

Analysis of the questionnaire

Total Number of Responses: 32

Q1 Open Day Benefit to club: Yes 31 No 0 Blank response 1

Q2 Prepared to attend: Yes 32 No 0

Q3 prepared to support your layout: Yes 32 No 0

Q4 have own layout: Yes 9 No 23

Entries repeated in the different sections are in italics

Event itself
1.1. Complaint/Comment
Less whingeing and more participation. It takes far less effort than the October event and is actually allows a full day of modelling.
It is no use complaining to the members that x number of flyers were thrown away after the event, as I have stated it was the committee responsibility to make sure the flyers were made available to the members on club nights not for the members to go on a treasure hunt to look for them.
I think the chairman's comments to the members had credence.
Less whingeing and more participation. It takes far less effort than the October event and is actually allows a full day of modelling.
With regards to how the committee operates seems questionable. The committee is elected by the members of the club to run and organise the club's affairs and events. A one day Open Day is an exhibition just as two day show and therefore needs to be managed in the same way. This appears not to have been the case in question. The committee is perfectly at liberty to Co-opt a member if necessary to do these tasks.
I thought the last open day was a bit of a disappointment (and this may have been due to lack of communication and not assume it will be alright on the day) compared to previous open days.
I did not have any criticism of event but was on sales stand all day.
I strongly feel that the Chairman should personally invite ("volunteer") the two members whose emails caused the current upset to both plan and run next year's Open Day, or withdraw their complaints on a "put-up or shut-up" basis.
1.2. Event itself
I think it is good to have an Open day, the club can show its self off. We operate layouts to fault find etc.
The "open day" surely should be to advertise our presence in the local community, to attract interest in joining from locals. It is not an exhibition but should reflect the varied activities the club is involved in.
The Open Day is completely different to the annual exhibition and should not be considered in the same way. I.e. it is not an exhibition!! It is a showcase of activities and skills at the club. Its main target audience should be the local community and not primarily to the wider community – great if the travelling public attends, but this should not be the main aim of the Open Day- the travelling public will not keep the club alive – we need more and hopefully younger members or the club will die as the last of us oldies dies. The club members need to be realistic about the aims of the Open Day as proposed by the committee.
First of all, the Open Day should come under the same rules as the exhibition. My reason is that where the public has access, whether they pay by admission fee or by a donation, our members should pull out all the stops to be in attendance so as to answer any queries regarding the Club and its layouts. They are our "advertisements", and it gives the public confidence about our existence and what we stand for.
I prefer the Open Day to the Annual Exhibition. I Like the idea that we can invite the public to share our space for a time and see what we are doing.
Whilst the public are welcome, a great benefit is that of the members being able to operate as a team without the pressure of a show.
The public (reportedly) did not just want operating layouts that they have seen many times before at Open Days. The club needs to rethink the Open Day and how we showcase the club – not just all the layout present and operating as this will cause diminishing numbers of attendees as the public switch off and get bored with the club!
As the committee says, the open day is a showcase and therefore should be completely different to the exhibition.

