RCTS
THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE AND TRAVEL SOCIETY

REFERENCE BT22/2603

Final

MINUTES OF MEETING BT22 OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE & TRAVEL SOCIETY.

Held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Caversham Bridge, Reading on Saturday 26th March 2022

***Note*: This meeting was recorded via Zoom (to subsequently prepare the Minutes).**

TRUSTEES PRESENT AT THE MEETING

ACM	Callum MacLeod	Chairman
DB	David Bird	Deputy Chairman
ARW	Reg Wood	Financial Group Leader / Treasurer
MSR	Mike Robinson	Commercial Group Leader / Managing Editor *RO* – via Zoom
JM	James Milne	Strategy Group Leader / Development
DPG	David Goddard	Membership
APD	Andy Davies	Archive & Library
ILR	Irene Rabbitts	Branch Liaison
MS	Matthew Shaw	Webmaster
JR	John Redgate	Trustee – via Zoom

OTHERS PRESENT

BA	Rev. Canon Brian Arman	President
PJC	Paul Chancellor	Minute Taker

MENTIONED BUT NOT PRESENT AT THE MEETING

RM	Richard Morris
TMBS	Terry Silcock

2603.01 – CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS & COI DECLARATION

The meeting commenced at 11.20 with the Chairman welcoming those present plus JR and MSR via Zoom. ACM enquired if anything on the agenda was likely to give rise to a Conflict of Interest (COI) for anyone – nil declared.

2603.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE None

2603.03 Confirmation of the Minutes of the BT21b meeting of 18th February 2022

ARW requested an amendment to item 1802.04c where it was stated that membership was to be treated as a cost centre. This should have read that it was to be treated as a profit centre. All accepted the amendment and agreed that the minutes could be signed as a true record of the meeting.

2603.04 Matters arising from BT21b

04a(i) Chairman's proposals concerning the E-RO: (see Appendix 1)
Following a detailed debate on the subject, it was proposed that the suggested action for the Webmaster to carry out an investigation into additional software that could be used to read the *RO* would in fact be undertaken by the Strategy Group and that was accepted by all present. The work should be carried out in time for a decision to be taken at the next Trustees' meeting.

Action Point 1

04a(ii) Chairman's Proposal on the digitisation of the Photo Archive: This section of the document contained in Appendix 1 proposed that the Strategy group undertake a review of the current and previously suggested processes. There was some debate as to the scope, e.g. should the commercial aspects be included and it was agreed that these could be added to the scope at a later date if the Trustees requested. The proposal was accepted but it was pointed out that appropriate members of the group should be drawn from outside of the Strategy Group.

Action Point 2

04b Publications and book finances: Appendix 2 refers and there had been subsequent discussions between DB and ARW. ARW stated that the same legal requirements applied to accounting practices for the treatment of book stock valuations now as before the Society achieved charitable status. However, within that framework there were various options for carrying out valuations and deciding when stock should be written off. It was agreed that the market for books had changed in recent years with a number of publishers offering books at very reduced prices within a few months of publication. As the Society published both 'technical' and 'picture' titles a single valuation system might not suit all titles.
It was agreed that the average sales achieved in years 2-4 following publication of a title would be used to determine if the society held any surplus copies of each title and, if so, they would be written off. **Action Point 3a**
It was agreed to carry out a further investigation to see if there was a case for putting in place differing practices for technical and picture style books. **Action Point 3b**

04c Remaining Action Points from BT21a: (*see Appendix 4*)

AP1 **Outstanding.** **Action Point 4a**
AP2 **Closed.**
AP3 **Done.**
AP9 **On-going.** **Action Point 4b**
AP10 **Done.**

04d Action Points from BT21b: (*also see Appendix 4*)

AP1a **Done.**
AP1b **Done – see 04a**
AP2 **Done**.
AP3 **Done**
AP4 **Done.**
AP5 **Complete**
AP6 **Done, see 04b**
AP7 Change of the Society's Independent Examiners – to be discussed at a future BoT meeting. DB asked ARW if he was satisfied that the current examiners were competent and applying the correct processes for a charity – ARW confirmed that he was.
AP8 **Carried forward to BT23 meeting.** **Action Point 5a**
AP9 **Ongoing**
AP10a **Carried forward to BT23 meeting.** **Action Point 5b**
AP10b **Done.**
AP11a **Done.**
AP11b **Carried forward to BT23 meeting.** **Action Point 5c**

AP12 **Carried forward.**
AP13a Only PJC had responded but other Trustees today confirmed preference for future meetings to be held in London – **Completed.**
AP13b **Ongoing.** **Action Point 5d**
AP14 **Done – see item 6b(i)**

05 MEMBERS' DAY AND AGM. ACM reported that all arrangements had been made and that he had visited the venue. So far 35 requests for lunch had been received. It was noted that 50 attendees would be required for a quorum. PJC advised that he would probably not be available to take the minutes.
[Post Meeting Note: RM has volunteered to take the Minutes at the AGM.]

06 ADMINISTRATION GROUP UPDATE

06a Secretarial vacancy. ACM advised that no progress had been made in finding a volunteer for the post. The possibility of having a paid person for this duty was discussed. It was noted that the Administration group cannot meet until a Society Secretary is appointed.

06b(i) Regional Meetings in 2022. ILR had spoken to a number of branches and all were in favour of holding the meetings and it was agreed that these should be organised and the Trustees advised of dates and venues for possible attendance. **Action Point 6**

06b(ii) Member's Weekend. The intention to hold the member's weekend at the Crowne Plaza had been dropped due to difficulties in getting responses from the hotel. Alternative venues had been evaluated with the Novotel now being the preferred choice. A programme of visits was being finalised.

06c Membership report. DG advised that the total membership of the Society now stood at 2,600 with 17 new members being enrolled at the Alexandra Palace exhibition. See also Appendix 4.

07 FINANCE GROUP UPDATE
ARW had submitted the Report contained in Appendix 5. The finance team would shortly complete their work related to the renewals process and would soon start on reclaiming gift aid. Due to Covid there had been little financial activity at branch level. East Midlands Branch had sent £5,000 for investment on their behalf. A request was made for a list of the end of year 'money on deposit' for each branch. A request was made to provide BoT with a list of branch cash balances at the bank at year end. **Action Point 7**

There is still a requirement for more volunteers to help in the finance group. One member had come forward but, as he did not have e-mail or use a computer, it was not possible for his services to be accepted.

A concern was expressed about the large sums showing on the balance sheet as provision for rent/rates etc. demands in respect of Leatherhead where there was still no progress in getting the lease documents signed by the landlord.

STRATEGY GROUP UPDATE

08a Action Plan: JM had submitted the document contained in Appendix 6 for information.

08b New Member Recruitment Update: See Appendix 7.

08c Society Nameplates: See Appendix 8. JM advised that the two 'Sheffield' plates had been moved to Barrow Hill where *Scirocco* was also now on display. Discussions were underway with various parties to house the remaining plates. The loan agreement for one plate '*Prince George*', falls due for renewal this year and consideration is being given to moving that from the bus museum in Rotherham to a more appropriate location.

Photos are required of the rear of the '*Falkland Islands*' plate to aid identification. **Action Point 8**

<u>08d Optimising the Membership Renewal Process</u>
The working group had carried out an evaluation of the current process. (Appendix 9). It had been questioned as to the need to continue to issue Society membership cards. It was pointed out that these had been introduced in part to enable members to identify themselves to staff at stations. They might also be needed to access some member's benefits and at least one branch required them to be shown when attending meetings.
To allow the group to continue its work it was agreed that the proposal in Appendix 9 be approved. However, the view of branches would be sought at the regional meetings. **Action Point 9**

<u>08e Analysis of New Member's Questionnaires</u>
MS reported on responses received to questionnaires now being sent to joiners a few weeks after signing up. 65% had responded. 75% of those were over 65. Most read at least one railway magazine of which the RM was the most popular. Branches had in most cases contacted the member. There appeared to be generally a low interest in non-UK railways.

REDACTED

A proposal from the SG was that there should be a further survey of members, although this might be carried out by e-mail (an e-mail address for 84% of members was on file). This would ask different questions to those posed in the 2020 survey. The proposal was agreed. **Action Point 10**

<u>09 COMMERCIAL GROUP UDATE</u>

<u>09a Archive/Library</u>: APD reported that visitors were returning to the library although still not at pre pandemic levels. A 'Book sales' weekend was planned for April. It was planned to remove copies of modelling magazines from the library to free up space. Proposals to bind copies of the RM and RO were being investigated.

<u>09b Publications</u>: DB reported that the Royal Scots book was almost ready to be printed subject to timely completion of work on around 15 photographs. He then explained the dilemma of how many copies should be ordered. Quotes from printers were only valid for 30 days at present due to rapidly rising paper costs. The current print cost per copy was between £8 and £10.50. The next book would be on first generation DMUs.

JR commented that we were not publicising our publications enough and that as a minimum a full listing of books should appear in the *RO*. **Action Point 11**

ARW questioned if the current member's discount policy was in line with that previously agreed by the Management committee. DB confirmed that it was correct and gave details of how it was applied.

