

POULTON & WYRE

RAILWAY

Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting
of the Poulton & Wyre Railway Society (PWRS)
held at Wyre Council Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde
on Wednesday 14th September at 7.00pm

1. Introduction.

Bill Eccles opened the meeting by welcoming the members.

2. Attendees.

There were 25 members present, who were signed in and the names and membership numbers were recorded.

3. Apologies for absence.

One apology was received, from Roy Dennard (501).

4. Acceptance of 2021 AGM Minutes.

Proposed by Iain Johnstone (141)

Seconded by Jim Thompson (65)

5. Annual Report.

Trustee Peter Banks read out the report by Geoff Ogden.

The past year started with a conscious effort to enhance the working environment at our workshops on the North car park at NPL. This entailed a trailer run to the tip every month and several skip hires to shift tons of rubbish. Frequent journeys to the scrap metal merchants gaining over a thousand pounds in the process and repurposing various buildings to provide new facilities. The barn has been weatherproofed and converted into a carriage workshop ready for the refurbishment of the L & Y carriage. A rolling frame work consisting of trolleys has been laid on track inside the barn ready for the underframe on order from Gilletts. The intention is to roll out the carriage from the rear of the barn in the future so we can work on the roof. The space required to roll out the carriage has been obtained by shifting two containers, originally owned by the North West Electrical Company. The Company was bought out by Ameen who had no idea the containers existed. Successful negotiations with Ameen concluded with the PWRS taking ownership including their contents. The aluminium scaffolding units inside one of the containers alone is worth thousands of pounds and has transformed our access and working safely at heights. We have disposed of items that no longer fit into our plans whilst ensuring they are not lost to the Heritage movement. The Wennington box fell into this category. We have salvaged useful components from the Ashdell building we demolished years ago and got rid of the remainder on the basis it would never be a viable railway building. The grounds have undergone systematic mowing, tree pruning and extensive weeding. The result is on a par with a golf course and has attracted the favourable attention of NPL managers. The Society held its second Open day in August which was based at

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NPL. Members were able to see the restoration of rolling stock, view Burn Naze station and experience rides on the Geismar trolley at Jameson Rd.

The Fowler loco repaired axle boxes have now been refitted to the 0-4-0 shunter, Armstrong oilers installed and the brake system relocated. The locomotive is to be moved to a small track laid between the two DMU cars, to enable limited testing of the gears and brakes.

Trustee Nigel Kirkpatrick gave the report on the DMU.

- We have continued to make great progress with the restoration of our Class 108 DMU over the last 12 months, with up to 20 or so members being actively involved.
- There are several photographs, in both the On Track Magazine and on our Website, showing the restoration work which has taken place.
- Recently members were able to see the progress themselves during the open day at NPL.

Trailer car - which is around 80% complete.

- Both sides of the carriage have now had two coats of green undercoat and we hope to apply the gloss coats next year.
- The roof is now finished in grey.
- Some additional work needs carrying out on both the cab front and the rear of the carriage before the green undercoat can be applied
- Internally all the seating is back in place, and we commissioned Blackpool Bus and Coach Trimmers to recover all the first-class seats in a charcoal moquette.

Power car - we are mainly working on this carriage at the moment.

- A new floor covering has been fitted throughout the power car, with just the cab area still to do.
- All the seat frames are now back in place and work is currently underway to put the seat backs and cushions on to the seat frames.
- Our electricians have been working hard checking the various wiring circuits.
- We do have the original wiring diagrams from the 1960's, but some additional wiring was added when the power car was converted for Auto gearing and some of this is no longer needed.
- The Guards compartment has been extensively restored.
- Work has included fixing a water damaged ceiling, a completely new floor, restoration of the various cupboard and new wooden panels are currently being fitted to the two pairs of double doors.
- Finally, we are currently rubbing down the carriage sides with the aim to get some undercoat on them before winter sets in.

During the next year we still have a few missing parts to source, and we will be continuing to fit back in place many components which have already been restored. These are just the highlights

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and unfortunately, I cannot cover all the individual tasks carried out.

Trustee Richard Rossall gave the report on the Carriages.

Gresley Teak Pigeon Carriage.

Since the last AGM, the ownership of the 1937 Gresley Teak Pigeon Carriage has been transferred to the Society. Since the ownership transfer, we have covered the carriage to protect it from further deterioration and plans for its future restoration are very much at an early stage and very much dependent on funds.

L&Y Carriage.

In 2008 the PWRS was informed that there was what appeared to be a wooden railway carriage languishing in a local farm field. On further investigation it was identified as a former Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, First Class 4 compartment, 6 wheel carriage.

