A Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission Registered Number 1169995

REFERENCE BT15/2012

FINAL

MINUTES OF MEETING #15 OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE & TRAVEL SOCIETY. Held via Video Conferencing (Zoom) on Wednesday 5th December, 2020. Commencing at 1400hrs

This meeting was the first to be held as a "Board of Trustees" - the consecutive numbering series for Trustee Meetings has been retained, with the addition of the prefix 'B'.

TRUSTEES PRESENT AT THE VIDEO CONFERENCING MEETING

ACM	Callum MacLeod	Chairman
ARW	Reg Wood	Treasurer & Finance Group Leader
GTA	Geoff Adams	Secretary & Admin Group Leader
DB	David Bird	Deputy Chairman & Commercial Group Leader
MSR	Mike Robinson	*RO* Managing Editor
DPG	David Goddard	Membership
APD	Andy Davies	Archive & Library
ILR	Irene Rabbitts	Branch Liaison
JM	James Milne	Strategy Group Leader
JR	John Redgate	Trustee
DK	David Kelso	Trustee

INVITED TO THE MEETING

MS	Matthew Shaw

MENTIONED BUT NOT PRESENT AT THE MEETING

PC	Paul Chancellor	(former Trustee)
DJ	David Jackman	(Webmaster)
RS	Roger Sandford	(Publicity Officer)
WGD	Gordon Davies	(former Chairman)
WRG	Bob Green	(former Secretary)

2012.01 CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

ACM welcomed the Trustees to this meeting, plus MS who had also been invited to the meeting.

REDACTED

2012.02 APOLOGIES

None

2012.03 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF MEETINGS T14/2010 & T14A/2011 (dated 10th October & 11th November respectively)

There were no objections from the Trustees, so ACM to sign the last page of both T14 & T14A, scan and then email to GTA, pending the time when he could hand over the original document for filing. ACM & GTA to liaise regarding any required redactions, prior to posting on the Society website – **Action Point (AP) 1a & 1b** to these Minutes.

2012.04 MATTERS ARISING, INCLUDING ACTION POINTS

.01 T14/2010 ACTION POINTS:

AP1	Completed.
AP2a	Completed.
AP2b	Completed.
AP3	Completed - ARW had recruited a new volunteer, Peter W Smith, to assist with Gift Aid; DPG also offered to assist, if required.
AP4	Carried Forward for action in due course – **AP2**.
AP5	No action required at present, RCTS have signed the lease but APD advised that Network Rail (or Go Via) had yet to do so, as the Energy Efficiency Rating has yet to be determined. The latest he'd heard was that a derogation was to be sought, as it was a listed building. ARW confirmed that rental charges were ring fenced in the Accounts, along with provision for utilities. APD was keeping a periodic record of meter readings but didn't know who the supplier was. As there was no need currently for ACM to discuss matters with WGD &/or Sarah Hollingsworth, this item to be put on temporary hold.
AP6a	Completed.
AP6b	Completed.
AP7	Completed.
AP8	MSR has purchased an external hard disc drive, onto which Quark is loaded, resulting in a slight improvement noted; he would discuss further with DJ – on going – **AP3.**
AP9	Completed. GTA enquired if PC could now be removed as a Trustee on the Charity Commission website and ACM confirmed that he should, as he had formally retired on 30/11/2020 – **AP4.**
AP10	Completed.
AP11	Completed'
AP12	MS to discuss under AOB (2012.22.01) below. Agreed to be shown as 'On Going'.
AP13	Completed and see also '2021 AGM Proposals' below (2012.20).
AP14	ACM has not been able to contact Coventry's Welcome Centre as they are still in lockdown, so it may be necessary to seek an alternative venue in Coventry – **AP5.**
AP15	Completed.
AP16a	GTA & MSR had discussed and had agreed to Carry Forward to the February 2021 meeting (BT16) – **AP6.**
AP16b	MSR requested to also Carry Forward this item to BT16 – **AP7.**
AP17	GTA requested to Carry Forward this item to BT16 – **AP8.**
AP18a	To be discussed under '2021 Society Diary' below (2012.19).
AP18b	Completed.
AP19a	Completed, with ACM making the necessary arrangements.

