



Minutes of Meeting held Thursday, 5th September 2024

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

7.00 pm

Members Present:

Alan Townsend (AT), Jonathan Ratcliffe (JAR), Peter Spence, Maurice Burns, Julia Almsbury, Jim Atkinson, Jeremy Horner, Francis Annett, Steve Sidgwick, David Thompson, John Harris, Peter Bainbridge (PB), Jane Hackworth-Young (JHY), Barry Thompson (BT), Ross Chisholm (RC), John Raw (JR), Catherine Yates, George Alderslade (GA), Steve Green, Neil Parker, Bill Stuart, Hugh Jackson, David Watt, Nicolas Alderson-Rice, Margaret Fenwick, Trevor Fenwick, Yvonne Richardson, Dave Pennington, Julia Armstrong.

(Note: Actions highlighted in Red)

1	<u>Welcomes & Apologies for absence.</u> Apologies Matthew Pease (President), Chris Lloyd (Vice President) Alan Macnab, Niall Hammond, Caroline Hardie, Paul Boden, Mary Smith, John Carr, Bob Scott, Alastair Culff, Richard Barber, Alan Macnab, John Fletcher, Trevor Horner, Sue Fleury, Paul Harle, 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> JHY Asked about the events program for 2025 and noted that there are a number of events in planning by several groups and individuals. AT proposed that the co-ordination of walks already starting obviated the need for an immediate Events Committee JDR reported that Norman Hugill has managed to get the barrier moved at Heighington Station. Thanks were given to Norman for intervening on the Friends behalf.	
4	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> No declarations were declared	
5	<u>Chair's Report</u> Report attached. AT covered the report's points about Heighington Station and Northgate, Darlington.	

	<p>JDR expressed disappointment that Niccy Hallifax hasn't come to the meeting and that we've not been involved more and we've been sidelined. Niccy has promised that she will attend a future meeting.</p> <p>Cllr. Jim Atkinson asked how many were invited to the launch of September, 19th. 5 were invited. PB has said we are not now allowed to publicise anything until March.</p> <p>JHY expressed disappointment that we are meant to be partners and that she feels that we have been misled and have been treated disgracefully. Maurice Burns asked whether as we have representation on the board whether Niall and Alan have had information about the festival in advance. AT confirmed that they do not get full information.</p> <p>JHY proposed the following communication should be sent to Niccy Hallifax.</p> <p>Peter Bainbridge and Peter Spence seconded.</p> <p>"The FSDR is very sad that it has not been involved in the planning since it began, in order that the FSDR could enhance what is being decided, help to fill the gaps and as a partner, all the Trustees, at least, should have been invited to the meeting on 19th September, especially as the Friends has been leading on the research of the S&DR".</p> <p>Motion passed.</p> <p>JAR to prepare the message with JHY.</p> <p>RC offered a correction to the report. The interpretation boards will be in place along the line, but signage and waymarking will not be in place as the route won't be finalised. Durham County Council have done most of the work to finalise their sections. In the Stockton area there won't be any routes in place. BT organised a meeting and Stockton officers refused to attend. Chris Slaughter was present but hasn't got funds to implement his proposals. Darlington haven't got funds to implement most of their section either.</p> <p>Peter Spence asked when the Fringe festival meetings were due to take place.</p> <p>JAR to email Niall about whether there are any further Shildon & Stockton meetings planned as per his report or whether these are the ones that have taken place.</p>	
6	<p><u>S&DR Executive Meeting</u></p> <p>Each attendee to the presentation on the 19th will now get a copy of "The Railway that got the World on Track."</p> <p>AT has asked for information about the passengers on the train and participants at the next stage of drafting.</p>	

