

WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST LTD

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on Tuesday 6th September 2016 at Brunel House, Bishops Lydeard at 10.00 am

Present: Chris Austin (CA) Chris Bolt (CB)
Peter Treharne (PT) David Baker (DB)
Claire Sheppy (CS) Ian Coleby (IC)

In attendance: Sam Hunt (Advisor) Jill Baker, Secretary

32. Apologies:

John Jenkins (JJ)

33. Conflicts of Interest:

CB & IC – PLC Directors

34. Museum Strategy (including Southern Gateway, HLF Bid and the future of BL and BA Museums)

HLF Bid. Sam Hunt (SH) addressed the meeting in response to the paper produced by CA. SH praised the paper's contents as a base line document for the future and emphasised that all railway interests should be included in any bid and sufficient time should be allowed to produce the final paper. SH suggested the following points and issues should be identified in any bid:

- Importance of all the Museums (BA, WD and BL) working together
- Development and interpretation should be pulled together
- External relationships should be explored, i.e. The PLC, West Somerset District Council, National Trust etc. and linked into the bid
- A high level audit of assets should be undertaken (Buildings, contents etc.), building on the work done by IC and PT.
- Emphasise the heritage aspect and the relevance of the artefacts, going beyond technical descriptions of the locos etc.
- Value statements should be included, i.e. preserving what is already there; operation of heritage items (some moving, some static) etc.
- Be aware that customers ask where they should get off the trains to see interesting things so it is important to have these linked as a story
- Involvement of other organisations to support these initiatives is important, i.e. Watchet Walk, Mineral Line, Washford etc.
- A 'Journey through Time' could include the Stations reflecting different periods of the line's history and linked to the social spectrum, i.e. Dunster and the Polo Ponies, transport of horses for hunting for example.
- The bid is an opportunity to re-think, take on ideas and include stories

SH stressed that HLF will need to know what is distinctive for the major bid therefore the ideas so far become the basis of the larger bid. SH also stressed that there will be a different generation of visitors by 2020 and interactive displays etc. will become more important. It was generally agreed that volunteers may need to know more of the history of the line and be able to pass this information onto passengers. Training may be required. It was also agreed that the model railway at BL needed to be more user-friendly, open more regularly and have an historical aspect.

Agreed: CA/CB to put together a paper for consideration by Mark Smith's Heritage Committee, as there is a need to put 'heritage' as centre stage for the major bid.

Action – CA/CB

Agreed: There is a need to make sure this is in the fore front and part of Southern Gateway's initiative.

Gauge Museum. CA produced a paper which had been circulated and the following points were raised:

- The employment of a part-time curator should be considered
- Links should be established with local schools
- There is a need to link into the overall HLF bid and as a possible launch pad for the bid
- Include displays about events etc. along the line, i.e. Watchet Walk etc.

CS reported that the website had generated interest and offers of help and suggestions had been received. **Agreed:** CS to reply positively to these and offer suggestions on how the offers could be taken up, i.e. P Darke to be asked to produce a paper on the artefacts in situ and suggest a theme for the paper, i.e. holidays. **Action – CS**

Agreed: A Project Manager may be required to pull all the ideas and suggestions together. CB & CA will undertake this role initially and link with people with ideas.

Action – CB/CA

Agreed: Discussions should take place with Somerset Museum Service regarding costs etc. for the ideas. These will need verifying and SMS could help here. **Agreed:** The theme of the displays is critical as it will become part of the larger plan. **Agreed:** The Curator should be employed by the PLC and seconded to the WSSRT. **Action - CA** SH suggested that a Job Description would be required for a Project Manager as someone with the right experience is required and these Job Descriptions are available. SH suggested that free advertising for a Project Manager is available through Leicester University Museum Jobs.

