

REPORT ON PEAK RAILWAY ASSOCIATION LTD AGM 28th May 2022

The AGM was held in Darley Dale Church Hall. The meeting was attended by 26 members in person with an additional 91 valid proxy votes. The current directors, except for Jack Thompson who gave his apologies, were present making 7 in all. The Chair, Roger Hallatt, declared the meeting quorate, complying with Article 9 of the Company's Articles of Association, and reminded members it was a formal meeting with a set agenda and general discussions under Report on Association Matters.

1. The Minutes of the AGM held on 14th May 2021.

The Minutes were approved on a vote of 122 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions.

2. Appointment of Council Members (Directors).

A third of council members must retire, depending on length of service, but may offer to stand for re-election. Those retiring at the AGM were, by rotation, Richard Johnson, Jack Thompson and Pete Waller. Jack Thompson had decided not to seek re-election and was thanked for his services as a director. Jacob Short was co-opted onto the Board on 25th June 2021 and members were asked to ratify this appointment.

Richard Johnson was re-elected on a vote of 122 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention.

Pete Waller was re-elected on a vote of 122 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions.

Jacob Short was re-elected on a vote of 124 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

3. To consider the Accounts for the year ending 31st May 2021.

These were approved on a vote of 122 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

4. To re-appoint Mills & Black as examiners of the Accounts.

This was approved on a vote of 122 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions.

There then followed Reports on Association Matters with general discussion on such.

Membership:

Pete Waller reported that membership had fallen in the last year but not as much as in previous years. 59 members had failed to renew and there had been 25 new members. Pete commented that he was rarely notified of the death of a Life member. Pete had received a letter from one Life Member which included a comment that his membership had almost been 'free' given how low the fee paid years ago and he sent a £50 donation. Approximately a third of members hold Life Membership. A member asked if membership fees should be increased and was informed that this last occurred on 1-06-2007 except for a modest increase in five yearly fees more recently. With the current cost of living crisis now was not a good time to increase fees.

Peak Express:

The Chairman pointed out that earlier this year he had produced an article published on the Association website regarding the future of Peak Express with suggestions on a way forward. The Chairman apologised for the fact that there had been no magazine for twelve months. With the purpose of the magazine being to inform members of news about activities on Peak Rail, Covid-19 had meant very little activity on the railway to report on. The Editor does not receive news items from departments or groups on time and after reminders are sent those that were on

time have to be revised. The costs of printing and postage are increasing significantly and these costs are carried by members holding one or five year memberships.

A member enquired about current costs of producing a magazine. Pete Waller stated that each magazine costs about £1 to print and 68p to post or £1.05 if over 100g. Pete added a further point that sending out membership renewals, membership cards and the AGM papers costs 68p for each. The member raising the question then pointed out 2/3rds of members therefore subsidised Life Members magazine costs.

Another member suggested that the magazine and AGM papers could be sent by e-mail. Pete Waller accepted that a lot of members have e-mail addresses but the Association is bound by its Articles of Association which state postal notification of the AGM. The member suggested the Articles be changed. Gordon Caro stated that at the next AGM an EGM be held to update the Articles and that the Association Directors make that commitment today.

Another member commented on the high proportion of membership renewal income that goes out on magazine and other costs.

A member suggested that the Association sends an e-mail to all members for which there is a current e-mail address to ask if they would like Peak Express via the website.

The Chair stated that there were now enough articles to publish a further edition of Peak Express, however quite a number of these would need rewriting as they met the deadline for submission set for earlier this year. What is the way forward? Should the Association continue to produce a magazine? If so should it go out via e-mail? The problem is that the Association does not have e-mail addresses for over 400 members despite frequent requests. The next magazine will be a printed copy and it will contain an article asking for all members e-mail addresses and the reasons why. However even if future magazines are sent out electronically some will have to be printed and posted out to those not on-line.

A member suggested giving a choice between receiving the magazine by post or electronically. The Chair pointed out that whatever the way forward news articles are still required and if not forthcoming there can be no magazine. Also other alternatives exist such as via the Association website, possibly through a password protected members only section. Perhaps it might not be a magazine but a newsletter or bulletins sent out monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly.

Gordon Caro asked if anyone present was without e-mail and one member indicated that he did not.

Another member, who formerly edited the magazine, stated that people often needed constant reminders to get articles in by a deadline. Pete Waller, the current editor, said he has to walk round the railway to encourage news articles for the magazine plus sending out e-mail reminders.

The Chair stated that it would be good to see departmental heads on the railway produce articles for the magazine as he does regarding the P-Way. Some post articles on a regular basis elsewhere and perhaps these could be part of an on-line magazine or newsletter/bulletin.

Gordon Caro suggested a magazine/newsletter be printed and posted to members without e-mail but not glossy and all others receive it on-line for members access only.

A member pointed out that news items are needed for the public to view. Gordon Caro suggested after a period of time items could be transferred from the members only section to the public area.

At this point in the discussion the Chair put forward two possible alternatives and invited a show of hands to give an indication of support within the members present. The Chair asked how many would favour a glossy magazine on-line. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ indicated their support for this idea.

The Chair asked how many would favour a monthly newsletter on-line. Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ indicated their support for this idea.

The Chair stated that Peak Express does not set out to cover aspects of the Matlock to Buxton line covered elsewhere in published material. Peak Express has covered different aspects such as the geology found along the route and Stancliffe Quarry. Articles prepared for future inclusion are on the construction of the second viaduct at Millers Dale and the use of Camping Coaches at locations on the route.

