

ABINGDON & DISTRICT MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

ABRAIL EXHIBITION SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON FRIDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2023 & FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2023

AT ADMRC CLUBROOMS, LODGE HILL, ABINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE OX14 2JL

1. PRESENT

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Trevor Slaughter (TS) | Exhibition Manager (Chairman & Secretary of Meeting) |
| William Marnane (WM) | Club Chairman |
| Peter Hunt (PH) | Club Secretary, Layouts |
| James Barclay (JB) | Logistics & First Aid |
| Dave Rodger (DR) | Rota |
| Graham Hadingham (GH) | Publicity Officer |
| Chris Nutman (CN) | Without Portfolio |
| Mike Taylor (MT) | Floor Manager |
| Phil Cole (PC) | Show Guide 1 |
| Tim Cole (TC) | Show Guide 2 |

Chris Nutman and Tim Cole were not present on 22 September 2023.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

This being the first meeting of the A-brail Exhibition sub-committee, there were no previous minutes.

3. MATTERS ARISING

This being the first meeting of the A-brail Exhibition sub-committee, there were no matters arising.

4. MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

TS introduced the members of the committee (who are effectively the A-brail 2024 team) and outlined broadly their responsibilities.

5. FINANCIAL, BUDGET UPDATE, TRADE CREDIT FACILITIES

TS reported that at this stage the arrangements for A-brail 2024 are too fluid to produce an updated budget for A-brail 2024, however the meeting acknowledged that as soon as possible one should be produced and agreed upon and that this will be made available to the wider club membership.

The meeting agreed that as the sales revenue of A-brail 2024 is not going to be credited to the club's bank account until the week following the exhibition, there is likely to be a short-term adverse swing in the club's bank balance and that any available finance towards the advanced expenditure should be explored and utilized. This will include the use of a club Barclaycard which has recently been arranged as well as seeking trade credit facilities for certain items such as Model Railway Press block advertising, hotels and show guide printing.

TS advised that the initial facility set up for the Barclaycard is £2,000.00 and any use of the card will be paid off by direct debit at the end of each month. The more the card is used in this way, the more likely it will be that additional credit may be offered.

6. TICKET DESKS, SUM-UP MACHINES, CASH TINS, WRIST BANDS

It was agreed, as per the Post Partem recommendations, that A-brail 2024 should have two ticket desks, one in the reception area and one in the entrance to the ASC building. This will involve the purchase of two more 'Sum-Up' machines and one more cash tin. It was agreed that the wristbands system should be continued, with a different colour for each day; one for the Saturday, the other for Sunday. TS will get the work done on ID checks for Sum Up in the near future.

7. ENTRY PRICES

After careful consideration, the meeting unanimously agreed that the entry prices should be £9.00 in advance (via Ticket Source) and £12.00 on the day. It is hoped that with an increase of the differential from £1.00 to £3.00, having regard to the booking fee payable by the public, people will

take advantage of the 'in advance' system and will want to make the £3.00 saving. For budgeting purposes, it will be assumed that everyone will pay in advance at £9.00/head and that anyone paying £12.00 on the day should be regarded as a bonus. There will be no concessions and children (accompanied by an adult) will enter the show for free.

TS reminded the meeting that once the show is advertised at an agreed price, it cannot subsequently be changed. ADMRC needs to carefully proof read anything that is published.

8. THE 'COST OF LIVING' CRISIS

The meeting was mindful of the potential impact of the national 'cost of living' crisis on potential ticket sales. It was agreed that whilst there has been encouraging news on inflation and the Bank of England' base rate, it can be expected that the base rate is unlikely to begin falling until after Abralil 2024. Nevertheless the meeting agreed to proceed with Abralil 2024 and hope for a good result.

9. GIFT AID

The meeting agreed that Abralil 2024 would be too soon to introduce gift aid at the ticket desk. When the Didcot 2024 exhibition takes place in late October 2024, there may be an opportunity to pilot the introduction of 'gift aid', by when the national economic crisis may have reduced. In the meantime, it was felt that in March 2024 it would be very difficult to persuade the public to pay extra at the ticket desk

10. ABINGDON & WITNEY COLLEGE

TS reported that negotiations with Abingdon & Witney College are now well advanced.

Although the first-floor area adjacent to the sports hall together with the drama studio are not going to be available, this has now been replaced with an additional ground floor classroom along the long corridor together with a couple of open areas previously used for chair and table storage.

