

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on Thursday 17th March at 5.30pm by Zoom video conference.

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

634. Apologies

Received from Helen Anson.

Action

635. Conflicts of Interest

No new conflicts of interest were recorded.

636. New Trustee proposal

SW nominated Ian Camp as a new Trustee with responsibility for Museums. The Board unanimously supported the proposal. Ian Camp then joined the meeting at 5.35pm and confirmed that he has no conflicts of interest.

637. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20th January 2022.

SW will make the amendments requested by MJ and will recirculate the minutes. Subject to this amendment the minutes were agreed.

SW

638. Matters Arising:

i) Heritage Committee – deferred to a later meeting.

ii) SW Green Grant – MB advised that the final closing date for submissions had been missed.

iii) Trust 2022 -2024 Business Plan – SW advised that the Business Plan has been shared with the PLC. The Business Plan is now ready for implementation. SW will circulate an update report with actions to be followed up by the Board.

These will be presented at every other Board meeting. MT urged the Board to get up to speed with the Business Plan and to offer to take the lead on topics not already allocated.

iv) Model Railway Acquisitions – DF commented that agreement had previously been reached for MJ to spend £250 on new stock. MJ advised that he now has a number of items available in addition to the original stock purchase. Further discussions will be held separately.

SW

639. Developments at Bishops Lydeard

MT advised that the Consultants (LHC) have put forward proposals which have the broad support of the PLC and the Station Master.

Output from last Project Group Meeting – SW advised that the options put forward at the last Project Group meeting are currently being revised by the Consultants (LHC) and include:

- A single storey building
- A mezzanine floor
- A building with a different layout

The last two options could include the footbridge descending into the building. Consideration is also being given to access, conservation considerations etc.

A date for the next project meeting is currently being finalised (hopefully the 2nd week of April). SW will share the revised plans with the Trustees.

SW

Station House – Trustees noted the current position with regard to the lease and discussions with the PLC. As the proposed Lease will be longer than 7 years the Trust's solicitors have advised that it will need to be registered with the Land Registry and incorporate some specific wording. Subject to legal inputs, the aim is to try and finalise matters before the end of March 2022 if possible.

SW

MB advised that the Consultants (LHC) have measured Station House and inspected the garden and route of the stream. Two points have yet to be resolved:

- Whether the tank on site is a Septic Tank and
- Ownership of the small lane and whether it could be used to access the site.

Scaffolding is due to be erected in the first week of April with works to the roof starting during the 3rd week of April.

Footbridge – SW advised the Board about the potential availability of a footbridge from Transport for Wales which has been offered free of charge. Trustees noted the current position and agreed next steps in terms of action.

SW

640. Gauge Museum Opening

I Camp updated the Trustees on the current position. The proposed re-opening date is the 21st May 2022 and the proposal is to invite the local MP, Lady Gass, Lord Faulkner and a further 178 guests to the official opening. MT commented on the challenge of issuing the invitations and registering responses. MT asked the Board to pull together to ensure that the event is a success. The Trustees agreed that the Members of Heritage Trust (likely to be around 175 people) should be invited to a separate event due the size constraints of the Museum. GE offered to draft a note to be circulated round the Trust Members to let them know what will be happening. I Camp indicated that invitations will be circulated by email to save time and money on postage. SW asked MT to invite Rebecca Pow MP via her office rather than just by an email invitation.

GE

MT

641. Discussions with PLC on Trust Business Plan

SW raised the need for the PLC to be on board with the proposed projects, particularly the big ticket items.

Bishops Lydeard Developments – SW advised that the PLC are mainly positive but have expressed concerns over the footbridge proposals and the timing of the cattle dock. The PLC are however generally pleased that the Heritage Trust is making positive moves.

Williton and Sherrings Yard – SW will reinstate the Williton Engineering Review towards the end of March/early April. Trustees noted the PLC view about the Sherrings Yard lease beyond September 2023.

Short Form Heritage Train – Further discussions to be held with the PLC to ensure that the carriage is completed and 6075 receives a Fitness to Run Certificate.

Washford Yard – Trustees noted the current position with regard to the Yard beyond November 2023.

642. Washford Museum – Proposal to transfer responsibility to the Heritage Trust

Trustees noted the current position and agreed to have further discussions.

643. Blue Anchor Museum – proposed development proposals

SW and I Camp presented the proposals which concentrate on the social aspects of the station and the railway line eg Watchet Port, polo ponies travelling to Dunster Castle, Minehead Butlins etc. The Board discussed the proposal for the museum to be unstaffed (just opened and closed by station volunteers) and security of items. Further discussions should be undertaken outside this meeting to cover security, staffing and potential for a Heritage Lottery Fund application. MT and SW will move the project forward and discuss the way forward with the PLC.

MT/SW

644. Finance Report

Trustees noted the current position on legacies received.

645. Learning and Education Programme update

This item was deferred due to the absence of Helen Anson.

646. Safety and Compliance Next Steps

SW met Stuart Hendry, the new PLC Safety and Compliance Officer, and agreed that the Trust will comply with the SMS and ORR requirements. SW is arranging a further meeting with ML and Stuart Hendry to ensure that the Trust is compliant. Safety and Compliance will then become a regular item on the Trust Board Agenda.

SW

647. Covered Accommodation Working Group – update

SW advised that the Working Group is focusing on:

- Operational running set including the QB.
- Restoration working environment.
- Long term storage and display.

CA and Andrew Forster have been working on the specification and a draft report will be prepared including the type of buildings, indicative cost and site options.

648. 2022 AGM

The date has yet to be agreed. This will be linked to the output from the discussion on Year end accounts and the Chairman's/Directors Reports.

649. Any other urgent business

MJ said that the Model Railway Group would begin operating with the opening of the railway.

MB – asked if the Trust will be funding provision of bunting at the stations. MB will circulate an email to the Board.

MB

MT confirmed that he is now a signatory for the Trusts bank account.

650. Date of next meeting:

Thursday 19th May 2022 at 5.30pm

It was agreed that Board meetings will continue by Zoom video conference unless a site visit is needed. The meeting finished at 7.25pm