Analysis of the questionnaire

Regarding the role of the Open Day in recruitment- Can our records identify how many new members have been recruited at the Open Day over the past 5 years, as compared to the numbers of visitors for each Day? Perhaps the majority of members have generally been too involved in the practicalities of the Day to think about trying to recruit new members in any structured way. We operate layouts to fault find etc.
1.3. Layout number
Make sure all club layouts appear. If possible include club members layouts
Ensure that most (if not all) club layouts/projects are represented and encourage members to display their models and skills.
I was disappointed all club layouts weren't on display
I do think all layouts should be put up and if some cannot be put up by the layout team than other members should be on hand to assist. It's our day to shine.
By making sure all Club layouts are on display.
The Monday before the Open Day, I was as layout manager informed by the secretary that support for the 009 layout (Old Hall) had been withdrawn. I had worked hard to get the new layout in its basic state ready for the Open day. The box of rolling stock was removed and a member (letter specifies who) was instructed to remove the wiring rendering the layout useless - now the chairman complains of lack of support!
Because the layout manager is not available, there is no reason why the project team can not set up and run the exhibit without him.
It has been told to me by an attendee at the Open Day that the public were disappointed in just having a few and well know layouts at the Open Day last time (none upstairs in the end), that there was little on display and no demonstration stands.
The club should assist layout teams that have problems with showing their layout rather than criticise them when they become a no show. Shame on the club membership generally!
Youngstown could have had a presence at the last Open Day if it was believed that some non-Youngstown club members would help to set up some of the boards (as the team members who were available were unable to lift the heavy baseboards due to medical reasons). However, due to the general belief that the team would not be helped by other members and the very late decision by a wife of the replacement team organiser that he had to be elsewhere, the layout had to be pulled from the Open Day at the last minute (Monday) and Graham was informed of this fact. Also the committee have been made fully aware of the transport problems of the layout. The club members should be willing to help out other layouts but this has not been seen in the past when Hazel Valley has struggled to have enough operators to operate at shows.
Smethurst Junction was without a layout manager at the time of the Open Day as the last manager has now left the club. In this transition period the team was not organised. Castigation of the team just because of internal team problems by other members of the club is unfair and unsuitable in this club.
Invite a max of 3 private layouts to exhibit at the open day
More of the club layouts.
As a showcase, is it essential all layouts are totally up? The committee should determine the showcase requirements not just all layouts all boards.
I suggest that the Club confines the Open Day activities to the ground floor rooms only, as from a number of years' experience, very few visitors get up to the Upper Hall. This would reduce the amount of work for Club members and have little or no adverse effect on the visitors.
It may be that reserving the main Club room for SMTF, Club sales, Demonstrations and refreshment sales, and having a maximum of two Club layouts (or part layouts) in Room 4 (adjacent to the Club room) may be better from a logistical and visitor circulation point of view. Subject to the space available, one private member's layout could be shown in Room 4.
"The Committee expects all club layouts to be represented at the Open Day. " This aspiration is effectively committing the Club to a mini-exhibition, and it may be that it needs to be modified to keep the requirements of the day in line with the physical capacity and ability of the membership to achieve them.
1.4. Number of members
Some of our group including myself work weekends which can make it difficult to attend.

Analysis of the questionnaire

Club members should attend, if possible, but various members still work and hence are not able to attend. Also it is a hobby, not a military institution and hence punishment of non attendees should not happen. Many of us have a wife and family that have other needs/desires and may demand that a club member is elsewhere on the day of the Open Day. This should be recognised and accepted by the club membership.
Members who fail to fulfil that obligations for no apparent reason should be spoken to in no uncertain terms, after all, what's the point of being a member if you don't "pull your weight"?
Try to ensure enough members can attend (barring emergencies) before making plans to exhibit.
Of course we need to ensure we also have enough members to attend, operate and or assist with the event.
Attendance: (as long as I am not away with work)
Attendance My availability subject to work
Attendance: My state of health at the time: My availability in terms of booked external workshops and other courses
Regarding the final sentence starting "The committee expects all members", I am sure that the Committee already appreciates-
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The increasing burden of ill –health experienced by a number of Club members, which affects their ability to attend / participate in Club events, and the extent to which they can lift and shift. 2. That this is a voluntary hobby activity which is only a part of most members' lives, and that members' participation is as the result of their good-will and willingness to support the Club. Such good-will should be nurtured to ensure that the Club succeeds in its objectives.
Attendance subject to changes (being made)
Attendance subject to medical status.
By everyone supporting it
As the date of the Open Day has moved into June, it often clashes with my Holidays. This will be true in 2020 unless the date is prior to 14 th June.
1.5. Profit
The Open day shouldn't necessarily have to make a profit. This is what the main exhibition is for and the Open day should be to promote our club hobby.
The exhibition is the place where any financial surplus can be ploughed back into creating new layouts and improvements to the existing layouts, the Open Day should not be considered in financial terms but as advertisement.
1.6. Internal Advertisement
The open Day should also be a time for members, not only to enjoy themselves, but get to know what other members and projects are doing and whether they can help in any way.
The club shows members where monies are spent and as mentioned attract new members.
1.7. Publicity/external advertisement
Perhaps more advertising
Look to improve website to draw attention to event, Consider putting in railway mags.
Then advertise the day as a demonstration & Home layout open day.
The event should be advertised locally in the local "freebee" magazine that is pushed through every local door rather than large numbers of fliers handed out at far flung exhibitions. Are we aiming for the wrong audience? Consider also the "freebee" magazines in other local areas e.g. Bramhall and Poynton.
How many members who live in the Hazel Grove area asked local shops if they would display a poster? Was the local library and Stockport library asked to display a poster?
All members to make an effort to advertise the Open Day by putting up posters, handing out flyers. Or Messages on Web Forums.
Look to improve website to draw attention to event, consider putting in railway mags
Greater Public awareness. Easy to say, harder to effect.
Target flyers to local stations/information centres/bus station/Park and Ride, Social media
Clear understanding of who is responsible in collating (timescale as to when Display and send out flyers - too early - people forget, too late - people already have plans to go elsewhere.
provide banners on church railings; corner of Wesley st./chapel street (school traffic)

