



Inter City Railway Society

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR YEAR 2018

Held on Saturday 6th April 2019 at Crewe Arms Hotel

The meeting commenced at 11.30 with introduction by Peter Britcliffe

Members Present: 57 (49 + 8 Officials)

Bruce Bayliss, Graham Bednall, David Benson, Bryl Berry, Dave Blackburn, Michael Boyes, Philip Carr, Michael Clarke, Robert Dalton, Neil Dix, Ronnie Dunn, Garry Dunne, Nigel Farebrother, Peter Flintham, Robert Fowler, David Gordon, Louis Guidi, Martin Hall, Keith Hawken, Nick Hemming, Robert Hill, Michael Hillier, Mike Holland, Bob Howe, Barrie Jeremy, Barry Knibbs, Alec Loftus, Roger Lowe, Fred Lyons, Lawrence McCormick, Gareth Oliver, Stanley Parfrey, Dennis Popham, Mark Richards, Andrew Scott, Nick Smith, Dave Spencer, Philip Stafford, Roger Thomas, Aidan Turner, Peter Turner, Michael Ventham, Peter Ventham, Daniel Wainwright, Albert Ward, David Watts, Roy Whittle, Steve Wilkins, Michael Windsor, Brian Wood (taken from the signature sheet on the day)

Apologies for Absence: None

Matters Arising from the 2017/2018 Minutes:

The minutes from last year's AGM were read and there were no matters arising. Approval of the minutes were proposed by Dave Watts and seconded by Rob Fowler.

Treasurers Report - Peter Britcliffe:

Also see attached Accounts.

2018 saw the Society's year aligned with the calendar year so that it included January and February, our two most profitable months for book sales.

We had a small trading surplus for the year of £380.81 based on what was a record income of over £52,000.

Our operating costs also increased but small savings were made on our officials meetings by using Skype to replace the expensive PowWowNow which cost in the region of £50 per meeting. The only down side from using Skype is that we can see the other Committee members faces.....only joking.

At year end our cash assets totalled £11,764.44 with £1,445.14 of this being money held from 5 year members fees making just over £10,300 of available funds. In addition our stock of books / sundries stood at £5,679.97.

Discussion:

- *Last year was the first year from January - December which is a true representation of income and expenditures. Savings have been made on Conference Calls by switching to Skype. No questions forthcoming from members.*

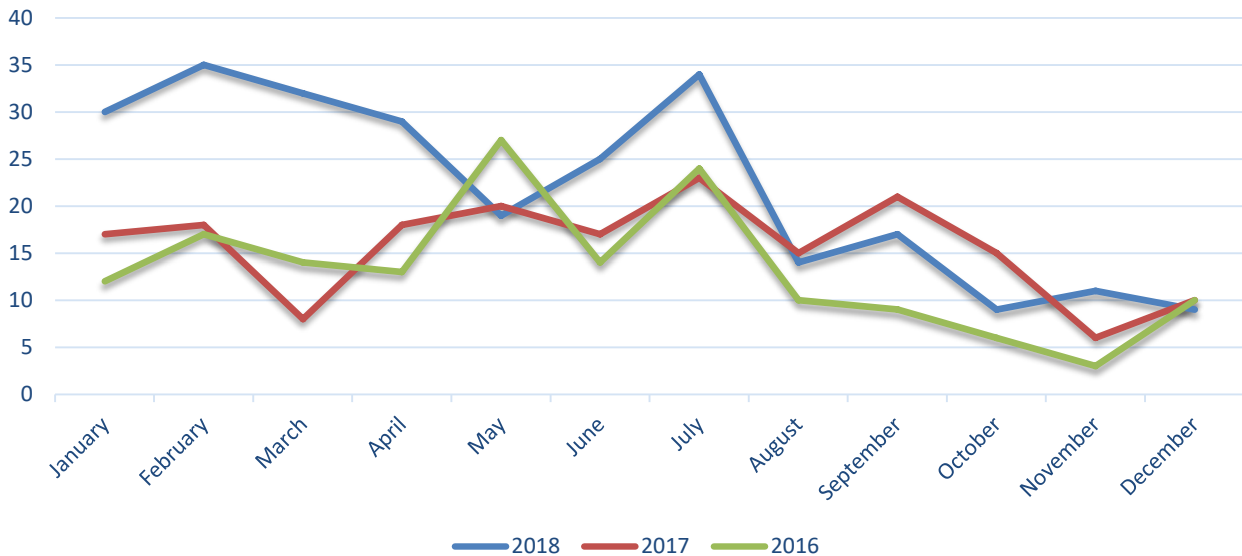
Approval of Treasurers Report was proposed by Dave Watts and seconded by Robert Hill.

