

Minutes of St Neots Model Railway Club
Annual General Meeting

Held at Buckden Village Hall on Wednesday 31st August 2022

| Item | Details | Action |
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| 1 | <p>Apologies 21 members attended. Chris Dales, Peter Siddall, Paul Bason, Alan Britcher, Brian Whittaker and Andy Pilditch sent apologies.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Minutes of the previous AGM The minutes of the last AGM were approved, and signed as a true record.</p> | |
| 3 | <p>Matters arising that are not already on the agenda None</p> | |
| 4 | <p>Chairman's report Caroline Hoy reflected on an unusual year, but after 2-3 years of COVID it was good to be back. Whilst numbers were down, members had been busy throughout the year. We held our annual dinner at The Lion in Buckden with over 50 people attending. Jackie Kneeshaw won the Personality of the Year trophy (now re-named the Steve Page Award). Members visited Fawley Hill on the annual excursion, which they thoroughly enjoyed. It is planned to arrange another outing in 2022/23, for which Caroline invited ideas from members. There were two modelling days this year, attended by the Bowaters group and a handful of other members, plus an 'open day'. The next modelling day is on 12th November. The Club was very fortunate to acquire a new layout, East Quay, from Mick Payne, exhibition-ready and modelled to a very high standard. It has become a regular feature of club nights under the stewardship of Chris Langdon. Finally, as we move into the new club year, we look forward to our first exhibition since 2019, to be held at the Priory Centre, St Neots – a 'local exhibition for local people'. All members will need to be involved.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">All</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All</p> |
| 5 | <p>Secretary's report Will Heath explained that the last year had been one of learning the job, which seemed to boil down to 4 things – dealing with membership, recording committee meetings (and the AGM), booking modelling days, and monitoring attendance (particularly during COVID restrictions). And, of course, keeping up supplies of milk and biscuits! Taking each of these in turn, <u>membership</u>: we have been fortunate in welcoming 5 new members, and finish the year with 40 in total (33 adult, 1 junior and 6 associate) <u>Committee meetings</u> - the committee met 5 times in the year, in October, January, April, June and July. A record of these</p> | |

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| | <p>meetings is available in a ring binder in the cupboard at the back of the stage.</p> <p><u>Modelling days</u> - there were two, and an ‘open day’. Each modelling day cost just under £100. These allow 8 hours to do jobs that need more time than is possible on club nights.</p> <p><u>Club night attendance</u> - this is not formally logged now like it was during COVID restrictions, when we numbered between 12 and 17. Since then, weekly numbers have remained at a similar level.</p> <p><u>Refreshments</u> - milk cost the club £45 for the year (a pint a week). Biscuits are down on previous years at just £25, suggesting fewer members at club nights (or healthier eating!)</p> <p>Will finished by thanking Jackie Kneeshaw for resuming her role as editor of the club newsletter, which he inherited when he took on the secretary role. This was a great weight off of his shoulders (especially when it was weekly) and made him appreciate the amount of time and effort that goes in to producing it. He was asked if the committee meeting minutes could be emailed to all members, and Will agreed to do this.</p> | WH |
| 6 | <p>(a) Treasurer’s report</p> <p>Chris Langdon distributed an Income and Expenditure summary sheet, which showed income of £2,159.88 and expenditure of £3,080.88, giving a deficit on the year of £921. This was described as “within acceptable limits”, and would be covered from the healthy £15,447 capital reserve. However, with ‘full’ membership falling from 36 to 33, the additional costs of storage and a likely rent increase in 2023, this position is not sustainable long term.</p> <p>(b) Subscription Rates 2022/23</p> <p>Chris explained that, after considerable debate, the committee is proposing that we do <u>not</u> increase subscription rates for the coming year. As a club we need to attract new members and do not want the subscription cost to hinder this. However, with the current cost-of-living rises, the rate will need to increase in the future. Income from the forthcoming exhibition is covered under item 7.</p> <p>Questions were raised on the impact of rising energy costs on the likely rent increase next April, and the rate at which subscriptions should go up (small steps rather than a large ‘hike’). The committee agreed to consider these points. It was asked that opening and closing balances be added to future financial summaries.</p> <p>Chris concluded that the club is in a positive position, and reminded members that subscriptions are due by the end of September. These can be paid by cash or a BACS transfer to the club’s new on-line NatWest account, but <u>no cheques please</u>. [The summary sheet of income and expenditure is appended]</p> | <p>Committee</p> <p>CL</p> <p>All</p> |
| 7 | <p>Acting Exhibition Manager’s report</p> <p>Jackie Kneeshaw started by thanking Charlotte Saunderson for all her hard work during her time as Exhibition Manager. Much</p> | |

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| | <p>of what is reported below is based on her efforts.</p> <p>Currently 10 layouts, 2 demonstrators and 7 traders are confirmed, with 2 traders pending. This gives a potential income from traders of £468. Layout costs are £259.50. With posters/flyers costing £58.37, and lunch packs for exhibitors at £3.11 each, we expect a surplus of £509 <u>before</u> revenue from admissions charges (this does include the grant negotiated from St Neots town council).</p> <p>Advertising for the exhibition will be largely through social media. Jackie presented a very neat 2-fold A6 exhibition guide which will be produced and distributed on the day.</p> <p>Planning is already underway for the 2023 exhibition. The Priory Centre, St Neots is booked for Saturday 14th October, and 4 layouts are confirmed, 1 pending.</p> <p>Jackie was asked about parking, which is explained on the flyer, and refreshments. The Priory Centre café will be open, and a tea urn for staff.</p> <p>[Tables of layouts, traders and demonstrators, and a plan of the hall are appended]</p> | |
| 8 | <p>Election of Officers</p> <p>The following people were re-elected unopposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chairman - Caroline Hoy b. Vice Chairman - Thomas Hoy c. Treasurer - Chris Langdon d. Secretary - Will Heath e. Member representative - John Kneeshaw f. Member representative - Harold Thompson <p>Jackie Kneeshaw was elected unopposed as Exhibition Manager for a term of two years.</p> | |
| 9 | <p>Club Layout Reports</p> <p>a) <u>Burbury End</u></p> <p>Bill Springbett reported that Burbury End has been a work in progress since May 2019, but it is only since the end of lockdown that the team has been able to do very much (currently Andy Pilditch, Colin Stimpson, Ian Cody, Keith Titmuss and Bill).</p> <p>The layout is 00 with a branch terminus and goods yard. There are two scenic boards and a fiddle yard. The team are at a point where they are happy with the track plan. The next stages are checking that all of the point motors operate correctly, and then they will wire the layout, firstly for analogue control and then for DCC operation.</p> <p>Bill thanked those club members who had offered help with the wiring.</p> <p>The budget is £800 and so far, they have spent £338.90. They are happy that they will stay within the budget.</p> <p>b) <u>Bowaters Paper Railway</u></p> <p>Will Heath explained that the focus this year had been on buildings, of which there are 7 in all. Five are complete except for fine detailing (gutters, downpipes, etc.). The track is</p> | |

