

WEARDALE RAILWAY TRUST COUNCIL (WRT) MEETING

Minutes of the management committee meeting held at Witton-le-Wear Community centre, on Monday 4th February 2019.

The meeting started at 19:30PM.

Those present

Kevin Richardson – Chairman
Peter Kearsley
Paul Wilson –Secretary
Tony Slack
Bob Dingle
Richard Maughan
Steve Raine
Mike Wood from 1937hrs

1 Apologies for absence

Gerry Mudd, Simon Adams

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 3rd December 2018 meeting were approved by the Directors with minor corrections.
Item 13 in minutes, duplication remove locally.

Proposed: - Peter Kearsley

Seconded: - Richard Maughan

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

None

4 Identify any other business to be discussed in Item 19

Request to donate a prize to a school

Laser jet printer purchase and ink for membership cards

John Askwith Honorary life membership

5 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There are no new conflicts of interest.

6 Chairman's Report

Now that we are approaching the 2019 operating season, we face several challenges. The preparation of the 2019 timetable is well in hand, and WRCIC have increased the number of "specials" operating days compared with 2018 by including "Afternoon Tea" trains and extra gala days. We have managed to incorporate these plans into our heritage timetable in a way that minimises the effect that it will have on our plans.

WRCIC are also in the process of transferring sets of left-hand points from the Eastgate site, which will be incorporated into the loop at Scotch Isle. This will transform this into a proper passing loop, which should simplify operations on days when more than one train is operating on the line.

The management team at WRCIC have also reported significant progress on obtaining an agreement with Network Rail with a view to installing the footpath between BAW and BAE. This would be a massive bonus to our heritage operation; we at WRT may be asked to contribute in some way to the cost.

We are currently trying to set up a mid-week volunteering team to do practical work around the railway, such as keeping the stations looking tidy and well looked-after. If anyone can help for a couple of hours a week it would be of enormous benefit.

Progress on preparing the 108 has been rather slow lately, mainly due to my domestic and work commitments. However, Norman Clarke has made some progress and hopefully we will accelerate this in the coming weeks.

Witton gate is still to install, however for the reasons already mentioned, and the fact that the track gang have been occupied with preparing the track and lifting the points at Eastgate, there has been no progress, other than painting the gate. The installation will need to be finished ahead of the start of the operating season.

We are hopeful of further progress on Number 40, now that the latest quote for extra work has been agreed and permission given to continue to completion. We intend monitoring progress more closely and have requested more regular updates from McEwen's.

We are now approaching the submission date for items for the next edition of BTL. As this will be John Askwith final edition as editor, we need to consider how best to ensure that future editions are published on time.

The Trust treasurer situation has not yet been resolved. Efforts to find an alternative treasurer have so far proved fruitless.

A confidential matter was discussed.

Finally, we face several challenges in the coming months, but with your valuable support, I am sure that we will continue to succeed.

Proposed: - Tony Slack
Seconded: - Bob Dingle

7 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.

The cash balances as of the 4 February are:

The cash balances today are:

Barclays	28,586.59	
DBS	17,931.20	
In hand	29.00	plus \$10 US
Total	46,546.79	

No outstanding bills. Elliott have said they are increasing the rent on the container, but they haven't said how much. QuickBooks are increasing the cost to £12 pm. Kevin Richardson advised that there were still £19K to transfer from Heritage Services from 2018. Trustees agreed that we could repay 25% of the loans pledged to purchase the 108 DMU which amounts to £4K during 2019.

Proposed: - Mike Wood
Seconded: - Steve Raine

8 Trust Shop

No trading or requests for purchasing items has been made in this period.

9 Secretary's Report

We are no further forward in identifying further potential patrons for the Trust. Any suggestions for suitable patrons to approach is welcome. We agreed at tonight's meeting that as we currently have the Bishop of Durham as a patron, we will not continue to try and identify more.

AGM – The venue, McNay Building at Shildon has been confirmed, we have been given this booking at no cost due to our charity status. If we want to make use of their refreshment facilities, there is a cost per head, and we would need to book this in advance. The webpage and social media have been updated, with an amendment planned in BTL. John Askwith has kindly agreed to do Weardale Railway 1993-2018 pictorial talk as part of the meeting. We need to decide whether we will offer a ride on the 108 to members, although our venue in Shildon may be a barrier to this.

The 4 WRT polices we signed off in December are now live on our webpage. No further progress has been made with standardising the remaining 3.

Correspondence has mainly been via social media and email to the Trust. We've had the query from Lady McAlpine enquiring about the original WR share scheme which was responded to, are we operating driver experiences, parking at Bishop Auckland station, comments about the provisional timetable/ gala's and commercial enquiries/ information which have been forwarded to the CIC. We wait in anticipation that our recent correspondence with McEwen's on 40's boiler has the desired effect and we receive regular updates on progress.

Industrial Heritage Network – North East; another meeting is planned with 3 dates in April/ May circulated to trustees. I've not had any responses to date. Plan to put another update in BTL, however we may need to re-think our involvement with the network.

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

10 Data Protection Legislation

Peter Kearsley gave a progress report on the Trust data retention policy. He is developing a spreadsheet of respondents; however, it was suspected this was not the total number. Peter to approach Peter Baker to ascertain whether he has received any paper responses for completeness.

11 No 40 Report

Trustees discussed the recent contact with McEwen's on the 1st February. We'd agreed the payment of the previous invoice Q14339 and impressed the need for a timescale for completion as well as providing monthly updates with photographs.

