



Minutes of Meeting held Thursday, 7th March

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

7.00 pm

Members Present:

Niall Hammond (NHa, Chair), Caroline Hardie (CH, Webmaster & Globe Editor) Alan Townsend (AT Vice Chair), John Raw (JDR Trustee), Peter Bainbridge (PB, Membership Secretary) Ross Chisholm (RC Planning Officer), George Alderslade (GA Trustee), Norman Hugill (NHu, Trustee) Barry Thompson (BT Trustee), Jonathan Ratcliffe (JAR, Secretary), Ian Ross (Treasurer), Bob Butcher, Paul Boden, Jane Hackworth Young (JHY), Steve Sidgewick, Neil Parker, David Waite, Alan Hudson, David Thirlwell, Gillian Bryant, Keith Halifax, Dave Middlemas, Leigh Taylor (LT), Tim Taylor (TT), Mary Smith (MS), Peter Cooper, Fiona Cooper, Alan MacNab, Angela Pickering, Dave Pennington, Anne Taylor (AT), Maurice Burns, Margaret Fenwick (MF), David Thompson, Owen Richards, David Thirlwell, Catherine Yates, Jeremy Horner, Alastair Culff, Peter Soulsby

(Note: Actions highlighted in Red)

1	<u>Welcomes & Apologies for absence.</u> Apologies Matthew Pease (President), Chris Lloyd (Vice President) George Morton, Rose Drew, John Fletcher, Malcolm Dunstone, Sue Fleury, Richard Barber, Trevor Horner, Paul Harle, Jim Atkinson The meeting sent their best wishes for his speedy recovery. Welcomes The meeting welcomed Anne Taylor from Kirkby Stephen East, <i>the West Side Story</i>, who introduced her project to look at women working in and around the railway.	Responsibility
2	<u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u> Clarify that Cllr. Scott Durham is at Darlington Borough Council	
3	<u>Matters Arising</u> Tricolor Ass. Startup meeting taking place on Monday 11th March. BIG Facebook page is having an issue with inappropriate posts. All members to be aware to report inappropriate posts to Admin. John Raw raised concerns that the action to get Niccy to a meeting has been delayed. Niccy to be invited to a meeting in either May or June,	ALL BIG members NHa/AT/JAR

4	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> None declared	
5	<u>Chair's Report</u> NH updated that the Heighington Station launched a week early. £5,475 has been raised to date and has attracted a huge amount of support in terms of fundraising suggestions and offers of help in kind.	
6	<u>Heighington Station Campaign Update</u> NHa, CH & JAR have developed campaign page and petition. JAR to circulate petition. Campaign launched early, we've had enquiries from local, national and international press. Disused Stations webpage has been very supportive, people have given us old photographs to use as part of the campaign. People have shared memories of the station both as a station building and as a pub. NHa spoke at the Aycliffe Business Park Business Breakfast which has raised interest from companies who are passing the project up to their headquarters.	JAR
7	<u>Rail Heritage Board February Update</u> AT has been deputising for NHa at the board for the last 2 meetings. RHB is working on communications and events. Jill Read is proving very efficient and thorough AT has asked for Jill to present to a future meeting. Jill Read is planning a wide ranging media plan encompassing websites, social media, print and events in the plan. AT is confident in the plan presented. RHB is looking at nomenclature. Richie Starrs stated that the train will be ready for testing in April/May 24. Reuben Kench has had positive contact with the committee of the South Tees anniversary preparing for the 200 th anniversary of port Darlington. Good progress is being made on the walking and cycling route including the confirmation of the forest Park to North Road Station section. Train will likely be tested on the Weardale Railway. RC updated that there's no route set between Skerne Bridge and Haughton Road and sections around	

	Teesside Airport and through Stockton is still up in the air. NHa added that the route is not ideal at the east end of the line and that the Friends will continue pushing for a reasonable usable route that doesn't deviate from the line too much. RC remains concerned with the delivery from North Road eastwards. LT asked what the situation would be with the boards in the Darlington and Stockton end and whether there would be deviating. The interpretation boards are fewer in number in that area and are by major sites. NHu has attended the Heritage Railway Association meeting. It was noted that the Northeast was "doing their own thing". Niccy Hallifax and Reuben Kench are meant to be integrating with the RHA and organising with Steve Davies NHa to follow up with Steve Davies to get confirmation that the plans are being integrated. MB asked if the safety and crowd control aspects have been looked at. AT updated that the planning has begun. Alan MacNab asked about accommodation for 2025 festival. AT mentions it frequently but the RHB feel it's a matter for the hotels to deal with. The meeting was concerned that this aspect of the festival has been under planned and it's getting close to being too late to begin preparations. LT pointed out that the main issue seems to be that the marketing has been too late and there's no product to promote. MB asked about whether there would be advance tickets available for those travelling long distance. NHa says that it's been raised by us for several years. AT noted that it is being worked on. NHa encouraged members to put these questions to Niccy Hallifax at her next attendance of a Friends meeting. Questions can be sent in advance by emailing the secretary at secretary@sdr1825.org.uk. RC suggested that the idea of temporary campsites be put to the committee. BT pointed out that there are ECML closures through Autumn 2025 for works for Darlington Station. This could have an impact on tourists coming in for the festival.	NHa All NHa/AT
8	Planning Officer's Report RC highlighted that the planning permission has been granted for the extension of the Garden of the former methodist chapel at Phoenix Row with the condition that there's an interpretation panel. RC asked who would be	