	<p>Questions have been raised about crowd control. There is a committee in place dealing with this</p> <p>Kynren will host the public launch event on Saturday March 29th 2025. It will be ticketed and will take up to 8,000 people.</p>	
7	<p>Report, recent applications including to NLHF for long term future of the Friends. Report Attached</p> <hr/> <p>Over the Summer Niall Hammond and Jonathan Ratcliffe have worked with Tricolor Consulting to develop a £250,000 NLHF bid. The aim of this bid is to support the Friends to develop into a body able to take on the legacy of S&DR200. It includes funding for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a conservation management plan for the S&DR • Employment of a full-time worker to develop a long-term business plan for the Friends and support the trustees to develop the organisation. • Increase in the hours of the Secretary to 3 days per week. • Development of a fundraising strategy to ensure that the friends are financially sustainable for the long-term. • Plot the surviving S&DR structures and features on a GIS mapping system to aid monitoring and maintenance of the line. <p>The bid was submitted at the end of July, and we will expect to hear the outcome in the next 3-5 weeks.</p>	
8	<p>Planning Officer Report</p> <hr/> <p>Report Attached</p> <p>Craggwood Caravan Park extension has been given permission. We had initially put in an objection but have worked with the site owner to develop an amended plan. The Haggerleaves branch will be on the walking program in 2025.</p> <p>BT highlighted the article printed in the Northern Echo that misrepresents our position. RC said that we had communication from the BBC as a result and that he had given them our actual position.</p>	

	<p>The owner of the scrap yard at Shildon has stopped engaging with BIG. JDR said that BIG are not keen to get into the middle of an issue between the owner and DCC and will not try and intervene.</p> <p>Land to west and south of station road at MSG. Photo opportunity will be taking place between developers and FSDR to present a cheque for £10,000, dates have been offered by the Friends and we're waiting for a response. Fighting Cocks group members are encouraged to attend.</p> <p>RC to chase the developers.</p> <p>Report for Darlington conservation area appraisal is available online and RC considers it to be excellent.</p> <p>The report will be available at DBC website, democracy, committee meetings, and on the cabinet, agenda. Darlington Library will also have a copy. We will be notified next week about the report and then it will be circulated for the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting recorded their thanks to RC.</p>	
9	<p>Questions on Circulated Officers Reports</p> <p>(Reports attached)</p> <p>PB has sent emails to members to remind members of upcoming renewal and has emailed new MPs with membership information.</p>	
10	<p><u>Reports from S&DR Area Groups</u></p> <p>DIG, report has been circulated. Skerne Bridge has been a major concern for DIG due to plants growing in the mortar joints. Network Rail have done some work but has not resolved the issue. Issue of Skerne Bridge to be added to trustees meeting agenda.</p> <p>The Chair drew attention to the report's section on GUIDED WALKS: 3 OF THE TRUSTEES . Jane, John and Peter had decided their FSDR Walks would be every Wednesday between March and September 2025 and this could be included in the Fringe programme. Walks would be about 5 miles, numbers limited to 20. Hopefully Darlington walks will be included in this programme. He hoped this be firmed up, along with other aspects of the walks for the major training day at Locomotion on October 14th. NHa was stressing that everyone possibly interested in leading walks should attend the day.</p>	

	<p>JHY asked when walk booklet 1 would be renewed. It's awaiting funding and the confirmation of the route from Chris Slaughter. The trustees have agreed to do walk booklet 5 first.</p> <p>BIG Mary Smith is holding a garden party on the 15th, RSVP to John for catering. Tom Walker is demonstrating the 1836 model on the 27th at Toft Hill community centre.</p> <p>WASH John circulated the design for the Gaunless bridge which will be installed in March.</p> <p>BIG, It is now possible to walk the cycling and walking route from Brusselton all the way to Newton Aycliffe. There will be a cleanup day on the 6th September. Shildon Town Council are tidying up the area in time for the 27th.</p> <p>BIG have requested that the residents of Brusselton are involved with the consultation over the placement of the stone blocks. BIG will not attend unless the residents are involved.</p> <p>Heighington Tidy up of the goods yard will take place on 21st at 10:15pm JAR to circulate. Drop kerb has been installed on walking and cycling route after feedback from the group.</p> <p>27th September Aycliffe Business Park have invited Margaret Fenwick to attend the business group meeting at GLO church. Needs to be registered by the 20th. MF to send JAR information to email to Niall.</p>	
11	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>Gerry Wilkinson raised that 2025 is also the anniversary of the previous anniversary events. Gerry recommended that the Friends recognise the importance of the previous anniversary celebrations.</p> <p>Kirkby Stephen East have rebuilt their signal cabin and they're going to have an exhibition on the 15th.</p> <p>GA raised the issue of installation of defibrillators along the walk. Trustees to look into this.</p>	
12	<p><u>Date & Time of next meeting.</u></p> <hr/> <p>7pm Thursday 3rd October 2024, Darlington Cricket club</p>	