



## FRIENDS OF VINTAGE TRAINS

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 19 March 2022 at the Tyseley Workingmen's Club

## MINUTES

Item	Subject
1.	<p><b>CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME</b></p> <p>Neil Ewart, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the AGM after a couple of difficult years where we were unable to meet personally due to the Coronavirus restrictions. It was good to see so many people this year.</p>
2.	<p><b>APOLOGIES</b></p> <p>Dave Collings, Harry Cowan, Phil Dalton, Mr and Mrs A D Roberts, Gill Smith, Brian Wildman, Bernard Wright, Hugh Wright</p> <p>The Secretary confirmed the meeting was quorate with 45 members in attendance.</p>
3.	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b></p> <p>The Minutes of previous meeting held on 27 March 2021 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were taken as read. There were no matters arising. The Minutes were approved and signed.</p>
4.	<p><b>CHAIRMAN'S REPORT</b></p> <p>It had been a challenging couple of years with the Covid protocols in place, trains being unable to run and restricted access for volunteers. We are fully conscious of Omicron and that it is still rampaging and we can understand why some members were wary of attending meetings because of that.</p> <p>During this time we are fortunate that the membership of Friends had remained quite consistent which hasn't been reflected in other British Railway groups so Members' loyalty was truly valued.</p>

There had been a minor drop off in membership due to natural causes but the Committee is very conscious of how to retain memberships and once the trains, social events and open days really get going again we hope we will be able to increase our membership. It was reported by our Membership Officer, Christine Brown, that a lot of members had renewed for five years, which is really helpful and cuts down on postage and administration costs. Members were asked to include a stamped addressed envelope when renewing. Christine had asked the Chairman to relay her thanks to Members for their patience when there had been any queries.

The Friends continue to develop a very good relationship with the Shakespeare Line Promotion Group who were represented at the meeting by Fraser Pithie. They, amongst other things, organise and co-ordinate all the stations along the North Warwickshire Line to Stratford. Our gardening team have made a great start in planting up the flower beds on Tyseley station; there is some remedial work needed on the middle bed and Spencers, the contractors working on the LMRCA, have promised to repair and fill the bed with soil. We hope this will happen soon and we can begin planting up with a red, white and blue theme in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The Friends of Vintage Trains have recently been accepted as a member of the Heritage Railway Association (HRA), Robin Coombes is our representative. It is a prestigious organisation and we hope to learn a lot from this alliance. 'Steam in Trust' has been nominated for an award in the Internal Communications Publication category at the HRA awards - just to be nominated is a wonderful achievement and we look forward to hearing the outcome shortly.

The Chairman thanked all the members who returned the survey undertaken in the summer. The replies have been analysed and the Committee are addressing the issues raised, particularly encouraging younger people to join the Friends which is a similar situation with every supporter's organisation in the country. We don't have the answers but we have to think about it and if anyone has any thoughts do get in touch.

The Chairman thanked the members of the Committee for all their time and effort over the year, as well as Chris Schroeder and Mark Smee who had been co-opted. Mark Smee has decided to stand down as Editor of 'Steam in Trust' and an Editorial panel will be set up. The Chairman also thanked Christine Brown for her work as Membership Officer.

Three Committee Members have retired during the year and the Chairman thanked Geoff Middleton, Dave Martin and Bernard Wright for all their support and service. Tony Watson resigned during the year following his appointment as a Director of the Vintage Trains CBS.

The Chairman also wished to acknowledge the following – the management and paid staff of Vintage Trains, it has not been an easy time for them, the staff at Tyseley Locomotive Works for the incredible job they do, under pressure, Members, and volunteers whether they are members of the Friends or not. There are several volunteer projects in hand – amongst them is the work on the LMRCA, site maintenance, gardening, trains are fully manned with stewards, and the miniature railway to name but a few.

During the year the Committee wanted to acknowledge and award two Honorary Memberships to Bob Meanely for his incredible support to the Friends over the years, and to Fraser Pithie who is secretary of the Shakespeare Line Promotion Group and who has helped enormously with the Tyseley station adoption – a certificate was presented to Fraser.

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chairman presented the Treasurer's report. The unaudited accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and the audited accounts were available at the meeting.

