

## WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST

**Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 5.30pm by Zoom video conference.**

**Present:** Mike Thompson (Chairman) (MT)      Steve Williams (SW)  
Helen Anson (HA)  
John Robinson (JR)      John Waters (JW)  
Chris Darke (CD)  
Ian Camp (IDC)      Don Fraser (DF)

**In Attendance** -Les Blake (Minutes)

### PART 1 - PUBLIC

#### 866. Apologies.

Martin Brown   Ian Coleby

Geoff Garfield was welcomed as a WSRA observer for this part of the meeting      Action

#### 867. Conflicts of Interest

No new items to report.

#### 868. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024

These were agreed as a correct record. The public Decision making schedule up to 27 March 2025 was attached and approved. (See separate document).

#### 869. Matters Arising

Learning Offer – Final programme was received and noted.

Railway 200 – SW will request a schedule of any events happening from the PLC General Manager      SW

#### 870. Museums

Model Railway Group – IDC reported that the new leadership team is in place. This includes George Legg, Rob Morley, Chris Darke and Matt Jackson. A new work programme was being developed and would sit aside the MRG Policy (see Minute 872 (i). IDC to keep the Board updated as necessary.      IDC

IDC said that Chris Austin has analysed the Visitors Attendance Book at BL and the results had been distributed to the Board. It was noted that 1293 people had signed the book in 2024 and that the trust had received some very complimentary views from visitors. The national and international distribution of visitor origin was very interesting and informative. Local visitors made up a small proportion of total visits with the international profile generating visitors from over 30 countries. This information would be used to inform further work on Accreditation and the ongoing development of the visitor offer.      IDC/SW

Blue Anchor – The Board were asked to endorse previously discussed arrangements

for reopening the Museum in a two-stage process commencing on Saturday 5th April. The approach was supported and it was agreed that IDC/HA/JA should coordinate arrangements with BA station staff through Robin Wichard.

IDC/HA

It was also noted that there would be a memorial for Pete Treharne which was being organised by the PLC for the following day and would be attended by members of his family. It was noted that Don Fraser would be attending and those Trustees who could make it would be welcomed.

### **871. Washford.**

JW updated on developments at Washford. He said that Carriage 6705 is almost completed and ready for its fitness to run examination. This was being organised by MT with the PLC.

Working at Height equipment. All items had been ordered. It is estimated that delivery and installation will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in April.

The Board considered a proposal from the Chairman to hire a Collett coach from the Severn Valley Railway to create a short form train with 6705 to run at the Spring Gala behind locomotive Fenchurch. The Board unanimously supported this initiative and agreed the cost which would enable 6705 to be seen in revenue earning service on the WSR for the very first time.

MT

### **872. Governance.**

#### **i) Accreditation**

##### ***a) Access Report and Access Action Plan***

SW reminded Trustees that the Access Report produced by WECIL had been previously circulated. The accompanying Action Plan to address the recommendations was in development and included proposals which were the responsibility of the PLC to consider. A meeting with the GM was in the process of being organised (subsequently agreed as 24<sup>th</sup> April). Trustees endorsed the work being undertaken by the Museum Accreditation Working Group (MA WG) through the Action Plan which would be brought back to the subsequent Board for consideration as there were those organisational and financial implications involved.

SW

##### ***b) Policies, Procedures and Plans***

The Board had received the following Policies and there had been earlier debate and contributions from Trustees prior to the Board meeting. After further discussion, the documents were approved for adoption and implementation. Trustees thanked members of MA WG for all their hard work and asked that appreciation be passed on to the non-Board members of the Group.

SW

- Collections Care and Management Plan and Technical Guide
- Documentation Manual, Procedure and Plan
- Model Railway Group Policy
- Heritage Carriages Management Policy

SW explained that the development of the latter policy had highlighted a significant issue for the Trust in relation to responsibility and accountability for the ongoing care of restored carriages as they were completed. Clearly, the current example is 9038 which is located

in the Museum and cared for by the Museum Team. This Policy establishes the principle that this arrangement should continue for all subsequent vehicles where responsibility transfers from the Heritage Carriages Restoration Team to the Museum Team regardless of where the carriage is located. The Board endorsed this principle as part of their overall approval of the Policy but asked that this be kept under review. With the near completion of 6705, it would be necessary for JW and IDC to discuss ongoing management of the vehicle in line with the Policy.

IDC/JW

### ***c) Users and their Experience***

SW reminded Trustees of the context here. The third and final part of the accreditation process dealt with how museums approach users and their experience. In addition to Access, the four papers prepared and previously circulated to the Board cover the remaining elements of this area of consideration. After discussion the Board approved the following papers for adoption:

- Evidence of Public Benefit
- Understanding our Audiences
- Providing a Learning Experience
- How We Provide Information to Users

## **ii) Corporate Policies**

### ***a) Conflicts of Interest***

SW advised Trustees that this was an updated version of the previously approved Policy and had been reviewed in the light of the emerging position on legacies. The Board approved the adoption of the updated Policy.

SW

### ***b) Corporate Risk Register and Risk Assessments***

In MB's absence, SW updated the Board. It was noted that a small informal working group consisting of MB, JR and SW had met to begin the review of the CRR and would be reporting back to the Board in due course. Work on the Risk Assessment of the Gauge Museum was making good progress and was almost complete. This would be brought to the Board at a subsequent meeting.

IDC/MB

## **iii) WSR Matters and Developments**

### ***a) Tripartite Board Meeting 10 February 2025***

The Minutes of the meeting held between the PLC, Association and the Trust were received and noted. DEPG would be invited to the next meeting which was scheduled for Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April (subsequently cancelled).

### ***b) Proposed Visitor Centre Bishops Lydeard***

MT spoke to the previously circulated briefing note on this emerging possibility. It had the support of the PLC Chairman and General Manager and appeared to be feasible from a planning and development perspective. However, much more work was required before a firm proposal could be finalised and this will be brought back to the Board. MT

**c) Covered Canopy Cattle Dock Bishops Lydeard**

SW said that he had re-initiated discussions with the PLC Engineering Director and Chris Austin and that there would be a site visit in May to review the scheme and the initial indicative drawings prepared by LHC Architects. A further report would be brought back to the Board in May.

SW

**d) Norton Project**

The Chairman invited Geoff Garfield to provide an update on the proposals and the background to this latest briefing paper. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Board would give further consideration to the proposals in Part 2 Confidential of the Meeting.

**e) Strategic Direction Programme Board**

SW provided the background to this initiative. The intention was to set the future long-term direction of for the railway and to pursue a number of key projects designed to enable the WSR to be operationally and financially more effective. More information to follow. The first meeting of the Board was due to take place on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

SW

**873. Any other business**

There was no other business to conduct.

Geoff Garfield left the meeting at this stage.

**874. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 5:30 PM by Zoom.