

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST COUNCIL (WRT) MEETING

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at Witton-le-Wear Community centre, on Monday 1st April 2019.

The meeting started at 1932hrs

Those present

Kevin Richardson – Chairman
Peter Kearsley
Paul Wilson –Secretary
Tony Slack
Bob Dingle
Richard Maughan
Steve Raine
Mike Wood from 1943hrs

Jean Clarke - Guest

1 Apologies for absence

Gerry Mudd, Simon Adams, Mark Woodhams

2 Election of Officers of the Trust

Chair: Kevin Richardson, agreed to stand again supported by Directors.
Proposed: - Tony Slack; Seconded: - Peter Kearsley

Vice-Chair: Mike Wood
Proposed: - Peter Kearsley; Seconded: - Tony Slack

Treasurer: - Resolution pending

Secretary: - Paul Wilson
Proposed: - Bob Dingle; Seconded: - Steve Raine

3 Election of Trust Directors on the board of Weardale Railways CIC

Tony Slack and Steve Raine kindly agreed to continue as Trust Directors on the board of Weardale Railways CIC. There is currently a vacant position for a Trust member on the board.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 4th March 2019 meeting were approved by the Directors with minor corrections.

Item within Treasurers report; add all figures are in £

Proposed: - Mike Wood

Seconded: - Bob Dingle

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

Co-opting of Jean Clarke as a Trust Director

6 Identify any other business to be discussed in Item 22

Nil

7 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There are no new conflicts of interest.

8 Chairman's Report

I would first like to offer my apologies for being unable to attend the 2019 AGM due to illness, and to thank Dr Mike Wood for officiating in my place.

Our thanks to Jean Clarke for agreeing to plan and operate the Trust membership database and for attending tonight's meeting to meet the team and discuss the format. This is an essential aspect of administering the Trust and, once sorted, should make the task much more straightforward.

I am disappointed that we have been unable to make the class 108 DMU available for the start of the heritage season, despite our best efforts. Unfortunately, there have been several electrical issues that have confounded us, but we now seem to be progressing to the stage where we will soon be able to put the unit into service.

The heritage season initially got off to a promising start over the first weekend, with very encouraging passenger numbers; however, this, the second week, our fortunes were reversed, and tickets sold were significantly below our financial break-even point. The weekend coincided with Mothering Sunday, a significant worsening of the weather compared to the previous week, and the introduction of WRCIC's afternoon tea trains, all of which may have had an impact. We will monitor the situation carefully over the coming weeks. We have so far managed to find the required number of people to cover all the posts for operating both the heritage and afternoon tea trains, but it has again required some individuals to offer more hours than they would perhaps prefer. This is something that we will need to carefully consider going forward. Illness and an ageing volunteer base are having a detrimental effect on our ability to cover all posts. However, it is pleasing to note that several of the young members of the SDRYT are now old enough to begin volunteering and are keen to make a start. Plans are in place for them to commence training and this should eventually help alleviate our personnel shortages. The drier weather over recent weeks has allowed both our Sunday and Wednesday gangs to further progress their invaluable work and we are already seeing the results of their efforts. Clearance of much of the undergrowth in the tree-line to the south side of platform 2 at Stanhope, together with the new flower tubs, has significantly improved the look of the station, and everyone concerned deserves praise for their excellent efforts.

Finally, as always, I would like to thank everyone for your ongoing support and contribution to both the trust and the railway.

Proposed: - Tony Slack

Seconded: - Bob Dingle

9 Treasurer's Report

The financial summary for the month was circulated to Directors prior to the meeting and is summarised below.

We are still without a Treasurer, trustees discussed potential ways in which we could address future financial accounting. Cash balance at 31 March is;

Barclays	£36,289.85
DBS	£17,982.14
In Hand	\$10(US)

It is usually an active time financially with many memberships being renewed, often with donations too.

This year there are many unusual expenses as well, particularly in preparing the 108 for running.

It's particularly pleased that we have been able to pay back the first instalment (25%) of the loans made to purchase the 108. All cheques sent out have now been presented. One loan of £100 was converted into a donation and gift aided.

The expenditure is shown inclusive of VAT. The last VAT return was January so the next will be sometime this month.

There are also some charges from the AGM to be received.

Income and expenditure for February and March are as follows:

Income	£2268.80
Expenditure	£6653.26

Proposed: - Mike Wood
Seconded: - Steve Raine

10 Trust Shop

An invoice was received for shop stock of £127.20, that should be deducted from the overall balance.

