

‘PROGRESS’
THE NEWSLETTER OF
TARKA VALLEY RAILWAY C.I.O.
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1162632

VOLUME 2 *ISSUE 7*

WINTER 2016/2017

MEETING REPORTS

As previously advised, on Monday January 9th and Tuesday January 10th two meetings of members were held in Torrington to determine the future shape of the Tarka Valley Railway. These meetings were chaired by David Morgan and Mark Smith of the Heritage Railway Association.

The first meeting, in two parts, was of the original **Tarka Valley Railway Group** to decide on the future of this organisation. Voting took place in the second part of the meeting.

Resolution 1 to amend the constitution was voted on and carried by 60 votes to 0.

Resolution 2 Election of Committee: The following were elected - Martin Wilson, Phil Tarry, Rod Garner, David Morgan, and Mark Smith. Jan Welch was co-opted in her role as Treasurer.

Anne Head withdrew her name and Colin Clifton, Richard Deane, Mac Head and Aubrey McKenzie were unsuccessful.

Resolution 3 To transfer the assets and liabilities of the Group to the C.I.O. This was carried by 59 votes to 3.

Resolution 4 To formally dissolve the Group. This was carried by 54 votes to 4.

The committee was instructed to complete these tasks within four months.

The second meeting was the first **Annual General Meeting of Tarka Valley Railway C.I.O.**

Resolution 1 To consider the Directors' Report and Accounts. These were accepted unanimously.

Resolution 2(a) Anthony Williams was re-elected as a Trustee.

Resolution 2(b) The appointment as Trustees of Ralph Chapman, Richard Rumbold and Andrew Boyd was confirmed.

Resolution 2(c) Mac Head and Anne Head withdrew their names from the election as Trustees, and Colin Clifton, Gary Flack, and Karen Flack were unsuccessful.

Resolution 3 A L Dalberti was confirmed as independent examiner of the accounts.

Resolution 4 Remuneration of the independent examiner of the accounts was vested with the Trustees.

The full draft minutes will be communicated to members shortly.

As members will note on page 2, Devon County Council are now in possession of all the information they requested to support our lease application. The results of these meetings are being communicated to them and it is hoped that this will produce the result we are awaiting.

Site Report

As you know, we do not have a great deal of indoor working space at Torrington and our activities are very much weather dependent on our Thursday working day. Having said that, the three months to the end of December has been very favourable with only a few days rained off because of the weather.

Restoration of the brake van and tank wagon has continued apace and the vegetation clearance team have remained busy with tree pruning, branch removal and general tidying. This work received praise from a visiting representative of the Trail. The south side of the platform has been re-pointed and the brake van and tank wagon moved to the sound of “come on boys, it’s only ten tons to push!”.

Visitors to the railway will be able to see the improvements we have made in and around the station site but we should not forget the considerable efforts made “behind the scenes” especially the lease application team (article in this issue), and the shop volunteers whose customer service skills deserve a special word of thanks for maintaining a cheerful smile in what can be a fairly chilly carriage.

Fundraising remains a major issue for any charitable organization and an unexpected large donation from a member has helped the bank balance considerably. The small team involved is working hard but we do need people with fundraising and marketing skills to help us further our ambitions for the railway. *Phil Tarry*



Rod Garner handing the file to Ros Mills of Devon County Council.

Photo: Phil Tarry

Update on lease acquisition.

We are pleased to advise our members that we have now completed all the documentation required by Devon County Council to enable them to give final consideration, and it is hoped approval, for the lease on the Phase 1 extension land. This amounts to over 50 pages of written material to include Method Statements, Risk Assessments, Travel Arrangements, Finance and Business Plans, Work Schedules, Vegetation and Flora & Fauna Surveys, letters of support, etc., as well as several architects drawings and plans. The whole package was delivered by hand to the Manager responsible for the Trail in Exeter at the end of November, and it was encouraging that whilst our appointment was expected to be only brief, such was the interest shown that we spent nearly an hour discussing the whole project.

Tarka Valley Railway Finances

Within the next three years, the railway will need to raise significant sums of money.