Membership Report - Colin Pottle:

From a membership point of view, 2018 was our best performing year ever. We have seen increases in members every month of the year with an end of year total of 1250, up 165 on 2017. This is despite me having to remove some members who didn't respond to any means of communication when it was time to renew.

The following chart shows the comparisons of new members over the last three years. As you can see, 2018 started on a high in Jan/Feb, tailed off in May, then shot up again in Jun/Jul which coincided with the book releases and advertising. The open day at DRS Gresty Bridge managed to account for fifteen new members in one day, a new record for us! Interestingly, May 2016 was up, probably due to us having a stand at Swanage.

New member data 2016 - 2018



The 'Additional Family Adult' & 'Additional Family Child' accounted for 29 new members – 11 children and 18 adults. We added this feature last year as a benefit for existing members who wanted to sign up other members of the family for a modest fee so they could go to events.

The number of 5 year members has dropped to 129. The number of eMembers has risen to 83.

To sum up 2018, we had 261 new members. People who resigned (or were resigned by myself) numbered 92 of which 45 stayed for one year only. Sadly, we also had 11 members who passed away, bringing the total who left to 103.

It was decided that from January 2019 that the Standard Membership rate should increase a modest amount from £17.50 to £18.00 to cover the 44p per member cost of the compostable bags.

Membership Cards: The month of March saw us complete the first sweep of the new membership cards, with the majority of members receiving one. Members who are still on the 'Five Year' deal and haven't had a new card will receive one upon their renewal. Remember, this is now a 'Card for Life', so no replacement will be forthcoming upon renewal. This will contribute a great saving to the society with much reduced postage costs. As stated in last years' AGM, receipt of renewal funds can be acknowledged by email or text – if requested, this can also be done by post if accompanied by an SAE. Obviously, it is even more important to keep your details updated, a quick email, text or message left on the phone to myself is all that is required.

Discussion:

- *2018 was a record year with increases every month. First 3 months 30 plus new members every month due to advertising. 129 Five year members lefts. Colin reminded everyone that it is important to keep us up-dated when address, telephone number or email details alter. No questions forthcoming from members.*

Editors Report - Trevor Roots:

The intention to continue with the bi-monthly schedule with quarterly supplements was carried out erratically until it became obvious in the Summer that all was going pear shaped. A full and comprehensive account of the various issues were in the Jul / Aug **TRACKS** Editorial, if you haven't read it please do. Without going over all that again and what has been added in various **TRACKS** Editorials over my trials and tribulations, it is suffice to say we successfully returned to monthly issues from September 2018 with the exception of the January issue which is still to be a bi-monthly covering Jan / Feb. This allows me to spend time on the books. The pressures are still there producing **TRACKS** and having a personal life, when that goes smoothly let alone if unforeseen problems need to be dealt with.

The eventual outcome in terms of the 2018 issues was 10 issues with a mixture of page sizes: 6 x 80, 2 x 64 and 2 x 32 (supplements) totalling 672 pages. Clearly this is almost 100 pages less than the last full year of 12 issues at 64 pages each in 2016 and consequently had a knock on effect of limiting space for several articles planned or series to be continued. There is also a backlog of Globetrotter reports from several members and they are difficult to fit in with the deluge of UK topical news. It is hoped I can catch up a bit in 2019 with the proposed 11 issues and a minimum total of 720 pages (1 x 80 + 10 x 64) and it is expected that more than the Jan / Feb issue will be 80 pages.

The one other major change during 2018 was the switch in November to compostable bags, our bid to be environmentally friendly by ditching the plastic bags previously used.

Discussion:

- *No questions forthcoming from members.*

Publications Report - Trevor Roots:

Introduction: The proposal to release the **UK Pocket Book** as a wire bound version alongside the original (with spine) did transpire and proved very successful outselling the original version by 4 to 1. However the sales of the original **Pocket Book** held up well against forecasts and the initial order of 100 was quickly doubled, selling out by the end of 2018. The two versions of the **Pocket Book** did result in the highest total of **PBs** sold in a year as a summer version of the wire bound **PB** was also released, though it did seem to affect summer **Combine** sales. **UK Locomotives** was also successfully released as an A6 pocket sized wire bound version but probably didn't sell as well as had been anticipated by the feedback. The new **USFs** were released in July of 2018 at the DRS Open Day alongside the **UK Combine Summer Edition**. With not so many changes, as yet they haven't sold as well as the 2013 version. The final copies of **Irish Railways**, released in 2015 was sold so that title is now out of print. The next edition of the **Name Directory** is proposed to take place in January 2019 alongside the usual books so totalling 6 to be produced and released within two months.