AP19b Completed but JR did join the meeting prior to agenda item .05 (2012.05 below).
AP20 Completed but GTA to follow up as Steve Ollive has not yet replied,
AP21a Completed.
AP21b Completed.
AP22 Completed and acknowledgement received.
AP23 Completed, with MSR adding that out of 9 responses, only 2 had been useful; DB's experience was similar. ILR had passed on her responses to the relevant Branches.

02 T14A/2011 ACTION POINTS:

AP1a/h (inclusive) were followed up as required.
AP2a APD had all the Survey papers and a memory stick from Lawrence Bindley, with names deleted but membership number retained – any necessary follow up would be via DPG, who could supply details from his records. APD is combining all the information into about three pdf files and will dispose of the paper Surveys via his work's secure refiling.
AP2b Completed.
AP3 Completed, with on-going discussion also with the Strategy Group.
AP4 JM advised that he had taken on website development along with digital transformation (social media) and are added to the remit of the Strategy Group to take forward into the 2021 Action Plan. AP taken as Completed.
AP5 Completed.
AP6 Completed.
AP7 Completed.
AP8 Completed.

2012.05

REDACTED

REDACTED

2012.06 FINANCE UPDATE

ARW had not issued any papers prior to the meeting. He started by discussing Governance issues, namely the list with the Bank of those Officers with authority to sign cheques, on behalf of the Society, for the release of funds. Currently, these were WGD & WRG as (former) Chairman & Secretary, ARW as Treasurer plus JR & DPG. ARW proposed deleting WGD & WRG and then adding ACM & GTA (as the new Chairman & Secretary). If this was agreed, he would notify the Bank accordingly and requested that this be Minuted, as it would be necessary to provide a copy to the Bank in support. **All Trustees present agreed that William Gordon Davies & Walter Robert Green should be deleted from the list of authorised signatories and that Alistair Callum MacLeod and Geoffrey Thomas Adams be added.**

For the Financial Year ending 31/10/2020, the books were closed but the Publications Stock Valuation was missing – ARW had a theoretical stock but no stocktake had been conducted – also, excess stock provisions needed to be finalised. ARW added the following:

- Sales in 2018/2019 had been £21,000 but only around £6,000 in 2020/2021 and although he had forecast this, it would impact the surplus/deficit in due course.
- Administration costs for all meetings, etc., had a budget of £20,000 but only £10,600 spent – some expense claims may be outstanding though; Zoom meetings had definitely brought savings.
- Image sales were better than books, with actual sales of £3,800 against planned sales of £2,000.
- Gift Aid had also increased, at £3,800 from HMRC against a forecast of £3,000.
- Submission of Branch returns were nearly complete, with only Northampton & West Midlands yet to come, much better than normal.
- ARW, DPG & JR had looked at the retention rates and concluded that there was a much better rate for those joining under a reduced offer, against those joining for free.
- Advertising budget: he had budgeted for £8,000 for all advertising (membership & new books) but the Development Committee had asked for £10,000. JM highlighted the number of members joining in the first three months of 2020, an average of 39 per month, then only 14 per month thereafter. The Society had a problem with the number of members not renewing after their first year, however they had joined, but those that did tended to keep renewing in subsequent years. JM added that without advertising, the Strategy Group's target for recruiting new members would need to be rescinded. JR had seen figures produced by DPG analysing the retention rate and from this it was obvious that those joining for free were those less likely to rejoin – a problem not unique to this Society. JR's report was sent by ARW to JM and would be forwarded to the other Trustees in due course. JR felt that the Strategy Group should perhaps look at how offers were presented to potential new members, for instance 'join for £5 provided a direct debit was signed'. JM agreed that the Strategy Group would look at retention as a project in 2021. MSR added that he had recently undertaken to advertise the *Railway Magazine* (*RM*) in the *RO* – and as advertising in the *RM* was more productive than in the Heritage railway press, perhaps there was scope for some reciprocal arrangements. ACM referred to JM's budget proposals dated 27/11/2020 and pointed out that there was scope for savings, in the amount required for exhibitions, etc., so perhaps ARW's budget of £6,000 might be a more suitable than the £10,000 JM was requesting. JM accepted that he could work

with £6,000, he just didn't want a nil budget; he was assured that everyone recognised the importance of advertising.