The estimated costs for phase 1, the Trail widening, the fence, the laying of the track and sidings etc., between the platform and the bridge is in the region of £100,000. It is expected to take about three years.

The money spent so far on tools, the container, etc., is not included in this sum.

Our rate of development depends on finance, and the time taken is also dependent on the income. The faster the money comes in, the more rapid the progress. Three years is a reasonable 'guesstimate'.

At present, we have funds to cover phase 1 a, the Trail realignment, and the fence. (We have also put in a Grant Application to assist with the cost of the fence).

Phase 1 b, the first four panels of track, plus level crossing will cost around £15,000

Phase 1 c. The point, plus 3 panels of track for the main line will cost around £20,000

Phase 1 d. The Trap point, splitting point and two short sidings will cost around £30,000.

Then there are going to be extra bits and pieces, accommodation etc.

How are we going to raise this money?

£100,000 equates to £33,333 per year or nearly £2800 per month. This is a colossal sum. The present IGU (Income Generation Unit) needs reinforcing. We need more support. As I see it, income needs to be generated from numerous sources:-

- Grant Aid/Trust funding, this is the big money, Research needed to locate these, then a package to be put together to apply. Several small ones already identified and on board.
- Event/Community funding, this will include shop/street collections, attending events with sales stall etc. Retail sales through the carriage and on site direct sales.
- Corporate funding. Writing to companies with a 'begging' letter, but including a corporate package to try to get donations or appropriate materials.
- Legacy Fundraising. Create awareness amongst members, Solicitors etc.
- Direct appeals to members and supporters.

Much of this work can be done at home, but with regular communication between other team members, and is especially ideal for members who cannot carry out the physical side of the work. Both sides are equally important.

Now that we are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with a registered charity number, it will make life easier. Once the Lease is signed we will be able to go for the bigger money (they normally wish to see a copy of the Lease).

At the moment Jan and a couple of others are trying to do this in addition to their normal roles on site. ***Your help is needed.***

Phil Tarry



Members trip to Bodmin and Wenford Railway



Sunday the 30th of October saw twenty six of us board the coach at the Puffing Billy, bound for the Bodmin and Wenford railway. The clock change meant we were all on time, with the weather looking good. The first bit of good news was this being the last day of the season, tickets were all half price, was this luck or good planning! This of course meant that the station was busy, as real stations should be: lots of people milling about with that lost look, followed by the rush for the exit as the train arrives at the platform emptying its passengers and the hush after the train has departed, just like the real thing.

With the expected increase in passengers, extra carriages had been added meaning that the steam engine at the front had to be assisted by a diesel engine at the back, or was it the other way around! Who knows, both engines pointed forward, either way something for everyone.

An extra add on was a conducted tour of the engine sheds and workshops, this I believe was organised by Rod who charmed the station master. Well worth it, of course the ex ND Clay works shunter Peter which worked alongside our own shunter attracted most interest. The workshops were my favourite, full of machines and equipment exactly the same as I have used throughout my working life, a shame I did not live closer.

An excellent day was had by everyone, to see a well presented and staffed railway, with an excellent array of carriages, locomotives, rolling stock and all facilities was a real joy, the only downside being you realise how much work is required at our own modest enterprise. They have been going for thirty years and started with a readymade set up, but we can't fast forward thirty years. Perhaps in a few months' time, a further trip might be a good idea, any suggestions!
Thanks to Bob Wood for this article.

FUTURE EVENTS

February 24th – talk by Hugh Reed on 'Local History' 7.00 for 7.30 pm.

Tickets £3 per head to include light buffet.

Tickets from Puffing Billy (01805 623050) or any Thursday at the railway carriage.

And finally.....

100 Club winner for November:

Number 40: Peter Owens.

Our website has been updated to include a "kids' corner" activity page with an opportunity to have your work published on the website. www.tarkavalleyrailway.co.uk
Please also visit our Facebook page for weekly updates on our work.

Lastly a very Happy New Year to all our members and thank you for your continuing support.