With the sheer workload nothing so far has been done with the other old Sighting Files.

Book Sales:

		Members	Non-Members	Trade (Ian Allan)	Direct (Shows)	Total Sold	Total Printed
2017 (# printed twice so 1300 actually printed)							
01	Pocket Book #	211	132	116	96	555	650
02A	Combine	349	123	106	23	601	600
02B	Summer Combine	108	60	55	97	320	300
03	Wagons	199	82	52	47	380	450
04	Name Directory	33	13	20	14	80	150
09	Irish Railways	3	0	0	2	5	n/a
Totals		903	410	349	279	1941	2150
2018 (* remaining stock)							
01	Pocket Book	65	64	52	25	206	218
01WA	Pocket Book	250	106	100	41	497	505
01WB	Pocket Book	84	46	61	57	248	300
02A	Combine	333	134	91	46	604	617
02B	Summer Combine	92	44	61	81	278	300
03	Wagons	197	76	56	48	377	377
04	Name Directory *	11	7	0	7	25*	n/a
05	Locos	62	28	70	26	186	250
09	Irish Railways *	0	0	0	2	2*	n/a
10	USF Vol.1	78	16	22	19	135	300
11	USF Vol.2	68	14	22	18	122	300
Totals		1240	535	370	535	2680	3167

As stated in 2017 the comparison of orders now available via the sophisticated database is very interesting. There were errors in the 2017 AGM Report regarding the % buying, which are corrected here showing an even lower number of new members buy a book on joining though this has increased. The number of members out of the total membership buying any books has stayed static.

Ordering Profile:

	All Orders			Unique Orders			Membership at end of financial year (new)	% Members buying	
	Total	Members	Non Members	Existing	New	Members		All	New
2016	879	560	319	nk	nk	nk	1044 (159)	nk	nk
2017	997	646	351	485	43	325	1084 (188)	45%	23%
2018	1229	785	444	545	81	390	1250 (261)	44%	31%

The number of orders from non-members indicated as generated by advertising is as follows: WNXX – 22, RI – 37, REx (even though we didn't have one in 2018) – 10, social media – 22, that is 91 out of 331 (27%) with another 113 not declaring where they heard of us. By far the biggest number of sales appears to be from our own advertising ie previous book sales or website at 60 and 66 with a further 33 through friends / family.

Advertising: Four full page adverts were taken in Railways Illustrated (RI) (February, March & August) and Railway Express (REx) (March) in 2018. These have continued to be successful as we can now see from analysis with the costs recovered through new members and orders. We also got our books advertised on WNXX again, which can be seen when you scroll to the bottom of the Latest News page under Members Marketing. In addition Gareth has been pushing us on social media.

Sundries:

Badges have sold steadily with nearly half of the 500 originally ordered now gone.

Printed pens have continued to sell well and with less than 100 left of the second 500 ordered, we will require another batch.

Our own printed notebooks have sold well though not surprisingly we have sold three times as many of the the bigger one (75 pages), so eventually we will need another run with less than a 100 left. The smaller 50 page notebook has almost sold out with 30 left and is to be discontinued as agreed at the last AGM.

The revised polo shirts ordered from **clothes2order.com** have sold steadily (26) and we added a new colour, black, to the range so we now hold a reasonable stock of all 5 colours in sizes from M to 2XL. We have done this as we have had to order larger sizes...you are a big bunch, so adding some 'normal' sizes to the order to reduce costs. In future if we continue to get the odd order for bigger sizes we might have to increase the price by a few £s for these, as they cost more to produce per item and to order singularly.

Baseball caps have also sold steadily (20) with a stock of all three colours.

Pocket book covers for the original Pocket Book with spine have continued to sell but with just over a 100 left and another batch will need to be ordered.

Having had a stock of **TRACKS** binders for several years, the increase in membership is seeing more sold and now moving back to 11 issues, more of the large binder will be required after 2 years of medium binders. With only around 50 large binders left another order will be needed, depending on sales in 2019, however the discounted price may have to rise.

To cater for visits we continue to stock hi-viz vests and a new range added to stock is bump caps, in three colours, a requirement for Carnforth visits.

Discussion:

- *Books - design, font, altered holes from square to round to make books better. Idea to cover Preserved items and list by location.*

Questions:

- *Why not go digital? The reason being we have over 200 members who do not have a computer and members like to hold a magazine to read as it can be taken anywhere to read. Others do not like to read it on a screen.*
- *Wagon book - why not put more detail in it? We can only put in what we can find out without copying information from other books etc.*

Website Report - Trevor Roots:

The website has been constantly updated and tweaked to add new books and sundries as they released or made available with more user friendly guidance. It is amazing how some do not read the guidance !!

