

WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST LTD

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on Thursday 16th July 2020 at 10 am by videoconference

Present: Chris Austin (CA) Chairman Geoff Evens (GE) Steve Williams (SW)
Ian Coleby (IC) Don Fraser (DF) Matt Jackson (MJ)
David Baker (DB) Alan Smithers (AS)

436. Welcome and Apologies

Chris Austin welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

437. Conflicts of Interest

Steve Williams was noted as a PLC Director. Following discussion, it was agreed that SW would make clear at Trustee meetings when he was speaking with the knowledge of a PLC Director and that this would be minuted. He would not convey information of a confidential or commercial nature where there was a contractual relationship with the Trust.

438. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2020

These were approved as a correct record.

439. Action Log-20th May 2020 (items not on the agenda)

424 Blue Anchor Museum Infrastructure Work

Now that RAMS were back working on the railway, Vic Simpson would be contacted to arrange completion of the outstanding external infrastructure work and removal of equipment and materials from inside the Museum.

AS

432 Update of Charitable Objects and Powers

SW reported that the Charity Commission had endorsed the proposals previously approved by the Board and that these would now be put to the AGM. SW would circulate the Commission response to Trustees.

SW

440. WSR Items

i) External Petition

The response by the 3 Chairman to the external petition received on 5th July by the PLC, the Association and the Trust was noted. Many of the issues identified by the petitioners were already underway or being actioned.

ii) Proposed Minehead Living Museum Events 25th/26th July and 4th/5th August

AS summarised the preparations for the two weekend events including cleaning and weeding. The Trust had been offered a stall on the platform which would include the opportunity to promote the two Museums, carriage restoration and the Learning and Education Programme. Helen Anson would be available in relation to the latter. It was noted that the PLC had agreed to go ahead and

that the event was being supported by Minehead BID. In addition to the station attractions, there would also be vintage bus rides and the possibility of some engine movements and the use of the turntable. AS would liaise with the PLC team about Trust requirements and with Helen Anson

AS

iii) Update on Railway Reopening

CA confirmed that the railway was on light maintenance only but that some work e.g. weed pulling had started along the line. Nationally, only about 10% of heritage railways had so far re-opened either in part or fully and those that had already done so were showing mixed results in terms of loadings. More would be opening in August. Around £10 million had been raised across the UK for emergency funding but this was a fraction of the income foregone as a result of not running heritage lines. SW said that the Minehead events would provide some valuable learning for the PLC but there was still much to be done in terms of certification, competency re-acquisition and priority infrastructure preparations for 2021.

iv) Tripartite Board Conference Call

No further developments following the circulation of CA's briefing note. The following weeks call had been deferred until W/C 20/7/20.

v) Bailey Recommendations

It was noted that the PLC were progressing preparations for consultation. The Trust supported the principle of a systematic working through of option development to be followed by engagement and consultation on the issues. SW said the PDG would provide one of the key vehicles for the consultation process and that it was anticipated that this would begin in September/early October.

441. Treasurers Report

SW apologised to Trustees that due to an oversight, papers from DF had not been previously circulated. DF then summarised the current position, the key points from which were:

- Donations to the Trust had diminished significantly due to the impact of coronavirus
- The 2019 contribution to the Heritage Rail Appeal had now been made available to the PLC
- The first tranche of the Trust contribution to the HLF Grant had now been activated
- The overall funds available had therefore reduced in relation to those specific sums of money
- The Trust intended to make an application to the NHLF Covid Emergency Appeal (see below)

442. MRG Review

CA introduced this item and reminded Trustees of the background. MJ then took the Board through the paper noting the conclusions and recommendations on each of the key points in respect of the previously circulated terms of reference. CA thanked MJ for all the hard work that he had put in with MRG volunteers on this work and for keeping the Group going on an interim basis.

Following discussion, key points to emerge were:

- in line with anticipated forthcoming national and HRA guidance, it was recommended to adopt 14 as the younger age limit for MRG volunteers,
- Person In Charge younger age limit would be 16 in the short term working towards 18 as existing volunteers got older and new members were recruited,
- there was support for disposal of surplus magazines and railway equipment to generate funds for MRG investment. DF confirmed that donations to MRG go straight into a Steam Trust Restricted Fund for MRG only use.

The recommendations in the Report were endorsed by the Board. MJ would work with CA and SW on communications back to MRG volunteers. With regard to the MRG Manager role, the complementary paper on the recruitment and appointment process was also approved. The initial recruitment process would be limited to MRG members only. If no appointment could be made within the Group then the role would be advertised more widely. SW would oversee next steps.

