

Minutes - Save Our Stute meeting 12/08/2020

In attendance:

Dave Reynolds (DR) (in chair)
Lisa Knight (LK)
Catherine Howard (KH)
Anthony Knight (AK)
Kelly Ambrosini (KA)
Sam Townsend (ST)
Colin White (CW)
Michelle Armstrong (MA),
John Raw (JR)
Trevor Horner (TH)
Sue Clarke (SC)
Dene Clark (DC)

Apologies - None received Dene Clarke.

Review and approval of actions & minutes from last meeting

ACTION - DR to liaise with Eric Thompson re printing the Hackworth portrait and the images from NRM York - *This was done and the resulting prints are now all installed at the Stute*

ACTION - MA to transfer £90 to Lloyds account. - *Done*

ACTION - CW to attempt to retrieve banking notebook from Fred Langley. - *Done - the book was in one of the boxes from a previous event*

ACTION - SC to open a second Lloyds account - in effect a 'savings account'. *Attempted but not done - we will keep one account*

ACTION - KA to ask Hazel for the tub on the bar. *Not done*

ACTION - SC to contact Shaun re Stute bank details so we can make donation towards the roof bill. *Done - money transferred*

ACTION - DR to share news on 'what have SOS done' so we can communicate to the public what we have contributed to financially and otherwise since we became involved. *Done - this was shared online via social media and pinned to the Stute notice board*

ACTION - DR to ask John Raw about donation of £200 to BIG. *Done but the donation was refused as the BIG felt that the Stute needed the money more*

ACTION - carpet - KA will contact shop on Church St asap - *Done - KA and SC saw to this and the carpet is now installed*

ACTION - SC to strim in car park/ DR to weedkill rougher patches - *Not complete - Weedkiller applied but the area is still rough and needs lots of work - though will become easier to keep on top of annually*

ACTION - Vision document. *Not complete, but Anth has made a start on the revised second draft*

ACTION - MA to contact Shaun re public liability for car boot sale. *Done - their Public Liability did not cover outdoor events - we'd need our own insurance*

ACTION - MA to change details on Facebook event to pre-book £8/ on the day £10, admission 50p adults only. *Not done as not proceeded with event due to insurance concern*

ACTION - MA to ask Kathryn about Sept availability for a flower workshop. *Done, but refocusing on October now*

ACTION - LK to ask chamber of trade about a summer outdoor fair. *Not done - COT not been meeting*

ACTION - SC to contact BBC Tees to follow up. *Not done - but we could do something after fundraiser launch*

ACTION - SC to update companies house with the new directors and to create a members list. *Done*

ACTION - LK to edit a risk assessment for Civic to make suitable for the Stute to use. *Done - Stute now operating under terms of Risk Assessment*

ACTION - KA to arrange a committee meeting next Sat morning. *Done*

ACTION - DR to work on video for the reopening and KA to write the script. *Done - the video was published on Social Channels*

ACTION - MA/ SC to look at Crowdfunding. *Done - MA attended a crowdfunding seminar*

ACTION - MA to send DR a pic of the CHOOSE STUTE tee - *Done - web-shop progressed to point of testing*

ACTION - CW to approach the committee to take over looking after the membership applications - *Done - CW now looking at transition of ownership of responsibility*

ACTION - DR to order beers and underwrite them as a trial. *Done - the Stute now stocks Consett Ales - original investment to be reinvested when stocks low*

Financial Update (SC)

- The SHA currently hold £2,190 of which a contribution of around £700 came from Hazel Johnson's fundraising run and around a remarkable £275 (after costs paid to the Stute) came from the "G and Tea" event
- SC also updated that we do now have a subscription to QuickBooks to aid accounting and that she was in the process of converting all the transactions so far to digital medium.