We also discussed the work that would need to be undertaken at the railway if we expected 40 to run regularly. Commencing this work now would be an ideal opportunity to complete any key documents, infrastructure and training in preparation for 40's return. This pressure is reduced if we expect 40 to be hired out to other railways, however we need to consider what our membership may think about this.

There have been no further steam group meetings.

12 Restoration Activities

The generator at Broadwood has had an oil change and a portable toilet has been purchased and secured for volunteers at the site. With the prospect of having no suitable vacuum brake vehicle for stock work, trustees discussed the brake van currently in a state of disrepair. If we could identify who owns this, then steps could be taken to restore this for use. To check with depot manager at Wolsingham.

13 Projects

Witton crossing gate still requires replacement. Ideally the work would be best completed with the 360 machine, however you need a competent person to operate it. Depot staff have been occupied with the point removal and track replacement. It can be transported on the low-mac wagon. Work would need to be planned in to ensure enough staff and volunteers.

108, progress is being made on replacing several of the brake blocks. 4 changed to date. Head of Operations has confirmed that that he is happy with the mechanical aspects of the 2-car unit if safety

critical work is done. 108 still requires a major exam completing before entry into service. We also need to obtain 3 quotes for work required to the floor of the 108.

0-6-0 Sentinel, feedback received from trustees that the shunter is seeing some work in and around the depot. It requires an oil change and there are doubts over the air compressor needing overhaul, as it is taking significant time to generate pressure. A member of RMS staff was identified and could potentially re-paint the shunter if the Trust provide this. This will hopefully be ready for driver for a fiver later in year. 3rd in line of projects to complete behind Witton gate and 108.

14 Trust Promotion Drive

The Trust has not been present at any recent events. Mark Woodhams reported that he is in contact with various groups regarding attendance at future events, one of which is Locomotion. To contact local press regarding the 108 unveiling.

To purchase a sign to put out on running days at the top of Bondisle Way to highlight when trains running.

15 Volunteer Liaison Officer's Report

Bob Dingle provided an update. He is keen to develop willing volunteers, we discussed the benefits from having a consistent database of trust members who have agreed to be contacted. To contact and request support. An excel spreadsheet is available to Directors to enable contact of members.

Mike Wood updated the meeting on the work of the Sunday gang. He provided analysis of the work of the gang over the last 12 months with a cumulative total of 1,385hrs worked and if salaried workers at £20p/h would have cost circa £27K. In the last 3 months the Sunday Gang have worked at Wolsingham Station, Scotch Isle - MP6; Harperley; Bridge 4A -Dun Cow crossing and 3 days at Engineman Terrace.

Wednesday group has commenced, worked between Bridge 3 and Engineman's last week, finding the remnants of the signal cabin dating from 1934. There have been no responses to appeal put out on social media and website which is disappointing.

16 Acting Membership Secretary's Report

Jean Clarke has kindly volunteered to take up the role of Trust Membership Secretary and we thank her wholeheartedly for that. We are transitioning now, and Jean should be up to speed in the next month or so. Jean will be assisted by a fellow trust member.

Handing over, the current membership stands at 428. Made up of 58 life members; 21 complimentary; 93 full, 59 joint; 186 concessionary members and 7 junior members. There were also 29 new members join the Trust in 2018. We discussed the importance of circulating the benefits of 50% reduce in travel to members of the Trust on heritage services.

28 members have renewed their membership following reminder letters dispatched with BTL 101. 205 renewal letters will be dispatched with the next edition of BTL when the busiest time for renewals is traditionally.

17 Heritage Services

The running calendar and timetable for 2019 is being worked upon and will be available for distribution shortly. Our initial running day will be the 23rd March and will see all services run to Bishop Auckland West on weekends, Bank Holidays and Wednesdays during the school holidays until 3rd November. For the first time we have incorporated the CIC events. Its also been confirmed that the Weardale branch will receive a through special from London KX in May. An alternative timetable will operate when afternoon and cream tea trains run to allow for passing at Scotch Isle.

We discussed the statistical analysis of heritage services over the last 2 years. In hindsight we potentially lost custom by not running the middle service all the way to Bishop Auckland.

We will hopefully be able to run driver for a fiver in 2019 dependant on the availability of the Sentinel, with the added potential of running past the limit of shunt board towards Unthank.

To retain mobile contact on Facebook for heritage services.

18 Weardale Railway CIC Reports.

A planning development next to the Station at Wolsingham is being consulted on. A management meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 6 February.

Directors were apprised of an ongoing confidential matter following our last meeting in December.

19 Other reports from Trust Directors

19a Weekly Lottery/Fund Raising

There have been no winners since last draw. Paul Wilson asked if a fellow director would be willing to take over the running of the lottery.

19b Educational Activities

Talks:

Nil

Publications:

Magazine (Publication dates/content details to be with John by 7th February)

BTL 102 March 2019, this is John Askwith last edition as editor. Directors were asked to consider if they would like to take on this challenge, as we will need an editor following the AGM in March.

20 Any Other Business

Printer purchase laser jet, to enable pre-printing onto membership cards + ink to print up to 5,000. Argos provided the best value for purchase. Directors agreed to purchase.

John Askwith – Honorary life membership in recognition to services provided over last 25 years.

Letter from school requesting a donation. Trustees agreed as the request was not from a local school (within a 5-mile radius of the railway we wouldn't support the request.)

Reported that a man with air rifle at Wolsingham platform shooting rabbits last couple of weeks. To share with the CIC at meeting on Wednesday.

The meeting closed at 22:30PM

20 Date of next meeting

Next WRT Council meeting: - Monday 4th March 2019 at 7:30PM at Witton-le-Wear Community Centre.