Our finances are in good shape with nett total funds available of £18,572. This was largely thanks to Members renewing their subscriptions, and sales of calendars and greeting cards and the on train buffet sales. The 2022 calendar had achieved a profit of c.£2,000 on an order run of 500. The 2023 calendar is being produced and a similar number will be ordered.

During the year, on your behalf, we donated £10k to the restoration of two Pullman coaches. Alastair Meanly was consulted to ascertain what the priorities were and £5k was donated each to the reupholstering of a Pullman coach and the Eagle bogie lift.

We plan to run the Social events although the programme is currently held at the moment as a lot of members had expressed concern about Omicron and so the Committee have decided to postpone the April event until later in the year. There is some funding in the budget to cover costs of the social events but with a raffle the costs are generally covered. These events are exclusive for Members and a guest with the hope of encouraging new members.

During the year we were asked to step in to manage and staff the Buffet on the train, and we were able to sell our souvenirs on board as well. The team did a sterling job and money from this venture will be donated to Tyseley when a suitable project has been identified. The Chairman thanked the team for picking up the task and carrying it out with such professionalism. For various reasons the management of the Buffet has reverted back to Vintage Trains but we carry on organising the stocking and staffing – thank you Brian Miles and your team for continuing this work.

During the year we received a very generous donation of £1,060 in memory of a former volunteer, Alan Price and this was used to purchase power tools for the volunteers on site, as they needed to be replaced to meet new Health and Safety regulations for power usage. We are always grateful for donations, large or small, made by our members.

6. **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE**

The following committee members were nominated:

Robin Coombes, Neil Ewart, Paul Hatton, Mary McCullough, Jeff Robinson, and Sharon Salter agreed to stand again for the Committee. Chris Schroeder had put this name forward to re-join the Committee along with two new nominations, Fraser Pithie and Matthew Self.

Proposed: Clive Gough. Seconded: Nickey Churchill. All were appointed on a show of hands.

7. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Paul Hatton had been nominated to the post of Chairman, Mary McCullough – Secretary, Chris Schroeder – Treasurer.

Proposed: Graham Mapp, Seconded: Les Ross. All appointed on a show of hands.

8. **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

Proposed to appoint Kevin McCullough to act in the capacity of Auditor. Mr McCullough is ACMA qualified, is not a member of the Friends and will therefore act in an independent capacity.

Proposed: Chris Schroeder; Seconded – Brian Miles. Appointed on a show of hands.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINES**

One of our Members, Trevor Matthews had written a book entitled 'The Craft of the Fireman'. Ray Churchill introduced the book, which he saw on a visit to the Severn Valley Railway, purchased a copy and couldn't put it down. It is an extremely in depth look at what the fireman does and Ray recommended anyone to buy it. Trevor has very kindly, donated 20 copies of the book to the Friends with all monies raised going to the Friends. We are extremely grateful to Trevor for this very generous gesture.

The incoming Chairman, Paul Hatton, presented a small gift to Neil for mark his Chairmanship.

The meeting was then declared closed.

**Talk by Michael Whitehouse, Chairman, Clun Castle Trust**

After the formal business of the meeting, Michael Whitehouse spoke about the future and how the business cannot survive without proper consideration of the people involved, whether they be staff, customers or passengers. It has been very hard to recover from the pandemic but was looking for a very positive outcome.

Michael gave an update on how the business processes and documentation had been reviewed and new appointments had been made to help drive the business forward, training people and running trains safely.

The recent Welsh Marches tour ran with Clun Castle on exactly the same day as Clun travelled the same route, 50 years earlier which was a wonderful achievement. Alastair Meanley has taken a further step forward to becoming a fully licenced steam driver by driving for part of the journey. He has passed his rules, and now needs to do 250 hours on the footplate to prove his driving skills. VT have also taken on another driver who can be trained up to be a steam driver.

In respect of the rolling stock, the Pullman class seats on the train sell out almost immediately, but the Tourist class are slower to sell. We need to get the coaches in a first class condition and last year this represented a spend of £250k and will be more over the next two years including controlled toilet emissions. The land currently owned at Stratford will be sold to help fund.

Next year there will be three express steam engines in full working order – and they will all be painted in British Railways Lime Green.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman