

Minutes

Rail for Herefordshire:

AGM

Feb 12 2009: All Saints Church, Broad Street Hereford

About 16 people attended and two apologies

The Minutes of the last 2008 AGM meeting were proposed, seconded and accepted

The Membership Secretary reported there were 147 paid up members. The aim is to increase membership and set up a system of direct debit.

The Secretary Report on events of the year is given below

The Treasurers report showed we had £832 income from subscriptions, £500 from one generous donation and £27 from donations from the Christmas party. The balance is now £667.05 at Lloyds TSB. The main expenditure was subscription to the newsletters (from HLF grant of previous year), the Cotswold Partnership £250 (this is a consortium of representatives from Councils and Rail Promotion Groups on the Cotswold line, not the CLPG), hire of hall, the post box and various expenses. We put for discussion next meeting if it was now worth the £250 membership, as we have set up a similar group in Herefordshire, the Quality Rail Partnership. John Fanshawe offered his work post box as a possibility for replacing the Post Office one (which is £60).

Gerald then made a presentation to David Plowman, who is retiring from the post of Treasurer. A small token of our thanks for his invaluable support over the last ten years, not just as Treasurer, but also for his knowledge of the railways

The following **officers** were voted in

Chair and Vice Chair: Gerald Dawe and Janet Shott (also Membership Secretary)

Treasure: Richard Branczic

Secretary: Becky Roseff

Committee Members: Janet Shott, Michael Sullivan, John Fanshawe and Michael Ledlie

Speaker; Andy Lawton, Talyllyn Railway

We then moved from the tables to Andy Lawton's slide show presentation on the Talyllyn Railway, in Snowdonia National Park. Andy told us this was the first community railway in England. It was opened in 1865 as a narrow gauge railway, largely to haul quarry stone, though also passengers. It was kept going by the owner Sir Haydn Jones until he died in 1950. A group of enthusiasts immediately bought it and began the long and ongoing process of making the track good, acquiring and restoring engines and wagons. Andy showed us slides of the wonderful steam engines and carriages, many dating from the mid 19th century. The group now employ 23 people and have over 100,000 passengers in a year. They also restore engines and advise, as a business. An unusual side line in Thomas the Tank Engine trips and sales also brings income, as the much loved children's train is based on Talyllyn. Last year saw a dip in visitors.

The line runs from Nant Gwernol about 12km NW of Machynlleth to Tywyn on the coast, which is on the main line station. To get there go Hereford to Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury to Machynlleth and Machynlleth to Tywyn. It takes between 3 and 3.5 hours, the return trip can be done comfortably in one day.

There are five stops on the line, at which you can get out and go walking or visit Dolgoch Falls. Between April and October the railway runs nearly every day (but check as it is closed on some Mons and Tues) and in winter on occasional days. Volunteers are always welcome. See www.talyllyn.co.uk for more information.

Secretary's Report 2008

Heritage Lottery Fund:

Two newsletters, two speakers and three posters at Hereford, Leominster and Colwall Stations for one year. The Hereford poster carried a political message about the choice between an Outer Distributor Road or twin tracking the railway line, with the money that will come from the 18,000 new houses that are due for Hereford. The Leominster and Colwall posters are still in place and give information about the place and Rail for Herefordshire. Project completed.

Preservation:

In March reacted to report that the Kinnersley part of the **Presteigne-Eardisley line** was being bulldozed by the farmer/owner. Contacted many agencies who investigated – outcome unsure.

Consultations

- **West Midlands' Transport Challenge Conference** on 10th March 2008, attended by Becky. This is where the business community are supposedly consulted on transport options for the region. Becky gave the rail response at the meeting and written afterwards, with little effect.
- Becky attended Railway Improvement Britain on Track, held by ITS United Kingdom on May 21st at the Barbican Centre. Lots of people, pointless.
- Michael Sullivan began attending **Cotswold Line Promotion Group** meetings in March for Rail for Herefordshire.
- We have attended several meetings and consultations on **ESG**, expressing our concern about the road in front of the Station. With some effect, ongoing
- We responded to the **Local Development Framework (LDF)** sending in a detailed submission.
- Gerald is FGW customer champion. He has attended about four meetings and asks questions and receives feedback on various FGW issues.

Speakers:

April talk by **Steve Banaghan** to about 45 people including Cabinet Member for Transport and Jesse Norman, from this the Quality Rail Partnership developed, we have had two meetings, the last Jan 30 2009. June a talk by **Charles Pickles** on ESG. Sept and talk by **Gary Draisey** on Rail Re-openings in Wales. From this came the Leominster-Kington proposal, no more than a website at present. In October a talk by **Christian Wolmar**, very well attended.

Developments/Successes

May bus service to the Hay Festival, partly due to our lobbying. **This will continue in 2009.**

December we had a cheese and wine party in All Saints.

Establishment of **Quality Rail Partnership**

We discussed setting a bus section of the Rail Group and decided we would confine it to a spokesperson (John Thorne).

Rob has set up a blog site on Herefordshire railways, link through from our website.

Next Meeting: March 12th; 7.30 All Saints Church, Broad Street, Hereford.

Meetings are always the second Thursday in the month, venue as above, 7.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

Dates for the year are April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, **August No Meeting**, Sept 10, Oct 8, Nov 12, Dec 10

www.RailForHerefordshire.org.uk