

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Middleton Methodist Church Hall, Leeds 10 on Saturday 26th February 1972, commencing at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. J. Bushell in the Chair, and 46 other members.

Mr. Bushell thanked the Minister and Trustees of the Church for their permission to use the Hall.

1. Apologies for absence: received from Mr. J. Alcock, Mr. N.A. Brampton, Mr. J.A. Cox, Mr. G.E. Duckworth, Viscount Garnock, Mr. F.W. Hellewell, Mr. M. Hindes, Dr. R.C. Lawrence, Mr. J.K. Lee, Mr. I.R. McDougall, Mr. M. Midgley, Mr. I. Smith and Rt. Rev. E. Treacy.

2. Minutes: it was proposed and carried that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 20th February 1971, and the Special General Meetings of 27th May 1971 and 20th November 1971 be accepted in the form in which they had been distributed to members.

3. Matters Arising from the above Minutes: none.

4. Officers' Reports:-

Treasurer: members had been sent Mr. Carr's written report with unaudited accounts for 1971. The audit was in hand, and a revised stock valuation, and a summary of the Appeal Account were being prepared but were not yet available.

For the first time the Trust was free of debt, and while the future of the scrap traffic was inevitably uncertain the passenger service should be profitable in future, having broken even overall in 1971 despite motorway interruptions. The meeting noted a suggestion from Mr. Cockerill about collection and sale of scrap paper. Proposed and carried that the accounts be received unaudited.

Secretary: Mr. Edwards presented his written report to the meeting. The final draft of the agreement with the Leeds University Union Railway and Transport Society for the lease of Hunslet diesel 1786 was read to the meeting, was approved, and was signed by Mr. Bushell for the Trust.

Membership Secretary: Mr. Ashurst reported that at the 31st January 1972, the Trust had 302 members including 62 junior/O.A.P. members, compared with 310 and 84 respectively one year before. 80 new members had joined during the year but 88 had left. He thanked the Carr family for their help in membership mailings, and encouraged all present members to enrol new members of the Trust.

Publicity Officer: Messrs. Bushell and Hirst presented a written report.

Editor, The Old Run: Mr. Leah reported that many good contributions had been received and more would be welcome. Several changes in production methods had succeeded in reducing costs. Discussion of the future of The Old Run was reserved for later in the meeting.

Mechanical Engineer: Mr. Lodge referred the meeting to his reports during the year in The Old Run.

Civil Engineer: Mr. Cowling also referred the meeting to reports in The Old Run. The year's work in summary included the relaying of Whittaker's junction and siding, the accommodation of the diversion caused by the motorway, and latterly piecemeal improvements in the main line between the tunnel and Parkside bridge. The track generally was now in better shape than ever before, but much remained to be done, for which help was needed.

Chairman: through Mr. Bushell, Mr. Lee reported that he had made good contacts with the Civic authorities. He was shortly to discuss with them the City's redevelopment plans for South Leeds, and would be able to press the Trust's interests. He was willing to be re-elected Chairman, but for a few months would have to restrict his Trust work due to domestic commitments.

5. Incorporation: Mr. Bushell reminded the meeting of the pressing reasons for incorporation, in particular the need to limit the personal liability of members. Much progress had been made in the last year; in order to enable the final steps to be taken without the inconvenience and cost to members of further Special General Meetings the Committee proposed that the A.G.M. should authorise postal ballots.

It was proposed and carried unanimously:-

"That the approval by members of the Trust of all necessary procedural steps for the incorporation of the Trust, and the election by members of the first Council of the incorporated body, may be executed by postal ballot, providing that:-

- a) ballots shall be returnable to the Trustees of the Trust by a specified date to be not less than four weeks from the despatch to members of ballot forms;
- b) any motion to be voted on by ballot shall be carried only by a two-thirds majority of ballots returned;
- c) notwithstanding the result of any such postal ballot, the normal right of members and of the Committee to call a Special General Meeting shall remain, and in the event of such a meeting being called to deal with any matter related to the subjects of a postal ballot, the decision of the Special General Meeting shall prevail;
- d) before being invited to vote for the adoption of Articles and Memorandum of Association, all members shall have been sent copies of the same."

6. Middleton Railway Association: this proposed body would be required, after incorporation of the Trust, to cater for members under the age of 18. It could also conveniently take over responsibility for the Sales function of the Trust, which must without delay be hived off in order not to compromise the recently-won charitable status of the Trust. A draft constitution for the Association was presented to the meeting. After noting a suggestion that membership of the Association should be available at nominal rates to Trust members, the proposal of the Committee was put and carried unanimously, that,

"This Meeting approves the draft Constitution of the Middleton Railway Association, and authorises Mr. J. Bushell to take all necessary steps, including the convening of an inaugural meeting, to establish the Middleton Railway Association."

7. The Old Run: the authority for the production of four issues, given by the S.G.M. of 10th October 1970, had now expired. Mr. Leah reported that costs had been reduced as far as possible consistent with the present format, and were £180 gross for a year; a very small amount could be offset by advertising and sales revenue. The set-up costs per issue were relatively high, with a low marginal cost for the additional copies which were produced for publicity use.

It was proposed by Messrs. Roberts and Greenhough:

"That The Old Run be continued in the present format with 4 issues a year". After an amendment by Messrs. Ware and Lodge that there should be three issues a year in March, July and November had been carried by a large majority, the amended proposal was put and carried nem. con., i.e.:

"That The Old Run be continued in the present format with 3 issues a year, in March, July and November".

8. New Depot: this was to be adjacent to the present Hunslet Moor platform, and the choice of types of building was being studied so that tenders could be invited. The City authorities had accepted the proposal in principle, subject to the appearance of the building being satisfactory, and had agreed to leave in the stub of Burton Road as hard standing. The shed would have 2 roads for 6 engines total under cover, with stores and workshop at one end and with sidings for all locomotives.

9. Election of Officers: the following had been nominated and were elected unopposed:

President: Viscount Garnock
Vice-Presidents: John Alcock, Esq.
Dr. R.C. Lawrence
Rt. Rev. Eric Treacy
Chairman: J.K. Lee
Deputy Chairman: J. Bushell
Secretary: J.D. Edwards
Treasurer: C.D. Ware
Committee Secretary: Miss S. Young
Membership Secretary: B.W. Ashurst
Publicity Officer: C.D. Hirst
Traffic Manager: Dr. G.D. Crapper

Mechanical Engineer: J.A. Lodge
Civil Engineer: A.J. Cowling
Committee Members: T.W.J. Apperley
D.J. Hebden
W.E. Holliday
P. Nettleton

10. Appointment of Auditors: it was proposed by Messrs. Carr and Ware, and carried unanimously,

"That this meeting authorises the Committee to appoint professional auditors at a suitable fee as soon as possible."

11. Other Business:

(a) Mr. Cockerill, for the Steam Power Trust, thanked the Middleton Railway Trust for help with overhauling the Y7, which he hoped to steam by the end of the summer. The Steam Power Trust's plans for bringing the Danish well tank to Middleton were well advanced and the engine might arrive in May.

(b) Mr. Edwards reported that he had talked informally and non-committally with the Railway Inspectorate. They felt strongly that, for the benefit of all parties, the Middleton Railway Trust should regularise its position by applying for a Light Railway Order, and thereby coming under the supervision and protection of the Inspectorate. The present operating practises of the Middleton Railway Trust would broadly be acceptable to the Inspectorate, and there were great advantages in being seen to be "government approved", both as regards security of tenure of the line and in minimising adverse publicity should a serious accident ever occur.

It was proposed, and carried unanimously:

"That subject to the satisfactory conclusion of current discussions with the Railway Inspectorate regarding their intentions should a Light Railway Order be sought and granted, the Secretary is authorised to apply for the same."

(c) Mr. J.R. Cowling could not continue as First Aid Officer; the Committee would appoint a successor.

(d) Tenders had been invited for the scrapping of "Chairman".

(e) The Committee would review members' privilege of unlimited free rides on the passenger service, in the light of reported abuse of the privilege.

(f) Mr. Greenhough proposed that one half of the Tram Crossing be loaned indefinitely to Crich. The matter was referred to the Committee for decision and action, noting that the crossing was not M.R.T. property.

(g) Mr. Thorndike noted the great improvement in the appearance of the locomotives during the past year.

The meeting closed at 5.50 p.m.

Minutes recorded by J.D. Edwards, Secretary.
