

WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST LTD

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on Wednesday 24th April 2019 at 10 AM in the Meeting Room, Bishops Lydeard Station

Present: Chris Austin (CA) Chairman Alan Meade (AM)
Steve Williams (SW) Don Fraser (DF)
Geoff Evens (GE)

In attendance Jon Jones-Pratt (JJP). Apologies from Ian Coleby, David Baker and Mark Smith.

292. PLC Chairman's Address

The meeting began with a discussion with Jon Jones-Pratt PLC Chairman. JJP said he was looking to develop effective links with all the organisations on the WSR and to build bridges where historical problems and difficulties had previously existed. He was looking for areas of collaboration and AM gave an example of the guards and Shunting material he and others had produced. JJP said that he would follow up on the shunting module and feedback.

The critical financial position facing the Company was summarised and had led to the need to reduce the number of paid staff across all disciplines and that this had been a very difficult decision and process. JJP shared some specific examples of the actions taken to achieve short-term financial stability. In addition, the drill down on competency and qualifications had identified a number of people who were unable to meet the standards required. Consequently this had created a number of short-term gaps in some key functions. Finances were now under control and being closely monitored.

JJP summarised the key challenges that the PLC and he personally had had to address since early autumn 2018. He said that the current version of SMS was an interim position and that it would be rewritten for the 2020 season subject to Office of Road and Rail (ORR) approval. This work will be led by Martin Brown new PLC Safety and Compliance Director. There would be further mandatory training on safety critical work and the PLC would definitely involve the Steam Trust. CA said that the main safety critical area for the Trust was in the work being undertaken on heritage carriage restoration but there may be issues for the Museums.

JJP said that main ongoing issues around safety and compliance included:

- Further work on structural change to make the PLC fit for purpose.
- Further competency checks and qualifications exams
- Comprehensive audit and re-training processes
- Upping quality thresholds
- All inspectors externally audited

Following discussion it was agreed that CA would provide JJP with a list of safety critical work that it was believed the Trust engaged in in order for the PLC to participate in auditing and competency assessment work. JJP was also advised that the Trust needed the PLC to provide external competency advice on an ongoing basis and JJP would come back on both points to CA as as soon as possible.

In terms of Infrastructure, JJP said that in order to achieve compliance on key requirements the PLC needed to invest around £400,000 in 2019 and that the railway would probably be closed for possession purposes between October 2019 and March 2020 to undertake the work. He was very grateful for the contribution that the Steam Trust was making towards the rail replacement

work at Blue Anchor. CA said that this was consistent with the objects of the Trust and would contribute to ensuring that the Museum there could function as normally as possible.

In relation to wider issues on the WSR, JJP said that he fully supported the education and volunteering work. The PLC was not however supportive of the emerging suggestions from the Association that a single new charity should be formed from the Steam Trust and the current WSRA. He shared the view of the Steam Trust that this would not contribute to meeting any of the key strategic objectives at this time. The Tripartite Board meeting on 4/5/19 would be an opportunity to achieve strategic alignment on these objectives.

Finally, JJP said that he intended to have undertaken a formal review of what happened within the PLC that contributed position found in September 2018. Trustees confirmed their support for this action.

JJP said that he intended that Mark Smith would be the main link with the Steam Trust Board going forward.

A formal presentation of the cheque for £5000 as a contribution toward rail replacement at Blue Anchor station was then made by CA to JJP. GE would handle the communications and PR. GE

JJP then left the meeting.

293. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts were reported.

294. Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2019

Action

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

295. Action Log-23rd March 2019

- 253 Induction Pack-work still in hand. Will be influenced and shaped by the work of the new Volunteer Committee GE
- 280 40th Anniversary Book Launch-This would take place on Friday 7th June at 6 PM in the Gauge Museum. Dick Wood was handling the PR and invitations would be issue early in May. GE/IC
- 282 SW confirmed that he had communicated the decisions of the Board with regard to the HLF Project Group.
- 286 Somerset Day. It was noted that preparations were now underway.
- 287 DF said that he was still waiting for the Bank to process DB as a signatory. DF
- 288. All the New Board dates had been communicated and the Meeting Room booked.

