

Risborough & District Model Railway Club

Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting held on Friday 10 November 2023

Present: - Rob Thompson, President; Paul Wright, Chairman; James Aitken, Treasurer; Roy Norton (Club Secretary), other Trustees (Tim Peacock, Mick Moignard and Richard Neil) and 19 members.

Part 1 - Governance

1. Introduction - President

Rob welcomed everyone to the 2023 AGM. Overall, it had been a good year. There had been a steady increase in the number of members attending the Friday evening meetings as we moved beyond Covid. Test track evenings had resumed and there had been a few Modelling Saturdays which we were hoping to make more frequent. The Club had organised three exhibitions during the year and Club finances were healthy. Progress continued on establishing a permanent Club building at Quainton which once completed this would enable work on the Club layouts to resume. Sadly, two Club stalwarts had died during the year - Harry Tame and John Casson – they would both be missed (there was a period of quiet reflection).

2. Apologies for absence received

Andrew David, Roger Noble, Jon Hill, Gary Day, Ted Smale, Russell Burrridge, Ray Gomm, David Lane and Neill Dewar.

3. Approval of the 2022 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 2022/23 accounts. There was an in-year surplus of about £7,000 and an overall surplus of about £79,500 (which provides a buffer for Railex 2024 expenses and new building costs). Sales of second hand items, particularly donations, had resulted in a significant income which had contributed much of the surplus generated by Railex (well done to the second hand sales team!). Income had also been boosted by a new high interest savings account and hire of the credit card machines. Subscriptions were currently sufficient to cover the main running costs of hall hire and storage as well as laser cutting materials etc.

6. Elections

President

Re-election of Rob Thompson. **Agreed**

Trustees

Re-election of Roy Norton (and Secretary), Tim Peacock and James Aitken as trustees. **Agreed**

Part 2 – Other business

1. Future premises

Roy gave an update on the latest position. Discussions on the lease documentation had taken much longer than expected; not because of any difficulties between the Club and Quainton Railway Society (QRS) but because of delays introduced by QRS' legal adviser. However, we were now in the final stages. The content of the texts was agreed. We were waiting for QRS to provide their legal adviser with proof of access to the public highway. Once received the format of the texts could be finalised and then formally approved by RDMRC trustees and QRS Executive Committee before being signed.

The lease documentation consists of an 'Agreement to lease' which essentially says once RDMRC receive planning permission, RDMRC and QRS will sign a lease for the plot of land on which the new building will be constructed. The lease and plans for the new building are included in the annexes to the Agreement. The key points of the lease are – annual rent of £2,500, reviewed every 5 years in line with CPI, 30-year lease period and the Club will agree an annual schedule of Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays when the Club will "as far as reasonably possible" be open to the public.

The sequence of events will be: - 1) Agreement signed; 2) planning permission submitted; 3) planning permission received – lease signed, and 30-year period begins; 4) RDMRC source building; 5) RDMRC notify QRS of start date for building works; 6) QRS clear site; 7) Building work starts; 8) Building complete & certified by BCC – first rent payment.

It was hoped the Agreement could be signed in the next few weeks.

In discussion it was agreed that consideration should be given to making provision in the costings for renewal/major renovation of the building at the end of its life.

2. 2024 Forward look

2024 Exhibitions

The usual venues had been booked for Haddenham and Risex; planning for the latter was well advanced. These were relatively straightforward to organise and contributed to our charitable public benefit objectives as well as providing a useful boost to funds.

Railex was of a different order – a finescale show aimed at the enthusiast with a national profile. The 2023 show had had positive feedback, but attendance had been disappointing, and it was largely second hand sales which had ensured a financial surplus. Railex was costly to set-up but was a showcase for the hobby and raised the profile of the Club. Once again, the show would be held in the bowling hall rather than the main stadium though the latter may be available for 2025. Other venue options had been explored but there was nothing suitable available at an affordable cost. Various options were being considered to reduce costs in the future including the possibility (though not hopeful) of collaborating with other groups and moving from the Bank Holiday weekend.

Layouts

Mellin Parva had been at both Haddenham exhibitions. It was working well and a number of developments, including set-up documentation, were planned. Work on

the main Club layouts – Okehampton, Aylesbury Town and Aylesbury LNWR – was effectively suspended awaiting the new building at Quainton though new rolling stock for Aylesbury LNWR continued to be built. The shunting puzzle had been to the Slough exhibition but was heavy and consideration was being given to a possible OO replacement.

New projects

James was leading an O gauge project as part of the O gauge Guild Challenge. This was a small (12' x 3') end-to-end layout which was self-contained but which could also be used as part of a larger circular modular layout. The layout was small enough to be brought to the Club evenings to be worked on and a number of Club members had expressed an interest to be part of the project team (all members are welcome to be involved whatever scale they normally work in). David Lane had also begun a small P4 layout for the Scalefour Society challenge. Consideration was also being given to an OO replacement for the O gauge shunting puzzle.

3. New income sources

Members were generally not in favour of using a Club website to sell second hand items and other Club items because of the resources involved, competition with the Club second hand stall at exhibitions and the availability of other selling websites. Some suggestions for other income sources included sales of Club photo collections (maybe explore with other photo sales sites), Club branded aprons and T-shirts.

4. Any other business

- a) **2024/25 Subscription rates** – No change, from April 2024 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. This will be reviewed again depending on progress with the new building.
- b) **Footplate** – Contributions to Footplate always welcome – contact Paul.
- c) **Club talks and workshops** – Suggestions for talks included Geoff Plumb (1960s photos), refurbishing a QRS GN carriage and for workshops – soldering, airbrushing, tree-making. Other ideas are welcome.
- d) **Club policies** – Members were reminded to keep abreast of the Club policies posted in the members' area of the Club website which includes safeguarding, health & safety, and (soon) social media.
- e) **Dates for the diary** – Christmas dinner 8 December 2023; Wheeltapper (talk and competition) 22 March 2024.

5. Pendennis Trophy

The trophy was awarded to Roger Noble for his work organising, at short notice, the accommodation for exhibitors at Railex 2023.

Date of 2024 AGM - Friday 8 November 2024

Roy Norton
Club Secretary
November 2023