

## Wensleydale Railway

### Shareholders Update – December 2011

Over the recent months there have been a number of changes to the WR plc Board. Angus Maude has stepped down from the Chair and has now become the Chief Executive, John Mazzucchi was elected Chairman. Other Board appointments are David Pilgrim Finance Director; Peter Dew, Director of Railway Operations; Carl Les, Director of Rail Enterprises. Russell Lord remains as Director of Rail Infrastructure and Janet Crampton, Vice-Chair.

Nick Wood resigned his post of General Manager in early November and the Board appointed Nigel Parks as acting General Manager pending a change in Staffing Structure. We thank Nick for his services to the Railway and wish him well in his future career.

During the summer months there was an accident between a steam-hauled passenger train and a car on a User Worked Crossing (UWC), which was widely reported in the railway press. No persons were injured in this collision. The accident was investigated by an inspector (HMRI) from the Office of Rail Regulation and resulted in a 10 mph speed restriction over all UWCs until the appropriate vegetation clearance is undertaken. Staff and volunteers are making a concerted effort to clear all UWCs of vegetation – we aim to complete this task by March 2012 at the latest. Once complete, it will be re-inspected by the HMRI and if deemed satisfactory, the speed restriction will be lifted.

With the railway passing through farming country we have over fifty of these crossings to maintain. It is the responsibility of the user to open and close gates; in the recent years we have spent over £5,000 in renewing / repairing these gates. However, many users refuse to operate these gates correctly and a police prosecution is difficult to obtain.

Another consequence of the accident was the examination of the Safety Management System (SMS) and the Rule Book by the HMRI. When the Railway was opened in 2003 it was decided to use the 2003 Network Rail Rule Book, which the inspector has now deemed inappropriate for a single-line railway using heritage rolling stock. We were served with an Improvement Notice, mandating the Railway to produce a new Rule Book and update our SMS. Both staff and volunteers 'burnt the midnight oil' in producing these documents. Special thanks go to staff member Richard Brown for leading and compiling these documents. They were inspected by the HMRI in early November and the Improvement Notice has now been complied with and 'signed off.'

Bookings for Santa Specials are continuing to come in as Christmas approaches and we have decided to run on Boxing Day. We have a special promotion from 26 December until 2 January 2012, our last day of the season, of £5 per adult return.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

John Mazzucchi  
Chairman WR plc