<u>09c The *RO*</u>: MSR advised that he was looking in the market to get alternative quotes for the printing of the *RO*. It was suggested that a contract for printing both the *RO* and our publications might be of interest. DB pointed out that this would preclude the use of non-UK printers for the books where our first such venture had proved satisfactory.

<u>09d Webmaster</u>

<u>09d(i) Cloud usage</u>: MS had submitted the document contained in Appendix 10 concerning the use of the Cloud for a number of projects/processes. Trials were taking place via the *RO* team and it was agreed that, if those were satisfactory, then the June *RO* process for image and Quark file transfers would use the Cloud. **Action Point 12**

<u>09d(ii) Mortons *RO* Scans</u>: ACM explained that most of the historic *RO*s had been scanned by a member several years ago and had been sold on CDs at the time by former Librarian TMBS. The remaining *RO*s had since been scanned by Mortons around four years ago but still none of the latter had been made available for sale. DB advised that cover designs were now being prepared and he was hopeful that all historic *RO* copies would be available for sale as PDFs within the next six months. Commercial Group to take overall responsibility for this to happen. **Action Point 13**

09d(iii) Proposed Change of Title to Digital Officer: See Appendix 11. It was agreed that henceforth the title of Webmaster be replaced by that of Digital Officer.

10. Proposed Review of the Effectiveness of Governance: ACM had submitted the document contained within Appendix 12 which proposed a review of the ways of working as it was felt that the Trustees were still debating items that should be actioned within the various groups. The Strategy Group had been cited as the only one operating in the intended way. JR thought that it was too early to carry out a review in that just one group meeting had taken place amongst the other three management groups. It was agreed that around a further six months should be allowed for the other groups to hold meetings and change their way of operating/reporting to the Trustees.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that meetings should return to Somers Town Coffee House and that the next meeting would be held there on June 11. However, ACM would chair this via Zoom.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

REDACTED

12(ii) 'Auto Renewal': DB asked why the Society was not implementing this as part of the membership procedure. JM advised that the subject was within the scope of the current review of that process.

The meeting closed at 16.10.

APPENDICES:

01 Chairman's proposals on E-*RO* and Image Digitisation

02 Excess stock provision recommendation

03 Relevant Action Points from BT21a and BT21b meetings

04 Membership Statistics (2022-02-28)

05 Finance Group report

06 Strategy Group Action Plan update

07 New membership recruitment

08 Barrow Hill nameplates

09 Position Paper on Membership Cards

10 Proposed RCTS Cloud implementation

11 Proposed Job Specification – Digital Officer

12 Effectiveness of new Governance Organisation

ACTION POINTS FROM BT22 MEETING

AP 1 **JM** to arrange for Strategy Group to carry out a review of alternative 'magazine reading' software for the E-*RO*. *[Minute 04a(i)]*

AP 2 **JM** to form a Strategy Group sub group to evaluate the proposals for the digitisation of the Photographic archive. *[Minute 04a(ii)]*

From Minute 04b:

AP 3a **ARW/DB** to implement agreed book valuation methodology.

AP 3b **ARW/DB** to evaluate if a differing process are required to be applied to the different types of publications.

From Minute 04c:

AP 4a **ARW** to discuss use of the WSR Silver pass with Paul Udey.

AP 4b **JM/DPG** to complete arrangements for the use of hand-held card readers.

From Minute 04d:

AP5a **MSR** to submit new proposals on the scope of the Commercial Group to BT23 meeting.

AP 5b **MSR/PJC** to discuss proposals for a Society photographic competition.

AP 5c **ILR** to gauge interest in SAPHOS proposal via a branch newsletter.

AP 5d **ALL** to advise any updates to the Society diary to ACM.

AP 6 **ILR** to organise regional Meetings and advise Trustees of the dates and venues. *[Minute 06b(i)]*

AP 7 **ARW** to provide BoT with a list of branch cash balances at the bank at year end. *[Minute 07]*

AP 8 **ARW** to supply photos of both sides of the Falkland Islands nameplate to APD/JR. *[Minute 08c]*

AP 9 **ILR** to include discussion re membership card provision in the Regional Meeting agendas. *[Minute 08d]*

AP 10 **JM** to prepare questions for a 2022 survey of members. *[Minute 08e]*

AP 11 **DB/MSR** to Include book sales list in the next available *RO*. *[Minute 09b]*

AP 12 **MS/MSR.** Subject to completion of trials, use the Cloud for the production of the June *RO*. *[Minute 09d(i)]*

AP 13 **MSR** to ensure Commercial Group handles appropriate arrangements for the completion of the historic *RO* scanning project. *[Minute 09d(ii)]*

N.B. Due to the size of the Appendices, they are not published along with these Minutes. Copies can be provided, on application, to the Society Secretary, but will only be supplied subject to any redactions that might apply.