

# **Risborough & District Model Railway Club**

## **Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting held on Friday 4 November 2022**

Present:- Rob Thompson, President; Paul Wright, Chairman; James Aitken, Treasurer; Roy Norton (Club Secretary), other Trustees (David Lane, Gary Day, Tim Peacock and Richard Neil) and 17 members.

### **Part 1 - Governance**

#### **1. Introduction - President**

**Rob** welcomed everyone to the 2022 AGM. Post-Covid we had now resumed Friday evening meetings with a good and increasing turnout; and test track nights had also restarted. However, lockdown and its aftermath had prevented our annual Railex and Risex exhibitions which had impacted our finances. On a more positive note we had staged a successful exhibition at Haddenham in October. It was hoped to resume Modelling Saturdays now that funds had been freed up by moving our stored items to Quainton which also allowed easier access. Work on moving to permanent premises at Quainton continued at a steady if not spectacular pace – but it was looking very positive.

Rob noted that David Lane was standing down as a trustee and, on behalf of the Club, thanked David for his contribution as part of the governance team and also for his leading role in organising Railex over many years and making it a much respected and renowned national exhibition.

Finally, Rob reminded everyone about the Club Christmas dinner on 16 December.

#### **2. Apologies for absence received (Proxy voters in brackets)**

Mick Moignard, Andrew David, Ken Harris, Roger Noble (Roy Norton), Chris Morrill, Ted Smale, Graham Bucknell (Roy Norton), David Powell, Russell BurrIDGE and Jennifer Chybalski.

#### **3. Approval of the 2021 AGM minutes**

**Agreed.**

#### **4. Chairman's annual report (for the Charity Commission)**

The report was presented without comment.

#### **5. Treasurer's report**

**James** presented the 2021/22 accounts. There was an in-year loss of £395. Without Railex and Risex the main source of funds was membership subscriptions. Main costs were storage and room hire. Overall, the Club had a reserve of about £73,500. James added that currently the Club had 38 full and 8 associate members.

#### **6. Elections**

##### **Trustee and Members' Representative**

Re-election of Mick Moignard as trustee. **Agreed**

## Part 2 – Other business

### 1. Future premises

**Roy** gave a brief recap of the history of the project. The main objective remained securing permanent Club premises – our own building – while minimising the financial and legal risks to the Club. With that in mind, and learning from our previous experience with Princes Risborough School, we were delaying applying for planning permission until we had a signed legal agreement with Quainton Railway Society (QRS).

Referring to the estimates paper, which were based on research and best judgement, Roy said there was a high degree of confidence in the running costs. Rent would be fixed for 5 years and the other major cost, business rates, was subject to an obligatory 80% discount as we are a registered charity (and we might qualify for a full 100% discount). The other significant cost was electricity which, given the current market situation, was difficult to forecast but the latest estimate was now double the previous figure. It was still intended to maintain the principle that running costs should be covered by subscriptions and the latest estimates for a membership of 40-50 showed that the subscription rate would not be unreasonable and was in line with rates charged by other clubs.

There was greater uncertainty around construction costs – particularly the cost of the building though our estimate reflected what has been sold on eBay. Much depended on what was available at the time we go to the market. Overall, there was clearly a gap between estimated construction costs and our current funds. There were ways to mitigate the shortfall including sourcing other funding (grants e.g. HS2 Community Grant, membership loans), phasing the project (e.g. single storey first) or settling for a smaller building. We had started to investigate the options but no decisions were needed yet. We would have a better understanding once we have planning permission and before we commit to any significant expenditure. Flexibility to cater for smaller or other building configurations had been built into the drawings. Members would continue to be kept fully informed and included in future decisions.

As to the current position, QRS lawyers had now started discussions with our legal adviser. A process of due diligence had begun – checking the *bona fides* of both parties. Once complete this would allow a letter of intent to be signed giving us the legal certainty to submit our planning application. Following approval we will sign a lease document.

In discussion a number of questions were asked. On timing it was difficult to say when a building would be in place. Planning permission ought to be straightforward and be completed within the 8 week deadline but experience suggests the deadline should be treated with caution. It would then be a question of securing a building which is very difficult to predict (though we have started putting out some feelers). If all went well then completion of the project by the end of 2023 would not be unreasonable. A number of suggestions were made to clarify aspects of the next iteration of the construction estimates e.g. detailing the costs of the elements contained in the furniture figure. It was confirmed that there would be no gas connection; heating would be electric (part of the modular building package).

## **2. Aylesbury Town wagon project**

**Paul** noted that it had been over 4 years since the wagon building project had been launched. The completed kits were on display and David Lane had been asked to judge 'best wagon' which he awarded to James Aitken. Paul also referred to the replacement stock building for Aylesbury LNWR which was making good progress (some stock was also on display).

## **3. Vulnerable person's policy**

**Gary**, referring to the position paper, explained that he had undertaken a benchmarking exercise to compare our policies, particularly for under 18s, against similar organisations. Our requirement for under 18s to be accompanied by a parent/guardian was out of line with both QRS and Wycombe MRC which were less onerous. It would clearly be sensible for our policy to align with QRS when we have our new building there. Currently, both QRS and WMRC were reviewing their policies and Gary was in close touch. The meeting agreed Gary's recommendations to continue reviewing our policies and update in line with latest Charity Commission guidance, ensure alignment with QRS before we move to Quainton and develop policies on bullying, harassment and whistleblowing.

## **4. 2023 Forward look**

**Paul** said Modelling Saturdays were being investigated. He was still waiting to hear from the Town Council about possible small storage rooms at the Wades Centre which would be convenient for some Aylesbury boards and allow Saturday working in the Carrington Room. The Church Hall was booked most Saturdays. Quainton was another possibility now that the layouts were stored there.

The Haddenham exhibition had been very successful and the trustees would be considering making this a regular annual event.

Project leaders were needed for the Club layouts. So far, the leads were: Aylesbury LNWR (Paul), Okehampton (James), Mellin Parva (Rob), test track (Richard). Volunteers were needed for Aylesbury Town and the shunting puzzle.

## **5. Any other business**

- a) **2023/24 Subscription rates** – No change, from April 2023 this will be £120 for Full Membership and £60 for Students and Associates. This can be one payment or 12 monthly payments of £10/£5.
- b) **Footplate** – Contributions to Footplate always welcome – contact Paul.

## **6. Pendennis Trophy**

The trophy was awarded to Ray Gomm for his work on the Aylesbury wagon project.

**Date of 2023 AGM - Friday 3 November 2023**

Roy Norton  
Club Secretary  
17 November 2023