

West Lancashire Light Railway Trust

Registered Charity No 1121149
Becconsall Station, Station Road, Hesketh Bank, Nr Preston, PR4 6SP

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the West Lancashire Light Railway Trust for the year 2022 held at 14:00 on Saturday 23rd September 2023, at the Railway, Station Road, Hesketh Bank.

Members present = 42, names as recorded in attendance register

Proxy votes registered = 13

1) Introduction and Apologies

The Chair, Mike Spall, welcomed members to the AGM and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. He said that the Railway had had a successful year and thanked the volunteers for their work.

The Secretary reported that he had received apologies from:

Robert Adam; Malcolm Atherton; Richard Baker; Howard Ford; Adam & Gary Kearsley; Tony Kuivala; Andy Lether; Graham Morris; Alisdair & Sarah Smith; Adrian Tayler; Gail Tibbett; Roy & Maggie Truscott; Peter Webster; Ann & Simon Weeks; David & Linda Westerman; Jane Whitehead and Ruth and Stuart Williams (23)

Barry Pike proposed, and James Dagger seconded, a motion that the minutes of the last Railway AGM be accepted as a true record.

Vote: 29 for, 0 against, 13 abstentions. Proposal approved.

2) Receipt of report and accounts for period ending December 2022

The Treasurer presented the accounts as in the circulated Annual Report document. There were no questions from members present.

3) Appointment of Accountants (Turpin Lucas Lees)

David Marsden proposed, and Martyn Smith seconded, that Turpin Lucas Lees continue as the Railway's accountants.

Vote: 38 for, 0 against, 1 abstention. Proposal approved.

The Chair informed members that in view of the high cost of accountancy services, the Trustees were looking at the possibility of alternative service providers for future years.

4) Officers' Annual Reports

The Chair introduced the Officers' Reports which were printed in the meeting booklet. Hon Chair – In addition to his report, and on behalf of the Trustees, Mike Spall thanked the Railway's volunteers for their work and reported very positive feedback from visitors during the year. He particularly mentioned how welcoming the site looked

with its flower beds, picnic tables and the facilities of the Tea Room and Shop – all encouraging visitors to spend more time at the Railway. He personally wished to thank the officers and Trustees of the Railway for their work during the year. Rostering for the Railway continued to be a challenge as the family events held at the Railway continued to be successful. He reminded members that the Railway produced two excellent publications – the *Short Axle* magazine and the Newsletter – and he thanked Andy Biggs and Derek Pratt for their work. This year had also seen the publication of a new Guidebook.

Hon Treasurer – Martyn Smith discussed the financial report within the meeting booklet and presented his annual Treasurer’s Report for the year (appended to these minutes). He also explained that the Railway was 4 years into the repayment of the loans for the land purchase. He said that he hoped that supporters of the Railway would continue their regular donations beyond the initial 5-year term.

Hon Safety Officer – In addition to discussing his report, David Geering thanked all volunteers for ensuring a good safety record during the year. He reported continued improvements to the behaviours and metrics that are seen around the site and thanked everyone for reading the Safety Bulletins and acting on the information in its articles.

There were no questions to the Officers’ Reports from members present.

5) Appointment of Trustees

The Chair reminded members that under the updated Articles of Association, elected members of the Council would retire on a three-year rotation. He explained that Martyn Smith had stepped down as a Trustee during the year but remained as the Railway’s Treasurer. Richard Marston had been co-opted in his place. Richard had a strong background in information technology and publicity and had put a lot of work into improving both, the Railway’s use of IT and its written publicity presence. He said that the Trustees retiring from the Council at this meeting were David Geering, Alan Frodsham and the co-opted Trustee, Richard Marston. All were willing to stand again. The Secretary said that he had received no other nominations. The Chair declared David Geering, Alan Frodsham and Richard Marston duly re-appointed as Trustees.

6) Members’ Questions

Q A member suggested advertising for volunteers, and for this advertisement to explain the different areas for volunteering at the Railway. The procedure at the Ribble Railway was quoted as an example.

A The Chair agreed that more volunteers were needed, and that he was happy to hold 1-2-1 meetings with volunteers, and stressed that one strength of the Railway was that volunteers worked across different areas.

Q A member asked what facilities could be provided for visitors who smoke.

A The Chair said that Trustees would look into the provision of a smoking area.

Q A member asked about the deterioration of the carriage shed.

A The Chair said that a long-term solution was required, but in the short-term, re-cladding on the public side would be undertaken.