2012.07 *RO* UPDATE

MSR advised of the problems with the December *RO*, causing roughly 60% of the published photos appearing too dark, though the text was okay. The MD of Amadeus advised MSR that the problem was caused by the ink being too cold, the printing having been undertaken first thing on a Monday morning; MSR added that the printer's 'quality control' at the printers has also been brought into question. A £500 refund has been offered (about 20% of the normal cost) and MSR felt that should be acceptable, as the printers will be following the printing of the flagship 'first B5' edition, the January 2021 *RO*. MSR offered his apologies for the quality of the photos appearing in the December *RO* and he and DK were also sending apologies to the individual photographers involved. For the worst affected photos, MSR would take them forward to the February and March *RO*s to give them the due they were owed; he had also posted an apology in the website Forum and asked if ILR could issue something similar in one of her Newsletters – **AP10**.

In respect of the January *RO,* MSR & DK had all the final copy ready and was aiming to have the final version to the printers by the next Monday and be received by members in time for Christmas. This edition will also include JM's piece on the Strategy Group and an article on MS's Timetable World. ACM asked if Profiles were to start soon and MSR advised that the Editorial Team had proposed re-starting the feature from some years ago, whereby members of the Management Committee / Trustees / Branch Officers were featured in the *RO.* On reflection, MSR has decided to shelve the idea, for a while anyway, but the general feeling was that they should restart, although ½ a page of the B5 size would suffice – **AP11**. MSR repeated that full page *RM* adverts would be appearing every other month during 2021. JR enquired if an apology from the printer would appear in the *RO* and MSR advised that he hoped something would appear in the February 2021 edition.

2012.08 STRATEGY GROUP UPDATE

JM stated that he had been particularly active recently and advised the Group's activities as follows:

- Bob Ballard is to leave the Development Committee but would be continuing with his other duties, as well as liaising in respect of the New Members documentation.
- Bob Avery hadn't been aware of being a member of the Development Committee but would continue on an initiative with *RM*'s Chris Milner, who is being succeeded by Paul Bickerdike, from *Rail Express*. Bob Avery's photographic group would prepare an article on photographic tips to appear, under the Society's name, in the *RM*. MSR queried a possible conflict about what appears in this article and what we tell our members about submission of images to the *RO* – JM to ensure Bob Avery aware.
- MS had been invited to join the Strategy Group, and has accepted, looking particularly at digital transformation and social media.
- Last Development Committee / first Strategy Group meeting, on Zoom, held on 21/11 and a continuation on 30/11; both successfully held without DJ's participation.
- First content for 'Running Lines' submitted for publication (in the *RO*), with initial fears of being unable to find sufficient material soon overcome. He hoped other Groups would also provide material for inclusion, as this was about the Society's operations, rather than Networks.
- In February, they would be looking for a volunteer to take over from PC the role of Nameplate Administrator.
- An attempt would be made to better understand how new members hear about the Society.
- Group also looking at ways to perhaps partner with 'Stockton & Darlington 200', in 2025.