Some additional classrooms were offered on the second-floor, but ADMRC will not be taking up this offer for Abralil 2024. They have however been viewed and measured for consideration in future years.

ADMRC will need to sign a formal contract in the next month or so, once the final layouts have been confirmed by booking form and the expanded presence of traders, societies and demonstrations has been concluded.

11. HOTEL BOOKINGS

TS will investigate obtaining credit facilities with either Premier Inn or Travel Lodge for the booking of hotel accommodation. A new Premier Inn has just opened on the Marcham roundabout and Premier Inn also have hotels in Didcot and Botley. Eric Young has said that he has contacts with Travel Lodge and TS agreed to provide him with details of our present requirements so he can investigate a more competitive package.

TS reminded the meeting that the cost of hotel rooms on Saturday evening is more expensive than those on a Friday evening.

12. LAYOUTS - GENERAL

TS advised that although he recently had e-mail commitments from 40 layouts (including children's layouts), when these were asked to complete and submit booking forms a few have dropped out, including: -

Sydney Gardens (OO)

Sweetmeadow (HO)

The Spirit of Swindon (N)

There are also 4 layouts who have not yet returned their forms despite several reminders. TS will shortly be making telephone contact with these to clarify their intentions: -

Abingdon (O)

Abingdon (OO)

Clarendon (P4)
Zeedijk (HO)

Any space vacated by these layout withdrawals will create additional ground floor space for the existing loyal traders, who will get the first priority for ground floor positions.

The layouts who have so far confirmed with a booking form that they are attending ABrail 2024 are: -

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Banbury (N) | Konigshafen (N) |
| Beijao (HO) | Los Tanimals (N) |
| The Bergeller Bahn (HO) | Moors View (N) |
| Bodmin (P4) | Museum of Transport (OO) |
| Broadford (HO & EM) | Norge – A Taste of Norway (HO) |
| City Basin Goods (N) | Overlord (OO) |
| Clarendon (P4) | The Parlour Railway (O) |
| Collingwood (OO) | Pencader (EM) |
| Corwenna (OO) | Portsea (3mm) |
| Drws-y-Nant (2mm FS) | Pwllheli (P4) |
| Elbow Lane (OO) | Redbridge Wharf (OO) |
| Hinksey Yard (N) | Whiteacres (OO) |
| Hungerford (EM) | Winter in France (OO9) |
| James Street (EM) | |

TS estimates that he will need to find another 9 smaller layouts, all prepared to exhibit on the first floor to bring the final total to a maximum of 40 (plus children's layouts).

13. LAYOUTS – CHILDRENS AREA

It was agreed that Dominic Hardisty will run the children's area of ABrail 2024, which will include: -

Sodor Island (Thomas) (OO)
Lego Layout
Sakura Crossing (HO)

There will also be a dedicated children's book trader.

A recent approach to a children's layout called '**Feldspar (N)**' was not successful, but may be possible for ABrail 2025. TS will follow this up.

14. TRADERS

PH confirmed that all of the existing traders from ABrail 2023 have been invited. There are also 5-6 additional traders he would like to approach when the space available has been clarified. It was agreed that traders will be charged at ABrail 2023 rates x 2 to reflect the 2-day show. Discounts for payment in advance will also continue.

15. SOCIETIES & DEMONSTRATIONS

TS confirmed that at this stage no societies have yet been invited, pending clarification of the floor space available. It was agreed that as far as possible, societies and demonstrations will be located on the second floor.

16. FLOOR PLAN

MT confirmed that he will be producing a technical drawing of the floor plan in time for the exhibition. In the meantime, TS is putting a draft floor plan together using Excel, which can in due course be shared among the sub-committee via email.

TS advised the meeting that most of the larger layouts are insisting on a ground-floor position. This means that the first-floor rooms/areas off of the long corridor and in the ASC building will likely be used for: -

Existing Layouts who have agreed to first floor locations
Additional layouts to replace those who have withdrawn
Exhibitors and Stewards Catering
Additional Traders

Societies (except Oxfordshire Railway Society)
Demonstrations
Club Stand, Second Hand Stand, Tombola, Raffle

17. SPEAKERS

It was agreed that ABrail 2024 should be the last opportunity to make the Speakers idea work. Again, the Lecture Theatre will be used for this.