Fundraising Appeal and Launch

- DR conveyed that the launch of the £30k fundraising target for the next 12 months would be launched on 27th Sep to coincide with the 5 year point to the bicentenary and the Rail Heritage Exhibition
- MA recapped on the Crowdfunding seminar that she attended and discussed in a previous un-minuted meeting
- MA outlined how it's important that we give an idea of what it was specifically we wanted to achieve with the money raised
- DR suggested that as well as paying for the next stages of the surveys necessary (approx (£3k) a good investment would be to remedy the issues highlighted by Paul Harle w.r.t. the boiler and heating system - i.e. correct ventilation for the cellar, boiler cover, fix any leaks from above and coat asbestos. To look at zonal heating as a stretch target, though that is subject to feasibility. Then also to look to replace all the lighting throughout with low energy substitute lighting to reduce one of the Institute's biggest overheads. This was broadly agreed.
- DC queried whether our fundraising target would have to be based upon the production of quotes to donors
- AK asked how specific we needed to be.
- MA responded that we didn't need to be that specific, just outline broad but realistic objectives.
- AK advocated following an emotive approach in that we'd be looking to make the Stute more sustainable. As long as people understood the broad aims.
- MA highlighted the importance of setting an initial target backed up by a stretch target if we achieve our goals. ST expressed that this gives people the feeling they are backing a 'winning team'.
- DC maintained that some donors might want to question the reality of our target vs the prices of the work. It was agreed that we should get some quotes anyway as a reality check
- **ACTION:** DR to start work on planning a session for production of a specification on what we'd like to achieve so that we have a foundation for requesting quotes. JR suggested this could include the exterior lighting previously investigated as this was deemed beneficial in promoting the Stute.
- **ACTION:** MA once specification is available it was thought that we could pitch on Facebook for local businesses who wanted to provide a quote
- Ideas were submitted by all regarding offers we could put out as incentives for our crowd-funder (See APPENDIX A)
- **ACTION:** DR to produce a table of the ideas put forward
- **ACTION:** AK, MA, ST to propose valuations for the donations mapped to each of the ideas
- **ACTION:** All to contribute to shortlisting the final incentives to take forward
- It was stated that it should also be possible for donors to make a donation without claiming a reward
- Other preparations agreed necessary pre-launch - to be discussed at or before our next session - were
 - a) Social Media Strategy,
 - b) Press Release (to come into play mid way through donation time window),
 - c) Leaflet to hand out at events,
 - d) Letters to local businesses,
 - e) a "How to Help" banner
- **ACTION:** DR to plan a fundraising video for social campaign.
- SC proposed that a web page be created with a QR code directed to it that can be on all our printed materials
- **ACTION:** DR to create fundraising web page to point to crowd-funder page (this way will act as a staging point if the Crowd-funder page itself is eventually closed we can have the QR code direct to somewhere with the latest news)

Events for Promotion

G and Tea

- A request was made for a poster to promote the G&Tea dates and a press release for the Town Crier
- LK: Felt it was important for us to show some support to the Town Crier by advertising given the support they had provided so far - this was met with broad agreement
- **ACTION:** DR to produce poster
- **ACTION:** AK to produce a 10cm x 7.5 cm ad for the Town Crier and press release

Rail Heritage Exhibition

- JR: Outlined the purpose, and timing (27th Sep), of the Exhibition and the groups that had expressed an interest to participate so far
- DR: Outlined the preparations that has been made so far, including the web page, posters, flyers and Covid safety measures proposed.

- JR: Informed that on the two Saturdays prior there would be walks of stretches of the S&DR line (flyers could be given out)
- JR: Pointed out the catering opportunities that the exhibition event offered - it could prove a money-spinner for SOS and/or the Stute (whichever is the priority at the time)
- **ACTION:** Session to be set up closer to the time to look at a catering plan perhaps using combinations of things we'd successfully done before
- **ACTION:** Any volunteers involved in catering to work towards Food Hygiene Level 2 certification
- **ACTION:** JR/DR to work on exhibition layout and flow plan
- **ACTION:** DR/MA to roll out social media promotion of exhibition (supported by all)
- Regarding things to exhibit, for Shildon we suggested the following assets many of which made up our contribution to the Works Reunion Exhibition - 1970s banner, wagon plates collection, works images.
- It was also suggested to include an exhibition relating to the Institute itself - perhaps including images, artefacts, the posters Ant Coulls donated, the old minute book (if Julia Teasdale will lend)
- DR also proposed a display relating to Shildon's part in the NER's electrification pilot in the 1910s
- **ACTION:** DR to collect the wagon plates paid for but not yet collected
- **ACTION:** DR to ask Julia if we can display the old minute book (If not I have images of pages)
- **ACTION:** DR/AK to explore new banners and pull-ups
- CW: Queried whether we could play railway sounds to add to the atmosphere - which we can.

Quingo

- Quingo event 2 posters are out for display now
- Needs promotion on social media
- Future dates to be 11 Sep and Oct 30th

Flower workshop

- **ACTION:** MA to find out if Kathryn Hume would be willing to do a Harvest Wreaths workshop in October
- Proposed to do a 4 hour session in the main hall to maintain social distancing

Cheese tasting

- Theo the Cheeseman is up for doing a '6 Best British Cheeses' session on the 18th September - charging £5 per head to us. We could price at £10 and include a drink.
- Thinking to follow the G&Tea model and limit to 20 places in the Lounge
- Could include a cheesy quiz and a cheese raffle open to all
- **ACTION:** DR to create poster art and liaise with Theo
- **ACTION:** MA to handle booking a la G and Tea

Race Night

Aiming to hold a Race Night on November the 13th

ACTION: DR to get another sealed race disc though we have the tickets from the last event - loads left

Car Boot Sale

- We have decided against a car boot sale this year, on grounds of the Public Liability Insurance issue - though we will need to sort this out for ourselves for future.

Bicentenary Meeting

- This remains on hold as we monitor the Covid situation, however we are keeping 2025 in mind through the Exhibition and will be able to link the even themes.

