

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on the 18th March 2026 at .30pm by Zoom video conference.

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

In Attendance -Les Blake(LB) (Minutes)

949. Apologies.

Ian Coleby

Action

950. Conflicts of Interest

No new declarations

951. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28th January 2026

These were agreed as a correct record.

952. Matters arising

i) Museum Agreement has been signed and will be implemented.

SW/IDC

ii) Museum roof – IDC awaiting prices for scaffolding. Use of cherry-picker hoist discounted due to roof angles.

IDC

iii) Volunteer hours – From 1st April the Trust will start using the Excel package to record hours undertaking using the “volunteers” identified. This will include use of the HOPS system as well.

JR

953. Trustee & Management arrangements Washford.

MB has met with John Waters (JW) and will investigate the circumstances of the recent Serious Untoward Incident and report back to the Board.

MB

It was proposed that MB be the interim Trustee portfolio Lead for Washford Engineering Centre. The Board **endorsed** the proposal. John Waters will remain On-site Lead of the Washford team. MB to action.

MB

954. Cattle Dock Covered Canopy project.

The Board noted the contents of the PLC response to the project proposal. Given the need to resolve outstanding issues, it was **agreed** that MT and SW should meet with the PLC to discuss next steps. Progress on the proposed topographical surveys will be made once SW has a response from the PLC.

SW

Trustees reiterated the view that provision of a footbridge to facilitate access to Station House and the Cattle Dock is a critical enabler to their success.

955. Museums

Pre-season meeting has been arranged for Saturday 21st March.

Blue Anchor – IDC suggested that a de-humidifier be permanently installed to help cure the damp problem. The Board **agreed** and that this could be funded within the Museum 2026 budget.

IDC/DF

956. Finance

DF introduced the Finance Reports. This included the latest legacy update. There were no significant matters to report. Because of the work on the wealth management proposals, finalisation of 2026 budgets had been delayed. These were still being prepared and discussed with budget holders and would be presented to the May Board for approval.

DF

The exception to this was the Museum Budget. Following discussion, the Board **approved** the Museum Budget.

IDC/DF

Following discussion, the suite of Financial Policies previously circulated by SW were considered and **approved** by the Board. One of the issues to be determined was the question of the extent of publication and authorisation to implement. These were matters that would be considered further by Finance and Investment Committee at their May meeting.

SW/DF

The Finance and Investment Committee paper to the Board also updated Trustees with decisions made by FIC.

The Board also received and noted the draft Investment Plan which was work in progress and would be finalised on receipt and approval of the Brewin Dolphin proposals.

SW

957. People

i) **2026 ID completion** – 2 members of the MRG have not confirmed their personal details so have departed the group. There was one outstanding completion which JR had in hand. JR was thanked by the Board for his sterling work on this particular issue.

JR

ii) **Fundraiser Role Profile.** JR and SW explained the background to the proposed change. The voluntary post would be accountable to the Vice Chairman who would retain overall Trustee responsibility for the fundraising function. The Board **approved** the profile and **agreed** that it can go to recruitment.

JR

958. Learning and Education Programme 2026.

HA presented the programme and summarised the key elements a number of which built on and repeated the successes of 2025. There would be a greater emphasis on the link between environmental sustainability and the WSR in this year's work with schools and other groups. It was noted that the Talking Nature project was almost complete and that HA had secured the final tranche of funding toward this work.

The Board thanked HA for her presentation and enthusiastically **approved** the Programme for implementation. HA also said that she had been in discussions about improvements to the Trust Website page on Learning and Education

in order to raise its profile and to expand on the work of the Learning and Education team.

HA

959. Governance

i) 2026-27 Business Plan. SW reminded Trustees that this had already been distributed. With the exception of some minor changes to the Appendix 2 Organisational Chart, the Plan was ready for implementation. The Board duly **approved** the Plan.

SW

ii) Proposed Junior Trust Membership Scheme. IDC introduced his paper which set out ideas for attracting younger volunteers to become Members of the Trust through the creation of a separate category which might be called "Explorer". It was agreed that this should be explored further and updated proposals brought back to the May Board for consideration.

IDC/JR

iii) Policies & Procedures Review. SW presented a paper summarising the current position with regard to active policies and procedures. There was still some work to complete but this provided the Board with an overview of the organisation's governance framework in this area. Again, there would need to be a discussion about what material remained internal to the charity and what would be publicly available and for what reason.

SW

iv) Statutory Accounts & Directors Report. Following discussions with the Auditors, it would be necessary to have draft documents available for consideration at the May Board meeting. This would then enable the auditors to undertake the necessary work in time for the 2026 AGM in September.

DF/SW

960. WSR matters.

i) Station House. MT updated Trustees on the current position. The PLC had yet to formally respond to the Trust letter. The Board confirmed its position but agreed that further discussions with the PLC were necessary alongside of those related to the Cattle Dock.

MT/SW

ii) Winter Works. SW advised Trustees that the first tranche of quotations had been authorised and that the PLC had been notified. The next tranche were awaited.

SW

iii) Fundraising Coordination Group. The Board noted that the first meeting had taken place. The initial focus was on developing proposals for the PLC Appeal. This would be directed at both PLC shareholders and the general public.

iv) Finance Resilience Group. The second meeting is planned for 20th April and Trustees were updated on current issues.

SW

941. Volunteers

HA said that she had been approached by a number of volunteers who had had raised some points with her. HA and JR would investigate and report back.

HA/JR

942. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 20^h May 2026 at 5.30pm.