

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on Thursday 16th September 2021 at 5.30pm by Zoom video conference

Present: Steve Williams (Chairman) (SW) Geoff Evens (GE) Mike Thompson (MT)
Don Fraser (DF) Matt Jackson (MJ) Martin Brown (MB)
Helen Anson (HA) Ian Coleby (IC) Mike Lee(ML)

585. Apologies Action

586. Conflicts of Interest

No new conflicts of interest were reported.

587. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22nd July 2021

All agreed

588. Matters Arising

a) Art Exhibition

HA summarised the arrangements for the exhibition which would take place week commencing 25th September. In addition to the exhibition there would be a formal workshops. HA said that there would be stewards in place and MB confirmed he was supporting preparations in terms of arranging logistics with BL station staff

HA/MB

b) Museum Curator

GE said he and Chris Austin would be interviewing a candidate between 18th and 25th September and would report the outcome to the Board.

GE

c) Gauge Museum Formal Launch Event

It was agreed that this should now take place between January and March 2022. SW to forward preparation material to MT. MT to discuss with Chris Austin.

SW/MT

589. Proposed Platform 1 Experience

MT summarised the emerging ideas for improving the visitor experience on and around Platform 1. These were high-level concepts at the moment which would link a revised role for Station House with the proposed covered accommodation on the cattle dock and a potential extension for the Gauge Museum. He said that the PLC were open to a number of options which were being pursued through the Covered Accommodation Working Group. MT would bring more detailed proposals back to the Board in November.

MT

590. AGM Arrangements

SW summarised arrangements for the AGM which were supported by the Board. He said that this would be his last Board meeting as interim Chairman with MT assuming the substantive role at the AGM. Trustees thanked SW for his work as Interim Chairman.

591. Covered Accommodation Working Group

SW summarised progress with the project. The Group had decided to split the work into two phases with Phase 1 focusing on an early opportunity to produce proposals for covering the cattle dock siding BL to accommodate to Heritage carriages. The PLC were in support of the proposal and were being asked to approve the development of a business case and site development plan. Further work was also being done on a Gauge Museum extension as part of an integrated package involving Station House and Platform 1. Further proposals to come to the Board in November.

SW

592. Heritage Carriages

MB reported on the work to cover the carriages in Dunster West siding with tarpaulins. It was noted that the external report on the future of the carriages being undertaken by Andy Forster was expected at the end of September/early October and would identify the priorities for work and funding over the next 3 years. SW said it was intended to bring the Report to the next meeting of the Board with recommendations on implementation.

SW/MB

593. Education and Learning Programme

HA gave an update on current progress. Points to note were that:

- seven loan boxes had been completed of which four had been made available to schools
- there was a renewed interest in school visits to the Museum and railway with two enquiries for October
- resource packs and now been distributed to schools
- work was continuing on the collections care policy
- responsibility for the emergency plan had now been handed over to Mike Lee

594. PLC Matters

SW advised that:

- The business was continuing to recover both from Covid 19 impact and the late start to the season. The bus operation between Dunster and Minehead has been well received by passengers. It was anticipated that Seaward Way crossing would be handed back to the PLC by the end of October.
- Although finances remained tight, the business model adopted for 2021 was holding up with the PLC continuing to apply for grants from both local and central government. The Emergency appeal was making slow but steady progress. The CHRF3 would go into the Heritage Lottery Fund in early October.
- The Trust needed to agree its voting intentions for the PLC AGM. SW recused himself from the vote by virtue of being a PLC Director. The vote was agreed and would be submitted to the PLC by MT .
- Good progress was being made with a number of named projects.

MT

595. Proposed Heritage Committee

Following an exchange of correspondence with the PLC, SW confirmed that the company

and given its support for the formation of a new WSR Heritage Committee led by the Trust. IC agreed to take the lead on this and would look to make a start on formation, governance and initial work in the New Year.

IC

596. Finance and Membership Report

DF updated the Board. There had been no significant changes to the overall financial position since July. Points to note were:

- there were spare CHRF 2 funds to allocate and the Trust had been given an extension until December 2021 to complete expenditure. Following discussion, it was agreed to use the money to help reprinting leaflets with the new Trust name. IC to lead.
- there were unallocated infrastructure funds arising from donations earlier in the year. SW advised that there would be proposals for infrastructure works fundraising for 2021/2022 coming from the PLC shortly.
- further information on anticipated major legacies was still awaited.

IC

SW

In relation to Membership, DF had received three new applications namely:

-John Home. This was approved.

-Alan Nicholson. This was approved.

-Martin Connor. This was approved.

It was noted that the membership profile was likely to change yet again following the events of last year and the evolving environment around the railway. Membership currently stood at around 240.

DF

597. PLC Shares

SW reported that, as a result of the change of name of the Trust, the PLC had now issued a replacement set of share certificates in the new name. SW and DF were undertaking a reconciliation exercise to the plc ensure that all shares had been properly accounted for.

SW/DF

598. Companies House and Charity Commission-EGM outcome

SW advised that although all the relevant papers had been lodged with Companies House difficulties still remained with the Charity Commission in terms of being able to lodge the new Articles of Association. He would keep the Board updated on progress.

SW

599. Gauge Museum Opening November/December

MJ asked for clarity around opening arrangements for November/December in terms of the Winter lights and Santa trains. MT said he would check and advise Trustees.

MT

600. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday, 18 November 2021 at 5:30 PM by Zoom