BL Museum. **Agreed:** Management of the BL Museum by WSSRT has advantages and HLF will require this for the bid. The following was suggested:

- The Trust would need to insure the museum contents and CB would seek to arrange this through the PLC, which also insured the building. **Action - CB**
- CA would discuss with Alan Meade the opportunities for the model railway to relate to the museum and the interpretation of other museum artefacts.
Action - CA
- The sleeping car could be a separate exhibit and more visible and possibly include someone in period costume explaining the history
- Write to the PLC and WSRA concerning the management of the BL Museum after the WSRA AGM in October (ideally about 1st December) **Action - CA**
- To continue the development of the short term HLF bid and CB will collate supporting information
- Request that the Southern Gateway Group endorse the bid
- CA will produce a revised copy of the bid. **Action – CA**
- SH was happy to review the bid and provide feedback.

BA Museum. **Agreed:** In the short term status quo will remain and PT will monitor the alarm, security lights, spotlights and be available for advice.

Agreed: CB will take on the accounts **Action – CB**

Agreed: DB will find volunteers for 2017 **Action – DB**

Agreed: IC will work with PT to transfer the inventory to an electronic database.

Action - IC

Agreed: May need to swap some artefacts with the Gauge Museum to fit in with the story of the line

35. Minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2016

The minutes were agreed as presented.

36. Matters Arising

Under item 20. Safety Management. CS reported that she had spoken to Ken Davidge and the WSSRT will now follow the PLC guidelines.

Under item 26. Coach at BA. Reported that the terms of the Lease were under discussion and the matter would be resolved.

Under item 27. Disposal policy. CB had produced a model for BA Museum and this was accepted. **Agreed:** This would also be applicable to the BL Museum. The model Policy had been placed on the WSR Staff Website under Policies.

37. New Website

CS was thanked for the significant improvement to the website.

She reported that she was updating the website regularly and answering emails. She is referring membership enquiries to CB and will refer Shares enquiries to DB. Other enquiries were being dealt with by CS.

CS reported that P Darke has a photo of 6705 which she intends to use in the next newsletter. The newsletter will have a 'Lest we Forget' theme. **Agreed:** Publicity will be an agenda item in Spring 2017.

38. Commercial Relationships with the PLC

CB had produced a draft which included BA Museum, access to space at WN for carriage restoration, storage of carriages on the railway, use by the PLC of carriages owned by WSSRT. **Agreed:** The paper would be sent to Ian Harrison (Director for Commercial) by CB. **Action – CB**

39. Financial Report

CB had circulated his Financial Report.

Agreed: IC will discuss costs with Auditors B J Dixon & Walsh **Action – IC**
Restricted funds. The Board agreed the stated specification of the restriction of the Museum Fund.

DB had collected some railway signs donated in a Will and these may be reproductions.

PT will obtain a second opinion. **Action – PT**

40. Business Plan

CB agreed to update his paper and then share this with PLC and WSRA. **Action – CB**

41. Retention of Records

Agreed: To adopt the paper as good practice and that a secure, fire-proof filing cabinet should be purchased and kept in the Registered Office (the Gauge Museum) after transfer of management responsibilities.

42. Report on PDG Meetings

CA reported that meetings would be held during the following week and he will report on the initial HLF bid and request clarification on the roles of the WSSRT and Southern Gateway in the bidding process.

43. Membership update & possible Membership Cards

CB agreed to let DB have an updated list of the Membership.

Action – CB

Membership Cards – **Agreed:** To ask the PLC whether they would give the same travel benefits and discounts to WSSRT members as are afforded to WSRA/PLC. CA to action through the Chairman of the PLC **Action – CA**

IC agreed to draft a possible Membership Card.

Action – IC

44. Carriage Project & Chairman's Update

CA reported on progress with internal fittings and confirmed that a new estimate was required for the upholstering. CA will keep Trustees informed on progress through emails.

CA reported that two volunteers had laundered all the linen in the sleeping car and undertaken a thorough clean.

46. Dates and Venues for 2017 meetings

Given the expected level of business, it was agreed that the Board would meet five times in the year, rather than four.

DB agreed to circulate possible dates in February, April, July, September and November and check availability of the Gauge Museum. *NB. Gauge Museum checked and available for the following dates: (all Thursdays at 10.00 am). 16th February, 6th April, 13th July, 14th September and 16th November. AGM – 22nd April, 2.30 pm*

47. Any Other Business

CS apologised that she may only be able to attend on the Thursday of the Spring Gala due to a prior commitment.