- Q A member said that re-cladding should be done in wood rather than metal.
A The Chair agreed.
- Q A member asked whether the Railway still had the Pole Ice building.
A The Chair said that the building had gone.
- Q A member asked about the Linear Park.
A The Chair explained that due to a lack of funding, this was on hold.
- Q A member asked about the provision of a larger car park.
A The Chair said that the Heritage Park had submitted a planning application for a Visitor Centre with car park, so he suggested first seeing how that application was received by the West Lancs Council.
- Q A member asked about the steam locomotives available over the next 3 years.
A The Chair said that next year 3 locomotives should be available - *Irish Mail*, *Sybil* and *Montalban* would be available.
- Q A member asked about *Joffre*.
A The Chair reported that the locomotive was being worked on.

7) Any Other Business

7.1 The Chair explained that the Railway was still resolving the issue with the Articles of Association that was discussed at the EGM in 2022. He reminded members that, as discussed at the previous AGM, the Charity Commission had advised that the change to Clause 4c – which had updated the wording connected with loans to the Railway by members or Trustees – was a regulated change and required their consent. He said that Simon Moore had obtained Charity Commission consent, but that specialist Charity Lawyers engaged by the Railway had suggested other changes that would bring the Articles more in line with current drafting. This work would be undertaken during the forthcoming year and refreshed Articles of Association would be presented to members next year.

7.2 The Chair introduced the concept drawing for a small multi-function building which had been included in the meeting booklet. He said that this could be used as a Tea Room but could also be used as an Education Room for school visits, for general meetings and for volunteer training sessions. It could be situated on the stone area adjacent to the toilet block. He said that architects had been engaged and a pre-application had been submitted to the West Lancs Council Planning Department. The construction of the building would be similar to the existing shop and toilet block. Initial discussions with external funders had taken place.

A member noted that the kitchen area on the plan had no windows. The Chair explained that this was because they would look onto adjacent properties, although high windows could be a possibility.

A member suggested glass panels in the doors.

A member suggested birthday parties as an income stream.

A member suggested increasing the floor area to create a larger building. The Chair said that this could be considered, as the building was just a concept at the present time, but that the close distance of the building to the rails was significant.

A member asked how permanent the building would be. Mike said that the building would be timber framed and fully insulated and erected on a concrete foundation. Advice on the necessity for piling would be sought.

7.3 The Chair said that the Railway was considering solar panels for the site.

7.4 The Chair said that the Railway had received funding from Screwfix and the Co-op to run school visits. He said that the Railway would also apply for funding to convert the triangle at Delph into a wildlife area.

7.5 Keith Nicholls wished to thank the Chair for the tremendous amount of time and effort that he devoted to the Railway throughout the year.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance.

The meeting was closed at 3pm.

APPENDIX

WEST LANCASHIRE LIGHT RAILWAY TRUST

Honorary Treasurer's Report 2022

To be read in conjunction with the Financial Statements prepared by
Champion TLL

Now that Covid 19 restrictions are largely no longer relevant, it becomes possible to compare results more usefully. Total Revenue income this year was £82,803 which, after allowing for the distorting effects of the Covid Support and Recovery Grants from the Local Authority, represents a modest 5% increase over last year. Under the somewhat extreme inflation we have recently experienced however this is a quite creditable performance.

The Members & Friends Development Fund account balance stood at £20,922 after payment of the third tranche of loan repayments at the end of February, this includes £5,000 of Designated Funds held against future site development. Income was £19,771. This is almost entirely made up of direct giving from Members and Visitors. The Members and Friends Regular Donation Scheme stands at £1132 per month (£13,624 per annum) and the Capital Transfer from Revenue of £11,000, plus the gift Aid return of £4,344, will ensure we are able to meet next year's Loan Repayments. Expenditure, however, is still ongoing as a result of work continuing on the All Access Coach, a credit to Alan and his hard working team, the Ash/Inspection Pit and other long overdue site developments.

Passenger figures were again rather better than last year. Congratulations once more to the very hard working teams in the Retail and Catering Departments. Tickets, Shop & Catering sales bringing in an extremely welcome £41,390, not including Santas.

The annual Santa Specials continue to be a significant source of income for the railway, this year's event bringing in a total of £24,209. A big thank you to all the volunteers who contribute so much to the overwhelming success of this event. All trains were sold out by mid October.

This year's financial results, total Income £103,574, are under the circumstances, extremely encouraging and continue to reflect the hard work and dedication of the railway's active volunteers, together with the loyal support of its members and visitors particularly during these harsh economic times. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this record year for the railway, although I would be neglecting my duties as Treasurer if I didn't add once more that we can't rest on our Laurels and should aim to do even better next year.

Martyn Smith

Honorary Treasurer