It was believed that the carriage was built circa 1882 – 1894. However when we started to dismantle the carriage in order to make an assessment of its condition, we discovered a build number (210) stamped into the wooden vents located over each of the doors. Records show that number 210 was built in 1890. The records also show that 82 First Class, 4 compartment, 6 wheel carriages were built for the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway and the most recent records show there to be just two in existence, those being our carriage number 210 & carriage number 279 which is owned by the Lancashire & Yorkshire Carriage Trust.

It was clear when we dismantled the carriage, that the large wooden soleplate the carriage sides stand on, was rotten beyond repair.

Fortunately, a local millwright (Gillette's of Kirkham) can make a new soleplate for us. This however comes at a significant cost and therefore we've decided to establish a Lancashire & Yorkshire Carriage Restoration Appeal to raise sufficient funds to carry out the restoration.

Over the last few months there's been a significant amount of time spent removing old nails and screw screws from the side sections, in preparation for repairs to the side sections.

The other issue with the carriage is that it no longer has its 6 wheel underframe. The only viable option was to acquire a 4 wheel 32' tube wagon underframe. We have quite recently acquired such a wagon from the Gloucester and Warwickshire railway and will be making arrangements for delivery as soon as we have prepared a short length of track to accommodate it.

6. Secretary's Report.

Presented by Peter Banks.

Myself and the Committee of Trustees have continued working tirelessly throughout the past year on behalf of the members and volunteers.

As well as planning our future aims, raising funds by holding a raffle, managing the restoration of assets, having a promotion stall at Tram Sunday and organising a successful Open Day at NPL, we have also produced policies for Disabled members and Young volunteers and we have continued our support for re-opening the Fleetwood branch railway, along with many other tasks.

I hope you have all recently received your copy of the latest On Track magazine and enjoyed reading it. I apologise for the long delay in producing the magazine but unfortunately our Editor, David Cox, had been unable to complete it due to his failing eye site and it took a while to get it together and the editing and printing done. I wish to record, on behalf of the committee, our thanks to David for producing an excellent publication over

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the last few years. I am pleased that we now have a new Editor to take over, Malcolm Lewis, who has previous experience in producing other magazines. I am sure that in the future the standard of the magazine will be maintained and should be distributed more regularly.

I also wish to record our thanks for their contribution to the PWRS, of Chris Griffin and Steve Hornby who will not be standing for re-election as Trustees. Chris resigned from the Committee due to ill health and Steve because of his work commitments.

Following last years AGM, when a new Constitution was adopted for the Society to allow it to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), I applied for registration with the Charity Commissioners. Unfortunately they rejected our application on two accounts.

Firstly, they were unable to ascertain the merit of the collection that we are in the process of restoring and displaying. They stated that it would be necessary to provide expert evidence of merit to show the educational and interest value.

Secondly, we could not at this time show that we could provide sufficient public access to exhibit our collection.

They also stated that our Business plan had not been developed to a stage where we were able to demonstrate to them that it was viable and feasible to deliver. We therefore must wait until we can fulfil all these requirements before re-applying.

Whilst we should be able to satisfy the criteria regarding the merit of our collection, it largely depends on the future of the railway line and our ability to obtain land for a new site to show that we can provide the required access for the public and then we will be able present a more detailed Business plan.

In the meantime I have now applied for registration with HMRC to be able to claim Gift Aid on all donations and membership fees for those who pay enough tax. It may be possible, although usually registration with the Charity Commissioners is necessary to establish our Charity status.

Finally, I would like to convey our thanks for all the support given by members to allow us to continue with our work.

7. Annual Financial Report.

The report for 2021/22 was presented by the Treasurer, Susan Cox.

Both income and expenditure increased during the accounting period. Sales were up from £300 to £1100. This was mainly due to the exploits of Geoff Ogden and team disposing of scrap metal. The DMU fund was boosted by a large donation from a supporter.

Since the possible re-opening of the line, little or no expense has occurred with clearing the line or improving the infrastructure. One edition of the ON TRACK magazine was produced after which the editor, David Cox had to stand down due to failing eyesight.

I feel the bank balance to be in a sufficiently healthy state for the current operations. The society is holding a £6000 contingency fund in case a relocation expenditure is required.

I am pleased to report that no insurance claims have been made, but we can all sleep soundly now, knowing the correct insurance cover is in place.

These accounts have once again been checked by another Executive Committee member, accepted

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unanimously by the members and are available to view on request.

8. Membership Report.

The report was presented by Membership Secretary, Nick McCrudden.

