

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST

Minutes of the meeting of Board of Trustees held on the 28th January 2026 at 4.30pm by Zoom video conference.

Present: Mike Thompson (Chairman) (MT) Steve Williams (SW)
Helen Anson (HA) Chris Darke (CD)
John Robinson (JR) John Waters (JW)
Ian Camp (IDC) Don Fraser (DF)
Ian Coleby (IC) Chris Austin (CA)
Edward Martin (WSRA)

In Attendance -Les Blake(LB) (Minutes)

929. Apologies.

Martin Brown

Action

930. Conflicts of Interest

No new declarations

931. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26th November 2025

These were agreed as a correct record.

932. Matters arising

Any items arising are on the agenda.

933. Cattle Dock covered canopy project.

CA updated the Board on progress to date using the outline architectural drawings provided by LHC. The plan would be for the original cattle dock to be covered, not removed. Project Team members favoured a timber clad solution if possible.

The Board discussed the financial aspects of the scheme and DF proposed that contact be made with outside funding bodies to obtain their general views on the project.

SW

Trustees agreed that LHC should be the ongoing architectural partner and that the drawings should be shared with PLC to obtain their support.

SW

It was also agreed that Andrew Horner would be approached to undertake topographical surveys of the area covered by the scheme similar to those completed for the proposed Visitor Centre. Chris Langdon would also be asked for his views on planning consent/permitted development. The planning authority would be approached for their advice.

SW

934. Museums

BL Museum roof – IDC advised that the roof is still leaking. A tarpaulin has been put in place, however, the PLC have advised that scaffolding may be needed to access the roof. It was suggested that a cherry picker or the use of Sherrings may be an

- option. Board was happy for IDC to go ahead and investigate. IDC
- BA Accreditation** – SW asked for approval to activate the process. Board agreed. SW
- BA Phase 2 renovation** – SW proposed that the Project Team be reactivated. All Agreed. IDC/HA
- Small grant application** – Intention was to apply for a grant for the Heritage Carriages Project display.at BL.
- HRA Awards** – Blue Anchor has been short listed. CA will be attending. CA

935. Communications and IT

CD advised that the website hosting is now totally with Fluid Labs. The email platform has migrated to MS365.The Advisory Group will meet in early March. The work to review and centralise key documentation was ongoing. CD and Matt Sutton would be having discussion with key Trustees and in particular DF and SW. CD

936. Governance

Honorary Life Membership – The website has been updated with the new rules.

Director ID Verification – 2 Directors are waiting for assistance to complete.MT offered to assist. MT

Policies and Procedures review – SW explained that he was undertaking a review of current policies and procedures together with developing new material principally with the new financial landscape in conjunction with DF. He would be preparing a paper for the March Board meeting. SW

Recording of Volunteer hours – DF briefed Trustees on the new accountancy reporting rules (SORP). As a ‘Tier 2’ charity we know need to report Volunteer hours and to reflect this in the Annual Report. We need to do this from 1st January 2026. SW to discuss with DF and JR. SW/JR/DF

937. Business Plan Update

MT thanked SW for the hours of work involved with the Plan. SW outlined the approach taken. Following discussion, it was agreed that there would be a period of internal consultation led by Trustees with teams. The Trust would also consult WSR family members with a final draft being prepared for the March Board meeting. SW

938. Proposed Visitor Centre Bishops Lydeard

MT and CD presented progress with the project to date. In view of its scope and cost, Trustees were asked to vote on whether to proceed with the scheme. The project was supported by the majority of Trustees with one dissension. CD then presented the draft legal agreement which was taken from the original Framework agreed with the PLC Board. The Board supported taking forward the draft agreement for further discussion and development. It was noted that the next steps would include development of the specification and the Business Case. CD/MT

939. WSR PLC Matters.

Museums Agreement – SW briefed the Board on his discussions with the PLC Finance Director. The paper before Trustees set out the alternative proposals and benefits accruing to the Trust in terms of current and future lease terms with alignment to the PLC Head Lease with Somerset Council. SW pointed out that the Trust was already funding a substantial amount of maintenance and repair work to the Museums and therefore the new proposals would have enable matters to be concluded. The Board supported the proposals in the paper.

SW

940. WSRA Update.

Edward Martin updated the Board on the latest WSRA activity.

941. Any other business

No matters were raised.

942. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 18th March 2026 at 5.30pm.