

POULTON & WYRE

RAILWAY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the PWRS

Held in the WBC Council Chamber on Wednesday 21st September 2016 at 7pm

1. Introduction by Chairman - Jeff Banks:

Fellow members and invited guests, this has been probably one of the most exciting years in the history of the PWRS almost on a par with when we got the 1st skip on Thornton Station platform in the very beginning. Obviously the purchase of the DMU is the highlight. Sponsorship of various parts needed for its refurbishment is available. Please see Nigel Kirkpatrick after the meeting.

The Trust is now dealing direct with Network Rail for a 25 year lease of the line from Poulton to Burn Naze and we now have a clearance licence from Highways England to clear the track from Carla Gran towards Fleetwood.

A good quality Society Magazine is produced regularly by David Gregory. Also thanks to a friend of mine, Dave Barton, we have a website that can be updated whenever it needs to be. Dave is a professional website designer.

This year we have aroused the interest of several groups and organisations including Fleetwood Town Council who have formed a Fleetwood Back on Track group. The Council have provided support by paying for the track clearance licence from Highways England. Also they have paid for Brent Platt to go on a weed killing course and are providing a shed at the Fleetwood end of the line for storage.

Simon Miller our representative at the Heritage Railway Association tells us that since the purchase of the DMU our profile has increased dramatically with most of the members aware of who we are.

A relationship with our neighbours Ribble Steam Railway is growing to the extent that we will be writing articles for each other's magazines.

One of our MPs, Cat Smith, joined Pete Williams and team for a spot of track clearance recently.

We have had grants from Lancashire County Councillors, Sedgwick and Lawrenson again and County Councillor Clempson. He is corresponding with Network Rail about the provision of car parking spaces at Poulton Station. Councillor Lawrenson's only condition is that he wants to be a train guard.

The progress made on the line is first and foremost due to the efforts of our volunteer workforce the size of which has become the envy of many longer established Heritage Railways. They have achieved miracles on a shoestring.

Now over to Pete Williams our Secretary for apologies for absence and acceptance of minutes.

- 2. Attendees:** There were 48 members present, signed in together with membership numbers and one guest, LCC Councillor Alf Clempson.
- 3. Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Susan Cox (Treasurer), Ron Stott, Cat Smith M.P. and Gerry Fenner.

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4. **Accept minutes of the last Annual General meeting, 18th August 2015:** The minutes were read out by the Secretary, Peter Williams, then proposed accepted by Mary Stirzaker (500) and seconded by G. Whyatt (74) and passed.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting:** There were no matters arising.
6. **Accept minutes of the EGM held on 30th March 2016:** The minutes were read out by the Secretary, Peter Williams, then proposed accepted by Nick McCrudden (274) and seconded by Geoff Ogden (164) and passed.
7. **Matters arising from the minutes of the EGM:** There were no matters arising.
8. LCC Councillor Alf Clempson was invited to give an update to members as he needed to leave the AGM for another meeting. He said he had been given three tasks by the PWRS, one has been done so far. The issue of parking at Poulton Station and the need for alternative parking spaces was discussed at a meeting with Network Rail. Electrification of the main line there was also discussed and this is ongoing. Money is being processed for the new strimmer. Locating a post behind Aldi is being sorted out with Network Rail. Updates will be issues as progress is made. LCC Councillors Sedgwick and Lawrenson attended the last meeting of the PWRS Executive Committee with a promise of financial support.
9. **Annual Report:** The Annual Report was given by Geoff Ogden (164). He gave a slide show presentation illustrating the work being carried out by PWRS volunteers. Thornton Station was highlighted with new signage such as “Thornton for Fleetwood”, “Beware of Trains” etc. Lots of work carried out in transporting and laying flags and road scrapings. Lights have been refurbished. Meetings with neighbours to be arranged in order to facilitate compromises as new work carried out. The station wall has been repaired and new fencing is being installed by Network Rail to stop land grabbing and access across non-working platforms. 14 trailers of wood have been taken from Dave Evan’s house and now stored at Thornton Station. We are now selling logs. The fence on Croft Court has been replaced with a new gate and a new storage facility will be erected for the DMU. The loco built by John Fowler was very dilapidated on arrival six years ago and has been refurbished and looking as good as new.

