

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Irish Railway Record Society, Saturday 7th October 2023

Dr Joan Smyth chaired the meeting and 31 members were present.

The meeting stood as a mark of respect to members deceased during the year.

Apologies

M.Bailey, M.Darragh, M.Devlin, R.Downey, J.J.Friel, R.Harris, C.Holliday, D.Mackie, F.McDonnell, G.Mooney, R.Morton, D.O'Hara, C.Playfair, T.Tynan, K.Walker, M.Walker, J.Williams.

Minutes of the AGM on 24th September 2022

The minutes, previously circulated, were adopted on the proposal of J.Clinton, seconded by W.Riddall.

Chairman's Report

P.Rigney said he was pleased to take over as Chairman during 2022, and he paid tribute to his predecessor, John McKegey who, he said, had steered the Society through difficult times. During the year the southern operations had commenced with the annual safety forum in January. In Whitehead, he welcomed new staff - Graham Nortje (Financial Administration) and James Friel (Engineer).

The report was adopted on the proposal of J.Clinton, seconded by J.McKeown.

Secretary's Report

The report, previously circulated, was adopted on the proposal of W.Garrioch, seconded by J.Clinton.

Treasurer's Report

M.Hoey asked about the exceptional item in the accounts in regard to a HEI loss. R.Rigney replied that HEI had ceased trading as an independent company in 2023 and there were a number of items which have not been closed off and should be clarified in the 2023 accounts. M.Hoey also asked about the low income for the Whitehead Railway Museum and was told by the President that 2022 had seen high expenses and low visitor numbers, especially for group bookings, but 2023 was looking better.

D.Humphries queried the lack of clarity in the accounts in regard to what expenditure items actually cover, e.g. General Office, Premises. P.Rigney said the layout of the accounts is dictated by company and charity law, but if specific questions were submitted following the meeting they could be answered, where appropriate, in the News-Letter. D.Humphries expressed concern about the financial performance and suggested they were heading on a collision course.

P.Hoare said he was not aware the Society was paying staff; he was informed of the position during 2022.

J.Smyth said the café had dramatically reduced costs since 2022.

J.Richardson said that complex accounts can be hard for the lay person to understand. P.Rigney said that commercial and staffing sensitivity needs to be taken into account when publishing financial data.

The report, previously circulated, was adopted by a majority on the proposal of W.Riddall, seconded by J.Clinton.

Appointment Of Auditors

Finegan Gibson were appointed on the proposal of M.Hoey, seconded by J.McKeown.

Reports Of Operations Officers

J.McKeown paid tribute to all the volunteers who helped make the Dublin operations a success, including members from the north who had helped crew a number of trains. He especially thanked the sales team for a great performance.

P.Hoare asked about the return of cross-border operations. P.Rigney said, in regard to northern operations, the situation was under negotiation with a view to Society becoming a Railway Undertaking in NI. There are no plans to get Cravens certified north of border - any such plan would require a business case. So things are fluid at present, but he will report back when things progress.

P.Rigney paid tribute to M.Darragh, who was standing down from the Board, for his sterling work on northern operations over the years.

The reports, previously circulated, were adopted on the proposal of W.Garrioch, seconded by J.Clinton.

Reports Of Locomotive And Carriage Officers

P.Scott gave a summary of the current locomotive situation. He noted that the price of materials, outside contracting, etc., had risen astronomically and the cost of overhauling locomotives was getting significantly more costly.

P.Rigney thanked the NMNI for allowing a visit of No.85 to Newry to satisfy its post-Brexit museum artefact conditions.

The reports, previously circulated, were adopted on the proposal of J.McKeown, seconded by M.Hoey.

Election Of Board and Office Bearers

P.McCann reported that nominations had been received for all posts and there were no contests.

There being no further nominations from the meeting, the following were elected to serve on the Board:

<i>Chairman:</i> Peter Rigney	<i>Directors:</i> Jonathan Clinton	Joe McKeown
<i>Treasurer:</i> Mark Bailey	Martin Devlin	Jim O'Neill
	Sue Harpur	Mark Parker
	Rachael Harris	Mark Walsh
	Paul McCann	
	<i>External:</i> Dermot O'Hara	

The President welcomed new directors Rachael Harris and Mark Parker. She paid tribute to P.Rigney and to all who served alongside him on the Board.

Any Other Business

The President gave an update on the position at Whitehead where it had become necessary to focus on café and platform events in order to maintain income in the light of no mainline operations. The local staff and volunteers were seeking to maximise its potential.

She said it had been an interesting year and she had strived to maintain cordial links with Translink and this was paying off.

She paid tribute to all volunteers who kept trains running, not least in Dublin where she had organised a large conference recently and was able to include a steam train trip as part of the associated events.

She closed the meeting with a call to keep going!

Signed: _____ ***Chairman*** ***Date:*** _____