

WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST LTD Draft

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on Thursday 19th March 2020 at 10 AM in the Meeting Room, Bishops Lydeard Station

Present: Chris Austin (CA) Chairman Geoff Evens (GE) Steve Williams (SW)
Ian Coleby (IC) Don Fraser (DF) Alan Smithers (AM)

405. Apologies

These were received from David Baker and Alan Meade.

Action

406. Conflicts of Interest

No new conflicts of interest were reported.

407. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2020

These were approved as a correct record.

408. Impact of Coronavirus (Covid 19)

The Board of Trustees had a lengthy and detailed discussion about the current and likely future impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the Trust activities and those of the WSR as a whole.

The key points and decisions to emerge were as follows:

- **Formal Launch of the Gauge Museum**

As the WSR would not be reopening for the 2020 season on 21st March, it was agreed that the formal launch would be cancelled and deferred until the autumn. Messages would go out on the Trust and Steve Edge websites and all invitees would be notified.

CA/SW

- **Trust Activities across the Railway**

All Trust volunteers would be notified that Steam Trust activities would be shut down until further notice including the HLF Project.

CA/SW

- **Trust AGM**

This would be deferred until at least September 2020 or later if required. SW to investigate implications with Charity Commission and Companies House and brief the Board. Under normal arrangements, the Trust had to hold an AGM within 18 months of the previous financial year.

SW

- **Annual Accounts**

The Treasurer confirmed that the Trust were required to submit approved Accounts to the Charity Commission and Companies House within nine months of the end of the financial year. DF would investigate what latitude would be given to charities if it were not possible to hold an AGM within that timescale.

DF

- **HLF Project**

SW said that he had already been in contact with the Heritage Lottery Fund who were very understanding of the current situation. Dependent on further Government guidance (subsequently confirmed with stricter lockdown, journeys and social distancing requirements) the physical completion aspects of the Gauge Museum element of the Project would be deferred until further notice and Smith and Jones notified accordingly.. SW would discuss with Helen Anson what could be offered to schools by way of remote access content for the Learning Programme and it was intended that the Project Team would continue working electronically on those remaining aspects of the Project which would do with organisational and systems development. Some useful advice would be forthcoming from the Somerset Heritage Trust following a recent meeting with Rachel Bellamy. SW would also update the HLF and ensure that they were supportive of the steps taken.

SW

- **Support to the PLC**

It was acknowledged that this would be a very difficult and challenging time for the company. Trustees considered a number of immediate initiatives which could be offered to the PLC if they required financial and/or organisational support.

409. Action Log-16 January 2020 (items not on the agenda)

- ***Sherrings Yard and Use of Facilities at Williton***

CA said that following a further meeting with the Association and the PLC, the Trust share of the rent for Sherrings Yard had increased to £3650 per annum with effect from 1st April 2020 for a period of three years. This was within the negotiating range previously agreed by the Board. DF had copies of the Agreement for signature for return to the Association.

- ***Friends of Minehead Station-ticket machine***

The ticket machine had now arrived from FOMS.

- ***Museum Infrastructure Work***

ASM sought advice on how to progress completion of the scaffolding and associated work at Blue Anchor. He was advised that the Vic Simpson was the key contact and that RAMS were normally available on Mondays and Fridays.

ASM

410. PLC Update

GM/MD Recruitment

It was noted that Justin Kerr-Peterson had been appointed and the anticipated start date was understood to be 5th May 2020.

Station House Project

SW had received a briefing paper from Martin Brown on the Project and the possibilities of linking Station House when completed with the Gauge Museum as an integrated package for visitors to Bishops Lydeard station. The paper would be circulated to Trustees for comment.

SW

411. Safety and Compliance

There was nothing further beyond the Covid 19 discussion other than to note that the railway would from the 21st March, be in a state of care and maintenance.

412. Treasurers Report

The papers from DF were received. The second tranche of Volume 1 books about the 40th anniversary had now been received.

In terms of the Annual Accounts, Monahans were now going through the final issues and there was nothing of significant concern emerging.

413. Volunteering and Safeguarding

SW summarised progress with the new Steering Group being led by Diana Ricketts-Tanner from the Association with input from other WSRA colleagues and Martin Brown from the PLC. The necessary preparations to introduce new recruitment arrangements for new volunteers were almost finalised as were the marketing and publicity arrangements. Particular attention would be paid in the next phase of work to under 18's and also developing updated arrangements for safeguarding. It was intended to establish a Volunteer Forum as a stakeholder group for developing systems and processes across the WSR going forward.

414. Washford Update

The current situation with regard to the Washford site was noted and would be monitored as further developments occurred.

CA/SW

415. The Future Development of Blue Anchor Museum

Following previous discussion at the Board and further discussions with AM and DB, SW had produced the attached paper for consultation with volunteers and Members. DB had confirmed that he was happy with the content and ASM also endorsed the paper. It was AGREED that the discussion paper now be circulated to volunteers for consideration and comment. Because the AGM was being deferred, it was agreed that Members would be consulted subsequently.

SW

416. National Lottery Fund Project Progress Report

The update paper from SW was received and progress noted. SW said that the confidential item discussed at the last Board Meeting was being progressed. Installation of the Smith and Jones work had proceeded largely to plan but would now obviously be deferred until resumption of activities on the railway. Helen Anson was going to look at ways in which the Education and Learning programme could be offered electronically to schools in the interim. The intention in the meantime was also to progress with the other elements of the project to do with conservation, museum management plan et cetera by desktop through the Project Team.

The proposal on the MODES system from GE would be referred to the Project Team for consideration in the first instance.

SW

417. AGM Preparations

Papers prepared by SW were received and considered. Following discussion, a number of points were agreed:

- Re-election of Existing Trustees-SW to confirm the rotation for 2020 from previous Minutes.
- Chairman's Report-Any comments to CA for preparation of final version.
- Directors Annual Report-Any final comments to SW following previous circulation.
- Annual Accounts-DF to obtain from Monahans and to circulate to Trustees for any final comments.
- Proposed Changes to Trust name, objects and powers. Any final comments on paper from SW to be returned to him.
- Trust Logo and Blue Anchor discussion paper. To be part of the informal session following completion of formal AGM business.
- Timing of AGM.SW to brief Trustees following communication with Charity Commission and Companies House.

418. Fundraising Priorities and Business Plan 2020/21

In light of the impact of Covid-19,SW proposed to circulate colleagues electronically on this and also consult the PLC on its emerging requirements and timescales to pull together proposals for subsequent consideration later in the year. This was endorsed by Trustees.

SW

419. Board Briefings

In view of the Government guidance and continued closure of the railway, Trustees would not be physically meeting as a Board for the foreseeable future. SW proposed that a Board Briefing be prepared on a monthly basis and offered to coordinate it on behalf of the Board. This was agreed. SW