

WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST LTD

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on Thursday 24th September 2020 at 5:30 PM 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) Helen Anson (HA)
Mike Thompson (MT)

452. Welcome and Apologies

Action

CA welcomed everyone to the meeting. Alan Smithers gave his apologies.

453. Ratification of Appointment of new Trustees

CA introduced Helen Anson and Mike Thompson to the Board. Further to the outcome of formal interviews and Trustee consultation, Trustees were then asked to ratify the appointments as Trustees of:

Helen Anson
Matt Jackson
Mike Thompson

The Board voted unanimously for all three nominations to be co-opted to the Board. They would then be formally put to the AGM for election. CA congratulated all three on their appointment. SW to notify Companies House and the Charity Commission.

SW

454. Conflicts of Interest

MT was noted as a PLC Adviser. Following discussion, it was agreed that MT would make clear at Trustee meetings and other gatherings when he was speaking with the knowledge of a PLC Adviser 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.

MT

HA declared that she was employed by the PLC (funded by National Heritage Lottery Fund) on behalf of the Trust as Learning and Education Officer. Any potential conflicts with her employed role would be identified and the appropriate steps taken in relation to Trust business either at Board meetings or elsewhere.

HA

455. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2020

These were approved as a correct record. SW apologised for the lack of an action log on this occasion. DB pointed out that due to the impact of videoconferencing, previous sets required the Chairman to sign and make available to the Secretary. CA confirmed that he would sign the previous two sets of minutes and send them to SW.

CA

456. Matters Arising (not on the agenda)

None were identified on this occasion.

457. Attempted Takeover of the Steam Trust

The Board considered the events, issues and implications of this unwarranted action by 10 individuals.

458. Revised Arrangements for 2020 AGM

Following discussion, the Board agreed that the AGM should now be held on Saturday, 28 November 2020. **(Subsequently amended to 14th November post Board meeting)**. A revised agenda, proxy form and set of resolutions would now be prepared for consideration. Members to be notified through social media and by post.

SW/DF

459. Partnership Development Group

SW fed back on the meeting held on 23rd September. Progress with the volunteer recruitment arrangements was noted as was the presentation from Mike Thompson supported by John Bailey on the PLC approach to restructuring. Further information to follow in due course.

SW

460. WSR Matters

i) PLC Restructuring

SW said that PDG would be issuing a statement on PLC Restructuring shortly. MT summarised the next steps in terms of consultation with PLC shareholders.

ii) Tripartite Conference Call 24th September

CA fed back on the morning call. Key points were:

- Update on forthcoming ORR visit
- Progress on Bailey Report (shareholder consultation)
- A proposal from Mike Sherwood that the PLC should develop a carriage improvement programme for funding consideration by the Association,
- A briefing from CA on the current position regarding future supplies of coal,
- A briefing from CA on the work of the All Parliamentary Group on public transport services on heritage railways which might include evidence from WSR on links to the national network,
- PDG feedback

iii) Association AGM

It was noted that this was happening on 26 September.

iv) DCMS bid

SW confirmed that the bid for Culture Heritage Recovery Fund monies had been submitted on 17th August. An announcement was expected from DCMS by 30th September.

v) Railway Reopening

It was noted that significant progress was being made and that paid staff were gradually returning from furlough. There was a focus on preparing for running Christmas trains and making interim appointments to key departmental heads of service positions to manage implementation.

461. Treasurers Report

DF summarised the current position. There were no significant issues identified and cash flow and expenditure were in line with expected predictions and activity.

462. NHLF Emergency Fund Award

The notes of the special meeting on 27th August were received. CA was thanked for producing them. Following discussion, it was agreed that a subgroup of SW, HA and DF would convene to go through the application spreadsheet and review progress and/or initiate the necessary actions to implement each of the activities.

SW,HA,DF

463. Gauge Museum Project Group

SW give an update on the current position. It was noted that Smith and Jones had submitted their final invoice for payment. However, there were a number of outstanding items including snagging requirements to be completed before payment. SW would be consulting colleagues on the list of issues to be shared with Chris Jones with a view to their being a final visit and assessment in order to ensure that all the Trust requirements were met. Following this, a Project Team meeting would be organised to progress the remainder of the Project Plan.

In the meantime, we would need to transfer the second £10,000 from Trust accounts to the project budget. SW would also approach the Lottery Fund to access the final £4000 contingency sum.

SW

464. Review of Trust Policies

DB said that he had looked at the Trust website and that there were a number of policies on it which were either date expired or required review. DB would send these to SW with a view to the appropriate Trustee and/or volunteer undertaking the work to bring them up to date.

DB, SW

465 Model Railway Group

MJ briefed the Board on recent activities. The Group had undertaken between 10 and 12 private operating days since the last Board meeting to maintain volunteer interest and competence. MJ was also looking at the review document approved by the Board in terms of implementation of agreed changes. He was also working with colleagues to look at opportunities for additional fundraising and was planning the next maintenance period. The Group had also acquired two new members. MJ would come back to the Board with an update. MJ

466. Blue Anchor Museum

DB had sent Pete Treharne's inventory book to GE and CA confirmed that Peter Over would be including the Blue Anchor items on the overall Trust in due course. RAMS had yet to complete the work on the external guttering and roof and their materials were still in the Museum. CA said that Alan Smithers was aware of the situation and would be contacting RA MS shortly.

AS

467. Gauge Museum Pest Control

HA reported that the Museum was now pretty much pest free! She also advised of the potential

availability of small Museum grant opportunities and would check to see if the Trust could benefit. HA

468. 2020 HRA Young Persons Award

CA said that the HRA was now seeking nominations for this year's award and he would discuss this with MJ and the PLC.

CA

469. Date and Time of Meeting

Thursday 22nd October at 5:30 PM by videoconference