



Minutes of Meeting held Thursday, 5th October 2023

Location Darlington Cricket Club, South Terrace,
 Feethams, Darlington DL1 5JD

7.00 pm

Members Present: Alan Townsend (AT Vice Chair), Peter Bainbridge (PB, membership secretary), John Raw (JR Trustee) Ross Chisholm (RC Planning Officer), Jane Hackworth-Young (JHY Vice President), Barry Thompson (BT Trustee), George Alderslade (GA Trustee), Jonathan Ratcliffe (JAR, Secretary), Margaret Fenwick , Trevor Fenwick, Cllr. Jim Atkinson, A Gillutt, Gerry Wilkinson, Keith Gregory, Paul Boden, David Watt, Richard Cowan, Alastair Culff, , Angela Pickering, Anthony Currer, Bob Scott, Peter Cooper, Fiona Cooper, Simon Nicholson (Darlington for Culture), Rose Drew (Sustrans), Steve Sidgwick, Peter Spence.

1	<p><u>Welcomes & Apologies for absence.</u></p> <p>Apologies Yvonne Richardson, Niall Hammond, Caroline Hardie, Philip White, Francis Annett, Mary Smith, Carole & David Parker, Ian Wrigglesworth, Norman Hugill, Alan Macnab, Tim & Leigh Taylor. Maurice Burns John Dinsdale, Paul Harle</p>	Responsibility
2	<p><u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u></p> <p>Jimmy was present at previous meeting. Typo in 2nd paragraph. JAR to correct previous minutes.</p> <p>RC noted disappointment that there hasn't been a written response sent in the absence of Reuben Kensch to the questions posed in advance of the previous meeting. He also raised the issue that there had already been significant prior work done several years prior re: walking route by WSP consultants.</p>	JAR
3	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <hr/> <p>Richie Stars update has been moved from this meeting to the the AGM.</p> <p>BT's question regarding the end of the line in Stockton wasn't asked. Questions that were left unanswered to be posed to Richie Star in advance of AGM.</p> <hr/> <p>There was discontent regarding the location of the end of the Stockton end of the walking route, JR asked whether the Friends were happy with this. Draft minutes to be sent to</p>	JAR

	Richie Starrs by JAR with a notice that this will be discussed at the AGM.	JAR
4	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> No declarations of interest.	
5	<p><u>Chair's Report</u> <i>Report attached to minutes</i> Earthworks in Preston Park have been given scheduled monument status.</p> <p>RC noted that the meeting in Middleton St. George is not a public meeting but a closed meeting with representatives of unnamed organisations in the village. Cait Barratt is taking up the issue with Alan Macnab to ensure that there is a public meeting in Middleton St. George. Draft minutes to be sent to Alan Macnab. All members are to keep the trustees in the loop when organising local meetings. Heritage board meeting update to be back as regular agenda item.</p> <p>Live steam subgroup has been suspended by the heritage board. There is no budget from the local authorities for live steam, they are very interested in proposals from other bodies and the live steam group will be resurrected if a proposal is made.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that other locomotive owning groups in Darlington are being ignored in favour of the A1 steam trust.</p>	JAR ALL JAR
6	<p><u>Early Railways Conference</u></p> <p>AT attended the early railways conference meeting today (5th October) Next early railways conference is to be based in Darlington and will be held 23rd to 26th September 2025. Provisionally at Central Hall.</p> <p>Friends put in 4 proposals, <i>Not just a coal railway, passenger traffic and coal facilities, rebuilding experiment, Shildon Coal Drops.</i></p> <p>Niall has been offered the opening slot and the paper on the Experiment is the first reserve paper.</p> <p>JHY asked AT to enquire whether members can access day rates.</p>	AT
7	<p><u>Education information Steering Group</u></p> <p>AT updated the meeting on the progress of the teaching materials being developed by the group.</p> <p>A call is to be put out for someone to take on the vacant Education officer post for the friends, especially those who have education experience.</p> <p>Susan Nixon is putting together primary age school material with Mary Smith for the first 5 miles end of the line.</p>	JAR