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| | <p>ballasted, and the open-style baseboard with its high and low ground contours is almost finished. A mound at the front has been built, and will be landscaped with bushes and shrubbery. The first two brass kit-built locos are almost finished and have already had running trials, and examples of the 3-D printed stock has been produced, fitted with high spec wheels and custom couplings.</p> <p>Expenditure this year has been mainly on modelling materials (£300) and a set of padded shoulder bags for the transportation and storage of fascia panels and backscene (£160).</p> <p>Next steps are to complete the landscaping, and then to ‘weather’ the whole layout to give it a dirty, industrial feel and visually tie all the buildings together.</p> <p>Finally, Will described the relationship that has developed between the project team and (a) the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway (S&KLR), which is the heritage line created from part of the Bowaters Paper Mill railway, and (b) DS Smith, the current owners of the Mill at Kemsley. The team has made three visits to the S&KLR and plans a visit in September to DS Smith for a factory tour and time in their archive.</p> <p>c) <u>Test Track</u></p> <p>The baseboard has been re-painted and re-numbered to make it easier to assemble. It will continue to be put up every fortnight. It was asked if the connectors could be changed as the current ones are very difficult to use. This was agreed. The test track team will also look at a retaining strip on the outside edge.</p> <p>d) <u>East Quay</u></p> <p>The layout was converted to DCC at a cost of £250. There is work to do on the layout signage, which will be costed. It will be made available on club nights to provide experience of DCC control. A future project could be to extend the LH traverser. The layout is currently booked for its first show under St Neots MRC ownership at the Great Electric Train Show in Milton Keynes, and will be photographed in October for an article in Hornby magazine. Chris expressed his thanks to Jackie for the introduction to Mick Payne.</p> | <p>RP/RG</p> <p>CL</p> |
| 10 | <p>Website</p> <p>Thomas Hoy reported that the website had been refurbished and is working, now that domain issues have been resolved. There had been 6,102 visits through the year, and 32 email enquiries. Thomas suggested creating a ‘members’ page that could not be viewed by the public. This could serve as a repository for club news and communications, such as committee meeting minutes, the newsletter, and other information. The meeting approved the creation of such a page, and Thomas will set up and maintain it. He also mentioned that we have a Facebook page, and members can ask him about accessing it. Finally, Thomas made a request for website content from members.</p> <p>It was reported that Andy Burnham, editor of Continental Modeller magazine had commented that the club had “a very nice</p> | <p>TH</p> <p>All</p> |

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| | looking website”. Praise indeed. | |
| 11 | <p>Members Layouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bankfield Road – will appear at Folkestone in October 2022 • Crocklemouth – next exhibition in Oxford • Scarborough – created much interest at the recent Ely show, winning third best in show. Scarborough & District Railway Modellers, Dereham and Sudbury had expressed interest in the layout but formal invitations have yet to appear. Jackie intimated that Derham and Sudbury would likely not materialise until 2024. The layout will appear at our own exhibition next month. • Priory Lane – still going strong, and will feature at St Neots MRC exhibition in October 2022 • Kimbolton – has had an invitation to exhibit in 2023, but help is needed with electrics, scenery and sector plate storage. • Whaplode – will also be at St Neots exhibition in October, plus Bury St Edmunds and Beacon (Tadbury). | |
| 12 | <p>Member Recruitment and Retention</p> <p>John Kneeshaw expressed his concern at the way the club absorbs new members. He felt that we all need to try to be more open and welcoming, and look for projects for them to be involved in, and things for them to do. This is everybody’s responsibility. We should establish what new members want and suggest projects that new members could get involved in. One new member commented that “We’re not exactly welcoming, but you don’t push us away”. Getting involved in projects is the key.</p> <p>Jackie Kneeshaw asked that any members that do not have a red badge should contact her to get one made, in time for the club exhibition.</p> | All |
| 13 | <p>Social Events</p> <p>Jackie Kneeshaw was happy to arrange social events and excursions in the coming year, but asked for suggestions and ideas, in particular a venue for the club dinner in January/February 2023 (involving 40-50 diners). Previous proposals included a visit to the Bluebell Railway, and a canal boat trip.</p> | All |
| 14 | <p>AOB</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Calendar</u> – given that we are at the beginning of September, we will defer the calendar for next year, but consider it for 2024. We do have a wide selection of professional photos of club and members’ layouts that we could use. 2. <u>Projects</u> – There is spare under-stage storage for new club layouts. There is currently no ‘N’ gauge or ‘O’ gauge club layout. Ideas must come from members, not the committee. Will Heath offered his services to scratch | Committee |

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| | <p>build buildings for an ‘N’ gauge layout. Andrew Moore asked if Kimbolton could be ‘adopted’ as a club layout. The committee will consider it. An ‘O’ gauge layout had been mooted, but has not so far surfaced. After a show of hands suggested significant interest in the idea, Colin McCallum volunteered to pull people together to discuss it.</p> <p>3. <u>Associate members</u> – Jackie Kneeshaw expressed the view that we should continue to offer associate membership for those who cannot regularly come to club nights, and welcome them. Without it, we would lose them.</p> | <p>Committee</p> <p>CMcC</p> |
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The meeting closed at 9.34pm.