MJ/SW

443. Development of Blue Anchor Museum-Next Steps

The paper summarising the results of volunteer consultation and proposed next steps was discussed by the Board. The proposals were approved and specifically Trustees agreed:

- That the principle of “One Museum on Two Sites” at BL and BA be adopted,
- That Option 2 with BA focusing on the history, economics and heritage of the northern end of the line was the preferred approach
- This would be the proposal put to the AGM.SW to undertake
- In the meantime, a project process (Project, initial planning and consideration of fundraising requirements) would be established under the leadership of Alan Smithers

AS/SW

444. Shareholdings (Non-PLC)

Trustees had a confidential discussion about shareholdings and updated the Trust position.

445. NHLF Gauge Museum Project-Update Paper

SW presented an update on the Project. Trustees noted the change in emphasis and focus as a result of Covid 19 particularly in respect of the Learning Officer and that this had had NHLF support. SW said that he would now take forward the additional actions approved at the last Board.

SW

446. Recruitment of new Trustees

The Board considered the paper prepared by SW who summarised the key issues. Trustees thanked him for a comprehensive review of the current and future position. Following discussion, the Board reached a number of conclusions and agreed actions. These were:

- There needed to be a proactive attempt to implement the principles of diversity, equality and gender and that this should be reflected in the methodology adopted for future recruitment. All future role profiles for Trustee and other roles should contain a generic statement to that effect,
- The status of one potential candidate would be confirmed following receipt of advice from the Charity Commission,
- The portfolio areas identified in the paper were approved. SW would now draw these up.
- The expressions of interest received to date would be followed up once the portfolio summaries were available and interviews would be held. In addition to the Chair and Vice Chair, other Trustees would be invited to participate. The Trust would continue to canvass for suitable candidates.

SW/CA

447. Trust Business Plan 2020-2022

The Board considered the first draft Plan that had previously been circulated by SW. Trustees acknowledged the significant amount of work that have been put into its development. SW said that he had already had a number of comments from Board members and that he would give

others until 26th July to respond. Trustees also endorsed the recommendation that, given the current circumstances, the Business Plan would then be published including copies been sent to Members in order to ensure that the Plan remained relevant and objectives for the rest of 2020 could be pursued.

SW

448. Fundraising

i) Joint Fundraising Group

DF provided an update on the work of the Group so far. A comprehensive fundraising leaflet has been developed with a donations incentive ladder including contributions from the PLC, Association and the Trust. There were a number of emerging ideas including e.g. a system for electronic donations which DF was investigating. The Group's work covered the longer as well as the short term.

ii) Emergency Fund applications

DF and SW summarised the work that they were doing to prepare applications for Covid emergency appeal funds. These would be going within the next 10 days.

DF/SW

iii) Charitable Donation

CA briefed the Board on the latest charitable donation by the Peall Railway Trust.. It was agreed to adopt a 50-50 approach with 50% going towards the heritage railway renewal appeal consistent with the Trust Objects and Powers.

CA

iv) Future Fundraising Priorities 2020-22

Following discussion, it was agreed that SW would update the Fundraising Plan to reflect the objectives of the Business Plan in a revised set of priorities for fundraising applications.

SW

449. AGM Preparations

Trustees considered the issues around holding the AGM in light of the current and anticipated Covid 19 restrictions. SW said that he had obtained permission the Charity Commission to defer the AGM to December 2020 if necessary. DF said that Monaghan's would be forwarding a copy of the finalised Accounts to be signed next week. Following discussion it was agreed that:

- the absence of any suitable venues locally with sufficient social distancing arrangements was a major impediment to a normal meeting. Current restrictions on numbers would make it difficult to be entirely inclusive of all Members,
- any further significant delay would have a detrimental impact of progression of Trust business where AGM resolutions were key to next steps,
- therefore, a videoconference option was felt to be the only way forward using SW's subscription,
- given the timing of other AGM's within the WSR, the preferred date was Saturday 19th September 2020. The AGM would be at 2 PM preceded by a standard Board Meeting. There would be further discussion about the logistics for the meeting and the preparation of supplementary briefing material which would replace the normal informal Q and A session

after the completion of formal business.

- A general meeting would be held subsequently when roles permitted and venues were available again to allow a general discussion for Members.

CA/SW

450. DASH IT survey

DB thanked DF for coordinating the survey and looked forward to the results.

DF

451. Date of Next Meeting

Saturday, 19 September 2020 at 10 AM by videoconference unless otherwise notified.

SW