296. Trust Priorities with regard to PLC Fundraising Requirements

In addition to the £5000 made available for rail replacement, Trustees agreed in principle **(subsequently confirmed by separate email exchange)**, to fund the cost of notifying PLC shareholders of a share appeal to raise additional funds for rail replacement. DB was leading this work and was in the process of producing a draft letter and supporting documentation including the need to inform PLC shareholders that the AGM was being moved from June to September 2019. In addition, Trustees confirmed that any profits from the 40th anniversary book sales could potentially also be made available to support the PLC. Any further initiatives could be discussed as part of the forthcoming tripartite Board meeting on 4th May. DB

297. Draft Hire Agreement for BCK 6705

A paper from CA was discussed. He said that the intention was that the PLC would decide how it wished to use the coach during the operating season and will be responsible for it during that period. The commercial arrangement was designed to enable the Trust to accrue sufficient funds to refurbish the coach after 5 years and undertake for the full restoration after 10. Following discussion it was agreed that the hire period should be for three years with an option for a further two years and that the operating period should be between May and October of each year. CA would send the updated draft proposal to Bob Meanley at the PLC for consideration to start from 1 June 2019.

CA

298. Emergency Planning and Charitable Incorporated Organisations

GE said that he did not wish to pursue these items at this time.

299. Gauge Museum Project Group

The overview paper from SW was considered. Trustees noted the progress being made with the Project together with the first iteration of the design and interpretation work following the initial workshop with Smith and Jones. Helen Anson was making good progress in rolling out the Learning Offer and the overall project was on track in terms of the Project Plan deliverables for 2019. Further updates would come to the Board on a regular basis.

SW

300. Safety Management

CA referred to the previous discussion earlier meeting with JJP regarding the interim SMS. It was agreed that CA should write to JJP formally requesting an invitation to mandatory training for Trust volunteers with a particular reference initially to safety critical work on the coaches.

CA

301. Peterborough Wagon Shed

The paper from CA produced jointly with Robin White was considered. It was noted that the conclusions of the paper had already been endorsed by WSRA Trustees. The intention was to continue working on the proposals and it was for Network Rail to identify how to dismantle and move the shed together with seeking the required planning consents. The project would require a separate and specified fundraising and planning activity in order to establish the Shed on the WSR.

CA/SW

302. Treasurers Report

The papers prepared by DF were received. It was noted that the Trust continued to receive a steady income and that a separate account might be required for specific donations. The cost of maintaining the website donations report was £15 per month and this provided a list of specific funding activity. There would be further expenditure of around £2000 on batteries for 6705 before it went into service. Sherrings Yard rental and 40th anniversary book costs represented the bulk of the rest of the expenditure for the last four weeks. Membership renewals and fees were being followed up.

DF

303. Board Development

SW introduced the draft role specifications for Chairman, Proposed Vice Chairman, Company Secretary and Generic Trustee (with volunteer development portfolio). CA said that it would be important, given the current age and gender profile of existing Trustees, to try and achieve a better mix in relation to diversity. The question of appointment of the Chairman was also discussed and it was agreed that this should continue to be undertaken by Trustees from within the Board. It was agreed that Trustee should be given further opportunity to consider the drafts with further discussion at the Business Plan seminar followed by ratification, if agreed, at the May Board meeting.

SW

SW confirmed that he had consulted with IC, DB and GE about the role profiles for Archivist, Curator-BA and Curator-BL respectively and that they were happy with the content as drafted. Initial copies of the Curator BA and the Museum Steward profiles had been sent to Catherine Dance for use on Somerset Day and by the Volunteer Development Group as had Helen Anson with respect to the Learning Assistant role for the Gauge Museum Project.. It was noted that Matt Sutton had also sent similar material in respect of Model Railway Group adult and trainee operators. Work was required on a specific profile for Heritage Carriages Restoration.

CA

304. Business Plan Seminar

The paper prepared by SW on the approach to and outputs from, the seminar was considered and agreed. SW would prepare papers on business plan actions responsibilities and timescales and provide an update to the Fundraising Plan. The seminar was on Wednesday 1st May at 2 PM in the Meeting Room.

SW

305. Taunton to Bishops Lydeard Shuttle

SW suggested that there may be commercial opportunities for the Trust arising from the recent announcement introducing the shuttle for a pilot period over the 2019 season. It was agreed that this should be given further consideration. CA was congratulated for his role in bringing about a successful conclusion to the discussions with GWR and it was noted that the Chairman was a member of the Implementation Group established by the PLC.

306. Art Exhibition and Reception

CA said that discussions with Ginny and Ian Barnfield were progressing well and that the latter was producing a poster for the event. There was a discussion about whether the reception should take place either on Friday 12 July or Saturday 13 July. CA would discuss this with the Barnfields and bring back to the next Board meeting.

CA

307. HRA Young Persons Award

AM said that he would like to have the support of the Board in looking at potential candidates for the 2019 award together with understanding from HRA what the criteria for selection were likely to be. In response to CA, AM confirmed that he would like support from identified Trustees in determining how to make any decision from amongst the Model Railway Group as to who should be put forward.

AM/CA

308. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

Wednesday 22nd May at 10 AM in the Meeting Room, Bishops Lydeard.