

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST COUNCIL (WRT) MEETING

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at Witton-le-Wear community Centre, on Monday 5th December 2016.

The meeting started at 19:35PM.

Those present

Kevin Richardson - Chairman
Mike Wood – Acting Chair (from 19:40)
John Askwith
Peter Baker
Peter Kearsley
Steve Raine
Paul Wilson
Tony Slack –Secretary

1 Apologies for absence

Gerry Mudd, Mark Woodhams, Richard Maughan

2. Election of Officers of the Trust

Council elected Officers of the Trust following the AGM held on the 14th November 2015.

Chairman: Kevin Richardson Proposed – Steve Raine, Seconded Paul Wilson.

Vice Chairman: Mike Wood Proposed – Peter Baker, Seconded Peter Kearsley

Secretary: Tony Slack Proposed – Paul Wilson, Seconded Peter Baker

Finance Director: Peter Baker Proposed – Tony Slack, Seconded Steve Raine

The Election of the above Officers of the Trust was carried unanimously.

Treasurer: Louise Baker Council agreed unanimously to ask Louise if she would continue in this role.

The Trust M&A's allow for a total of 12 Directors as members of Council. Previous discussions had considered co-opting a further Director following the AGM. An individual member has been approached who is willing to consider becoming a Directors of the Trust. The nominee was Norman Raine. Council agreed to invite Norman to subsequent council meetings as an observer to determine if he wishes to be co-opted.

Council also confirmed unanimously Richard Maughan as custodian of the Trust's steam locomotive No40.

Proposed Peter Baker, Seconded Paul Wilson.

3. Election of Trust Directors to Weardale Railways CIC board.

Steve Raine and Tony Slack will continue as two of the three nominated Trust Directors on the CIC Board. Council will discuss the third nominee at the next Council meeting.

4 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the 31st October 2016 meeting were approved by the Directors with the following corrections:

Minor grammatical corrections throughout.

Item 13 - 1st sentence – should read – Gerry Mudd is assisting with the upgrade of the website.

Item 14 – insert - No report submitted by the Volunteer Liaison Officer.

Item 17 – Publications – Easter 2107 should read Easter 2017.

Proposed: - John Askwith

Seconded: - Peter Baker

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

There were no matters arising.

6 Identify any other business to be discussed in Item 21

Trust Policies and Procedures.
Polar Roster.
Change of Trust year end.
Eastgate Section situation.

7 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There is conflict with the Trust council members that are also involved with the G5 Group regarding the potential Trust purchase of the G5 Group's BG Coach.

8 Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave a verbal report.

The AGM was very good and had gone very well with no issues raised.

We are now well into the Polar Express event, passenger bookings have already exceeded last year's numbers, and many demands are being placed on our operational volunteers. Thanks to all concerned.

Even though we are in the closed season, as far as our own passenger operations are concerned, there is still much to be done in preparation for 2017. The new timetable leaflets are in the final stage of design and we hope to have them ready for distribution soon. Once the timetable is finalised, we will book the necessary paths on the railway to allow us to keep to our publicised times.

The Sunday Gang volunteers are still working as weather allows – the lines of sight along the trackside are vastly improved.

With recent progress on the redesign of the web site, as well as plans for taking our Trust display to various events, I am optimistic that 2017 will see us make significant progress in publicising the Weardale Railway, and the Trust's part in keeping it viable. Hopefully we will see increasing membership and volunteer numbers as a direct result. Many thanks again to Paul Wilson for successfully bidding for a grant for new display boards, and to those who have volunteered to help, both with maintaining the web-site and with manning the display.

Finally, I have received a proposal to change the Trust financial year end, and correspondingly to move the AGM to early spring. This will avoid a clash, both with the end of our operating season, (especially the Halloween event), and also the run-up to Polar Express. We will consult with our accountants and also discuss at the Trust Council, prior to making a decision.

Proposed: - Peter Baker
Seconded: - Steve Raine

9 Treasurer's report

There has been little change in the accounts that were presented and discussed at the AGM, November being a quiet month. The accounts show that there is a VAT charge for the write off of the sum of money that was owed to Multi Tal.

Current Balances:

Barclays	£15,602.76
DBS	£30,587.06

The grant monies from the CDCF for the new display boards will be transferred shortly.

The new Membership Subscriptions agreed at the AGM are as follows:

Full	£18.00		
Concessionary	£14.00		
Joint	£10.00		
Junior	£10.00		
Family	£40.00		
Life	60yrs+ £200.00	under 60yrs	£350.00

These subscriptions are to be incorporated into any new publicity materials and implemented as from the 1st January 2017.

Proposed: Paul Wilson.
Seconded: Peter Kearsley.

10 Trust Shop

There has been no shop activity since the end of the operating season of the Heritage Service.

11 Secretary's Report

The Secretary agreed that the AGM went very well but there was general agreement that the CIC presentation wasn't particularly relevant and representations should be made ahead of next year's AGM. Council decided to keep the 11:00am start for 2017.

It was agreed that the film shown by Keith McNally was extremely good and Keith should be approached to supply a link to the updated website, subject to resolving any copyright issues.

It was agreed that the No. 40 presentation was well received and that we need to monitor progress with the boiler smith to deliver in the timeframe agreed.

A Raffle Prize of a Family Rail Voucher has been sent following the request on behalf of the annual Stars in Your Eyes event to be held at Wolsingham School.

