

1. Welcome, apologies

Present: Frank Grant, Richard Hamlet, Jon Tyler, Dave Pearson, Sandra Pearson, Bob Kelley
Apology: Dave Cowie

200 Club

372 Ian Crane
4 Pete Mearns
305 Clive Hodgetts

2. Minutes of last meeting, matters arising.

The minutes of the Committee Meeting on 19 March were adopted. Proposed Dave Pearson, Seconded Jon Tyler.

Matters arising are covered in this month's agenda.

3. Check in. Issues, successes, challenges.

- Staffing is the greatest challenge in operating terms this season. Guard training is going ahead, and recruiting people for this training has been successful. Guard trainee progress is to be graded per session as 2nd guard.
- There was some discussion on starting a train by guards, particularly with regard to late coming passengers. A signal from the shop to the guard that ticketing for the current train was complete might be beneficial in terms of safety, as done on other heritage railways. This was ruled out by a majority. **ACTION: Write a procedure for guards starting trains. FRANK GRANT.**
- No volunteer forms have appeared on the website yet. Some modifications to the proposed form are needed for compatibility. No information has been forthcoming yet from Ali Tong regarding volunteer forms.
- Query how much is owed to RDRPS by Dave Allan for Transport of his coach.
- Queen's Messenger has been printed and posted except for three overseas copies.
- Publicity challenge. Frank Grant will explore if we can we get radio or TV coverage when the station building is nearer completion.

4. Finance. Reports and forecasts.

- In getting to grips with the RDRPS accounting practices, there is a disparity between income and expense records and bank records. One bank statement is missing. A study is proceeding on anomalies around higher expenditure recorded than we have actually spent from many months back. Several cheques paid out appear not to have been cashed (NB cheques are void after 6 months). are thought to be a source of these anomalies. Some invoices are awaited. One source could be copying for last year events possibly flyers which should have been charged to DRC. Meantime, theories as to causes are being investigated. From now, we will report just a single operating year.
- Committed funds £8566, including station building equipment.
- Bank situation - bank continues to be problematic with regard to signatories. Frank signed forms at the meeting.
- **Two loads of ballast were authorised for purchase.** This will take us up to the points at the lay-by.
- An online return to Entrust has been completed by Richard, who is now our focal point for that body. Possibilities for grants from this body will be monitored. Bridge of Bennie is possibly the best target for such a grant application.
- Landfill Community Fund finishes this financial year. There are now no operating landfill sites within 10 mile radius of this site, so we may not be eligible.

5. Development plan. Updates, sponsors.

- The tidy up around bothy completed. This area is now being used by the public some of whom are using the picnic tables. The platform is also being used by the public who are not travelling. We may need to issue platform tickets for this in order to control the situation. This subject will be monitored by operating staff, and needs careful consideration, since this is a customer issue.
- Sponsorship requests have had a number of positive responses.

6. Tourism Conference Feedback

- Richard attended a recent Deeside Tourism Conference, and fed back on implications for the railway. Deeside organisations recognise the railway as an important attraction. In this age of communication, things are changing to mainly online for booking, payments and contacts. Facebook is important in this context. We apparently need to improve our system, eg the mobile version of our website does not support bookings and is very slow in downloading the roster etc. We need to make it as easy as possible for people to book, pay and join the railway through the website. We may need a separate page for renewal of membership, donate etc. Some training may be needed for some volunteers in order to handle this.
- Note that 2014 is the Homecoming event and this is seen as a major event in terms of Deeside tourist attractions, and we should take note of that in our advertising.

7. Volunteers, membership

- Disclosure was raised again as an issue. We have some young volunteers who would fall under the legal umbrella as vulnerable. We have some RDRPS members who have disclosure, but no framework of procedure to make this an effective safeguard for. Apparently, DRC have the responsibility for safeguarding, but we have not seen any policy or procedure. Meantime, we could have young people working with members without disclosure. **ACTION: BOB KELLEY discuss with Chris Milburn regarding clarification of policy and procedure.**
- New volunteers: We have an offer of services by an ex railwayman; two have expressed interest from conversations with members, and we have a new volunteer on the catering team.
- Richard working on a system for electronic communication through the web for those who express an interest in volunteering.
- FLT/ crane operators are needed. We need to think about training for this, and getting volunteers to undertake these duties. With correct training, this could be an attractive volunteering option.

8. AOCB

- Coffee has been requested for vintage car rally on Sunday 27 April. Can we set up a gazebo or use the guard's van to serve coffee, as they only have around 30 minutes. **Proposed by Frank that we purchase of a collapsible gazebo for railway functions up to a max of £250. Agreed.** Frank will inform DRC, as this could be a joint asset.
- Volunteers - if volunteers work here, they should volunteer for the full day.
- Afternoon teas - not enough advertising. A food hygiene course is needed for staff undertaking this, and for cream teas, we don't have the facilities. Can we use the Picnic coach for this in the future, as other railways have done?
- Siding area needs to be cleared of undergrowth. This must not be burned. Weed killing of the track is to be undertaken in May.
- Scrap material at the lay-by is to be moved and sold.
- Track inspection is to be undertaken by Alistair Connell of Network Rail during May.
- Suggestion to line up half height containers for platform and use these for access to paint coaches before the platform construction.
- Participation in Techfest. 6 - 26 September as previously agreed. The station building could be used for talks, and should take around 20 people. We await suggestions for dates from Techfest organisers.
- Station building. Floor covering of toilet and east room should be finished during June. A joint display by RDRPS and DRC in the east room is being worked on. East end electrics are completed. West end room needs completion. This will be a store room/ office. Disabled toilet is ready to fit.

9. Date of next meeting. 21 May 2014.

