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Chairman: Gordon Neilson  
Vice-Chairman & Secretary:  
David Kerr  
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Bus Manager: Ronnie Gibson  
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## Thornhill & District Community Transport

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 21/03/2017, at 7.15pm at the Gladstone Hall, Penpont

**Present:** Gordon Neilson, David Kerr, David Dick, Alison McMillan, Rab Cook, Robin Robertson

**Apologies:** Jenny Bourne, Rolf Buwert, Ronnie Gibson, Mary Newbould, Jock Scott, Joan Neilson

1. **Welcome.**
  - GN, chairing, welcomed everyone.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
  - As noted above.
3. **Minutes of Previous (Quarterly) Meeting**  
**www.**
  - Proposed: DD; Seconded: RC
4. **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**
  - DD has checked our current fares for scheduled routes. They are line with those of D&GC.
  - The missing log sheets had re-appeared and been submitted. Our s.19 & 22 claims have, despite fears, been settled without query. Thanks to Annette Beagrie, our accounts inspector, who endorsed them.
5. **Financial Report, incl review of charges**
  - See DD's report, annexed.
6. **Licence Check, Ticketer...any issues?**
  - Both of these systems working well.
7. **MiDAS**
  - Nothing further, in the absence of RB.
8. **D1...**
  - Also nothing further, in the absence of RB. Govt was, maybe still is, offering free D1 training. Don't want to presume/trespass on RB's goodwill; but, should he be interested in doing this, it would be of benefit. All of our current drivers are sufficiently venerable that D1 is not yet a problem, but the time will come when it will be.
9. **Bus Report; incl replacement plans.**
  - Existing bus running well at present and, after pre-MOT checks at Keir, resulting in £200 or so of remedial works, passed its MOT.



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- We have funding applications currently in with The Robertson Trust (£12.5k), Clyde Windfarm (£12.5k) and ANCBC (£12.5k). An application to Morrisons had been turned down. Robertson are meeting in the next few days, so we should have an answer soon. Clyde is a two stage application. We have passed Stage 1. DD will submit the Stage 2 application shortly. Decision will be in September. ANCBC next meets at the end of May. Our application is already in. In view of the lower than expected cost of a replacement bus (see later), probably one grant of £12.5k will be enough.
- DK reported that, of the bus builders contacted, Excel had, as previously reported, quoted slightly over £70k for a Mercedes Sprinter to our general spec; O&H had, after several promptings, failed to quote (ATI advised us this had been their experience also); further approaches to K&I (Dalkeith) had also failed to yield a quote and Allied (Glasgow) had been, on the previous time we contacted them, so uninterested that it did not seem worth contacting them again. Meantime, ATI have successfully sourced a (Crafter) bus from TBC Conversions in Dungannon and reported favourably on the finished product and on all their dealings with the company. DK had contacted them and found them very responsive and helpful. They provided, in very early course, quotes for a front entry, 16-seat Crafter (because they have a number of the base vehicles in stock) and a side entry, 15 seat Sprinter. 16 seats do not seem to be possible with a side entry vehicle. DK had some recollection that the 16<sup>th</sup> seat was slightly 'shoe-horned in' to the bus we have just now (hence no access to the rear doors from within the bus itself) and that regulations have been tightened up since then. We had hoped for another 16 seat bus, but JB, consulted beforehand, and those present felt that, with the sort of work we do, an automatic door (the front entry is manual only) was the priority. Drawings, quotes available separately. The exact spec still needs to be fine tuned, but, in principle, the meeting *approved* purchase of a Sprinter bus from TBC, assuming sufficient funding becomes available from one or more of the funders applied to. Price quoted by TBC is of the order of £60k inc VAT. (Excel's quote was for £71k inc VAT, plus extras). The existing bus may prove difficult to sell (as did the last one, though, 10 years on, Wallace Hall cluster schools are still running our previous bus! Maybe they'd be interested in an upgrade...?) If no-one locally will buy it, *agreed* we would dispose of it by auction. In the meantime, DK & DD to pursue, as appropriate.

www.

#### 10. Personnel; retirements.

- GN & JN moving, this week, to Stirling, following various changes in family circumstances. GN willing to continue to act as Chairman, including making the s.19 & 22 returns and OSCR return, until our AGM.
- RC will be obliged to retire in May; RR's licence will be due for renewal in June and, given the expense and trouble of renewing it the last time, he is disinclined to do so for the sake of another 6 months or so. So he will retire then, also.
- We will have a small 'do' at the AGM to thank all our retirees for all they have contributed to T&DCT over the years.
- And we will need to address recruitment again.

#### 11. Development: Thornhill station steering group.

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- DK had attended the recent meeting of this group, representing T&DCT. One of the factors in this is a link to Thornhill station, should it re-open and, either as well, or instead, a specific rail bus that connects with trains to/from Kirkconnel/Sanquhar, Dumfries and Lockerbie. Apparently the existing commercial services do not link up with trains and D&GC say that the operators cannot be made/persuaded to do so. A possible rôle for us, had we sufficient volunteers. Might be worth looking in to further. Thornhill Station Steering Group also indicated they might have access, amongst those who have signed up, to more volunteers for us. DK will pursue. MN has also indicated that there is an electronic 'grapevine' in and about Tynron, which might yield some results. AMcM suggested printing some more of the fliers (which, though out of production for some time, are still current) and circulating them about.

**12. AOCB**

- None.

**13. DONMs 2016/17:** 13/06/2017 (to include AGM).

**14. Meeting Closed.**

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Annexe: Financial Report for Bus Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017

- I should say at the outset that these figures will change by the end of the month as we are due payments from both the Scottish Government and D&GRC however they do reflect our position.
- We are approaching the Financial Year End for 2016 – 17 and while the accounts when complete will show a deficit this is because the purchase of the ticketing machine was completed into this financial year while the funding for it arrived in last year's accounts.
- If I take off this exceptional expenditure we will be in profit by £950.00. In addition we also trained Rolf as a MIDAS Instructor at a cost of around £1,076.00 so this is also an exceptional expense for this year only.
- Hires to date are down by around £2,000.00 this year when compared to last. Just short of £900 of that was received last year from WHA/ Education Department Hires. This year there has been little more than £50 received from WHA. The rest appears to be across the board with fewer Drumlanrig View Trips and Briery Park Trips Only 1 Briery Park Trip throughout the year.
- This drop has been balanced by income from the concessionary tickets which as approaching £1,000.00. A drop in fuel costs of around £600.00. Maintenance is also down by £1,000 albeit it is still quite high at around £3,500.00.
- As we move towards buying a new bus hopefully the maintenance costs should fall away and it would be reasonable to expect a new bus to be much more fuel efficient.
- I am therefore not proposing any changes to our charges.
- We have three potential sources of funding for our New Bus and we await the results of these applications.

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