Letters of thanks are to be sent to Mark Westerfield and Keith McNally for their contributions to the AGM.
Action: Tony Slack

Trust Policies and Procedures:

There are currently seven Trust Policies and Procedures that require assessing and updating as required by the report from the Charities Commission. Council agreed to distribute these for review to different Council Members as follows:

Policy	Responsible Director
• Child Protection	Paul Wilson
• Harassment	Peter Kearsley
• Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults	Mike Wood
• Purchasing	Peter Baker
• Safety	Kevin Richardson
• Code of Conduct	Tony Slack
• Equality	Paul Wilson

Two additional policies were identified as being required

• Data Protection Policy	Tony Slack
• Risk Assessment and Method Statements	To Be Confirmed

A register of the names of Persons of Significant Control is required. Peter Kearsley had provided the latest guidance. It possible the Trust is not required to comply with this requirement but the situation requires review.
Action: Peter Kearsley and Tony Slack.

It was suggested that following the success of the use of Makaton sign language by the staff on the Polar Express, consideration should be given to training the Trust front of house personnel.

12 No 40 Report

The latest report from McEwens detailed the situation as of the 11th November 2016. Council resolved that the boiler smith should be visited in the New Year to review progress.

13 Projects/Restoration Activities

A Grant recognition plaque is required to show the CDCF Grant contribution to the restoration of Stanhope Station Canopy. It was agreed that the most appropriate place for such a plaque to be mounted would be the Booking Hall at Stanhope Station. A plaque design is to be developed and brought to Council for approval.

Action: Paul Wilson.

The contractor that undertook the work on Stanhope Station Canopy has requested a statement/testimony from the Trust to use in his promotional materials. Council agreed to produce this. Action: Tony Slack

There has been no progress on the refurbishment of Wolsingham Station Cabin.

Broadwood Crossing Cabin

- The electricity supply to the cabin has been disconnected at the request of Shenstone.
- A temporary generator supply has been installed for the duration of the Polar Express event.
- An application has been submitted for a new supply.

14 Projects

G5 BG Coach purchase. As part of due diligence an assessment of the current physical state and Fitness to Run is to be undertaken. Action: Peter Baker to arrange.

The possibility of installing a Halt to serve the Kingfisher Caravan Park was discussed. Early discussions with the Caravan Park owners have been very encouraging and there is a possibility that costs may be shared. A design would be required to be drawn up and planning permission sought before a properly costed project could be drawn up.

15 Trust Promotion drive

Progress on the updating of the website is to be an agenda item for monthly tracking by Council.

Yesterday Belongs to You event at Beamish in 2017. This is a major Regional event that the Trust usually attends. John Askwith will lead again this year with appropriate assistance. A copy of the Company Public Liability insurance is required as part of the Registration process.

16 Volunteer Liaison Officer's Report

No report available.

Sunday Gang continue track clearing with work undertaken recently between Milepost 6 and Eels Beck.

17 Membership Secretary's Report

The Acting Membership Secretary reported that of the 84 membership renewal reminders issued with BTL 93 so far there had been only 19 respondents. Leaving 65 members still to renew many of whom have been long term members. It was determined that some of these should be followed up to determine why memberships are not being renewed.

18 Heritage Services

As stated in the Chairman's report the production of the Heritage Services brochure for 2017 is at an advanced stage. It is the intention to get supplies to A-ha the distribution company early in 2017.

As stated previously 2017 will see all trains operating between Stanhope and Witton-le-Wear on timetabled operating days.

It is the intention to distribute Customer Feedback forms to determine the make-up of passengers and their reasons for travelling on the railway.

19 Weardale Railway CIC reports.

Management meeting subjects since the last Council meeting.

- Bridge 28 repairs completed in time for commencement of Polar Express. Other bridges require examination. The Environment Agency propose a plan to be in place for all bridges by May/June 2017.
- A fix for Broken Banks is under consideration.
- The Company has contacted the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham to explore possible opportunities in conjunction with the Kynren events held at Bishop Auckland.

There have been no WRCIC Board meeting since the last meeting

20 Other reports from Trust Directors

20a Weekly Lottery/Fund Raising

Lottery application forms were distributed at the AGM resulting in one new member. Council agreed that the event of no winner based on the Lottery numbers a draw would be taken every 13 weeks with timing to coincide with the publication of the BTL magazines.

20b Educational Activities

- Talks: 2 talks are planned so far for 2017
- Presentations
None
- Publications.

Rebirth book. Ed Ellis of Iowa Pacific has agreed to write a new Introduction and recently been informed of proposed publication date. Stocks of the current edition to be determined.

Action: Tony Slack.

- Magazine (Publication dates/content deadlines)

BTL94. Copy by 19th January 2017. Publication date 3rd February 2017.

21 Any Other Business

There was a proposal to examine the opportunity to acquire a Class 142 DMU unit as part of the upgrading of the services on the Network.

Proposed; Mike Wood
Seconded; Kevin Richardson.

Council agreed to pursue this further.

There was discussion about the apparent bias in personnel rostered for the Polar Express event. The Chairman agreed to follow this up.

The proposal to change the Trust year end is to be discussed at the January 2017 Council meeting.

It was agreed that the Trust would gain approach the Company with a request to lease the Eastgate section of the railway. Action: Peter Baker.

The meeting closed at 22:35PM

19 Date of next meeting

Next WRT Council meeting: - Monday 16th January 2017 at 7:30PM at Witton-le-Wear Community Centre.