

Minutes of the 795th meeting of the Paddock Party Committee

Held at Primrose Cottage, Astcote at 6:30pm on Saturday 2 May 2009

Present:

Graeme (in the Chair)
Maggie (in the kitchen)
Adrian (inebriated)
Sarah B (inclined)
Station Master Steve (in line)
Sarah D (in time)
Penny (in charge)
Richard (in the garage)
Cathy (in awe at all the food)
Sue (in jeans)
The Minutes Secretary (in trouble)

Apologies:

Adrian, for the shirt; Stationmaster Steve, for the early morning mowing; Penny, for Richard and The Minutes Secretary, for singing along with the music played at the last meeting that Sarah B had referred to as 'you know, that ghastly 80s stuff'.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Most people had forgotten them but Sarah B did recall having to apologise to the neighbours for some loud gaffaw-like noises for which the minutes may have been responsible although Adrian thought it was more likely to have been her vegetarian diet, lentils and all that jazz.

Matters arising

Stationmaster Steve suddenly remembered some interesting facts about Venetian architecture. A spectacular main square, Piazza San Marco, showcased the wealth and artistic vision of its citizens, and magnificent townhouses lined its main thoroughfare, the Grand Canal, he added, with one of his wise expressions and a fixed gaze upon the sausages.

Chairman's introduction

In a complete break with tradition and in recognition of the vast enterprise that this whole tent, hog-roast, salad and booze affair has become, the Chairman distributed some leaflets, not of the type that the lad in funny trousers stuffs through our letter boxes on Thursday evenings but of the agenda variety. He declared that this might possibly have some influence upon the way discussion might be structured but shortly afterwards decided that he might have been expecting too much of members whose glasses had already been refilled several times and refined his suggestions to a statement that the A4 sheet might assist some in focussing upon what we needed to decide rather than when might be a good time to grab another slice of excellent steak off the barbecue.

The agenda was also entitled Paddock Party the Sixth – Planning Plenary which resulted in everyone repeating the phrase to each other in a way that would have been regarded as

Minutes of the 795th meeting of the Paddock Party Committee

shouting by a lip-reader due to the alliteration. Stationmaster Steve pointed out that a plenary was a full, complete or absolute inspiration of Scripture; inspired equally in all parts. Penny thought he has said something about being very full, a complete and absolute arse but with quality parts.

Generally, however, there was considerable admiration for the effort made by the Chairman to bring some sense of purpose to the gathering rather than the consumption of immense amounts of food and an opportunity to keep fit by running in circles attempting to avoid the smoke from the chimera.

The date

A final decision was taken that the event would take place on Saturday 8 August, starting at 6:30pm with the hog-roast ready at 7:30pm as last year.

The pig

Quotations had been received from Hunts and Blacks, £480 and £638 respectively for similar catering numbers to last year. It was agreed that the quality of the previous supplier was excellent but concern that it had been delivered in a sort of ready-cooked state and not particularly hot when served. Whilst no-one expects the whole damn thing to be cooked from scratch at the event, there should certainly be more roasting taking place at the event. The Chairman would liaise with the preferred supplier and ask them to improve on this aspect this year.

Entry price

Last year's entry had been £7.50. It was proposed that, as there had been a reasonable surplus from that event and a substantial contribution to the chosen charity and that the expenditure had included equipment that would not need to be bought again this year, the entry charge should stay at this figure.

Sarah B, however, felt that a higher charge should be made in recognition of the superb food, provisions and sheer entertainment value of the event, suggesting £8.50 not particularly tentatively but in quite a forceful manner, backed with an impressive albeit slightly rambling, speech reminiscent of her performance at last year's event now a favourite amongst YouTube aficionados.

Stationmaster Steve promptly suggested that we split the difference and make it £8, in doing so, demonstrating his expertise in both mental arithmetic and bargaining, prompting Adrian to wonder aloud if he might be heading for a holiday destination where those skills could come in particularly handy when parting company with wads of local currency for a carpet or whatever.

The Minutes Secretary attempted to do battle with his ex-neighbour and made a valiant effort and quite a stirring speech but still failed miserably and eventually did the honourable thing by shutting up and settling for the Stationmaster Compromise of eight quid.

Minutes of the 795th meeting of the Paddock Party Committee

Adrian said that would be easier to type on the tickets too, for which services he was promptly signed up for once more. Paddock Party tickets are now becoming collectible items and can be found on page 45 of Collect-o-mania magazine. Buy yours now from Mr A Pinckard, Cold Higham before the rarest years' items have all gone. (Or wait until he knocks off a few more copies). Only face value + 50%.

Raffle

This year some prizes will be provided from the ticket sales, although people are more than welcome to make donations of anything. Everyone was grateful to Sarah B for the huge effort and hamper last year and recognised that it wasn't really for any one person to be out of pocket creating prizes which should, in the main, come from the raffle ticket sales.

This year's profits would be shared between the local Air Ambulance organisation and another charity, possibly PDSA. We would confirm the choices at the next meeting, to give anyone time to submit other suggestions.

Music

Once again, there would be music and various degrees of noise along those lines. It was agreed that the acts last year were all marvellous and as many as can be persuaded to return this year will be there again. The jazz band, Grace & Matt looked definite and, of course, there would be some combination of Sideouters, Outsizers or whatever the new line-up of Outsiders call themselves on the night.

The Minutes Secretary and Chairman will also throw a few well-chosen tracks on to an mp3 player in case the familiar echos of *where the hell's Aretha?* Continue to resound after the fifth bottle of Cava and the perseids begin descending.

Tents

All should be fine but, recalling that last year several men had trouble with erections due to bad wind one evening, a check will be made of their equipment. Penny offered to do this. Richard said his had got a bit bent but hoped that he would be able to get it straight again. Sarah D wondered whether some more string might not be a bad idea as several strands had broken last year. Sue reminded the committee of what a splendid job Richard had made of bashing his sticks into the ground, especially when viewed from behind.

Richard would also take charge of getting electricity to the various components of the event, plugging in to the nearest unsuspecting sockets.

Chairs and tables

There was a request for some cushioning to be provided for those with less than their fair share of the natural variety in the nether regions. The supply of Cold Higham chairs and tables would be confirmed and booked by Adrian and Sarah B and we would look at any better ways of transporting them this year. Last year's ferry service using four or five cars kind of worked but it was considered sensible if just vehicles that could cope with more than one chair or table were involved this time. Adrian said he had a wheelbarrow.

Minutes of the 795th meeting of the Paddock Party Committee

Food

The previous years' fayre has been magnificent and always the talking point of the evening and no reason was found to change it. Penny did indicate that she would like someone else to take the role of Chief Saladeer. She therefore resigned but was promptly reappointed as no-one reckoned they could do the job as well for no pay.

It was confirmed that the usual selections of greenery and concoctions of vegetables and variations on the pasta theme would be created by the saladeers who would also make the now traditional annual day trip to the wholesale store to acquire extremely large tubs of mayonnaise and potato salad, without which their day would not be complete.

Stationmaster Steve attempted to make his traditional annual point that extremely large tubs of mayonnaise usually resulted in extremely large deposits of said mayonnaise being chucked away at the end of the day but was largely ignored due to the emergence from the kitchen of Assistant Resident Saladeer Elect (who preferred not to use her acronym) to announce that seconds were available.

Licence

The Chairman would contact the appropriate local authority with a view to ensuring that the event was legitimate and that we wouldn't be invaded by men in suits demanding to check the temperature of members' roast chestnuts or whether we were playing music of which they might not approve.

Stationmaster's Report

Members listened intently as the latest developments in the saga of The Ascote Line were explained in some detail. Cathy and Sue took the opportunity to enquire whether the Minutes Secretary was getting it down as they regarded some of the Committee's views on the new service as being of great import. The Minutes Secretary had, however, disappeared at the time and was unable to report further although he did mention on his return that the motion had been satisfactory.

It is understood that Stationmaster Steve has agreed to let the Committee see how he can make his new equipment go around corners and to demonstrate how it makes a much more realistic, and loud, noise than it used to. Richard was concerned that as interference with his own equipment by the Stationmaster's hand-held device had rendered all his efforts to please Committee members last year somewhat less pleasurable than expected. The two men would compare what they intended to use prior to the next meeting.

Any Other Business

There being no further business but an awful lot of drink remaining the meeting sort of petered out at 11:30pm and members were left pondering what on earth DONM stood for.