Gareth Patterson is doing an excellent job with Social Media, see his report below and the three advertising platforms are continuing to generate new members and book sales.

The **TRACKS** photo database has still yet to be put on the website as no time to fully check it but it is kept up to date as each issue is released. Hopefully it will not be too much longer.

Discussion:

- *Want to get the data base on the members page. Trevor requested that if any member finds a link not working to let him know.*

Social Media Report - Gareth Patterson:

Since the last AGM the social networking sites have gone from strength to strength. Our Facebook page has risen from 1082 to 1,865. Our Twitter account has nearly trebled from 276 to 789. In July last year it was decided to extend our social networking more so we setup a Instagram account which gained around 250 followers by the end of the year. All sites are active on a daily basis with either photos / videos and of course our main site which is promoting our Books & Events. The three sites have also proved useful at attracting more people in joining up to the Society. At the beginning of July last year a new feature was setup on our Facebook page with the introduction of a shop section so all our books and sundries can be viewed via social media on Facebook.

Discussion:

- *Sites going up daily and basically trebled since starting. The photo site is very popular.*

Events Report - Trevor Roots / Tony Whitehead:

As a result of the request to organise visits to WCR Carnforth through Tony Whitehead he duly stepped in to help organise other events throughout the year as part of the team including Trevor Roots, Chris Field and Simon Mutten (Long Marston) the Visits Organiser was to plan ahead for 2018 but in the end this was taken on out of necessity by Trevor with help from Chris. So many thanks for Tony's much needed help...though he has now got less hair !!

The first event of the year on the 10th March was a visit to the East Lancs Railway and a tour of the various sheds and yards around Bury Bolton Street, the main headquarters attended by 64 members. This was followed by lunch and the AGM at the Bury Transport Museum across the road from Bolton Street station. A full report was written in the Spring 2018 issue of **TRACKS** so suffice to say though the AGM went smoothly the tour nearly didn't, due to the inclement weather, which did clear on the morning and a jobsworth ELR organiser. I did get a bit impassioned fighting our corner so members could get what they were promised.

Our next visit was to Crewe Basford Hall on the 21st April attended by 77 members. With excellent weather again as in 2017, this was an excellent trip though a little rushed to fit the tour in the allotted hour.

Next we attended the Severn Valley Spring (SVR) Diesel Gala on just the Saturday the 19th May, with our stand, based in the Diesel Shed at Kidderminster Town, the only one as it turned out. We decided based on the previous year not to stay for the Sunday which was just a Mixed Traction day as there was little footfall to the shed.

Our next members visit was to Long Marston on the 9th June, attended by over 110 members and again we were blessed with good weather. A full report appeared in the Jun / Jul issue of **TRACKS**. The highlights of the day were the visit of 37611 manoeuvring Cl.350 EMUs and the presence of the Vivarail Cl.230s

The DRS Open Day for 2018 was held at Crewe Gresty Bridge on the 21st July for which the weather was fair if not always sunny, at least drier than Carlisle !! This was probably our best year since we started attending the DRS Open Days.

On the 11th August we then held the first of two visits organised to WCR at Carnforth. The chance discussion at the earlier AGM proving very fruitful and has since developed into a very popular venue. Unlike other visits it was limited to 30 places so initially we booked two trips for 2018. The first visit was blessed with glorious weather and set the basis at least for me to establish what stored stock was on site.

Our annual members only bash at Eastleigh Works was held on the 8th September, attended by 131 members, the largest number ever on a members visit. The day remained dry again was successful with two shunters and 73133 employed on cab rides. A full report was given in the October issue of **TRACKS**.

We broke new ground again for our sales stand when we attended the Nene Valley Railway (NVR) Cl.31 60th Anniversary Gala from the 13-15th October. Attended by 8 Cl.31s it was a worthwhile event. The weather was fair though at this time of year light was failing by late afternoon and there was always that autumnal feel in the air

On the 13th October we held the second of two visits to WCR at Carnforth but unfortunately the interminable Northern rail strikes and appalling weather took the shine off. Now a firm favourite with members we proposed to book several more trips for 2019.

The last event of the year was our attendance at the Warley Model Railway Show at the NEC Birmingham. As a Society we are able to get a free stand so it was worth going if nothing more than for free advertising. It is not a good event for sales but we actually did better than at any previous attendance and was able to put a few more faces to members and vice versa.