- Through Steve Lacey's contacts with heritage railways, Group to look at offers to advise to members; Dave Coxon also to pass on details of a contact to Steve regarding the opening of the new GWR Depot at Exeter.
- The *RM* are looking at having a 125th Anniversary Rail Tour and the Society has been offered the opportunity to book a whole carriage at a discounted rate; Strategy Group to keep under review.
- Bob Avery has restarted the Portfolio circulation by email, with surprising success.
- Folders for the new B5 size *RO*: Bob Ballard had a stock of 3000 A5 sized folders, ordered in February (cost £1,000), which the Group are looking at ways to use. Also, to look at who orders what and from where.
- Branch Chairman to be recruited to help ILR & ARW in a small working group looking at improving relationship with the Branches.
- Looking at how the centre can encourage those Branches not yet doing so, to hold Zoom meetings, perhaps with a Branch that already holds Zoom meetings doing so by proxy.
- Longer term, to integrate the Society name/logo with that of partners; members who have their own website to mention their RCTS membership, etc., all to help advertise the Society.
- Looking at renewals / lapses.
- New Branches Project to remain on hold until we get through the Covid pandemic.
- Issuing best practice guidance to Branches as to when to start face-to-face meetings, what needs to be done in respect of risk prevention, venues, any social distancing requirements, proof of vaccination, etc., that may be required; all points to consider in Quarter 1 of 2021.
- Looking at membership & fee structures, and come back with proposals.

2012.09 RISK ASSESSMENTS (BRANCH & NATIONAL)

ILR had asked for this item to be included on the agenda as it is mentioned in the new Rules. This was linked with what JM had already mentioned in his Strategy Group Update (penultimate item above) and he confirmed that his Group would be taking this forward.

2012.10 BRANCH LIAISON UPDATE

.01 2021 Members Weekend

ARW advised that the message from the President, withdrawing the Bristol Branch offer to help run the 2021 MW in Taunton, was made without holding a Committee Meeting. The two Branch organisers had withdrawn, with the recent tragic death Roger Newman, due to Covid, **REDACTED** . However, ARW and his wife were willing to step-in instead, and with the help of the former organising team (ILR & APD), they hoped to hold the 2021 MW as planned. Bookings had been confirmed / transferred, though the position of the West Somerset Railway remained to be seen. The notes and documents about the MW were still with Roger Newman's widow but they would be retrieved in due course. Contingency plans were under consideration, should bookings be low. ILR had nothing to add other than to record her thanks to ARW and his wife.

.02 East Midlands Branch Update

ILR had prepared a brief report for circulation prior to this meeting and this is attached as **Appendix 4** of these Minutes and she added that a new Branch Secretary, Dave Coxon, had been appointed but that a Treasurer was still needed; contingency arrangements were in place and the Branch was moving ahead. ACM thanked ILR for all her work in trying to help the Branch with their recent difficulties.

2012.11 PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

DB advised that “The Journey” had now been published, with about 80 copies sold so far, with further orders arriving slowly; no Book Shows, Branch Meetings, etc., so sales were slow. No reviews yet but looking with RS at alternatives for reviews, such as Amateur Photographer. Two more books were ready to go, the Brush book and the Mensing Image book, which should be out in the next 3 to 4 months, the former delayed with printer requests for 50% payment up front. The Commercial Group need to look at what we sell and where we sell, authors, etc. ARW suggested the Branches be told, via ILR’s Newsletters, of the books published and invite them to submit orders. DK reminded DB that an advert was in the December *RO* about “The Journey”, which Branches will see. The Royal Scots and 8F books will follow and there are a lot of photos in the Library that could be used to produce future books, though having the people to put it together was a problem.

2012.12 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

DPG had circulated his latest Membership Statistics (as at 30/11/2020) prior to the meeting, and these are attached as **Appendix 5** of these Minutes, while a further 8 had joined in the last week. Steve Ollive had advised that, as of lunchtime that day, we had 507 members who had yet to respond to the renewal letter, 5 of which were AVRs; 143 of the non-renews were ‘first timers’ with 23 of those having joined for free. These letters had requested renewal by 30/11/2020. ARW added that donations were probably down overall but two significant ones have been received, of £1,000 & £200, and he would acknowledge these in due course.

2012.13 ARCHIVE / LIBRARY UPDATE

APD restated that water ingress at Leatherhead was still ongoing and that the matter had again been reported to Govia / Network Rail. Work on the images was continuing and the ‘photographic document’ had been updated and would be issued in due course. Although still officially closed, arrangements can be made for people to visit.

