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# **FRIENDS OF THE SETTLE – CARLISLE LINE**

COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE. REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AND WALES NO: 14240068



## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026.**

Double Tree Hilton Leeds. Granary Wharf, 2 Wharf Approach, LEEDS. LS1 4BR

The Annual General Meeting of FoSCL will be held on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Please assemble from 10.15 am for the start of formal business at 10.45 am. Tea and coffee will be available. A light lunch will be available after the formal business from 12.15am. The venue is a 3 minute walk from the Granary Wharf entrance to the station

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the AGM 2025.
3. Chair's Address - Allison Cosgrove.
4. Finance Director's Report - Damian Smith.
5. Election of Officers and Committee.

Nominations for Officer and other Board (Committee) roles close on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2026, and will then be published. Nomination forms are available by contacting [secretary@settle-carlisle.com](mailto:secretary@settle-carlisle.com) The posts to be elected this year are;

Chair – 1 year term

Treasurer – 1 year term

Secretary – 1 year term

Other board members, 5 posts – 3 year term

After the close of formal business there will be an opportunity for members to ask questions. These can be posed in advance to: [Secretary@settle-carlisle.com](mailto:Secretary@settle-carlisle.com). It would be appreciated if questions could be directed towards FoSCL and Settle-Carlisle Railway matters.

It is intended to invite a guest speaker to talk on a subject relevant to the work of FoSCL Further information will be shared once it is available.

It is recognised that not everyone who wishes to will be able to attend the AGM in person. It is intended that a Zoom link will be shared ahead of the meeting to enable remote access.

**PLEASE BRING THIS AGENDA PAPER WITH YOU TO THE MEETING AS YOU MAY NEED IT IN ORDER TO VOTE.**

**James O’Ryan** – Secretary

**FRIENDS OF THE SETTLE - CARLISLE LINE**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: TUESDAY 17 JUNE 2025**

Venue – Crown and Mitre Hotel, Carlisle at 1300

**Chair – Allison Cosgrove. 51 Members in attendance and 26 Members online. 23 Members sent apologies**

**Minutes of the AGM 20 June 2024** – proposed and seconded. Agreed

**Chair's Address** – Allison Cosgrove welcomed Members to the Meeting and introduced her Review of the past twelve months by way of a Power Point slide presentation. She was assisted in this by Anna Jackson, recently appointed Commercial Manager to the three LSCL support organisations. Allison emphasised how much had been achieved thanks to the efforts of hard-working Volunteers and paid tribute to their contributions.

Allison gave the apologies of the guest speaker, Alex Kirk, who was unable to attend due to illness.

A number of questions had been raised by members in advance of the meeting. The Chair summarised these and advised members of the actions that had been taken.

## **Finance**

***Finance Director, Damian Smith, presented the financial position of FoSCL to members. His report is below and will be published, with appendixes, in Friends on Track.***

I am pleased to report a very healthy position with a net profit of £12,109, supported by strong cash reserves. Trading Activities; Sales from our retail operations continue to provide valuable income with gross profits of £13,956, from sales that were 12% lower than last year. Sales for the shops at Settle and Appleby were 16% lower reflecting the damp spring and summer. That said, our product range continues to evolve appealing to new and regular customers alike. It is therefore pleasing to see our online sales increase by 26% reflecting the trend of home shopping. A big thank you to Margaret Hargreaves and David Wilkins, who select and purchase our stock. Thank you to Annie Payne and the many volunteers at Settle and Appleby plus our online sales team who do a fantastic job in welcoming our customers and visitors. We continue to move forward and in January, we started our rollout of a new EPOS II and card reader that links direct to our accounting systems. This started with our Settle Shop in January and since year end has included Appleby and our signal boxes. As well as making us more efficient, this has been well received by volunteers and most importantly our customers as well as increasing donations in an increasingly electronic payment led society.

Membership; This has seen a real step change, with an increased contribution from £3,953 to £26,437. This has come about following the review of our membership offering, resulting in the first uplift in our membership fees for more than 20 years. In summary, the actions taken from the review have generated increased income of 86% and a reduction in costs of 12%. Our members can now benefit from a wider range of offers including discounts at our station and online shops, along with discounts from the wider Settle & Carlisle Railway family offerings at Ribbleshead Visitor Centre, Horton Cafe Bar, the On Train Trolley refreshments and stays at the 6 holiday lets at Horton, Ribbleshead, Dent and the 3 at Kirkby Stephen. Members may continue to apply for a Dales Rail card to benefit from reduced fares on the line. In February, our members received the first edition of the new Quarterly Journal, Friends on Track, which has been widely heralded. Our costs will continue to fall as more members engage with the new Membership system, provided by MemberMojo, reducing postage and administration. We have a new membership leaflet in design to support our online offering as we look to grow our membership and appeal to a wider demographic. A big thank you to our Membership team at Appleby and especially to all our valued members for their continued loyalty and support. Other Income Donations are up by 13 % to £14,607 and we thank everyone who has contributed to this valuable source of income. Legacies have contributed £1,663 compared to £2,962 the previous year. Donations and legacies are important and we ask all members to consider these as they help the Friends continue to maintain and invest in the heritage assets and volunteer activities that

showcase the line. A proportion of our cash reserves is deposited with interest bearing accounts and this has generated an increase of £3,993 to £7,317 received from bank interest. All our deposits are with UK registered banks and protected by the £85,000 guarantee provided by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). In summary, our gross income rose by 16% during the year to £111,587. Costs Our increased income has enabled us to invest £11,453 in the development of the line, an increase in 48% on last year. These include work on our Signal Boxes at Armathwaite and Settle, shop refurbishments at Appleby and Settle, the new cafe bar at Horton plus all the stations on the line, with some recognised by the RHS Britain in Bloom awards. There has been an increase in our contribution to guided walks along the line, including the grant for the Ride to Stride Festival and printing costs for leaflets raising awareness of our regular free guided walks at weekends plus the Footsteps in Time walks at Ribbleshead. Meeting expenses for our volunteers have grown by £2,938 following a general meeting in March 2024 and a recognition dinner of long serving committee members that had recently retired. Such events had not taken place since before COVID and there is an element of catch up. Other costs have been reduced, including our storage at Unit 8a, with costs 18% lower. These will be removed entirely for the coming year following the termination of our lease. This will result in the winding up of the Midland Railway Company, our subsidiary that operated Unit 8a. We are grateful to Mark and Pat Rand who have offered valuable storage space at the Water Tower.

Dent Station & Lettings. Dent station is owned by the Friends and is operated by a wholly owned subsidiary – the Settle Carlisle Railway Company Limited (SCRCL). We are proud to have welcomed many guests to stay at our iconic property as England's highest mainline station. Utilisation was slightly lower in the year, reflecting the overall trend in the UK holiday let market. That said, it remained a positive year contributing an overall trading profit of £9,545. This is excellent considering the 6 week closure to complete the 3 year renovation programme. Charitable donations of £4k were made to integrated transport for buses linking to stations on the line and £6,500 to the Settle & Carlisle Railway Trust as a restricted fund for the activities we jointly undertake to enhance the line. Monies spent from this fund include new Midland Red station signage. We would like to thank Adrian Quine from the Trust in making this happen. Moving forward we are working with the property arm of the Trust to consider how we can best showcase and operate all the holiday let properties along the line. Thanks go to John Carey for his dedication and diligence with the daily operation and ongoing renovation of the property. John has also project managed an upgrade of the accommodation, including the Porters Room, with repairs and maintenance totalling £6,321, which reflects an increase of £3,396 on the previous year. Work has also been completed with the final phase of the 3 year renovation programme taking place in Spring 24. Last year the Friends invested £17,455 and the work that has been undertaken reflects positively in the property value estimated to be in excess of £500k compared to an initial purchase price of £362k. As bookings for the coming year are strong, this continues to be a valuable asset for the Friends. Looking forward The Friends continue to have sound financial controls and are in good shape with strong cash reserves of £244k, an increase of £8k on last year. This is a strong platform to move forward as we begin our focus on delivering the key strategic priorities which include growing our membership and working together with the wider Settle & Carlisle Railway family, particularly on our commercial and trading activities.

Summary. I would like to close by thanking Joanne Crompton for her ongoing contribution with our bookkeeping and financial management. Joanne's knowledge and proactive approach is much valued. I continue to take a great deal of pride in my association with the Friends and I thank my fellow Board members and our band of dedicated volunteers who promote the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle line on a daily basis. There is much work to do and I look forward to the challenges ahead.

**Election of Officers** – Allison Cosgrove (Chair) Damian Smith (Finance) and James O'Ryan (Company Secretary) all elected unopposed

**Election of Board Members** - Jill Tiernan and Pete Myers both elected unopposed

## **Questions and Answers**

Jon Tomlinson led a lively discussion addressing questions raised by members answers and covering other areas of work being undertaken by volunteers

The question and answer session included a broad range of subjects. Included in the discussion were;

1. Members - we have 2656 members. This includes 98 new members this year. 125 of last year's members are still to renew their membership. We discussed the Board stretch target of doubling membership to 5000 – and broadening to reflect the communities served by the line.
2. Priorities – our number 1 priority, as outlined in the strategy, is to increase use of the line.
3. Performance - we discussed Northern's performance and an outline of the passenger subsidies relevant to the line. It was agreed that reliability of services is key.
4. The missing Colne to Skipton section of line. Members supported the re-opening of the missing section as a major contributor to supporting East Lancashire and feeding more passengers to the Leeds Settle Carlisle line
5. Opportunities arising from the planned closure of the West Coast line for maintenance. The Chair will provide a view from the Board
6. Population changes – it was noted that increased housing growth at the northern end of the line may provide some opportunities for growth.
7. Rotation of Annual General Meeting days and venues. The majority of those present supported a proposal to hold AGMs at different places between Leeds and Carlisle and on different days of the week. Action - Secretary
8. Printed vs online material- the Board are concerned about the quantity of printed material consumed at Leeds Station. Current printed material now contains QR Codes which evidence reveals are being used. The Board will continue to have both online and printed material.
9. Views were sought on whether the Board should continue its current policy that new volunteers are required to join the Friends as members. The overwhelming view on the floor was this policy should continue. The Board will consider and take a decision in due course.
10. Name of the organisation – in response to a question from a member suggesting the name is changed to include "Leeds" a show of hands revealed a significant majority in favour. The Board will consider and report back to members via the Journal
11. Some members requested Directors should have their pictures published in a future journal. This will be considered by the Board
12. Younger members – a question was raised about how to draw more younger people into membership and volunteering. The Board will consider how best to recruit more younger members.

The Chair declared the Meeting closed at 1430.

**Allison Cosgrove**

**Chair**

