

**BRITAIN’S GREAT LITTLE RAILWAYS**

**Minutes of 2020 Spring General Meeting held at the Watford Miniature Railway. Cassiobury Park, Watford, WD1 7SL on Wednesday March 11th commencing at 11.30**

**Railways represented**

Bekonscot Light Railway, Bentley Miniature Railway, Brickworks Miniature Railway, East Herts Miniature Railway, Exbury Gardens Steam Railway, Fancott Miniature Railway, Ferry Meadows Railway, Hotham Park Railway, Littlehampton Railway, Moors Valley Railway, Riverside Miniature Railway, Rudyard Lake Railway, South Downs Light Railway, Strawberry Line Miniature Railway, Swanley New Barn Railway, Watford Miniature Railway, Whitfield Light Railway and the Woking Miniature Railway

**Welcome by the Chairman, Iain Dinnes**

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Charles O'Mahoney and his team for hosting the meeting and welcomed all those railways that were able to attend.

**Apologies for Absence**

Barnards Railway, Beer Heights Light Railway, Brookside Miniature Railway, Bure Valley Railway, Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway, Eastleigh Lakeside Railway, Evesham Vale Light Railway, Exmoor Steam Railway, Fairbourne Steam Railway, Foxfield Miniature Railway, Great Cockcrow Miniature Railway, Great Laxey Mines Railway, Hambleton Miniature Railway, Hastings Miniature Railway, HMR Alexandra Park, Hollycombe Steam Museum, Kirklees Light Railway, Mortocombe Railway Society, North Bay Railway Company, North Weald & District Miniature Railway, Rhyl Miniature Railway, Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, Sherwood Forest Railway, Shibden Miniature Railway, South Devon Miniature Railway, Summerfields Miniature Railway, Thompson Park Railway, Weston Park Railway,

**Minutes of the Autumn General Meeting**

The chairman asked the members if they had any issues with minutes and as there were none he asked for the minutes to be agreed. Proposed by Roger Brown and seconded by Jim Haylock. and the resolution was carried unanimously.

**Matters arising from the minutes**

**"HS2020 - Managing Health and Safety at passenger-carrying miniature railways”**

This is the replacement of HSG 216 and after some three and a half years of work it is at its final draft and awaiting a supporting statement from the HSE. As I understand it the final document will not be published as an official HSE guidance paper but they will support it.

Just when it all seemed to be coming to a conclusion the HSE appointed a new person to the committee. This person has a background in legislation for fairgrounds and fairground rides. This type of legislation is very prescriptive whereas the HSG 216 and its replacement is all about guidance and understanding risks. These two approaches are not compatible. There is little chance that the BGLR members on the committee would accept a prescriptive approach as although it might be useful for a new railway start up it could be devastating for an existing railway (e.g. if the exact width requirement for a tunnel on a 7 1/4" railway was prescribed and an existing railway did not conform)

The committee awaits developments.

Other matters arising are addressed in the HRA News below

**Treasurers Report**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Spring Meeting Financial Report** |  |
| No outstanding Subs for this year, well done all |  |
| **Current assets** |  |
| Deposit Account | **4,971** |
| Current Account | **2,513** |
|  |  |
| **Large payments due out shortly** |  |
| Printing and leaflet holders c£1,600 |  |

**Legislative Update and HRA Update**

**HRA**

The ORR are concerned that the HRA members have an increasing number of incidents mainly around level crossings and maintenance of permanent way and coaches.

They are especially worried that railways are not following their own laid down safety systems and not conforming to their own written risk assessments. If you have these written down they must be adhered to and the timeframe or frequency of inspection must be met. Failure to do this could result in their insurance not being valid in the event of an incident.

The ORR and HMRI will be taking more interest in the operations of HRA members railways.

**Coal**

The HRA had a meeting with the Government committee on bituminous fuels tp confirm a derogation for its members but the outcome of the meeting was not available at the time of the meeting.

The recent Government announcement that sales of two of the most polluting fuels, wet wood and house coal, will be phased out from 2021 to 2023, puts more pressure on ensuring that there is a derogation. It should be noted that even in the of a derogation the effect of the phase out out of household coal could result in a price increase for steam coal.

**Young Volunteers**

There continues to be joint activity between the HRA and the ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON HERITAGE RAIL **(APPGHR)** to allow young people to work on heritage railways, currently prohibited by a 1920's Act but its future in the next parliament is unknown. No update on this was available.

A discussion on young volunteers ensued with many railways allowing volunteers from 12 to13 but not able to drive until 16 to 18. Many of the larger gauge railways had 16 as the minimum age to join and 18 to learn to drive.

**Request for copy for April Newsletter**

I would like to go "to press" the weekend of 25th/26th April after the school holidays (assuming that they won't all be closed by then) so all articles and photos on or before 24th please.

**BGLR Website**

If you want any changes to your website for the 2020 season just send them to me and I will do the rest. If your webpage has prices and/or a timetable on it please make sure that they are up to date - if not send me the new information

**Review of any safety incidents during past 6 months**

**Rudyard Lake Railway**

On leaving the station the railway immediately goes onto a road bridge, and thence to the lake. On this day working at the station there was an almighty crashing sound which many thought was a railway problem but was in fact a large van hitting this bridge. On investigation it was found that the driver of the van that had hit the bridge was rapidly trying to put his dislodged roof into the back of the van and drive off. However he was prevented from doing this and the police called. They responded rapidly, interviewed the driver and then let him go but stayed on insisting that the bridge had to be structurally tested otherwise they would have to close the road, After some discussion about the fact that no bricks had been dislodged in the collision, the police left.

Now because they have this bridge Rudyard, which is a 10 1/4" railway, comes under the ORR so the incident had to be reported but no one present at the railway realised that but they did report it up the line management.

Simon then tried to report it within the 3 days requirement for a minor incident via the ORR website and then the frustrations began. His railway was not on the web site registered list and therefore he had to register it before being able to make the report. Registration was going to take 5 days so that was a problem which was overcome with many phone calls to the ORR.

The incident was minor, it did not affect the railway at all but a report was required. So if your railway falls under ORR rules

* Ensure that staff are fully aware of the ORR reporting requirements, when and how
* That your railway is pre-registered with the ORR otherwise this process will be very difficult and time consuming

**Confirmation of 2020 Autumn General Meeting**

Barnards Railway, Barnards Farm, Brentwood Road, West Horndon, CM13 3LX will be the venue for the Autumn General meeting on Wednesday October 14th - a firm date in their diary and hopefully yours as well.

**AOB**

Mizens Railway (Woking MR) are having a visiting engines gala on May 7 - 10th. Please contact them if you wish to attend.

The Fancott Pub has been taken over by new owners who, after several meetings have decided to sell the assets of the railway to Ron Stanbridge for a nominal sum so the railway is safe in his hands on the current site.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.20