MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held on Saturday 8th September 2018 at 11.00am

at the Methodist Hall, Market Place, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 5AT

Directors present: Kenneth Monkman (Chairman), Robert Carter, Bob Coombs (Vice-Chairman), Robert Mordey (Treasurer), David Walker and Andy Woodland (Company Secretary).

Members present: 59 (including Directors)

In attendance: Steve Davies (Plc Board Director)
Helen Ashworth (Volunteer Co-ordinator and Lead Fundraiser)

Proxy Forms received: 49 forms representing 57 Members

Apologies: Virginia Arrowsmith, Andy Turnbull and Nigel Park (Directors)
Peter Sangwine, Mr IW Wray, Neil Smedley, Norman Scholes, Prof. GL Huxley, David Hart, David Glendenning, David Lobb, Oliver Richardson, Alan Lancaster, Anthony Walker and Carl Les.

The meeting commenced at 11.00am and the Chairman welcomed all those present.

He introduced Steve Davies, Plc Board Director, who gave a presentation illustrated by slides, setting out progress with the Plc’s Development Plan (introduced last year), highlights of the 2018 season, and future plans and priorities for and leading up to the 2019 season. Attention was drawn to the popularity of more frequent steam-hauled services during August. Arrangements are well advanced to have an S160 steam loco from next April to December (from Churnet Valley), a J27 from NYMR for August and, a highlight, Tornado for two weeks (three weekends) in May/June. The visit of British India Line this year highlighted the shortcomings of water supply for steam operation, which will need to be addressed. There has been good progress this year, since the sale of the Aysgarth Station site, with recruitment of key staff, important track renewal and upgrade, the catering arrangements and works at Leyburn and Leeming Bar (covered in more detail by David Walker). The financial viability of WR Plc remains challenging. Infrastructure renewal is a continuing drain on funds and discussions are being opened with Network Rail about the terms of the lease under which we use the line. The capacity of stretched personnel resources, both paid staff and volunteers, continues to be a constraint on progress. There is to be a review of the ticketing prices and discount arrangements. Overall, Steve was very positive about progress since last year’s AGM, but the Board are well aware of the challenge faced by WR Plc to achieve a viable and sustainable operation, in collaboration with the efforts of the WR Association.

David Walker gave a presentation firstly about works at Leyburn Station to provide a passing loop, a water supply tank, an island (observation) platform accessed by a refurbished footbridge acquired from Brigg Station and the renovated signal box donated from the Furness Railway. David continued by outlining progress with the Leeming Bar Station House restoration project, for which a substantial grant is being sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will deliver a restored building with improved facilities for office staff (both volunteers and WR employees) and, importantly, a centre for Community Engagement and for the delivery of an enhanced Heritage Education programme, led by
Virginia Arrowsmith and building on the widely admired success of the educational visits programme at Scruton.

Helen Ashworth was then introduced to those present. Helen has been employed, 3 days per week, by the Association (supported by grant funding from Hambleton District Council) as the railway’s Volunteer Coordinator and Lead Fundraiser. Helen distributed copies of a new leaflet she has produced about the many volunteering opportunities that are available. Working with the new Events Coordinator (Rebekah Jerram), considerable progress has been made this year in better publicising the railway and the frequent events now taking place, both by traditional means (articles in the Press) and via Social Media where, for example, the number of Facebook Friends has increased from approx. 8,500 to more than 10,000. Helen described a potential corporate donation, from a Hull-based company which has offered us 1000 free platform coping stones, valued at £138,000, so long as we can arrange for their transport. She is liaising with local haulage companies to achieve this. Helen then outlined her two current fundraising priorities, namely track renewals between Leyburn and Redmire to enable continuing services west of Leyburn (approximate cost of £20,000) and the renewal of the level crossing at Ham Hall, to enable services to run east of Leeming Bar to Scruton and beyond, to Northallerton (approximate cost of £38,000).

All of the speakers were thanked for their informative talks, before moving on to the formal business of the AGM.

RESOLUTIONS: (Voting figures include Proxy Votes)

1. The minutes of the 2017 AGM were approved. Proposer: Tom Glover, Seconder: Bill Briggs, (carried unanimously except for 1 abstention)

2. The Annual Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 December 2017 was approved. Proposer: Stuart Simpson, Seconder: Phil Smith, (carried unanimously except for 1 abstention)

3. The Financial Report and Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017 were unanimously approved. Proposer: Tom Glover, Seconder: Bill Middleton. Prior to voting, Bob Mordey explained that an error in the version of the Accounts circulated to Members had been identified where, on page 14, the Grant Payable in 2017 for the Arup Interim Report should read £17076 instead of £3176. The total at the bottom of the 2017 figures was however correct and there was therefore no impact on any other figures in the Accounts.

4. Andy Woodland was elected unanimously as a Director. Proposer: Phil Smith, Seconder: Bill Middleton.

For the next item only, Bob Coombs assumed the role of Chairman.

5. Kenneth Monkman was re-elected unanimously as a Director. Proposer: Frank Clough, Seconder: Kate Draffin

6. David Walker was re-elected unanimously as a Director. Proposer: John Young, Seconder: John Tong.

7. Robert Mordey was re-elected unanimously as a Director. Proposer: Andrew Gill, Seconder: Peter Harbord.

8. Kenneth Easby Ltd, Chartered Accountants, were elected as Independent Examiners and the Directors were authorised to fix their remuneration. Proposer: Ian Mawson, Seconder: Frank Clough, (carried unanimously except for 2 votes against).
Any Other Business

1. Ruth Annison re-iterated her request, made to the Chairman prior to the meeting, that the Directors, on behalf of the Association, seek members’ views on methods of communication and consultation with the membership in order to communicate fully, clearly and in a timely fashion, remembering that consultation is a two-way process. Ruth also expressed thanks and appreciation to all of the Board Directors, and to Andrew Gill, Membership Secretary, for the time and effort each has put into the running of the Association over the past year.

2. A member raised a question about Note 9, Grants payable, in the 2017 Accounts where significant amounts were paid to the Plc for ‘Out of Season Running’ (£35,000) and ‘Winter Services’ (£30,000). What is the difference between these two items? The Treasurer agreed to look into this, in consultation with the Auditors, and to explain this more accurately, if appropriate, in the 2018 Accounts.

The meeting concluded at 12.55pm

Andy Woodland

Company Secretary WRA(T) Ltd

The 2019 AGM will be held in Leyburn on the morning of Saturday 21st September 2019.