2012.14 WEBMASTER UPDATE

MS advised that he had started the process of picking up from DJ, but had not received any documentation from him, though he had all the necessary credentials to run the website. He had posted the December RO to the website and that seemed okay. There was still a lot of work to do before he could take over from DJ – a meeting was planned for the following week – so DJ is remaining as the main contact for now. DJ has stood down from attending Trustee meetings but as holder of the Society’s Zoom licence, he is still heavily involved with hosting Branch meetings and ACM has thanked him for his efforts. MS may need to take out a new licence as it was not thought possible to transfer them.

2012.15 REPTA PROPOSAL

JM had circulated a paper on this topic prior to the meeting and this is attached as **Appendix 6** of these Minutes. REPTA’s Secretary had originally contacted GTA, who had passed it on to the Strategy Group, via RS. The Society logo already appears in the REPTA handbook and in return MSR was to offer a free half page advert and additional ones at discounted rates. REPTA are proposing that the Society purchase a block of 50 membership cards at £4 each, against the normal £5. ARW added that REPTA certainly had a lot on their website, so strategically it would be good to offer this to our members; finance would not be a problem but it would need to be managed. MSR expressed reservations, given the number of discount cards now available in the market. DPG enquired as to whether such a purchase would be in line with our charitable objectives – ACM suggested it would be okay. JM added that the Strategy Group would take this on and come back with a paper on how it might work. Generally, it was felt obtaining a code, to identify the RCTS when applying for REPTA membership, should be sufficient to obtain a discount, without having to purchase a whole block of REPTA membership cards.

2012.16 ZOOM LICENCE EXTENSION – RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL

ACM explained that DJ took out an extension to the Society's Zoom Licence, to cover the possibility that more than 100 members would register to take part in the 2020 AGM; at one point, over 100 had but less than that remained throughout. £40 was paid for the extension, and approval was sought retrospectively, and granted without objection by the Trustees. ARW would make provision in the accounts, as DJ had not yet submitted a claim – reminder to be given by MS to DJ to submit all his outstanding claims when finally handing over – **AP12**. MS added that DJ may need another extension for a Branch meeting in March but APD advised this was a Surrey meeting, and his Branch would use their own licence and purchase any required extension.

2012.17 GOVERNANCE REMITS (aka Terms of Reference)

Two had been submitted and are attached as **Appendices 7** and **8** (Administration and Strategy Group Remits, respectively) attached to these Minutes; Finance & Commercial Groups to follow. Comments welcomed and ACM was happy for that to be dealt with by email.

2012.18 NAMEPLATES, ETC., BEQUEST

ACM screen-shared a photograph of three nameplates bequeathed to the Society, along with some 15+ boxes containing books, photos, etc., by the late Ted Vaughan, who had been the Secretary of Solent Branch for many years. A Solicitor based in Hythe (Hants) was dealing with Ted's affairs and had written to GTA with details of the bequest and had provided the photos. GTA had been liaising with APD over the books and with ACM regarding the plates, and it had been agreed that the Trustees would be consulted as to possible authenticity and advice on disposal, e.g. retain and send on loan, or put out to auction and keep the money. It was not thought likely that the Flying Scotsman plate was off the loco itself, and it was suggested it could have come from an industrial loco or a train. Nor was it known for certain if the King Arthur plate was original or a replica and JR suggested that, if the number 449 appeared on the reverse, it may be an original that Ted probably purchased in March 2008 because he himself had purchased the same plate in the 1980s; GTA added that he had asked the solicitor for a photograph of the rear of the plates but this had not yet been received. ARW suggested getting the plates out of the hands of the solicitors first, then have a debate as what to do next; he was happy to collect the books and ferry them to Bristol for Brian Arman to look at, Brian being well enough now able to undertake light activities at home and he could arrange for disposal once any required for the Library had been withdrawn; GTA added that if ARW were to come down, there were also approx. 40 books, from the Bob Turtle bequest, awaiting disposal that were currently housed with the Chichester Branch Secretary, who lived just north of Bognor. APD confirmed he'd asked the solicitor for either a list or photos of the other boxes but his first impression was that he may only want a few for the Library. GTA confirmed he would be able to collect the plates and deliver them to, say, Leatherhead or, he suggested, he could speak to Great Central Auctions (he had details of a contact from WRG) who might be prepared to come down and collect them all for auctioning on our behalf. Loaning to a heritage railway in the south was a possibility, perhaps at Swanage, though GTA added that he knew PC & RS had had difficulties trying to find a home for a plate with this railway last year. In respect of the 69664 plate (ex-Class N7), JR advised that this had never come up for auction. It was agreed that obtaining possession of the plates was the first priority, APD & GTA to liaise – **AP13a**. ARW repeated, if required, his offer to collect the books – **AP13b**.