Burn Naze Station has been refurbished with lots of flags laid and includes a viewing area to the line. A grant has been received and lots of planting carried out. A building is needed at Burn Naze and will initially have a Porta Cabin. A memorial to ICI workers lost in both World Wars has been situated near the viewing area. The purchase of the DMU has been the biggest purchase this year. This is being restored at Butterly with two thirds finance now in place. Tarn Gate was very overgrown but is now clear. New fencing has been installed and areas to be landscaped and planted. The C4 Gate spur to ICI is intended to store rolling stock in association with Alan Hargreaves. Lots of work has been carried out and much more remains to be done. Hillylaid crossing gates need replacing. The sentry hut is used for storage. Jamison’s Road Bridge towards Fleetwood has had lots of work carried out on it regarding track side clearance.
10. **Annual Financial Report:** Due to the absence of the Treasurer, the Secretary read out the financial report as follows:

A copy of the draft accounts are available to view. They will be with an auditor on my return from

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holiday. The accounting period takes in an overlap of 2 years membership fees and the remainder of the 175 anniversary celebrations.

To summarise against the previous year's accounts:

- Memberships down £300, but donations up by £1,000.
- Log sales up by 33%
- The 175 dinner was self-funding, no profit made
- Fundraising, including Tram Sunday and the 2015 raffle netted over £1,200.
- Grants for various projects, including the greening of Burn Naze, totalled £1,320
- £450 was spent from the Sleeper fund to buy replacement sleepers
- £18,000 was paid for the purchase of the DMU. This includes an amount of £3,000 VAT.

The society is now VAT registered and I intend this will be reclaimed in the next few months, along with other VAT paid by the Society.

Costs for the magazine On Track, including postage for some members, totalled £450, some of this cost should be offset in the current year by the small increase in membership fees and advertising space being paid for.

It is intended that the RBS bank account will be closed during the next two months, as the Society is now fully set up for internet banking and all controls are in place for such security.

Since the financial year ends at the same time as membership fees are paid, the committee has agreed that the 2016/17 accounts be a nine month period ending 31st March 2017 and thereafter ending in March. This will not affect the AGM but will give a clearer picture of the annual income.

The full accounts will be available to view by appointment.

Please note the Society bank account is now Santander a/c 89012757, and sort code 09-01-28.

A question was asked by Geraldine Greenhouse (451) regarding charity status and claiming gift aid. Eddie Fisher (3) responded by saying the Trust is in the process of registration with the Charity Commission, but that we do claim gift aid at present.

Membership Report: Nick McCrudden reported a good year for new members. As at the 21st September we had 185 members with about 32 still to rejoin. The target is at least 200. A very positive message is going out to the public.

11. Other Officer Annual Reports:

- a. **Trust:** The Co-Chairman of the PWRs Trust, Eddie Fisher (3) gave this Report.

Since last year we have strengthened the Trust with appointments from Wyre, Lancashire and Fleetwood Councils. These new trustees are already having an impact and give us the voice we need in the three council chambers. Small amounts of funding have already been delivered due mainly to these new relationships. The negotiating team are due to meet representatives from Network Rails property team to look at how an operational lease of the line as far as the Cala Gran would look. Highways England, who are responsible for the disused section from the Cala Gran to Copse Road have intimated that they would consider offering the land on similar terms. This has been a frustratingly slow process however, we are confident that basic terms could be

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agreed by the end of the year.

Our clearance licence has been extended and now includes the above mentioned section beyond Jameson Rd, meaning that we are now responsible for all the remaining track bed into Fleetwood. We were hoping to deliver the first operational section to the Society by the end of this year however, we are confident that this can be achieved at some point next year and will continue to push the process forward.

The Trust has been rebuilt to especially include Councillors at County, Borough and town council levels.

