

## **Wylam Parish Council**

**8 October 2018**

### **Update on Wylam: Past Present and Future**

Progress is being made on preparing a programme of short, medium and long term actions to take WPPF forward, with a view to producing firm proposals for immediate spend of money sourced from the Reece Foundation or otherwise at the next meeting.

An informal meeting of some councillors was held on 17 September to discuss in particular the spend of Reece Foundation money. In practice it focussed on the possibility of working with Amber Films on a community engagement programme using video as a major part and involving young people in the process. Bryan Dixon of Amber Films attended and gave a very stimulating overview of past projects.

The meeting concluded that the approach discussed with them could form a very valuable part of WPPF, but that the overall cost, value for money and the management resource needed from the Council all required careful consideration. Bryan was to be asked for an outline costed proposal with options to give us some idea of what was possible on various budgets. An update on this will be given at the meeting.

Another positive move was the invitation at short notice to attend a meeting at Wylam Station on 27 September, organised by the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership and attended also by representatives of Wylam Winter Tales, Network Rail and Northern Rail. The focus was the long standing request from WWT to use some part of the station building, probably what is currently a mess room, for an art exhibition as part of the festival.

Alex Bateman, the new LOM (Line Operations Manager) for our stretch of the Tyne Valley line from Network Rail, attended. He saw difficulties in releasing the room for any extended period as it was well used and available to any railway staff in the area; he could not close it as such (and not his decision anyway). To prove his point the station was at that very time being inspected by railway staff and they came in to use the facilities.

However, during the course of the discussion he came round to the possibility of letting WWT use the room for a one-off pop-up display on one or possibly two days, with the toilets and kitchen still being available to staff. This would require careful planning and he would need to go through the company system to get agreement. WWT said they would be happy to work with the Parish Council, for example in publicising the Railway Museum.

During the meeting it was ascertained that the station house was still occupied by one or more commercial tenants, so its early release for community use seemed unlikely.

Colin Percy

03-10-18