Analysis of the questionnaire

How about advertising to cubs, scouts and other organisations that use the church
Organisation
2.1 Preparation
If layout teams are having problems then they should be honest and advise the committee in writing as early as possible so that the committee can request help for that team from the general membership. This relies on the willingness of the general membership to help others as well as the team being honest to the committee.
<i>Try to ensure enough members can attend (barring emergencies) before making plans to exhibit.</i>
Possibly meeting of all layout managers Mon before open day to confirm layout availability.
Before the event I believe it is the assistant secretary role to ensure that we have ADQUATE number of layouts which can be accommodated in both downstairs and upstairs rooms to be on display and preferable in running operation mode and only to have a limited number of work in progress layouts.
<i>Of course we need to ensure we also have enough members to attend, operate and or assist with the event.</i>
Draw up a list of club members who have small home layouts which they may be prepared to exhibit at the open Day.
Each layout manger should advise the organiser of the Open Day in writing by the Monday before the Open Day at the latest of: i) the team members who anticipate being at the Open Day and ii) what that team intends to showcase.
The organiser of the Open Day will also need to know several weeks in advance of the space requirement for the layout.
<i>Invite a max of 3 private layouts to exhibit at the open day</i>
2.2 Internal Communication
This year I was not aware that private layouts would be welcome.
Notice of the Open Day is given well in advance of when it takes place, so there is no reason why it should be treated as an after-thought.
Much better communication between the Open Day Organiser and layout managers.
One or two reminders leading up to the Open Day.
If anything communications.
Communications needs to be improved
2.3 Plan
A room plan showing which layouts are to be exhibited where.
Ensure adequate space in front of the layout for viewing.
But as the open day has been done for many years, some layouts can only be in set places, Hazel Valley.
<i>It may be that reserving the main Club room for SMTF, Club sales, Demonstrations and refreshment sales, and having a maximum of two Club layouts (or part layouts) in Room 4 (adjacent to the Club room) may be better from a logistical and visitor circulation point of view. Subject to the space available, one private member's layout could be shown in Room 4.</i>
The Committee should consider discontinuing the use of the Upper Hall due to the very small number of visitors who climb the stairs to this area. This would also cut costs.
Your point about Hazel Valley fiddle yard is a good one. We have always placed the layout as near as possible to window wall to ensure adequate space in front for viewing.
2.4 Display
The club should have a manned display stand that has information on the history of the club, previous club layouts including photos where they exist, number of current members, statements/quotes by members on why they attend the club, current operations at the club and photos of making the layouts. Also on how the club interfaces with the wider part of the church's life and other attendees/clubs at the church, participation in local events etc, This stand should also have leaflets to take away that give information on the club nights and times with a come along and see before joining invitation, as well as a form to apply for membership giving membership fees.

