



SRC BOARD BRIEFING

March 2017 (Supplemental)

At a Board Meeting on Saturday 25th March 2017 the following items were discussed and action decided upon. The SRC Board considers that information on these items should be shared with Shareholders, Volunteers, Employees and SRA Members.

Finance & Related Matters

The Finance Director is in receipt of formal written notification from EY who have submitted their resignation as Auditors. Given previous information conveyed through this communications channel, read into this what you may. Gareth Jones will be handing over to Chris Beaton as he takes on our CA work. The Board extend thanks Gareth for his work in recent years.

Finances remain somewhat overstretched and cash income weak and this should strengthen in coming months, although the market has been fickle of late with all the potential political upheaval impacting. Things could go either way. So we remain cautious in our approach.

There are considerable pre-season outlays necessary particularly with the new Catering Service starting. Many people are putting in hours of additional work, notably behind the scenes.

AGM (Reconvened)

The reconvened 2016 AGM shall take place at the Cairngorm Hotel on Saturday the 15th April at 12 noon. Paperwork has been distributed to Shareholders. An updated Financial report will be made on the day.

Catering

Staff have been recruited for the new Catering Service with many long hours of planning being put in by Ken Donaldson and Gill Kelly. Pilot trains were run offering both Luncheon and Afternoon Tea to guests ahead of the first public train on Mother's Day. As always with a new venture there will be a settling in period and not all who started on the journey will see it through to the final destination. On-board Catering has a knack and speciality to it. Bill McCarthy, Ray Courtney, Neil Ellison & Paul Blount are thanked for getting equipment on board operating to meet the needs of the catering crew.

It is imperative not to overlook the extensive drainage work undertaken by Mike Tough aided by Jim Clark, Colin Frost with the "Ellon Squad" and Georgie McNair all of which took place in a small 3 week window of opportunity between mid-February and mid-March. This work followed on from Graham Sutherland's and Ken Donaldson's sourcing and transporting of a twin off-shore toilet module from Aberdeen (via Elgin). Now that was team work.

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Health & Safety and Related Matters

There have been a number of incidents and the Board have spent considerable time discussing these. One serious matter has been reported to the ORR and internal investigations will require to be carried to completion. To say the least, this is embarrassing and not welcomed.

All are asked to take care when working, adorn the correct PPE, not to rush or work tired and if things cannot be done safely then they should not be done at all. The Board will take a hard line on people who cross this line. It has to. It's the Law.

There have been words over inappropriate posting of material on Social Media from the workplace. The Board have pointed out that it is not the norm for any industrial or commercial environment to be casually recorded and "posted" on-line.

Worryingly, we have had reports of footplate crew "filming" whilst on duty. This was made known to the board from an English Heritage Railway where this type of activity results in automatic suspension. This "hero culture" has to stop. No member of the Board is prepared to underwrite such irresponsible behaviour.

There are ways of doing these things properly when some basic formalities are adopted and review and due diligence are exercised before publication.

There are plans to reform the Engineering Committee to help professionalise matters in the Shed and in conversation with Paul Blount, we understand that Alan French may take on this role.

On the Aviemore site tidy up, although some progress has been made, there is still some way to go; but it's a case of a little and often. A revised plan will be forthcoming.

Staffing

It is with regret that we accept Billy Picken's resignation however at this stage of a young person's career, moves are advantageous. We recognise that. So too his contribution, particularly in the last year picking up Marketing and related retail work in the shop, selecting and purchasing the required stock. Billy's most notable recent achievement was the complete compilation and preparation of the timetable leaflet using in-house resources working with Graham Sutherland, Andy Mackinnon, Laurence Grant, Bob Anderson, Maureen Cuthbertson and Gill Kelly. The Board wish Billy well in his future career and acknowledge another best example of team working.

Gill is due to leave us in early May as she finally emigrates to Madeira having selected a suitable property there. In appreciating the energy and passion she has shown in her time with us, not much of it easy, we will all miss her as she heads to her new life in the sun.

Georgie will be taking time out for a while and has been in conversation with the Board as regards cover whilst away. A statement of the obvious, however, may we ask that particular care is taken with Switch & Crossovers (pointwork) and respect signals, both fixed and manual, in order to avoid damage and the resultant remedial work both in sidings as well as the main line.

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Marketing & Website

Graham Sutherland will provide a report on Marketing after we consult with Billy as he prepares to move to his new job. He is keen to remain a volunteer and we have the technology and will to make many things possible.

External Matters

Douglas Norris and Mike Tough have concluded the first part of the Agreement in Principle for the Tom Nan Clach Wind Farm Power Cable Wayleave. This has been a lot of work for Mike, particularly as Douglas was abroad latterly (For more information about the project, refer to <http://www.tomnanclachwindfarm.co.uk/tom-nan-clach.aspx>).

Mike Tough, Colin Stirling & Andrew Fairley met on site with representatives from CTiL, Telefonica (O2), Vodafone and Galliford Try to agree best location and ascertain mast structure and "civils" to meet both the "4G" telecommunication aspirations of the networks and least intrusive impact on the Strathspey Railway. This is a Government backed initiative to improve rural communications through collaboration rather than competition of Network Operators.

A design is in preparation and we await details so that a full assessment can be made and we shall engage legal advice to ascertain a realistic income from accommodating these dual telecommunication facilities on our property. The SR shall not be providing power.

One consequence at Boat of Garten is that the Caravans will require to be removed completely as that space is required to accommodate the power and infrastructure equipment cabinets and provide clear access for maintenance in accordance with the agreed lease requirements. The Board will be in touch with owners to advise of the need to vacate the area and tidy up. Provisionally we are stating that this is required by the end of June.

*By order of the Board
Strathspey Railway Company
31st March 2017*