Discussions are ongoing with Network Rail and Highways England (Historic Rail Assets Section). Mary Stirzaker (500) asked a question about Jameson Road Bridge and was informed that a representative from Highways England will be joining us on a trip to start work on our DMU at Butterly. He is a keen railway enthusiast and is very supportive of our project. Mary added that the next Fleetwood Back on Track meeting was arranged for Tuesday 4th October at 10am in the North Euston Hotel.

- b. **Website:** The website was reported to be very good but members are requested to log on and see for themselves and any positive or negative comments be sent to the Chairman.
- c. **Project Manager:** Geoff Ogden reported a meeting has been held to ensure all is on track to achieve targets and objectives of the PWRs. We are now looking at timetables and priorities so that programming of track maintenance and safety issues can be formulated, especially for the first stage of Thornton to Burnaze. There is still lots of work to do to ensure the DMU is ready on time. There is a need for a mobile workforce of volunteers and a channelling of expertise to provide relevant training in track safety. (a session has been arranged for October 19th). The possibility of hiring out the DMU to generate extra income and avoid storage costs is being considered.
- d. **Rolling Stock:** Nigel Kirkpatrick gave an update on funding which is now at £19,400. An estimated costs sheet summary was circulated. This will be included in an article to go on the website.

12. Election of Officers and Committee:

Currently

- a. **Chairman:** Jeff Banks
- b. **General Secretary:** Peter Williams
- c. **Membership Secretary:** Nick McCrudden
- d. **Treasurer:** Susan Cox
- e. **All other ex-members of the Executive Committee:**

Neville Ayrton (89) proposed that all current Executive Committee Officers be elected en-block as per the PWRs Constitution Item G. (3). This proposal was seconded by Ramesh Gandhi (248) and accepted.

- f. **New proposed and seconded members for the Executive Committee: subject to a maximum of 15 in total.**

There were 4 proposed and seconded new Executive Committee members as per the PWRs Constitution Item N. section (5) requiring 14 days' notice of nomination.

The 4 nominated candidates were proposed by the Chairman, Jeff Banks and seconded by the Secretary, Peter Williams as follows:

Mary Stirzaker (500) (Fleetwood Town Councillor), Brian Crawford (486)
Brent Platt (443), Richard Rossall (215)

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However, although all 4 nomination forms were received and processed according to the Constitution, only the forms for Brian Crawford and Mary Stirzaker were available at the meeting. Therefore to ensure election of Brent Platt and Richard Rossall, the Chairman requested that these two be proposed and seconded from members present at the AGM. Therefore, Brent Platt was proposed by G. Whyatt (74), seconded by G. Crow (432); Richard Rossall was proposed by T. Reed (402), seconded by G. Elliot (409). (Note: the two missing forms are now in the 2016 AGM file.) There were no other valid nominations and these 4 were therefore elected.

13. Any other Business:

- a. Gordon Whyatt (74) commented on the election procedure stating all officers should be elected individually. The Chairman affirmed that the elections had been carried out in accordance to the Constitution as noted above.
- b. Ian Johnstone (141) of the Fleetwood Civic Society, raised the issue of the outstanding business concerning the footpath running towards Jameson Road, stating that UU has money in their budget to facilitate the project. The Chairman said that LCC Cllr Lawrenson is already looking into this.
- c. Johnathon Ball (233) asked how much is set to be spent on the DMU before the lease can be in place. Eddie Fisher responded by saying the purchase price was very reasonable following over 12 months of investigations and considering the cost of a ready refurbished unit. He outlined the timetable of the purchase of the DMU and lease priority. The hiring out of the DMU until the lease and the relevant stretches of line are ready could cover cost of refurbishment and save on storage costs. An alternative option to hire a DMU incurs very high costs and is not viable.
- d. Brent Platt (443) asked about storage of fuel and water for the DMU. The Chairman stated that this is an ongoing situation. More facilities will be established as land and premises are acquired.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed as an approved true record of proceedings:

Chairman: Date: