



Minutes of Meeting held Thursday, 2nd May 2024

Location Darlington Cricket Club, South Terrace,
Feethams, Darlington DL1 5JD

7.00 pm

Members Present:

Niall Hammond (NHa, Chair), Caroline Hardie (CH) Alan Townsend (AT Vice Chair), John Raw (JDR Trustee), Peter Bainbridge (PB, Membership Secretary) Ross Chisholm (RC Planning Officer), Norman Hugill (NHu, Trustee) Barry Thompson (BT Trustee), Jonathan Ratcliffe (JAR, Secretary), Paul Boden, Jane Hackworth Young (JHY), Rose Drew, Neil Parker, David Watt, Keith Halifax, Dave Middlemas, Margaret Fenwick (MF), Trevor Fenwick David Thompson, Gerry Wilkinson, David Newmarch, Alastair Culff, Nicholas Alderson-Rice, PW Cooper, FT Cooper, Nick Boynton, Steve Sidgwick, Hugh Jackson, Jeremy Horner, Peter Spence, Keith Simpson, Dave Reynolds.

(Note: Actions highlighted in Red)

1	<u>Welcomes & Apologies for absence.</u> Apologies Matthew Pease (President), Chris Lloyd (Vice President) George Morton, Jim Atkinson (Sent thanks for his card and for the kind messages), Bob Scott, Trevor Horner, Michael Poole, Keith Simpson, Alan MacNab, Ian Ross, Paul Howell, David Parker, Carole Parker, Tony Britton, William Pickersgill, Pat Pickersgill, Alan Curry, John Giles, Andrew Simmons, Sue Fleury, Ken Bradshaw, Richard Barber, David Waite, John Parker, George Alderslade, Welcomes	Responsibility
2	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u> Minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.	
3	<u>Matters Arising</u> RC passed on Darlington Borough Council thanks to the Friends for putting the consultation report on the website. Gabby Rose has been invited to the July meeting. Fighting Cocks Heritage hub report will be going out in the near future. Reuben Kench has accepted the invitation to meet with the Friends. JHY asked about accommodation. Visit County Durham and Visit Tees Valley	

	<p>NHa & AT have met with Cait Barratt and her team and have clarified that within the grant there's an expectation that they support the Friends with volunteer support.</p> <p>It has been agreed that there will be an annual volunteer event and the creation of a volunteering opportunities guide, an online volunteering calendar and also the opportunity for guided walk training and resources for walk leaders.</p> <p>The creation of a research agenda for the Stockton & Darlington Railway and early railways was highlighted as a potential item to develop.</p> <p>A meeting has been held of the education committee and it's been</p> <p>Locomotion No. 1 replica has been condemned and permission has been given to SBC to dispose. The Friends have no further liability for the replica.</p>	
4	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>None declared</p>	
5	<p><u>Chair's Report</u></p> <p>Report attached.</p> <p>Peter Gibson MP has helped to get a commitment from Lord Hendy that the Merchandise Station site will be cleared and an archaeological investigation carried out.</p> <p>Heighington Station, the Rail Heritage Trust has visited the site and there is a commitment from them to help assist with work on Network Rail land.</p>	
6	<p>Reports from Local area groups.</p> <p>Stockton BT has had a meeting with landowners and a second meeting needs to take place with the Canal and riverbank trust who are the leasees</p> <p>Yarm We've purchased an additional 20 copies of the Yarm Branch book from CIAS. Additional copies can be printed at £12 each at quantities as low as 20.</p> <p>A boundary stone has been found in a Garden along the Yarm Branch. The landowner is keen to open the garden to the public in 2025.</p> <p>Middleton St. George/Fighting Cocks</p>	

	<p>The Mural is in place and mostly complete, there has been a late requirement for the NLHF logo to be added which may incur an additional cost. The mural has been receiving local interest and exposure on Social media.</p> <p>The local school has visited the site and helped with wild flower seeding and learnt about the S&DR.</p> <p>Approval has been granted by DBC for the rebuilding of the waiting shelter, we are currently waiting for the license before starting work hopefully by end of May.</p> <p>Friday afternoon sessions are running every alternative afternoons to tidy the site.</p> <p>RC asked for guidance re: the mural. Niccy Hallifax has requested an information panel and asked RC to write text for the panel, Cait Barratt has asked for a plaque to be put in. RC asked for guidance over the conflict. RC to pass information to Niccy Hallifax and leave it to them to decide the best route forward. Any plaque or</p> <p>Darlington DIG have created an action list to improve the route of walk booklet 6, working to clear the path and improve landscaping with help from DBC.</p> <p>Haughton Road Coal Depot wall repair has been completed by the “heavy brigade” which has improved the site.</p> <p>Sleeper blocks from Honey Pot Lane will be repositioned along Tornado Way to mark the route of the line.</p> <p>Litterpicking and path clearing is ongoing.</p> <p>RC asked on behalf of DIG for a revision of walk booklet 5 in time for the reopening of Hopetown. Funds. CH asked if the group could find out what Hopetown are planning and what funding is available.</p> <p>JDR to ask Paul Harle for example risk assessments.</p> <p>The person in charge of events has the responsibility for ensuring the events. Rose Drew is also willing to help with writing risk assessments. RC to pass on examples to Rose Drew of activities.</p> <p>There is a need for a method statement and the creation of a RAMS package. JAR to look into this</p> <p>Heighington</p>	<p>JDR</p> <p>RC</p> <p>JAR</p>
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	<p>Heighington Group are applying for funding for another history day. MF organising</p> <p>Station yard cleanup will take place on Saturday 25th May 10am to 1pm. MF will advertise the event.</p> <p>A walking the line event will be taking place on 11th May to update the booklet. Husqvarna will be sponsoring the booklet and will take part in the event.</p> <p>UTC will be taking an active part in adopting Heighington Station.</p> <p>BIG Masons arms is now on the cleaning cycle. Born Again Gardens will be doing more work on the Masons arm crossing. Footpath improvements have taken place through the industrial estate site to the scrapyard.</p> <p>St Helens</p> <p>A litter pick has taken place at the Gaunless Bridge abutments. DCC have awarded the contract to span the Gaunless to Atkins Consulting Engineers. Bridge will not be in place in time for the anniversary.</p>	
7	<p>Barnard Castle Report Attached</p> <p>JHY feels that we should be setting up subgroups for organising walks and events. She pointed out that we need to start planning as there's only four months until the events program needs to be finalised. JHY proposed that there are a subgroup set up to co-ordinate events.</p> <p>Rose Drew suggested that a combined events calendar be set up and used for planning to prevent</p> <p>Members are encouraged to come up with ideas for events in 2025 and to pass to JAR and JAR to feed into Niccy Hallifax</p> <p>AT suggested putting together a list of desired events.</p> <p>RC pointed out that he's unable to give answers to people who are asking about what the events are going</p> <p>Rose Drew offered to remotely support co-ordination from the USA. Her offer was gratefully accepted.</p> <p>Dave Reynolds to set up a calendar for events.</p>	<p>JAR</p> <p>Dave Reynolds</p>

	<p>JHY, RC, GA JDR to plan a draft calendar of walks.</p> <p>Calendar to be implemented and populated as soon as possible.</p> <p>A lecture series to be considered for 2025.</p>	JHY/RC/GA/JDR
8	<p>Heighington Station</p> <p>We've had £10,000 grant from Headley Trust, individual giving is up to £15,000. NHa/JAR are working on the business plan. Surveys have started in preparation for the COF grant application.</p>	
9	<p>Alternative venues for meetings.</p> <hr/> <p>Report attached</p> <p>Meeting decided that we would remain at the Cricket Club with potential to move in future if we grow further.</p>	
10	<p>Planning Report</p> <hr/> <p>Report Attached</p> <p>A section 106 notice has been put in place for the developer on the South Side of Tornado way to pay for improvements for local walking and cycling routes. RC has mentioned this to Richie Starrs and Chris Slaughter who were unaware of this fund.</p> <p>RC has informed SBC that a proposed development is on S&DR land. Tees Archaeology are now engaged to do an investigation to see if there is any surviving archaeology.</p> <p>Progress is being made at Black Diamond Bridge, the bridge may not be ready for the anniversary. The local councillor will fund a length of fencing and resurfacing to allow the underpass to be reopened as an alternative route which will be closer to the original route. The council have committed to improved</p>	
11	<p>Officers Reports (Reports attached)</p> <p>Commemorative pens are selling well and are supplying funds for Heighington Station.</p> <p>Any events between 27th May and 27th June to be sent to caroline to advertise on the podcast.</p>	
11	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <hr/> <p>NHa has spoken with Blue Badge guides, training session will be taking place on 20th May at Locomotion.</p>	

	<p>23rd New hall at Locomotion will be opened with the public opening on the 24th. They have not taken up our offer for support with fact checking displays.</p> <p>Dave Reynolds suggested a GPS app based walk which could potentially be a revenue stream. This is currently being looked at by Richie Starrs in collaboration with Teesside University. If this doesn't go ahead the Friends will look at going at this again in June/July. NHa to email Richie Starrs and get an update on this project</p>	NHa
13	<p><u>Date & Time of next meeting.</u></p> <hr/> <p>7pm Thursday 2nd May 2024, Darlington Cricket club</p>	