

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Whitehead Excursion Station, Saturday 11th January 2014

D.Houston introduced Vice-President Dr Joan Smyth and thanked her for agreeing to chair the meeting. He noted two 'firsts' - the new venue and the first lady to chair a meeting. 79 members were present.

Dr Smyth opened the meeting by asking those present to stand in memory of those members who had died during the year past.

Apologies

Lord O'Neill, N.Owen, H.Beaumont, H.Boomer, F.McAllister, R.Edwards, J.Fitzpatrick, N.Foster, J.Gunning, J.Harcourt, C.Holliday, F.Lee, E.Lewis, G.Mooney, K.Murphy, J.O'Meara, N.O'Sullivan-Arnould, J.Richardson, I.Sinclair, D.Walsh, D.Young.

Minutes of the AGM on 25th August 2012

The minutes, previously circulated, were adopted on the proposal of B.Garrioch, seconded by H.Ritchie.

Chairman's Report

The report, previously circulated, was adopted on the proposal of J.McKeown, seconded by F.McDonnell.

Secretary's Report

The report, previously circulated, was adopted on the proposal of D.Mackie, seconded by B.Garrioch.

Treasurer's Report

R.Thompson asked could the item "Other Costs" under the Employees heading in the accounts be clarified. It was agreed that the Finance Committee would be asked to respond, to be circulated to the membership in due course.

S.Boomer asked could the Auditor's Opinion be made known. D Grimshaw read:

In respect of the limitation on our work relating to fundraising income and stock - we have not obtained all the information and explanations that we consider necessary for the purpose of our audit and we were unable to determine whether proper accounting records were maintained.

Except for the financial effects of such adjustments, if any, as might have been determined to be necessary had we been able to obtain sufficient evidence concerning fundraising income received by the Society and the cash on hand and physical stocks, in our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Society's affairs as at 31st December 2012 and of its excess of income for the year then ended.

J.Friel said the Auditor had informed the Finance Committee that this was a standard clause for voluntary bodies dealing with fundraising and donated stock.

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

Appointment Of Auditors

Guardian were re-appointed on the recommendation of N.Foster, seconded by S.Timmins.

Reports Of Operations Officers

The Belfast Area report having been previously circulated, J McKeown read the Dublin Area report.

The reports were adopted on the proposal of E.Fahey, seconded by B.Garrioch.

Reports Of Locomotive And Carriage Officers

The reports, previously circulated, were adopted on the proposal of H.Ritchie, seconded by S.Comiskey.

Election Of Board and Office Bearers

There being no contest for the post of Chairman, D.Grimshaw was duly elected in place of D.Houston. D.Grimshaw noted that promotion was slow in the RPSI; he had been Secretary nearly 50 years ago! He thanked D.Houston for all his hard work in his years as Vice-Chairman and Chairman, and wished him well in his retirement. The chain of office was then handed over.

Dr Smyth noted the vacancy for the post of Vice-Chairman and that a number of members had been approached, so far without success. She said, while not compulsory, it is nevertheless a desirable tradition that this post is filled from the other side of the border to the Chairman. She asked the membership in the Republic's jurisdiction to look for a suitable candidate.

Dr Joan Smyth also made reference to the vacant post of Treasurer which was a crucial position that outside bodies, such as the Charity Commission and various potential funders, would expect to be filled. The membership should take responsibility for the good governance of their society and look among themselves to have the post filled.

P.McCann explained that an election was required as there were 11 director posts and 14 candidates nominated, 8 incumbents and 6 new nominees. He asked the newcomers E.Fahey, B.Garrioch, N.Kelly, P.Newell and M.Walsh to introduce themselves to the members present. He read a submission from K.Murphy in his absence. J. Beaumont and R.Thompson were appointed as tellers and a paper ballot was held.

While the votes were being counted R.Morton presented the latest plans for the Society's 50th Anniversary activities.

The election results showed a tie between B.Garrioch and N.Kelly. On the advice of C.McAteer and with the candidates' agreement their names were put in a hat and B.Garrioch was drawn out by D.Grimshaw.

There being no further election, the following were elected to serve on the Board:

<i>Chairman:</i>	Denis Grimshaw	<i>Directors:</i>	Mervyn Darragh	Phillip Newell
<i>Vice-Chairman:</i>			Bill Garrioch	Tony O'Shaughnessy
<i>Secretary:</i>	Paul McCann		Mark Healy	Francis Richards
<i>Treasurer:</i>			Dermot Mackie	Peter Scott
			Fergus McDonnell	Mark Walsh
			Joe McKeown	

Any Other Business

F.McDonnell recorded his thanks to J.Richardson for his fundraising work in Dublin, with €25,000 raised over two years for the No.171 Appeal.