Another member suggested a Peak Rail Youtube channel. Jacob Short explained that there is, and the Association website has links to it with Stuart Graves kindly allowing videos from his back catalogue to be shown.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the discussion and that the Directors would reflect on these in coming to a decision on the future of Peak Express.

A comment was made about possible GDPR implications. The Chair pointed out that when initially contacted about GDPR when it was introduced only 1/3 of members responded and many of these did not give an e-mail address when prompted to do so. It would also help if when renewing membership that all members confirm their current e-mail address. Also because of GDPR the PRA raffle tickets cannot be posted out to Plc shareholders.

Mick Bond suggested giving members access to back issues of Peak Express on-line. These are in PDF format going back to 2011.

A member pointed out that visitors to the Peak Rail shop often ask for current news and can be given a copy of Peak Express.

Another member suggested communication between PRA and its members via Facebook.

Archives:

Mick Bond stated that the Peak Rail past and present volunteers Facebook page had been useful in identifying certain people on photographs in the Archive. A large collection of 760 photos in 17 albums had been received from the family of the late Nick Collin. The intention is to scan these and Mick would be happy to hear from anyone with experience of scanning. Mick also noted that the Archive Cabin needs de-rusting in places and painting. Any help would be welcome.

Branches:

Buxton. Gordon Caro. The branch meets on the second Thursday of each month. An advert has been placed in the Buxton Advertiser and will be repeated approximately every three months. Around 15 members attend each meeting. There is a raffle and a request for a £3 donation. After costs any monies left are put towards projects. In June Bahamas will visit Buxton on a railtour and the branch will have a stand at the

station promoting Peak Rail. On July 2nd and 3rd the branch will have a stand at the model railway exhibition to be held at Buxton Pavilion. The branch continues to look after the Peak Rail site at Buxton. Care and maintenance is carried out. Painting of the bridge is planned. It has had an inspection and is in good condition.

A member asked a question regarding the NHS site adjacent to Peak Rail at Buxton. Gordon Caro responded that the NHS had applied for government funding for their site but no other information was available. Meetings had been held with the developers McCarthy Stone throughout the development of their site.

Chesterfield: Jacob Short. There has been one meeting since Lockdown. David Grainger is stepping down as branch secretary. The branch meets on the third Tuesday of each month.

Derby: Nigel Carabine. Meetings are to restart in October or November. Members of the branch will be attending two carnivals in July to raise funds for projects on Peak Rail along with the Buxton model railway exhibition.

Derwent Valley: Jack Thompson organises the meetings which are held bi-monthly on the fourth Monday of the month.

Sheffield: Roger Hallatt. The venue has changed to the former British Rail social club near the Midland station. Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month. Dave Sharp continues to attend model railway exhibitions with a stand selling a variety of mostly second hand model rail stock and books. Dave sells other peoples model rail stock at a commission which goes to the PRA.

All branch meetings are advertised on the PRA website.

The Chair thanked all involved with the branches.

Website: Gordon Caro.

The website has been running since November 2020. There were 25,000 viewings in the first month and a monthly average of 15,000 since. An update is provided for each Board meeting. Hits are mainly from the UK with the USA, France and Italy also showing well.

Raffle: The Chair stated that the result of the last raffle in 2019 had been disappointing. There will be a 2022 raffle with proceeds going towards improving visitor experience on Peak Rail. Tickets will go out to all members. Sales on the Santa Specials generate the highest proportion of total sales however in recent years it has been difficult to attract volunteers to sell raffle tickets on the train. Jacob Short will roster people to sell raffle tickets on the train from July onwards.

A member asked how raffle tickets would be sent to members if the magazine went on-line. This is one for the Directors to think about.

The Chair thanked Nigel Carabine for organising the raffle licence.

General Questions from the members present.

Are there any plans for the Steam Crane?

Gordon Caro: The plan is to place the Steam Crane in a more accessible location behind Rowsley engine shed. The boiler will shortly be lifted off for a Non Destructive Test followed by an assessment of its condition and work required by a boiler inspector. Quotes will be sought for the work necessary.

The Chair stated that either number 1 or 4 road behind the engine shed would be extended to accommodate the Steam Crane.

Is there any information on the link with the Quarries at Buxton to re-open the whole line?

Gordon Caro stated that this is a Plc issue but that there is no updated information.

Gordon Caro and Roger Hallatt are on the Plc Board. Is there a conflict of interest?

Gordon Caro stated that there are now no obstacles to communications between the Association and the Plc. There is a better insight into where funding should be targeted. For example Rowsley shop recently had no small items for sale so the Association has funded such.

Do the PRA and DWVT carry on as separate entities?

The Chair reported that this was investigated pre Covid-19 and the result was to proceed as separate entities.

The Chair reported that the Association was now responsible for the induction of new volunteers to Peak Rail having carried out a review of the process.

Gordon Caro stated that the Association is looking to move the volunteer profile to younger people. Jacob Short mentioned that job descriptions need writing for prospective volunteers. A member suggested that a volunteer role to include was line side maintenance.

A member suggested using someone IT savvy to do things with Facebook.

The Chair thanked everyone who attended the meeting and declared it closed at 2.35pm.

After the meeting closed quite a number of the members expressed their thanks to the Directors for their work. Some expressed their appreciation of the openness of the meeting.