Reports from SOS attendance at other meetings

- There have been few meetings progressing on account of Covid.
- Main points from the Brusselton Incline Group meeting had already been covered
- LK reported that the Chamber of Trade were due to start meeting again
- DR originally volunteered to attend the meeting on the 13th Aug regarding the Stockton event at which we are due to exhibit on 26 Sept - however this was later changed when ST volunteered

AOB

- AK gave an update on his rendering the Vision for the future of the Institute into a booklet to share with funders and to use as a consistent source to support funding applications. More work required before ready to use. We can hopefully use digitally before printing any copies.
- DR communicated that there will be a Heritage Action Zone festival in October to which we had been invited to make a contribution. The festival would be a mainly 'virtual' event with pieces of information being released online. DR suggested we make a video explaining the Railway Institute and its place in rail history. It could prompt some donations.
- **ACTION:** DR to plan this video in parallel to the fundraiser one

- SC: Gave an update on the progress of formal instatement of new Directors for the Shildon Heritage Alliance CIC which was not yet complete but should go through this month.
- DR: Updated the group on the web-shop progress
- **ACTION:** DR/MA/SC to test the web-shop by making a few token transactions to test the experience and flow of revenues
- DR: Outlined his plan to produce 1000 A5 flyers promoting the Stute to be posted through doors to increase day to day footfall while there were no events going ahead. He circulated a draft version and received feedback from AK and SC.
- **ACTION:** DR to go ahead and get flyers printed then volunteers to hand deliver them to New Shildon and Middridge Vale (on premise that we're promoting the Stute as a 'local' facility for this end of town where there are few other similar facilities)
- ST: Pointed out that we should have the SHA CIC company number on the website
- **ACTION:** DR to update the website template
- It was also suggested that we should do more to promote the other draws and games run by the Stute - we need to get details from the committee.
- CW asked whether we have many Membership Application Forms left as the pricing is incorrect. A quick check revealed that we have loads - but can reprint soon if we need to.

APPENDIX A - Crowd Funder Incentive Offerings So Far

ID	Title	Description	Suggested Value
1	Stute Limited Edition Thank You Cards	A lovely limited edition print thank you card featuring the portrait of The Stute created in 2019 by Shildon born artist Eric Thompson	
2	Guided Stute Walk and Special Reception	Interested in the inside story of the world's first Railway Institute then this could be for you. These guided walks led by our resident 'tame historian' take you in small groups from the site of the start of steam passenger railways to the Globe Inn where a curious incident was said to have resulted in the idea to start an institute, and on to locations connected with the institute culminating in a special reception for you at the current building to raise a toast to first president Timothy Hackworth himself.	
3	Limited special edition "G & Tea"	Think afternoon-tea combined with gin-tasting. Our institute bar specialises in gin, under the clever alternative title of "The Ginstitute", and out Hackworth Lounge occasionally dresses up properly especially to offer these exclusive events. Reserve a place at one of our extra-special VIP Donor's G & Tea afternoons featuring three gin and tonic combinations of your choice from our menu, as well as a selection of freshly prepared scones, cakes and finger sandwiches of your choosing = plus something a little 'special' as a surprise.	

ID	Title	Description	Suggested Value
4	Stute Goodies Bundle	Choose this reward and we'll send you a bundle of exclusive Shildon Railway Institute goodies including: Items to be determined	
5	Limited Audience Paranormal Investigation at the Stute (subject to Elaine's agreement)	The Institute has served Shildon for many decades and played a key part in the lives of generations of railway workers and engineers. Could this be your opportunity to encounter one or two of them in spirit? This reward secures you and a friend a places on a very exclusive limited experience to investigate the possibilities within paranormal phenomena. Your evening will involve an introductory history talk followed by the opportunity to get hands-on with investigation equipment.	
6	Learn to.... at the Stute	Ever fancied trying your hand at..... The Stute has always been a place for broadening your horizons and trying new things so we're offering limited places for a workshop. (we need to know more but could be photography, art, printing - things like that)	
7	Supporter Membership	Would like to help the Stute but don't live local to Shildon. You could become one of our supporter-members. Your donation of at least £x will secure you a year's membership. We'll send you a special supporter-member certificate and occasional updates on how we are progressing.	NB: Would need clearing with the Committee and at least £5 needs to go to the Stute as it would be membership not a donation - therefore dubious as to adding to sum raised
8	Lifetime Friend of the Stute	We need to define better what this could be but it should not be conflated with membership - what does a lifetime friend get other than a warm fuzzy feeling?	
9	Stute Discount Card	Donate at least £x and claim this 1 year SOS Discount card valid against (what exactly? we could discount our event tickets quite heavily but that would have limited appeal - discounted drinks would be more interesting, but not within the gift of SOS to offer unless we had a deal with the committee where we reimburse, which could erode the donation value over time or possibly even cancel it)	

ID	Title	Description	Suggested Value
10	Murder on the Shildon Express	Claim this reward to take part in an exclusive theatrical murder mystery right here at the Shildon Railway Institute. There's blood on the dance-floor and any one of our shifty looking suspects could be the culprit. But whodunnit? You're the newest recruit to Shildon Police's crack investigation squad. If anyone can figure it out, you can. Oh....and there's a reward!	