Analysis of the questionnaire

Each layout should have information displayed that shows a track plan, what has been done since last Open Day, what are the plans for development of the layout. Also general (short) history and operation of the layout (e.g. its different time periods possible, different configurations, type of operation DC/DCC or both). Also information on any model railway magazines that the layout has been featured in.
Arrange with layout managers to display on each layout information such as the layout write-up, track plan, construction photos, etc.
Written details of club layouts for people to read about.
Possibly some explanatory info on layout stage of production. Could do a simple handout with details and also a membership application form. Include also contact details.
Improve signage in the building
Dedicated sign up for making Tea/Coffee by members to assist with this and other duties.
Consider a "welcome" desk at the entrance
2.5 Demos
The organiser will need to know if you can man a demonstration stand. Whilst this gives you time to do some modelling, discussion with the public would be appreciated. The Open Day needs several display stands.
A stand for people to bring Railway Stock to be repaired for a fee.
Set demos e.g. How to assemble kits at a set time. Maybe if enough how to solder or preparation of kits etc.
2.6 Operation
If something is going wrong at the Open Day, then someone should advise a committee member immediately and not leave it until after the Open Day when nothing can be done to correct the situation. Whinging later does not help to create a success showcase for the club.
When the committee has organised help for a layout, it would be appreciated that people on that layout accept the help.
If you are told to be located in a certain area then you should be at that place. If there is any ambiguity or a communication breakdown then the layout manager must seek help from the organiser of the Open Day (or a committee member) before erecting a layout and not assume where they are to be located. Just because you normally use the upstairs hall, does not mean that you are located there.
If "a nameless member" wanted cover whilst he had lunch, I never saw him ask anybody for help.
Access to the upstairs hall creates problems for disabled and infirmed people. The committee should discuss with the church what can be done (e.g. trained personnel available to operate church equipment) or use of more accessible rooms. Fit club members may be requested to help infirmed attendees access all the rooms being used by the club.
Question: should the visiting public be shown the Library even if entrance into the library is prohibited (roped off)? Question for the committee.
It may be that the Club needs to introduce some "meet and greet" roles with two objectives a) to man the door and record, as far as possible, numbers of visitors and b) to have a separate roving commission with membership flyers (and Exhibition flyers) with the aim of discussing the benefits of membership with visitors. These roles could be filled by members "freed" by the potential reduction in use of the Upper Hall. We can then see whether this recruitment tactic is effective, as long as records are kept of what prompted new members to join us. I would be happy to organise this for the next Open Day, and participate as far as possible on the Day (subject to my availability).
2.7 Sales
More members' sale goods required.
I will do sales stand
Always happy to staff the sales stand (<i>if available</i>)
Other:
3.1 Constitution
"All groups" within the society are classed as "committees" with a minimum of two members. This includes Layout groupings, so that an exhibition committee and open day committee could exist, although they would technically receive no funding. But they would appear on the constitution as a voluntary grouping with "a chairperson who is basically a manager"

Analysis of the questionnaire

Social secretary to organise refreshments for Christmas Do and exhibition lunches. Possibly involving one other member to help/share workload or ideas??
Assistant Secretary role/involvement increased in administrative tasks.
In view of the recent situation re e-mails + "grievances" I suggest that a grievance procedure should be written into the society's constitution.
Historically the open day has been left to committee, After Toni's statement to the membership, surely a member of the club other than the committee should step up and organise the event.
3.2 Layouts
I have come to the conclusion that interest in the Hazel Town Layout is waning. The question is "do we keep the layout or offer it for sale to the highest bidder at our next exhibition?" No other members seem interested enough to partake in its general upkeep, not that it needs much now that most of its features are complete. It was built as a simple layout for children to operate and after early storage problems, it has been made more secure in more ways than one, and it is firmer when set up. However, the only time it does seem to attract attention is at our exhibition, but it needs at least two people to oversee its general upkeep and operation throughout the year.
3.3 Normal week activities
Layout managers should advise the committee in writing of the people that are normally helping with the construction and creation of the layout. This will help the committee to see who may be "lost souls" in the club and may easily drop out of membership.
3.4 General comments
I would like to end by saying the committee do a grand job all year round.
Finally, all club members should remember that this is a hobby and the club is there for our enjoyment and should be a sociable event.