2012.19 SOCIETY DIARY

ACM had circulated a draft Society Diary, this time incorporating the Strategy Group meetings, and had chosen approximately two-monthly intervals for BT meetings, starting with the 6th February and this, plus the 10th April meeting, were to be via Zoom, with the hope that the June meeting could be held at the STCH, starting at 1100. After discussion, the 5th June meeting was changed to the 22nd May after discussion and 17th March selected for the Commercial Group's Editorial Conference; DB said Publications did not need to arrange a meeting as yet. The revised version of the 2021 Society Diary is attached as Appendix 9 of these Minutes.

[**Post Meeting Note:** 27th January has been selected for the Commercial Group's next Publications meeting and this is reflected in the latest version of the Diary.]

2012.20 AGM PROPOSALS

ACM had still not been able to contact the Welcome Centre, with Coventry currently being in Tier 3 probably the reason. GTA had prepared and circulated a Proposal Document prior to the meeting and this is attached as **Appendix 10** of these Minutes. 23rd January was the deadline for announcing the AGM in the March 2021 *RO*, so a venue needed to be arranged before then. DPG reminded ACM that we had used the Midland Hotel in Derby for AGMs in the past and this was still fairly central. ACM thanked GTA for his work on this and both would need to liaise, as there was no BT meeting in the interim – **AP14**.

2012.21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This would be on the 6th February, as shown on the 2021 Society Diary, via Zoom and at 1400hrs.

2012.22 AOB

.01 Working Timetables Proposal

MS advised that since this proposal had been outlined at the T14 Trustee Meeting, and concerning which was to bring a paper to the February 2021 meeting; he had been unable to get Network Rail to engage on the project. Also, the Bus Archive / Kitson Trust's WTTs are in deep storage and thus also reluctant to engage. Consequently, MS was not in a position to be able to deliver anything in February. GTA would now note T14 AP12 above as 'ongoing', with MS to continue the proposal in due course – **AP15**.

.02 Format of Agenda Attachments

MSR queried if it was possible to standardise the format of documents circulated with agendas, etc.; he preferred the use of PDF. Discussion ensued with some Trustees in agreement, others preferred the use of Word. JM suggested using the RCTS 'SharePoint' site, MS adding that this was a topic on his 'to do' list and a discussion was needed to look at how we deal with internal documentation and then make proposals. ACM suggested GTA continue to use Word until such time as MS comes back with proposals.

.03 RCTS-branded Facemasks

DPG said that he had produced a small number of these (as demonstrated by APD) as a sample and he could offer these to the members at £8 each. Availability could be advised in ILR's Newsletter and included on the website as an additional item amongst clothing. No objections were raised to proceeding as outlined.

.04 Society Insurance

JR is looking at the annual insurance renewal, which will be completed before the next meeting, and he would send a summary to ACM, ARW & GTA. MSR still to submit his information and ARW or DB to advise on valuation of Society publications but given sales of only £6,000 worth, he would also use his judgement. MSR to send required information to JR – **AP16**.

As there were no other items for discussion, ACM wished everyone a Happy Christmas and Hogmanay, prior to concluding the meeting at 1722hrs.

G T Adams – Society Secretary

APPENDICES ATTACHED TO THESE MINUTES

1.

2. **ALL REDACTED**

3.

4.

5. Membership Update (as at 30/11/2020)

6. REPTA Proposal

7. Admin Group Remit / TOR

8. Strategy Group Remit / TOR

9. 2021 Society Diary (as revised retrospectively)

10. 2021 AGM Proposals