT

There has been no change in the Company's position with respect to Youth Volunteers and further clarification from the HRA is unlikely in the short term. A copy of the HRA Guidance is to be obtained.

SDRYT have has requested that the £60 membership fee be refunded. This is to be progressed.

12 No 40 Report

The Non Destructive Testing (NDT) of the boiler for No 40 has been undertaken at McEwen's works. The result of the NDT and further inspection by the Boiler Inspector has resulted in a quotation from McEwen's for an additional £13,000 for work additional to their original quote.

Following discussion; Council agreed unanimously that McEwen's be requested to proceed with the works to the boiler of No40 provided that they agree that work will be suspended should the Trust have insufficient funds to take the project to completion.

A team to plan the reintroduction of steam services has been convened under the coordination of Peter Baker. Members include Richard Maughan, Steve Raine and Trevor Horner. Phil Charlton will be included in any correspondence as required. The first meeting is planned for June 13th 2016.

Mike Wood departed the meeting at 21:15, the following notes are a record of the informal updates and discussions that subsequently took place.

13 Projects/Restoration Activities

A revised quotation for £8,500 has been received to replace all the canopy glass and to replace the glazing bars with hardwood for the Canopy at Stanhope station.

The Grant funding document is for grants in the £1000 to £5000 range and Brewis Henderson has agreed to act as representative.

Repair work is required on the paintwork of Nina. This was noted.

14 DCC Stanhope Station Lease

At a meeting between Richard Maughan and Peter Baker with DCC to discuss the situation with the lease of Stanhope Station to the Trust, DCC again made it clear that they expect to get a commercial rent for the station and offered a rent of £12,000 p.a. They were also of the opinion that the issue of the leases for the multi user paths were separate of the negotiations with respect to the station lease. Peter Baker has responded that the Trust cannot possibly afford a rental at this level and Steve Raine has also written to DCC to clarify the situation. The Stanhope station lease situation is no nearer resolution.

15 Projects

Witton-le-Wear Station Platform project is complete save for the installation of the stock fencing which is hoped to be completed once Trevor Horner has returned from holiday. The W-le-W youth club were involved in the restoration of the garden and the manufacturing of banners for the opening day. We have received a request for a free trip for approximately 10 youngsters with a supervising adult.

As reported in the Chairman's report work continues on the 0-6-0 Sentinel shunter.

16 Volunteer and Membership Secretary's Report

Membership Report.

Membership renewals continue to come in

Volunteers Report

New volunteers have begun to come on stream and are working hard. One has passed out as Controller and another is to be assessed as guard on the 1st June. The numbers of qualified drivers means that they are limited to 1 to 2 turns per month. PTS training is required in June.

17 Heritage Service 2016

The service days to Witton-le-Wear continue to be very good and the service is proving popular.

Planning to take advantage of the Flying Scotsman event at Locomotion at Shildon is at an advanced stage. The provision of the shuttle bus connection service has been agreed with the Eden Bus Company and poster design is at an advanced stage.

Following an initial approach by Evan Greene-Hughes to the NRM Curator of vehicles with respect to the loan of the museums 108 two car DMU to provide additional capacity and backup to the 122 unit we are required to formally request to be considered in writing. A letter will be produced.

The situation with the company's 141 unit to be followed up.

Action: A Slack

18 Weardale Railway CIC reports.

There have been no CIC meetings since the last Trust meeting.

19 Other reports from Trust Directors

19a Weekly Lottery/Fund Raising

There are still currently 12 active members.

19b Educational Activities

- Talks (Dates/locations)

06/06/16 - Sedgefield Local History Society.
11/10/16 – Spennymoor Probus.
17/10/16 – Wensleydale Railway Association.
09/09/16 – Bishop Middleham Historical Society

- Presentations

Semi-Permanent Display Boards at Locomotion, Shildon.
Display boards booked for Darlington Crown Street Library
Contribution of photographs and information to the Westgate Village photographic exhibition.

- Publications.

- Magazine (Publication dates/content deadlines)

BTL92 Contributions 21/07/16 – including notice of AGM, venue and date.
Despatch 05/08/16

20 Any Other Business

WRT Membership fees were discussed. The general consensus was that at present the fees barely cover the cost of production and postage of the 4 issues of BTL per annum. Peter Kearsley undertook to survey other Heritage Railway membership fees to determine the current levels.

An update to the "Rebirth" book is to be discussed with John Askwith with a view to another print run.

The CIC is to be approached with respect to funding chainsaw training for the Sunday Gang.

21 Date of next meeting

Next WRT Council meeting: - Monday 27th June 2016 venue Stanhope Station Café.