Thank you all for coming along to this year's A.G.M. But most of all a very big thank you for continuing to support the Poulton & Wyre Railway in these difficult financial times, with your membership fees and generous donations. Without your support we could not carry on. We ended last year on August 1st with 179 members.

Last year was quite a good year for us all as we got nearer to our goal of opening the line from Fleetwood to Poulton. With the big announcement of the Government passing our project to the final stage, I was a bit fearful that our members would say: - "Well, we have done what we wanted for all these years what is the point of going on?" I need not have worried because 135 of you did carry on and renew. Thank you.

We still have exciting projects going on. We have a collection of rolling stock that we are refurbishing. The Nigel Gresley Pigeon Carriage. The D.M.U 108. The Fowler Shunter. And our 140 year old L. & Y carriage. All of which we hope one day to put on our short test track. So, the future is looking good. We just hope that the new Liz Trust Government honours promises made in the levelling up.

Thank you all once again for your support, you are all appreciated.

9. Update on re-opening of Poulton to Fleetwood line

President, Eddie Fisher addressed the meeting to explain that following the basic Feasibility Study there had been little progress due to Covid, until very recently. The Society now have little influence on the outcome but he had remained in touch with local M.P.s Ben Wallace, Paul Maynard and Cat Smith and their parliamentary aides to keep up the political pressure. He was also in contact with Network Rail Business managers, leading Dept. for Transport "Restoring your Railways" team members and L.C.C. Rail officers, to provide information to assist them with their meetings and studies. He hosted a comprehensive visit by the working party of all the railway line and they were all very supportive, impressed and grateful for the input of local knowledge. Due to this, Eddie will be invited to all future meetings of the working party in his capacity of representing his employer, Northern Rail.

This scheme is the top one in the North West and is very important politically to the Government and a detailed study and outline costing by Network Rail has been commissioned for the Outline Business Case, which is to be completed and announced by the end of December. L.C.C., Northern Rail and Blackpool Transport are involved and a decision must be made on one of three options, Heavy Rail, Tram or TramTrain, to be taken forward. Heavy Rail is a good option, which would reconnect the railway at Poulton with a possibility of services To Preston and beyond and have a terminus near the Three Lights Public house, central to industrial development and the housing areas of Fleetwood.

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The Tram would be able to be connected to the existing tramway at Lindle Rd. and operate to Fleetwood town centre, but would only operate to a separate terminus at Poulton. Being Light Rail they would have the advantage of only requiring traffic lights at road crossings.

Tram Trains are also designated as Light Rail and could connect to the existing tramway and also have the added advantage that they would be able to connect to the national railway system at Poulton.

Eddie is very positive that it will be a successful project and the railway line will re-open in some form. He feels that the Tram option is the least likely to be chosen by the working party, because it does not provide the necessary connectivity into Poulton Station and beyond, and that the Tram Train option is being looked at very favourably. Once the decision is made, however, only the chosen option will be taken forward by Network Rail, with funding from the Government, for a Strategic Outline Business case which will be a detailed plan with costings for construction, operation and maintenance of the option.

Member Iain Johnstone (141) asked if Fishermans Friend, the present landowner of the proposed Fleetwood Station site, had been contacted, although he had been told by them that their plans for the site were for the distant future. Eddie assured him that he would ensure that the working party would be made aware of the need to contact and advise them as part of their study.

10. Report of the future plans.

Eddie moved on to explain that he has been asked to meet with Paul Maynard and LCC to discuss a potential site for PWRS on land adjoining the railway and confirmed that they are fully supportive of our future heritage railway and museum plans. The team leading the project had assured that both PWRS and Alan Hargreaves Ltd., who presently have use of the railway, will be catered for in the future planning.

N.P.L. have confirmed that the present site occupied by the PWRS on the Hillhouse site does not figure in any of their plans for the next ten years, so hopefully we presently have a secure base on which to carry out our heritage restoration projects.

11. Election of Executive Trustee Committee Officers.

The present officers all retired as per the procedure in the PWRS Constitution and sought re-appointment en-masse by the members present. They were then duly unanimously elected and will serve for the next twelve months.

- a. Chairman: Bill Eccles
- b. Secretary: Peter Banks
- c. Membership Secretary: Nick McCrudden
- d. Treasurer: Susan Cox
- e. Other Executive Committee: Nigel Kirkpatrick, Richard Rossall, David Wright, David Mills, Geoff Ogden and David Evans.

There are now five Trustee vacancies.

13. Any Other Business.

As there was no other business previously notified to the Secretary, the Chairman praised and thanked the work of the volunteers and the meeting was then closed.



Peter Banks, Secretary