

Preston & District Model Railway Society

Committee Meeting Monday, 21st November 2022 at 8:00pm

Present:

John Wilson
Andy Joel
Carl Bowden
Tom Springett

Chairman
Secretary
Dave Pallant
Chris Wilkes

Apologies for absence

John Farnden

Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

- One light still to be replaced as and when time permits.
- Flooring is still outstanding; to be progressed once the treasurer returns.
- The chairman is still awaiting official confirmation from the bank that he can sign checks.
- The smoke alarm still needs to be installed. **Action:** DP
- The “N” gauge layout is progressing slowly in the work room.
- It was noted that the subs increase was accepted at the AGM. **Action:** AKJ to advise members by e-mail.
- Future use of the back room is still to be decided, but setting up the old 009 layout in there may be desirable, as we do have a potential new member interested in 009.

The Christmas quiz has been set for the 12th December. **Action:** AKJ to alert members and provide a quiz.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a good record.

Accidents recorded since the last meeting

- None.

Upcoming events

- The date for the AGM was firmly settled as 31st October. It will be held in the club rooms to reduce costs, but layouts will be left standing. **Action:** AKJ to send out email advising members and requesting rules changes, to put up sheet for committee members.

Any other business

- One new member was approved

- A report from the treasure was read out. He reported the balance at 2/Nov/22 was £7,722.87, which includes subs for the year for two members; does not include rent and insurance as these are paid on the 6th.
- An email from the new auditor, Stuart, was discussed (see appendices). He had several good ideas that are worth implementing, once the treasurer is able to do so.

Date of the next meeting

09/Jan/23 at 8 pm

Meeting finished at 9:15 pm

Appendix 1: e-Mail Communication from the Auditor to the Secretary

Dear Mr Joel,

I hope you are keeping well.

I am Stuart Gray, your Railway Club's auditor.

I spoke to John yesterday, and understand that you have a committee meeting on Monday. John was unsure if he would make it due to the unfortunate hospitalisation of his lovely wife.

So, I thought I would email you as Secretary, and express my thoughts on how things can be improved on your accounts and copy this to John.

- 1) Some of the members at your Club are paying odd amounts for their subscriptions, mostly lower than the set fees. This should really be investigated.
- 2) John should get a receipt pad, or at least email receipts to the members who pay subscriptions in cash, as it's difficult to monitor these amounts accurately at present.
- 3) There was some confusion over the amounts paid out for the running tracks and boards etc. at your Club. I assume these costs are born fully from your Exhibition Account?
- 4) John told me that you sell second hand things at your Annual Show, with profits going to the Club. These profits do not show in your Club accounts. Dare I query with you where these profits appear?
- 5) The cash collected from your honesty box and refreshments till. This should be checked and recorded, on maybe a receipt pad or carbon copy pad. It should be checked and signed by two people. At the moment odd cash amounts appear on your bank statements and there's nothing to back them up.

I have asked John to let me monitor the accounts every 3 months, so that I can pick up any errors or missing evidence as soon as possible. The first monitoring will be next month, hopefully, when I will be looking at the September to November transactions. I will attempt to arrange this before Christmas.

I hope that all of that will not cause any problems. I am on hand to offer advice and guidance where needed. The Club will then find that things will be much efficient and easier for me to audit.

I have been looking at Sharepoint type software (don't worry, it will be free), so that everything can be online and accessible to all of the committee, and indeed me. The main problem we have is that the Barclays Community Accounts are not online accounts at present, and they still operate them as clerical accounts. A basic statement can be emailed out by Barclays but they do look very basic and a bit messy, even in PDF. John has requested one of these for the October statement, and we shall see whether it's in a suitable format to be used in an online app. If it is, we can gradually get all the statements sorted in this way ready to put on the Sharepoint type app. I do have contacts amongst the Barclays hierarchy, and am reliably informed that these accounts will eventually operate like most other current accounts. This will make life much easier all round.

Sorry for the lengthy email, but I hope that it helps.

Here's wishing you all a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Stuart Gray

Appendix 2: e-Mail Communication Between the Secretary and the Auditor

Hi Stuart

Good to finally make contact with you. Hopefully one day we can actually meet; it would be great to see you at the club one evening.

A comment to John: We all hope your wife is on the road to recovery, and do remember that she is more important than the club!

With regards to your points, Stuart, I can quickly address some of them.

1. I am not sure why people would be paying *lower* amounts and was not aware of that. I fully agree that that warrant investigation. Some people pay extra as a donation to help the club. Speaking just for myself, I pay a little extra each month to cover donations to the honesty box as I never have cash, and I think others do too.
2. Great idea!
3. At one time expenses for layouts were paid out by John, who would then get the money back from the exhibition account. However, that account now has the ability to do on-line banking and pay directly into an account, and subsequently all layout transactions are done purely through it, so should not impinge on this account at all.

4. Profits from the second hand stall are also done exclusively through the exhibition account, as they are used to fund layouts.
5. The cash at the club is a case of “we have always done it that way” and nobody has thought about how it really should be done. Now you say it, I realise that, of course, you are right.
6. With regards to software, I see Sharepoint itself is not free, but there are free alternatives. I work in IT and would be happy to help get this up and running, whatever system you recommend. I think it would be generally appreciated if the accounts were more open.
7. It is good to hear our account at Barclays will get improved; I know this is something John has complained about regularly!

Should John not be at the meeting on Monday, I will raise these points. I will get back to you if there is anything more to add.

Andy

[Note: It was later established that point 1 relates to country members, who pay a lower rate]