



THE WEST LANCS (NEWS) LETTER

Welcome to a special edition of the newsletter!



The big news is that we now own our site!

On Monday 5th August Chairman Mike and Deputy Chairman Keith signed the contract to purchase the land on which the Railway sits. This was rapidly followed by a signature from Alty's Anne Price, and completion took place on August 9th.



Mike Spall summed up the achievement like this:

'With the tremendous support given to us by our members, friends, neighbours and supporters, we have achieved our goal of raising the £260,000 required for the land purchase. A dark cloud over the future of the railway has been lifted and we can now start to develop and invest in our popular heritage Railway. Our visitors can expect to see great things in the coming years as our plans are rolled out.'

In the coming months we will be considering ideas to improve the site and its facilities. Some changes are being driven by the developments next door, with a new site access and car park, new toilets with disabled access and a new electrical substation. Others will be more of our own making - let us know what you think we could do!

In the meantime the funding situation still needs to be resolved. We urgently need to raise more money to repay the loans we have taken out to fund the land purchase. The website gives details of how you can help.

In other news...

Some other important news relates to health and safety. We are progressing steadily on various aspects, including training schedules, induction workshops, passing out of firemen, risk assessment and Rule Book updates and a revised Safety Management System. We are also formalising our incident investigation procedures, so that we capture any learning points and incorporate them into our ways of working.

The aim is to create a fundamental change in our safety culture, where everybody feels confident in their own ability to work safely, and is willing to take action where necessary to correct or improve any work situation they come across. The new risk assessments will spell out the precautions for each main activity, and newly-written or revised procedures will incorporate these precautions into our methods of work.

To help with this we have engaged the services of Martyn Ashworth, to review our systems and see where we need to prioritise improvements. Martyn is a very experienced railway safety consultant, who has worked with many preserved railways and is well placed to give us advice on the way forward.

And... we are to have a visit from a Railway Inspector!

James Walker of the Office of Road and Rail has made contact to say he will be coming to the Railway in late August. The ORR have indicated that they are to pay more attention to the health and safety of preserved railways, in addition to their work with Network Rail and the mainline train operating companies. It looks like we are to be early beneficiaries of this policy!

In truth, we can only benefit from having ORR's eagle eye turned on us, as it will give us a good benchmark for where we are compared to other railways, and what we need to improve on.

In a future West Lancs Letter we will give an update on progress with health and safety.

This edition was prepared during our Summer Gala, in the middle of some distinctly autumnal weather!

However a good time was still had by members and visitors alike - more details in our next issue.