	advising on the panel and will it need to match the Brightwhite panels. JDR has spoken to the owners, they're not happy with this condition. The Friends will maintain a neutral attitude on this matter. JDR will mention our small grants scheme to the owner to help pay for the plaque if necessary. Extension to the SG Petch garage affecting the setting of the line. RC will raise the issue of why no form of screening was included in the planning conditions with planning to soften the impact. AMacNab suggested that RC mentions the Biodiversity policy in this communication. Layfield House; Tees Archaeology have commented that the recent groundworks have destroyed any opportunity for investigation. BT pointed out that the Friends raised this before the works were carried out but this wasn't taken into consideration. The Friends are concerned about the continued alterations to this grade 2 star building. Middlesbrough Local Plan: Important that the historic assets S&DR are preserved and that the policies closely align with DCC, CBC & SBC. Triangle of land near road hasn't been developed and the Friends have commented that this should be preserved. If the lines are removed that the corridor be preserved and the rails in the road are preserved. RC will ask why an S&DR policy isn't being included and if it doesn't ask for clarification about how the line will be preserved. JHY asked if RC will include the Hackworth designed staithes and the Globe. This is included in the HEA. CH pointed out that the unusual thing we're asking for is for the preservation of a site that has already been cleared. Conservation Area Report Northgate report. We've received apologies from Gabby Rose, conservation officer that there will be no consultation until after June. RC to write to ask for a timetable. Gabby Rose to be invited to a future meeting. Friends will keep Gabby Rose updated on the activities at Fighting Cocks. RC will mention the work that Seth Pickles undertook previously on the line to fighting cocks. David Hands will be approached regarding the diminishing rural gap between Newton Aycliffe and Darlington and to propose a conservation area. County Durham, no update. NHa has meeting with head of assets on the 16th March so will raise issues regarding communication.	JDR RC RC NHa/JAR RC RC NHa
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9	Questions on Circulated Officer's Reports Reports attached S&DR music project is ready to go and we're hoping to confirm funding shortly.	
10	Reports from FSDR area groups SIG raised concerns about the lack of assets and the lack of imagination in doing something. NGP who are the property arm of JT Atkinsons own the site under their property arm and are interested in the heritage of the site and were involved in placing the rails at the site. BT asked if he could have the go ahead to set up a meeting with Atkinsons to discuss what we could do as well as involve Lakota training. Cait Barratt hasn't acknowledged emails from Lakota training when they've approached for funding. It feels a disgrace that there is no suitable marker. Suggestion was made to approach Nigel Cook as cabinet member. BT to arrange meeting and invite SBC as a courtesy. Yarm. BT has had a meeting with Peter Monk regarding the wrong facts in the interpretation. They're going to try and adjust the plaques where possible. MSG There is a lot of interest and ideas at MSG and there's a group been formed to take these forward. Friday 26th April is the day for the event to unveil the mural and more info will be Darlington Dates for diaries: • 14th March – Next litter and path clearance day, meet at carpark in shopping centre off John Street • 16th March – Repairing damaged wall of Haughton Road meeting • 28th March Meeting at railway tavern Darlington. 7pm WASH, EIG, Pub sign at the Locomotion No. 1 has been purchased for £125, to secure it. MF asked if the Friends would support the purchase. There is an issue that the building is being pilfered. MF to put forward proposal in writing to the Trustees Heighington event is going ahead on Saturday, MF requested if anyone had any contributions to contact her.	BT MF
11	Opportunities for Member Participation in 2025 events Nothing was discussed	
12	AOB An artist/writer has approached the Friends for information for his rail 200 book and has offered to do a free drawing of the station to help the campaign	

	LT asked if we were going to do any official merchandise for the anniversary. To be added to the agenda for a future meeting. Pen manufacturer has offered to make pens from salvaged wood from the restoration of the building to donate for fundraising.	JAR
13	<u>Date & Time of next meeting.</u> 7pm Thursday 4th April 2024 Darlington Cricket club	