11 Secretary's Report

Evaluation of the 2019 AGM was provided. There were 32 members present for the meeting, (9 of these Trust Directors), which was in keeping with totals from the previous two AGM. Total cost was £86.40 with donations on the day helping to offset this. Still awaiting invoice from Locomotion staff. It was good to try a different venue, although we did have to break to facilitate furniture moving for the slide show. My gratitude to Tony Slack for despite no longer being Trust Secretary he had a major part in feeding back various reports on behalf of the Trust and to Mike Wood for Chairing the AGM in Kevin Richardson's absence. Thanks to John Askwith for agreeing to provide a slideshow and to Evan Green-Hughes for the review of CIC activities and what the next 12 months offer is.

The remaining 3 WRT polices that required standardisation have been completed and signed, now sent for uploading onto Trust website.

Correspondence has mainly been via social media and email to the Trust. I have also forwarded on enquires to the CIC for matters requiring their attention.

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

12 Data Protection Legislation

Peter Kearsley gave a progress report on the Trust data retention policy. The period we retain information for was discussed. Peter reported that staff from the CIC had been corresponding with him. Question raised whether we proceed alone or produce something standard across the Trust and CIC. Peter has agreed to work with Evan Green-Hughes to support the production of a data retention policy.

13 No 40 Report

Richard Maughan to have a conversation with Alistair McEwen regarding timescales for 40's boiler completion.

14 Restoration Activities

Trustees discussed options of funding; a potential project would be a wooden shelter at Witton-le-Wear. Following on from some recent work on the railway at Escomb, it was raised that there is an offer to donate half a day volunteering from Mott McDonald staff. Broadwood cabin and Wolsingham Station are a couple of potential options for them. John Askwith is leading on this.

15 Projects

Witton crossing gate still requires replacement. Steel work has been added to gate, planning to install soon. Next priority for paid staff after Scotch Isle loop work has been completed.

108, progress is frustrating with recent electrical gremlins in form of an electrical fault. Currently there are 3 volunteers working intensively, our thanks expressed to them.

Trust 0-6-0 Sentinel requires an oil change and there are doubts over the air compressor needing overhaul. To approach WRCIC staff for quote.

16 Trust Promotion Drive

There were no updates.

17 Volunteer Liaison Officer's Report

Bob Dingle provided an update. Bishop Trains volunteers completed 4 initial turns, with one of them old enough to undertake guard training soon. It's been disappointing not hearing back on 3-4 volunteers who started back end of last year. The offer from Mott McDonald volunteers positive.

Mike Wood updated the meeting on the work of the Sunday gang. The gang have spent two days at Stanhope clearing over hanging trees at Platform 2 and two days between Engineman's and Bridge 3. Graham Peat led the gang on a Sunday during March.

Wednesday group has commenced, helping to paint and replace Unthank gates. Hopefully more volunteers will join them.

18 Acting Membership Secretary's Report

Eight members have been removed from the database due to a lack of response from two reminder letters. This leaves current membership at 425, including 7 Junior members (4 of whom are local) Membership renewals continue to come in and to date we have received 121 renewals from the 165 reminders sent out in February with BTL 102.

From 4 April 2018 there have been 25 new members.

The new style membership cards are expected to be delivered by no later than Monday 1st April and it is anticipated that the renewals will be sent out by Wednesday 3rd April.

19 Heritage Services

After a successful initial weekend, followed by a poor weekend when we ran at a loss. Service ran with 122, in place of the unavailable 108. We've continued to make a profit on average over 4 running days.

Times confirmed for main line rail tour on 11th May, which will have an impact on last train of the day.

20 Weardale Railway CIC Reports.

Directors feedback recent presentation from Evan Green-Hughes on the Heritage Railway Association and Office of Rail Regulation.

Recent discussion about a platform at King Fisher Park shared, not feasible at present due to cost.

Tony Slack provided an update from the Weardale Railway management meeting. Train to Christmas Town tickets to go on sale in 4-6 weeks.

21 Other reports from Trust Directors

21a Weekly Lottery/Fund Raising

There have been no winners since last draw. Hoping to complete a draw over Easter. Recently participants have been the closest ever being only one digit away from getting a winning line.

21b Educational Activities

Talks:

Nil

Publications:

BTL 102 will be due early in May.

22 Any Other Business

Agreed to co-opt Jean Clarke to the Trust Council; with Jean accepting the offer.

John Askwith has kindly agreed to continue as Editor of BTL, our thanks to him.

A recent clean-up of rubbish under Latherbrush Bridge at Bishop Auckland has attracted two new volunteers.

The meeting closed at 21:56hrs

23 Date of next meeting

Next WRT Council meeting: - Monday 3rd June 2019 at 7:30PM at Witton-le-Wear Community Centre.