	JR noted that a volunteering officer has been appointed and will be starting on November 7 th to work alongside Cait Barratt.	
7	<p><u>Planning Officer Report</u></p> <p><i>Report attached to the meeting.</i></p> <p>New wall at Northern Metal Recycling is stuck in an argument over ownership. BIG have come to the conclusion that it's between the landowner and DCC so have removed from their agenda.</p> <p>RC has had it confirmed that the developers of new housing estate at Fighting Cocks will be making a donation towards the upkeep of the trackbed. RC has asked for details of what the money is to be reserved for.</p> <p>Layfield House, Urlay Nook Road, application to render extension has been submitted.</p> <p>Durham Spray Paints have submitted a proposal for the mural at Fighting Cocks Station, mock up is attached with the minutes. The total quote is £1500.</p> <p>The meeting decided that the work should be done as soon as practical to ensure that it's ready in plenty of time in preparations for 2025. Copyright is to be checked on the background image.</p> <p>BT asked with the work on the cycle way over the Yarm Branch if it was possible if there's diggers on the ground whether there could be some excavation done to see if there's any surviving track bed remains. RC to propose the request.</p> <p>It was asked if there has been any update on the money from Storey Homes. Nothing has been received so far.</p> <p>Edward Peases House there's reports of fresh funding potentially available to complete the purchase of the remaining portions of the house Edward Peases house to be added to next trustees agenda.</p>	<p>RC</p> <p>NH</p> <p>JAR</p> <p>RC</p> <p>JAR</p>
8	<p><u>Questions on Circulated Officer Reports (attached)</u></p> <p>No questions.</p>	
9	<p><u>Reports from S&DR Area Groups</u></p> <p>No additions to BIG report and WASH</p>	

	<p>EIG has had a meeting with Caitlin Barratt today, the group is concerned that there's no plan of the route published with only 2 years to go. EIG are writing to Richie Starrs to discuss signage at the starting point of the line.</p> <p>There's a play in the process of being written by Bill Gibson that features four characters, a copy has been given to Niccy Hallifax and she can assist with helping with the production. Barnard Castle players are interested in the play.</p> <p>Jim Atkinson can make an introduction to the author and can suggest financial pots. DFC are potentially interested and could provide some financial support.</p> <p>JR asked if it's not picked up for the main festival would the Friends be happy for the Etherley Groups to run with producing the play. The meeting moved that it be taken to the next trustees meeting. JAR to add to trustees agenda.</p> <p>Stockton A film has been developed and can be shown at a future meeting and a sequel is in pre-production. No progress on Locomotion as SBC still purchasing the tools required. Allans west boundary has been breached by Northumbrian Water, BT has spoken with the project manager to ensure that the hedgeline is reinstated in it's original curved form. Scoria blocks from St. Johns have been purchased for fighting cocks.</p> <p>MSG There have been a few volunteer sessions, volunteers are still thin on the ground.</p> <p>Darlington Honeypot Lane sleeper blocks are being moved to a safe location. Have met with head of street scene and head of grounds. AP has made contact with the owner of Haughton Road coal depot and are working on it's restoration. Meeting 7pm next Wednesday at Railway Tavern. JAR to add to events and email to members.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JAR</p> <p style="text-align: center;">JAR</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">10</p>	<p><u>AGM arrangements</u> Plans are well under way and a final agenda will be circulated shortly.</p> <p>A request was made for the timings to be kept tight, JAR to email BT for eatery list.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JAR</p>
	<p><u>Members Participation</u> A question was raised whether there should be an FSDR series of events for 2025. There is an expectation that this position is to be clarified at a future meeting.</p>	

	<p>AOB Bright white</p> <p>Question to be put to Bright White when similar meetings will take place for Stockton and Darlington.</p> <p>Members were asked to vote in a non-committal vote if they want to continue to alternate venues or to only hold at cricket club. Passed by a majority of those present.</p> <p>JAR to email trustees tonight.</p>	<p>.</p> <p>JAR</p>
11	<p><u>Date & Time of next meeting.</u></p> <hr/> <p>AGM</p>	<p>ALL</p>