J.Friel said all volunteers should be thanked for their contributions in various forms.

B.Garrioch paid tribute to D.Houston for his excellent chairmanship.

J.Lockett thanked H.Ritchie who was stepping down as Whitehead Train Manager after a long period in the job.

S.Comiskey said that the work done by T.O'Shaughnessy in recruiting and welcoming young members in Dublin should be recorded.

B.Hall said he would like to thank all the volunteers at Whitehead who had been so welcoming to him and his teenage grandson as new recruits.

M.Halliday noted that the perception was that there were more young volunteers in Dublin than in Whitehead. He wondered why! He also asked that consideration be given to shorter steam trips at lower prices.

B.Hill asked for an update on grants and the developments at Whitehead. D.Grimshaw replied that the Whitehead 2020 Committee had arisen out of a need to transform the Society for the 21st Century, to improve working

conditions for working members and employees, and to allow the RPSI's work to be made accessible to the general public, with an emphasis on informing and educating. The cost of the proposals comes to around £4.5m, which needs to be funded. The current situation is that HLF have agreed £1.64m and GROW £1.2m; discussions have been ongoing with a third funder for about two years for the remainder. Hopefully, the latter is coming to a conclusion. GROW have also funded a number of separate smaller projects totalling £1m, some of which are complete - station, ashpit, shed apron - and some of which have just started, or are about to start - No.131, No.171, car park, carriage shed extension. If and when the final funding is in place then the main development project can commence.

P.Scott noted that two major locomotive projects were being funded, the amazing rapidity of the funding having stunned everybody involved. The No.131 project had been tendered for and won by HEI, the wholly-owned engineering subsidiary for the RPSI. The deadline for overhaul is October 2014. The work is funded by a GROW grant and partly by the Society, a major part of the latter being volunteer work in kind. Hence there is an increased need for as many volunteers to attend as often as they can.

D.Grimshaw reported on the second locomotive contract, i.e. No.171. With the No.131 contract secured by HEI, that company were not in a position to take on a second, also with a deadline of late 2014. It was a condition of the grant from GROW that the contract be advertised. Surprisingly, a bid - the only one - was received from Great Britain, from Rail Restorations North East Ltd in Shildon, Co. Durham. There were reservations among some working members but the Board view was that with an offer of funding, which couldn't be transferred to another project, the RPSI could not be seen to turn down major funding and yet continue an appeal to members for money for the same locomotive. Also, it was considered that current and future funders would not look kindly on the Society as a result, plus the ministerial departments to which some of the funders are responsible. The Board let this contract to RRNEL in January 2014. It is a possibility that some work on wheel machining may be sub-contracted back to HEI. The work will be funded by GROW and the No.171 Appeal raised by members' donations and sales, currently estimated to be £50,000.

B.Hill said that with so many locomotives expected to be in traffic in a year or so the Society will be unable to cope in ten years when they come out of traffic. D.Grimshaw agreed that the timing was not the best but with two locomotives being overhauled at minimal cost it should be possible to schedule some future overhauls in advance of the required 10 years to avoid this situation.

B.Hill said that a glaring omission was funding for carriages. D.Grimshaw agreed and that funding had been sought but funders were only prepared to fund locomotives at this time.

J.Turner asked if there was any progress on a base for Dublin. R.Guinness replied that a Dublin 2020 had been set up, with its first task to be the identification, securing and funding of a suitable location in the greater Dublin area to use as a base for storing locomotives and carriages. Facilities for running maintenance and perhaps light overhaul would be the immediate requirement. A potential site in the North Wall had been visited and the indications are that Iarnród Éireann are not averse to preliminary discussions - a meeting is to be arranged in the near future. T.O'Shaughnessy said the site had five sidings with run-round facilities. It would be feasible to erect a shed over two of these roads to provide covered accommodation. He said it was still early in the process and the mistake would not be repeated of dropping further investigations into other sites while discussions on this one took place. He reminded everybody that the recent announcement of a proposed move to the valeting plant at Heuston Station was for accommodation for the heritage set only and was not the solution to the hunt for a Dublin base.

E.Fahey asked about the diesels stored in Dublin. M.Healy replied that access to work on the locomotives in Inchicore has been denied. No pressure was put on the authorities there while the negotiations were ongoing for a lease of Connolly locomotive shed. As that has now fallen through moves are being made to gain access at Inchicore. Changes will be required to the Safety Management System documentation for this to happen and then training will be involved to bring working members up to the required competency.

That being all the business, Dr Smyth thanked all who had taken the trouble to travel to the meeting. She gave special thanks to those who organised the meeting and to those who prepared reports. She wished the new Chairman and the Board a very successful 50th Anniversary year.

Signed: _____ *Chairman* *Date:* _____