

## RETIRED MEMBERS GROUP : MINUTES OF THE ON-LINE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 09<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2021 VIA ZOOM.

**Participants:** John Rees, Luke Howard, David Porter, Tim Young, Bob Bayley, Dick Sharp, Neil Baker. Also taking part was Steve Whitehead for Agenda Item 9 (NPC matters)

**1.Chair's opening remarks:** John welcomed those participating in the Meeting.

**2.Apologies from those unable to take part:** Cheryl O'Brien

**3.Minutes of previous Meeting:** These had been circulated and were agreed as a correct record.

**4.Matters arising not elsewhere:** Luke mentioned that he had been particularly busy but had matters referred to him such as the retirement Form were in hand, otherwise none.

**5.Secretary's Report:** Luke reported that:-

(a) 2022 Meeting dates:

- Apart from the proposed additional Zoom Meeting in January to deal with the SDC Conference on the IBB merger, these were confirmed as:  
**General Meetings** 3<sup>rd</sup> February; 28<sup>th</sup> April; 22<sup>nd</sup> September with the AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> November. **Committee Meetings** 24<sup>th</sup> March; 11<sup>th</sup> August; 6<sup>th</sup> October and 8<sup>th</sup> December and, after taking the comments made below into account, they would be via Zoom. Concerning the SDC, the date may be put back to 12<sup>th</sup> February and, if confirmed, it may be that the proposed additional January Meeting will not be necessary should the preliminary Agenda be available before our February Meeting. He would make enquiries to see if its issue could be expedited. Concerning Committee Meetings being exclusively by Zoom, it was acknowledged that when this decision was made Bob had not been present. Bob said that due to him needing a hearing aid, he was affected by sound feedback and echos when using Zoom which was a distraction and, as a result, he preferred face to face. The general feeling was that Zoom was

preferable, considerably cheaper and eliminated the need for possible long-distance travel for a short meeting. However, there was sympathy for **Bob's** situation and, as we did not want to lose a very good Newsletter Editor, options would be kept under review.

- Several options for other suitable locations were suggested such as the Council House at Birmingham or other business centres. **Luke** would also look at other London possibilities including St Aloysius Church Hall where we have previously met and said that other suggested venues would be considered. **Post Meeting Note:** the RMG had previously used the Camden Centre for the London General meeting but the cost had become prohibitive. **Tim** said he had been involved in arranging a hybrid meeting at Exeter University and cautioned that the involvement of an IT expert would be valuable for hybrid meetings.
- Discussions with St Michaels Centre at Stoke Gifford were underway with a view to their ability to facilitate hybrid meetings. Due to the prevailing Covid situation, it was decided that the February and April General meetings would be via Zoom but it was hoped that later in the year, hybrid meetings would be possible as they have the advantage of encouraging longer distance participation without the need for the travel involved. These arrangements were confirmed and the draft General Meeting Agenda would reflect these decisions.

(b) **Website/MyTSSA:** There was nothing further to add, although **Luke** did question the need to keep historic items such as minutes and agendas. Head Office had been asked where RMG documents from the original website had gone and this would be repeated. It was felt that NPC items should be kept but a link to the NPC website would be the best way to give access to all their public information: unfortunately this is not supported by the website at present.

(c) **Election for General Secretary:** This was an issue of concern given that his 5 years Term of Office was up on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 and nothing had been issued concerning the necessary election of a General Secretary. **David** said this was a legal requirement and **Bob**, who had circulated the document which contained this election requirement, questioned the GenSec's entitlement to continue if he had not been elected for a further

term. There were thoughts that the IBB situation might have clouded the picture, but what was seen as a legal requirement was paramount. **Luke** undertook to write to Head Office to seek answers.

**(d) RMG Stall at Sheffield Conference:** Our intent to have a stall had been confirmed with **Steve Coe** and **Luke** would have further discussions with him over content and any suggestions. We also needed to have a roster of volunteers to man the stall. It was agreed that we would seek a volunteer to co-ordinate materials and a staffing roster for the staff.

**6.Treasurers Report:** **David** said that there had been no income or expenditure since his last report and that there were sufficient funds to cover the anticipated NPC BDC account.

**7.Newsletter Report:** **Bob** said he would get the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the Newsletter out over the current weekend. He had also reissued the request for volunteers for the two vacant Committee members. Concerning the question of the transfer of travel entitlements to a companion, as had been raised at the AGM, **Luke** said he would speak to **Pauline McCardle (DWG)** and follow up this idea with the Rail Delivery Group. He also asked if there were any names for the Committee vacancies that he could personally approach. **Bob** was again thanked for his work on the newsletter.

**8. Pre-retirement seminars:** There was nothing new to report.

**9. NPC and related matters:** **Steve Whitehead** reported that he expected to receive the paperwork for the NPC BDC was over the current weekend. Concerning the submission of amendments to the agenda, he would circulate the motions as soon as they are known. There would, however be a tight deadline. Concerning an enquiry from **David**, **Steve** said the BDC invoices would be sent to him, but he would let him know the amount.

He had attended the last NPC EC Meeting and found it somewhat trying as, whatever the topic, there were the same one or two delegates who found it necessary to speak.

The NPC Finance Working Party was to meet next week to discuss the NPC budget. The current cost savings will reduce the deficit, as will working from home as this will reduce the budgeted expenditure.

Concerning the NPC Charity, the inaugural meeting of the seven trustees took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. It seems that he as Secretary and Mike Sparham as Chair will have the lion's share of the admin work to do, with the hope that April 1<sup>st</sup> will be the official start. Vantage Fundraising are being involved in fund raising talks and we are seeking to contact Trusts to see if they provide an opportunity for funding.

In a reply to **Bob**, he said that he would be sending a report for the Newsletter by the end of next week or soon thereafter.

**Luke** asked if **Steve** could identify whether reports he sends on NPC matters contain any confidential material so he can post other briefings on MyTSSA.

In conclusion, **Steve** said that would continue to make reports up to the BDC, but if he is elected as NPC Treasurer, he would not be able to continue to do so due to a conflict of interests and that a new 'reporter' would be necessary.

**10. Visits:** As has been previously reported, given the constraints and effects of the pandemic, it was still the opinion that Spring 2022 was the soonest we could consider such events. However, suggestions for venues/topics were welcome.

**11. General Meeting by Zoom February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022:**

There was, at present, nothing further to add, other than the Agenda would include SDC details and procedures if information was received in time.

**12. Future Meetings:** These were dealt with under Item 5(a)

**13. Any other business:** A request had been received from Steve Leggett seeking any information on where to get financial advice over taking voluntary severance. The general opinion was that we should not get involved in making any recommendations over Financial Advisors and that he should be advised to contact Rail Pensions.

There being no further business, **John** thanked all who had given reports and participated. He specially thanked **Neil** and **Dick** for their service on the Committee. **Neil** said he had enjoyed his time and would still send in his monthly pensions updates. Likewise, **Dick** said he had been happy to help keep the RMG going, but after being on the Committee since the RMG started in February 2012, perhaps it was time someone else had a go.

**John** then wished all the compliments of the season and closed the Meeting at 15.15hrs.