

MINUTES OF THE NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY SOCIETY

(A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, no.7406570.)

**Held at 12.00 at the Kidderminster Railway Museum, Station Road, Comberton Hill, Kidderminster, DY10 1QX
on Saturday 27th April 2019.**

Attended by:

Directors:

David Barrie - Chairman

Paul Whittle - Vice-Chairman and Public Relations Officer

Peter Barnes - Sales

David Charlesworth - Editor

Peter Jordan - Treasurer

David Mead - Engineering and DRCS Liaison

Michael Melbourne - Webmaster.

Officers:

Janine Bird – Secretary, Membership Secretary and Events Organiser

David Churchill - Technical and Modelling Coordinator

45 members were present, including the Directors and Officers listed above.

5 guests were present.

Apologies had been received from Martin Collins, Director, and 5 other members.

14 proxy forms had been received from members nominating the Chairman to vote in their stead.

A full list of Members attending the meeting and Notices of Proxy is held by the Secretary and filed with the Minutes.

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chairman welcomed those present to the ninth Annual General Meeting of the Society as incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. Also welcomed was member Dr Christopher Young, consultant to UNESCO on the DHR Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Eighth Annual General Meeting held on 28th April 2018

The Chairman said that the minutes of this AGM had been published on the Society's website with provision for paper copies to be available.

The Secretary had not received any comments on the Minutes.

The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder to approve the minutes.

Proposed by: Graham Hopker

Seconded by: John Alder

The resolution to approve the Minutes of the Eighth AGM was put to the meeting and was carried unanimously.

3. Approval of the Report of the Directors and the Annual Accounts for Year Ended December 2018

At this point the Chairman proposed suspending the formal agenda in order to consider the Directors' and Officers' Activity Reports.

Updating his own Activity Report the Chairman added:

"Last year I said that the stars over India were aligned for progress, citing the appointment of steam heritage champion Ashwani Lohani as Chairman Railway Board. And so it proved. But we can also now truthfully claim that the role the DHRS has played in supporting the DHR has rarely been equalled. During this time I imagine that you have enjoyed reading the contents of the Darjeeling Mail just as much as I have.

So I am now merely going to mention a few landmarks as I do not wish to steal the thunder of those who were instrumental in our achieving so much. I think they have earned the right to tell you themselves.

Firstly, as you know, we celebrated our 20th Anniversary with a grand event at the Beeches Light Railway, courtesy of our President Adrian Shooter and his wife, Barbara. Our entire team were involved, but the fact that the day ran so seamlessly was testament to Janine, our peerless Events Organiser. With a bright sun shining down, for all those present it was truly a day to remember, and to reflect on just how far the DHRS story has come.

Secondly, with much anticipation we published the 'B' Class book, authored by David Churchill. A lifetime of research had gone into this exhaustive and comprehensive work which will surely never be bettered, and the enthusiastic response to it plus the first rate reviews were well-deserved.

Thirdly, I want to mention David Charlesworth's visit to India last November. When David presented his report to the Board, we instinctively knew that this should be shared with you, the membership. Initially, David was nervous, lest it was interpreted as, "Look what I did when I was in India." But the Board knew it would not be seen that way, and

would enable members to read a first-hand account, and feel they were 'there'. When we see or hear a news report, it is not for nothing that a reporter is despatched halfway around the World. David's report is one of the finest pieces of journalism that I have read, not just in our magazine, but in any periodical. Mind you, I was exhausted just reading about his punishing work schedule. A holiday, it was certainly not, and the goodwill it generated was priceless.

Now, in both their reports and this afternoon's entertainment, you will hear from the Directors and understand why and how this has been one of our finest years. The Society and I are truly blessed with a Board and Officers, and other DHR enthusiasts, who are so able, dedicated, and caring about the DHR.

In summary then, this has indeed been a vintage year for both the DHRS and the DHR."

"During his after-lunch presentation Paul Whittle will update us on recent developments with the UNESCO Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan."

"Likewise, David Mead will outline his imminent visit to the DHR to conduct a UNESCO-funded training workshop."

Janine Bird, Membership Secretary and Events Organiser updated her Activity Report: Membership was now 623 which, in her opinion, was good and optimistic at this point in the year. Martin Gurney asked for the highest level of membership. JB remembered it being approx. 850 – but that was about ten years ago. Tickets for the final steaming of The Beeches Light Railway at Steeple Aston on 18th May were still available. Notice was given of the August 15-16 August event at Launceston and volunteers were requested.

Reports were then provided by the Darjeeling Railway Community Support (DRCS) and Darjeeling Tours Ltd. (DTL). The Chairman pointed out that both were separate legal entities from the DHRS and that the reports were being provided because they had a close relationship with the DHRS and their activities were considered of interest to DHRS members.

David Mead (Director responsible for liaison with the DRCS) reported that last year's restrictions of sending funds to India had been overcome and that he would be assessing projects during his May visit to the DHR.

Peter Jordan (Director responsible for liaison with Darjeeling Tours Ltd) described their recent/future programme and confirmed that early bookings for the 2020 'Darjeeling Mail' tour were encouraging.

There were no questions for the Directors and Officers so the Chairman reverted to the formal agenda: That of approving the Report of the Directors' and the Annual Accounts for the year ending 2018.

There were no questions regarding the Directors' and the Annual Accounts Reports so the Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder for a motion to approve the Reports.

Proposed by: John Clemmens

Seconded by: Roger Pascal

The resolution to approve the Reports was put to the meeting and was carried unanimously.

4. Appointment of a Reporting Accountant

The Chairman reminded members that there is a legal requirement for the DHRS to have a Reporting Accountant to review the accounts and advise the DHRS Board.

Derek Williamson of Goddards Accountants had acted as Reporting Accountant for the Society for the 2018 Accounts and was happy to continue in office.

There were no questions so the Chairman asked for a proposer and a seconder for the motion to reappoint Derek Williamson.

Proposed by: Tim Hadfield

Seconded by: Veronica Hopker

The resolution to reappoint Derek Williamson as Reporting Accountant was put to the meeting and was carried unanimously.

5. Re-election of Directors

Article 29 of the Society's Articles of Association provided that at each Annual General Meeting (other than the first) one-third of the Directors must retire from office.

In accordance with this Article, three directors were retiring and, being eligible, offered themselves for re-election. The profiles of Peter Barnes, Peter Jordan and Michael Melbourne had been provided in the insert to the November 2018 issue of The Darjeeling Mail.

The Resolution to re-elect Peter Barnes was

Proposed by John Alder

Seconded by John Clemmens

and carried unanimously.

The Resolution to re-elect Peter Jordan was
Proposed by Jim Ivens
Seconded by Malcolm Bruce
and carried unanimously.

The Resolution to re-elect Michael Melbourne was
Proposed by Tony Parker
Seconded by Reg Banks
and carried unanimously.

6. AOB

Martin Gurney asked that the minutes should include thanks to Adrian Shooter for the years of hosting visits to The Beeches at Steeple Aston.

The Chairman brought the formal meeting to a conclusion.
He thanked the SVR catering staff for the usual huge buffet lunch.
He reminded members that the afternoon entertainment would start at 14.30 with presentations from
Paul Whittle: Update on UNESCO CCMP
David Mead: Forthcoming visit to India
David Charlesworth: "Off the rails" (forgotten sidings and line-side life)
Fuzz Jordan: Laurie Marshall's slides