A big programme of events has been planned for 2019 with an early visit to Carnforth then this AGM and tour of Crewe Basford Hall. The regulars of DRS Open Day (Carlisle this year), Long Marston and Eastleigh Works are bolstered by another four visits to Carnforth to cater for demand. We are only planning to be at one Preservation Gala, SVR on the 18th May. Another first for 2019 is LSL opening their doors at the former Crewe Diesel Depot via an Open Day on the 8th June so we will be there with our sales stand.

Discussion:

- *Tony has been a great help since offering to take on the role. Trips - small sites cannot take a large group and if any members go to Rye Farm they should park by the Cafe. If any member has any ideas of sites to visit, give Tony a call, especially if you have a contact at the site.*

Election of Officials:

The election of the committee en block was proposed by Barry Knibbs and seconded by Robert Hill.

Any Other Business:

- Nothing

Presidents Closing Comments - Simon Mutten:

Due to personal circumstances I have not been able to write out a speech but basically I would like to reiterate what I said last year. I would like to make the point that all the work is done on a voluntary basis and I would say to you the members, would you want to do it with all the work involved?

In order to produce the books it is a case of finding out the information to go in them, keeping the data up-to-date and putting it altogether to go to the printers. Also having several proof readers to check it is all in order.

The Membership data base - keeping this up-to-date is a daily task.

Social Media - this takes constant monitoring and keeping up-to-date.

Finances - paying invoices on time and generally keeping control. Legislation which is a legal requirement to ensure all members' details are kept safe.

Producing the monthly magazine which is a time consuming task as articles have to be written if members have not sent enough in and the re-sizing and photo shopping of photographs sent in.

Website - keeping this up-to-date not only for members benefit but also to attract new members and to encourage the sale of our products.

All these things take many hours to make Inter City Railway Society a thriving club and it is also thanks to you for supporting it by being members and purchasing the many products on sale.

Finally, thank you for coming along today and again, thank you for being a member.

For those not at last year's AGM this is Simon's closing comments:-

"Having listened to this afternoons reports, I am struck by how pleased a commercial business would be, in % terms at least, with the growth and success we have achieved this year. Such success does of course bring its own challenges – not least the workload (all voluntary remember) for the officials –as Trevor so eloquently and entertainingly reminds us in his editorials.

This year it is perhaps worth reminding members that, despite the voluntary nature of ICRS, we do have to be business like in our thoughts and actions in order to ensure the continued success of the society going forward. So what sort of things do we need to take account of?

Be prepared

Have a plan in place. Organisations that survive are those which plan in advance. Whether that's managing the growth of the society, ensuring financial stability or developing the magazine and publications. ICRS officials are in regular contact through meetings and conference calls, enabling timely discussion and decision making to take place..

Be realistic

Such discussion has, certainly in my experience of the current team of officials, resulted in practical and workable solutions on how we develop which have worked for the benefit of the society as a whole. I remember reading of a charity where the leader insisted on leading the organisation down a blind alley by pursuing an alternative vision that was based on false premises. There was a time in the society's past (and I am talking of quite a few years ago) where that almost happened to ICRS. The inclusive and mutually supportive team approach we have today ensures that is unlikely to happen again.

Keeping a grip on the finances

Robust financial information and strong budgeting processes are key to avoiding insolvency. The officials understand the cost of running ICRS. Successful organisations, whether commercial or voluntary like ours also have proper governance in place to ensure what we do is always aimed at achieving our agreed objectives. ICRS' own Constitution underpins such governance

Keep the right mindset

Whilst we need to be commercially aware in the sense of ensuring the society remains financially viable, we always keep in mind this is not a business – it is a society, run by volunteers within that society for the benefit of all members and indeed anyone who enjoys and follows an interest in railways. We are fortunate in having officials who are flexible and understand the economic realities while maintaining the inclusive approach can make all the difference to success or failure.

But strike the right balance

Organisations such as ours exist for social or benevolent goals and the wholesale adoption of private sector values is simply not appropriate. As a comparison successful charities have a strong awareness of the commercial environment but also manage to maintain a clear focus on the service they want to supply.

Leadership is key

Successful organisations inevitably have good leaders, whether an individual or a grouping of officials as in our case. Our leadership team, and in particular here I must mention Trevor, has a clear vision, can communicate that vision and achieve a consensus. Because of that ICRS has a clear focus on the way ahead. They are aware of the commercial environment, and understand the need to be financially sustainable, but ensure that financial stability is used entirely for the benefit of the Members to enjoy and follow their pastime – i.e. you and me.

But remember – all our officials are volunteers. There's a quote that says "Volunteers are not paid not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless and once again this year we owe them all a huge debt of gratitude."

Meeting closed at 13.00