TS advised that he has approached the Oxfordshire Railway Society (ORS) to help us with this project. The proposal is that in exchange for a free of charge society stand outside the entrance to the Lecture, ORS will give away the free tickets to those who show an interest and appear likely to attend. They will also manage the Lecture Theatre and equipment and introduce each speaker. ADMRC stewards should then be freed up for other duties. Speakers will cover 50% railway modelling and 50% general railway interest, which will hopefully attract attendees from local people and railway modellers alike. Provisionally, each lecture will be an hour in duration, commencing at 12.00, 13.00, 14.00 and 15.00. Additional promotion will be done by giving away cards to those in the queue to get into the show, on the ticket desks and on the doorway entrances to the various rooms being used at the college.

18. CLUB STAND

It was agreed that for ABrail 2024, Leicester Belgrave Road would involve too many stewards, but that one of the smaller layouts may be available, perhaps **Carlisle Canal** (OO).

At this point, the meeting adjourned for 7 days as the agenda was too long for just one meeting.

19. SECOND HAND STAND

This will again be run by Paul Robinson. This subject to be discussed in detail at another meeting.

20. TOMBOLA & RAFFLE

This will be done on the basis of what items are donated. PH agreed to approach Hornby again for a raffle prize and establish new contacts.

21. INTERNAL SIGNAGE

As per the Post Partem, it was agreed that there will be a requirement for additional 'A' boards for internal signage. TS produced a suggested sign that can be purchased and a poster inserted. It was agreed that an increase of 'Layouts This Way' signs would benefit the show and reduce the number of dedicated stewards required to direct people around the college.

22. SHOW GUIDE

PC & TC acknowledged that they have received much of the text, photos and track plans from TS and that they have begun working on this project. It was agreed that the show guide should be A5 sized, make good use of colour and include block advertising from all of the traders which will tell everyone what each trader does. It was agreed that additional advertising will be required to at least cover the costs of the show guide, which will be offered out free of charge to everyone who attends the show.

23. ADVERTISING IN SHOW GUIDE

It was agreed that Traders would be offered a free of charge block advert of a standard small size. This could be up-sold to a larger size.

Additional adverts will be sought from manufacturers and traders from the railway modelling community who are not in attendance at the show. Also, local businesses will be approached for additional advertising.

TS agreed to speak with other clubs to establish a fair rate for adverts of various sizes.

24. SHOW SPONSORSHIP

After some discussion on this it was agreed that sponsorship is likely to include: -

- a) Estate Agent promotion on their own promotional signs in Abingdon.
- b) The sponsorship of some of the layouts in return for an advert on a display sign in front of the layout.
- c) Large block adverts in the show guide.
- d) TS advised that use can be made of some TV screens around the college where ADMRC could sell advertising. Someone in the club needs to take this project on.

Andrew Skinner is in touch with Rapido Trains who are interested in promoting themselves at A-brail 2024. The back page of the show guide might suit them.

GH will look after this and seek suitable sponsors and advertisers.

25. PUBLICITY – NATIONAL

a) **Model Railway Press**

It was agreed that notices in the diary sections of Railway Modeller, Continental Modeller, British Railway Modelling, Model Rail and Hornby Magazine will all be given details of A-brail 2024 in time for the February and March issues. PH will look after this and in the case of Railway Modeller should include a list of all the layouts attending. It was further agreed that full page or half page block adverts should be included in the same publications to appear in the March 2024 editions, which it is hoped will draw in modellers from a wide area. TS produced an initial design that he is working on.

b) **Specialist Websites**

UK model shops now needs to be updated with the confirmed layouts and traders and then kept updated. GH will organise this. It may also be worth considering banner advertising on UK Model Shops and RM Web. GH will investigate

c) **Flyers at Model Railway Exhibitions**

An initial 'save the date' type of flyer has already been produced. An A5 flyer needs to be designed for use at the shows in January/February that include prices, layouts and traders attending, and advanced ticket arrangements.

