

Preston & District Model Railway Society

Extra Committee Meeting Monday, 4th Sep at 8:00pm

Present:

John Wilson	<i>Chairman</i>
Andy Joel	<i>Secretary</i>
John Farnden	<i>Treasurer</i>
Carl Bowden	Tom Springett
Dave Pallant	Chris Wilkes

This meeting was called in response to a new lease proposed by the landlord, which includes a 43% increase to the rent. It does not follow the standard agenda.

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. The New Lease

- A new lease was delivered by the landlord, effective from 01/Sep/23. It was delivered eight days before the lease was due to start. The contract details were read and are very standard, the only issue is that the monthly rate has risen from £378/month to £541, an increase of 43%.
- It was noted that there had been no change in rent for at least eight years, and our audited noted that the new rate is what would be expected for premises like this.
- An increase of approximately £6/month to subs would be required to allow us to continue to break even.
- It was further noted that we had previously been looking for alternative premises, and had found nothing suitable. In particular, we need a lot of space, with parking, in a reasonably central location. It is therefore a case of pay the rent or fold the club
- Should the exhibition pay a portion of the rent? The chairman took the view that it should not that the exhibition funds should be kept separate.
- Should we use the reserve funds? We have about £8000 in the current account, in part because the electricity bills were not as bad as expected.
- It was also noted that for the first time in the experience of the treasurer, all members were fully paid up. We currently have 40 members.
- DP had Googled other clubs, and of the dozen or so clubs he could find details for, we already have the highest subs. There is a real worry that people would not be able to afford higher subs, and would leave the club. This would, in turn, mean subs have to be increased further, potentially spirally down to the club folding.
- A solution was proposed to raise the subs by £2/month this year, with a further increase next year and again the year after.
- There was a discussion as to whether this should be pro-rata or across the board (i.e., junior membership, for instance, increasing by £2 or £1). The difference would be around £15 a month. It was decided that pro-rata would be fairer, and would not require a change to the society rules.
- This is subject to agreement at the AGM in a few weeks.

- There was discussion as to how much the club needs to keep in reserve, without resolution. It was noted that funds in the exhibition account would also be available.
- It was agreed that the secretary would send out an email warning members of the issue, mentioning the 43% rent increase and the proposed solution. **Action:** AKJ
- It was agreed that the new lease would be signed before the AGM and the new rent paid using existing funds. It was noted that we can leave the lease if we give three months' notice, and club funds can cover that.
- It was noted that the broken window still has to be fixed; given they want more money, we should chase them to get the most out of it.
- It was noted that encouraging new membership would help the financial situation.

Meeting finished at 9:00 pm