

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on 25th July 2024 at 5.30pm by Zoom video conference.

Present: Mike Thompson (Chairman) (MT) Steve Williams (SW)
Don Fraser (DF) Geoff Evens (GE)
John Robinson (JR) John Waters (JW)
Ian Camp (IDC) Ian Colby (IC)
Martin Brown (MB)

In Attendance -Les Blake (Minutes)

816. Apologies. Helen Anson **Action**

817. Conflicts of Interest

No new conflicts of interest were recorded.

818. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30th May 2024

These were agreed as a correct record.

819. Matters Arising

BL electrics.

IDC is waiting for either of the Electricians to contact him. **IDC**

820. Museums

The Blue Anchor update prepared by John Anson was received by the Board. Trustees recorded their ongoing thanks to John and the team for all the dedicated work that was being done there. The progress with the storyboards and the internal work was noted although an update on the external work through the PLC was awaited. The Board acknowledged that given the delays and work still to be completed that it was unlikely that the Museum would open before the end of the 2024 operating season. The recommendation from John Anson that the focus should be on 2025 and its 40th anniversary was accepted by the Board.

IDC advised that the Museum Wi-Fi system needs to be upgraded. The solution will be for a new cable to be installed to connect the Museum to the PLC system via the Signal Box. The Board approved the cost which was additional to the current agreed budget sum. **IDC**

IDC introduced discussion on the future of the remains of coach 9037 and its location. Given the issues involved, it was agreed to form a subgroup to determine a way forward with recommendations being brought back to the Board. **IDC**

821. Learning and Education – Talking Nature Project.

The proposal prepared by Helen Anson was introduced by SW. The intention is that this is subject to a further bid for external funding in early autumn. Feedback had

been obtained from South West Museums Network on content and focus and further advice would be sought before submission. Because of other financial priorities, the Board felt unable to support any matched funding on this occasion. However, SW said that he would explore other options for matched funding with HA. With that caveat, the Board supported submission of the application.

HA/SW

822. Finance

DF has circulated the finance reports. These were received and accepted by the Board. DF proposed that in light of a number of difficulties, the implementation date for portfolio budgets be moved back to January 2025 in order to allow further work to be undertaken with designated Trustees and others. This was agreed by the Board.

DF/ALL

A discussion took place as to how to address the continued need for additional income generation and support to fundraising projects. SW proposed that the Finance & Governance Group restart its meetings on a Bi-monthly basis by zoom video conference to which Trustees would be invited. This was agreed by the Board.

SW

823. Governance.

a) 2024 AGM

SW presented the 2024 AGM pack to the Board. Trustees made the following decisions:

- i) Approval of the 2023 Statutory Accounts and Directors Report;
- ii) Approval of the AGM Members Meeting Pack (Notice of Meeting, Proxy Voting Form and Chairman's Report);
- iii) Endorsement of the Trustees for Re-Election (I Camp, I Coleby and S Williams); and
- iv) Endorsement of Co-opted Trustees for Election (J Robinson and C Bolt).
- v) Approval of the Members Q and A Paper 2023 as updated
- vi) Inclusion of a short presentation by HA on the work of the Learning, Education and Community Outreach Programme.

None of those Trustees put forward for either Re-election or Election took part in the voting process.

DF would be preparing the Statutory Accounts and Directors Report for signature by himself and SW. The External Examiner would then submit these to Companies House as usual on behalf of the Trust. SW would submit the Accounts and Report to the Charity Commission within the prescribed timescale.

SW/DF

SW would now prepare the final 2024 AGM pack to go out to Members to be distributed by CB.

SW

b) Trustee Changes

GE advised that he would be standing down as a Trustee at the 2024 AGM. SW proposed that he should assume the lead responsibility for the Museum Accreditation programme. This was approved by the Board.

SW said that in order to lead on Accreditation, he would need to give up responsibility for PR and Communications. Accordingly, in discussion with the Chairman, SW had approached Chris Bolt about assuming a Trustee role that combined Membership and Communications. Chris Bolt had confirmed that he was happy for his name to be put forward to the Board for this new role.

Following discussion, the Board approved the co-option of Chris Bolt as a Trustee and the creation of the new portfolio. SW would prepare a new role profile for agreement with Trustees.

SW

SW had also had discussions with JR about the need to enhance the importance of the work on the People Plan which would include the volunteer strategy. Accordingly, SW proposed to the Board that JR's portfolio should be expanded and would now be Safeguarding and People. This was approved by the Board. Again, SW would prepare a new role profile for agreement with Trustees.

SW

c) Accreditation.

GE advised that the Policies are being updated. He gave an overview of progress and it was noted that work for submission of the application is still on track.

Access Policy

The Board received the draft Policy which had been prepared by SW on behalf of the Museum Accreditation Working Group. Following discussion, Trustees agreed the Policy and supported the development of the subsequent Action Plan

GE/SW

People Plan and Volunteer Strategy.

JR introduced the draft document and proposals and took Trustees through the key issues. Following discussion, the Board approved the Plan and Strategy for implementation. JR would lead and coordinate this process through the Board and volunteer teams. The Board reviewed the document.

JR

824. PR & Communications

SW had met with Sam White of the PLC and gave a synopsis of the opportunities and challenges associated with broadening the Trust approach particularly in the context of use of social media. The possibility of a joint approach to Communications across the WSR family was particularly welcomed. With the transfer of portfolio responsibility, Chris Bolt will follow-up accordingly and advise the Board.

CB

825. Membership Matters

The reports prepared by Chris Bolt were considered and the proposals supported. ***(The following specific recommendations were confirmed as supported subsequent to the Board Meeting)***

- following up on members with unconfirmed emails;
- writing to all those members who do not currently Gift Aid their membership;
- a pattern of communication with members; and
- the proposed shape of a corporate membership scheme.

826. Major Projects and Fundraising.

i) Coach 3639

SW introduced the paper setting out proposals on the approach to public fundraising for coach 3639. The broad template was approved by the Board but it was recognised that more information was required and in particular on the preferred restoration option for the vehicle. Following discussion, it was agreed that JW would consult the HCP team and make recommendations to the Board. In the meantime, MT would seek further views from Trustees and Chris Austin as President (who has previously undertaken a lot of research on 3639).

JW/SW

Subsequent to the Board Meeting it was agreed that a one-off meeting of Trustees would be arranged to discuss the issue further once the recommendations from the HCP team were available. This will also include the development of criteria to aid the decision-making process..

SW

ii) Proposed Carriage Shed-Norton Fitzwarren

The Board considered the proposals received from West Somerset Railway Association for the development of a carriage shed adjacent to the triangle. The PLC were currently considering the proposition and a technical workshop to look at the detail around design, operations and function was being organised for October 2024. The proposal from the Association included the opportunity for the Trust to stable and display its carriages if it so wished. JW identified a number of issues with regard to the shed which he would forward as part of the technical discussion.

JW

It was agreed that JW would represent the Trust at the technical workshop and that MT and/or SW would attend any subsequent project team meetings.

JW/MT/SW

MT asked the Board to send their thoughts to SW.

All

827. Any other business

i) Proposed Visit to Washford

MT advised that the meeting at Washford will be to meet with the volunteers there rather than holding a Board meeting. Date to be advised but hopefully before the AGM.

MT/JW

828. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 26th September 2024 at 5:30 PM by Zoom.