26. PUBLICITY – LOCAL

a) **AA Road Signage**

It was agreed that the AA road signs were a success at A-brail 2023 and should be repeated into A-brail 2024. Additional AA signs may be required to direct people to the overflow car parking.

b) **Road Posters**

It was agreed that the A2 sized road posters need to be produced during the Autumn. It was also agreed that the timber should be plywood and PH agreed to get this purchased ASAP from Powells Sheet Materials who will cut these to size. As far as possible these signs should cover the approaches to Abingdon and not duplicate the AA signage. A road posters plan needs to be produced. ADMRC club members will be required to erect these road posters two weeks ahead of the show.

c) **Banners**

Additional banners on railings in suitable prominent positions needs to be organised and permissions sought if required. GH will research this.

d) **Local Radio**

GH will investigate whether there is an opportunity for an interview with a local radio station in the days approaching the exhibition. Also, Jack FM may be able to assist in the general promotion of the show.

e) **Facebook**

GH will look into how we can best utilize Facebook and other social media to help to promote the show locally and also to maximise the advanced ticket sales.

f) Collection of email Addresses

It was agreed that ADMRC should have stewards with clipboards near the ticket desks collecting contact e-mail addresses that could be used to promote ABrail 2025 by emailing a PDF of the promotional flyer in mid-February 2025. Under GDPR such data can be retained for a limited period of time and it was agreed that care needs to be taken to stay the right side of GDPR legislation. DR to ensure that the rota covers this.

27. SOMEONE TO OPEN THE SHOW

The meeting identified Paul Clifton from the BBC as a local celebrity and someone who might agree to open the show. GH to investigate.

28. THE MAYOR OF ABINGDON & CHAIRMAN OF VOWHDC

PH agreed to formally invite the Mayor of Abingdon and the Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council to attend the ABrail 2024 exhibition.

29. ROTA

DR confirmed that he has started work on producing an excel of the rota and now needs for club members to commit to becoming stewards to cover all of the positions and duties. An initial estimate of 35 people will be required to do the job properly. It was agreed that ADMRC should seek additional assistance from friends and family. WM will include this in his next Chairman's email.

30. BARRIERS & CABLES

TS confirmed that the barriers and any additional cables required has been booked with CMRA and will need to be collected by van from Welwyn Garden City on Thursday 29 February 2024 and returned on Monday 4 March 2024. TS, JB and Steve Crook have already volunteered for this.

31. VAN HIRE

JB confirmed that a box transit van with tail lift has been booked with TVR for the period from 29 February 2024 to Monday 4 March 2024. This will also be used for transporting items between ADMRC clubrooms and the College. It was acknowledged that it will be a late evening for some on the Sunday, as the barriers will need to be loaded onto the van so that the return trip to Welwyn can commence on the Monday.

32. CAR PARKING

It was agreed that there is insufficient car parking at the college to cope with the expected numbers. It was agreed that TS would write to Fitzharris School to seek the use of their car parking spaces and the hard standing on their sports pitches as an overflow car park. PC has provided TS with a contact and email address. It was also agreed that either the Air Cadets or the Scouts will be approached to assist with stewarding the car parking. JB has the contacts for this.

33. RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

JB has recently purchased sufficient radios to cover the exhibition. The Air Cadets or Scouts will provide their own.

34. CATERING

TS advised that he is in discussion with Abingdon College to provide a 'first floor' dedicated area (off of the long corridor) as a combined break out area and exhibitors catering area. The main catering area near the reception will be exclusively for the public. This should mean that exhibitors will not have to queue for too long for their lunches. Food will be transported between this area and the kitchens via a trolley using the lift.

35. FIRST AID

JB will be the primary first aider for the show and there is a dedicated first aid room included in the hire. It is estimated that ADMRC will need a total of 4 named and qualified first aiders on each day of the show. Certificates will need to be produced to Abingdon College.

36. 50th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

It was agreed that this subject should be referred back to the 'General Committee' and be discussed in detail at their next meeting. This to include the form and content of the celebration, when and where it should take place, who should be invited, and how it should be paid for. The meeting still has in mind that this will happen on the Saturday evening of Abrail 2024, though this has yet to be decided.

37. ABRAIL 2025

TS confirmed that good progress is being made to secure the layouts for Abrail 2025, which will take place on Sat & Sun 1 & 2 March 2025 at Abingdon & Witney College. It is hoped that all of the layouts will be confirmed with booking forms before the copy date for the Abrail 2024 show guide in order that an advert for Abrail 2025, including a list of the layouts attending, can be included. Apart from this, there is nothing that needs to be discussed on Abrail 2025 until Abrail 2024 has been concluded.

38. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

39. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that although it was necessary for this meeting to take place on two consecutive Friday evenings at the clubrooms, future meetings should take place via Zoom on a Thursday evening to avoid dividing the club on a Friday.

40. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

No date has yet been set, but it was agreed that it would probably be via Zoom on a Thursday evening in early October 2023.

Meeting Closed