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

REFERENCE BT23/11-06

Final

MINUTES OF MEETING BT23 OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE & TRAVEL SOCIETY

Held via Zoom

on Saturday 11th June 2022

TRUSTEES PRESENT AT THE MEETING

ACM	Callum MacLeod	Chairman
DBB	David Bird	Deputy Chairman
MSR	Mike Robinson	*RO* Managing Editor
DPG	David Goddard	Membership
JM	James Milne	Strategy Group Leader
MS	Matthew Shaw	Webmaster
ARW	Reg Wood	Treasurer
RLM	Richard Morris	Secretary

Others present

PJC	Paul Chancellor	Minute Taker

1106.01 – CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS & COI DECLARATION

The meeting commenced at 11.00 with the Chairman welcoming those present plus in particular RLM. ACM enquired if anything on the agenda was likely to give rise to a Conflict of Interest (COI) for anyone. MS advised that in respect of item 13 on the agenda he did have a conflict. The Trustees agreed that he would be allowed to take part in the discussion but not in any vote that might arise.
ACM advised that he had become aware of some discussions between Trustees that were not conducted in a way that he felt appropriate. All discussions should be undertaken using civil language.

1106.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Andy Davies (APD), Irene Rabbitts (ILR), John Redgate (JR).

1106.03 Confirmation of the Minutes of the BT22 26th March and BT22A 9th April

Both sets of minutes were approved and will be signed by ACM. Signed copies of the minutes of all meetings since April 2020 to be passed to RLM. **Action Point 1 ACM**

<u>1106.04 Matters arising from BT22</u>

There were no matters arising that were not to be covered by the agenda.

<u>1106.05 Updates from Action Points of BT22 meeting</u>

AP1 Strategy Group review of magazine reading software
JM advised the meeting on the contents of a report prepared by David Jackman. This looked at the existing Page Suite and Flip Book software plus one from Issuu.com. This showed that the most cost effective system combined with performance and security was Flip Book. The Trustees approved the recommendation to work with that software. The contract with Page Suite would be terminated.
Action Point 2 MSR

AP2 Strategy Sub group to Evaluate Photo Archive digitisation
The group which met on June 1st was chaired by JM with JR, DBB, MS and APD with a written input from David Jackman. Potential solutions presented and discussed were that a) the work be carried out by volunteers as and when available, b) the contents of the archive be disposed of or c) a full time employee be taken on to scan the approximately 100,000 images in store. It is noted that no formal proposal or recommendations were put forward by the Project group at this stage.

Whilst the Trustees thought that option (c) was the way forward there was discussion on employing someone and that it should either be done by a business or a full time volunteer. In discussing past system failings it was agreed that ideally all scanning should be done at Leatherhead and that one person should have overall control of the process. One member was identified as having an interest in the work but it was agreed that an appeal would be put in the RO for a project leader. A further meeting of the project group was also to be held. **Action Point 3 JM**

AP3 Implementation of agreed book stock valuation processes and methodology.
Following a meeting between DBB and ARW processes had been agreed for implementation at the next year end (2023)

AP4a WSR Silver Pass
The existence/availability of the pass had been advised to Bristol Branch members. The need for a system of traceability of loans was noted.

AP4b Hand held card readers
The Society now owned two card readers having provided to the issuers requested personal information about the Trustees.

AP5a Submit new proposals for the scope of the Commercial Group
MSR advised that these were not yet ready. Carry forward again. **Action Point 4 MSR**

AP5b Discuss proposals for a Society photo competition
PJC advised the meeting that all the work for setting up the competition had been done and it should be announced in the September RO with voting to close on September 30th.
Send information for the RO to MSR. **Action Point 5a PJC**
Send the winner a congratulatory e-mail**.** **Action Point 5b ACM**

AP5c Gauge interest in SAPHOS railtour proposal.
An item in Running Lines did not result in any response. It was also to be the subject of a branch newsletter but ILR had advised that this had not yet been done. JM expressed the view that the time had passed to accept any offer for 2022 and that the item should be closed. The meeting agreed.

AP5d Advise updates to the Society Diary
ACM advised that he was aware of meetings that had taken place which had not been advised to him for the diary. He reminded those present that it was an ongoing requirement.
Action Point 6 ALL

ACM queried when an Editorial conference was to take place. MSR replied that no date had been fixed and he did not see the need to call a meeting. ACM thought that one should take place but he was not able to insist that MSR organise it.

AP6 Organise Regional Meetings
ILR had advised via a report that two meetings had already taken place and two more were planned. However it had proved difficult to organise one in the northwest – see later

AP7 Provide BoT with cash balances held by branches
ARW advised that this had been done. (Ref Doc 05)

AP8 Supply photographs of Falkland Islands nameplate
ARW advised that this had been done.

AP9 Include discussion on Membership Card requirements on Regional Meeting agendas.
ILR had advised that this had not been included in the Agenda for these Regional Meetings as it was felt not to be appropriate at this time. However subsequently it was agreed that the chair at each meeting would raise this point. See item 1106.06

AP10 Prepare questions for 2022 Members Survey
MS advised that this had been done and that the survey would go ahead shortly.

AP11 Include book sales list in RO
DBB advised that this had been done in the May RO and appeared to produce sales to four members

AP12 Use Cloud for production of the RO
MSR advised that this was being done

AP13 Arrangements for the completion of historic RO scans.
MS advised that he had been to Broadstairs to collect the existing RO scans and other items held on computer plus hard copy of the unscanned ROs. Just the issues from 1928 to 1930 required to be scanned before all ROs could be made available on-line.

AP14 Confirm that resignation e-mails had been withdrawn
ACM and DBB confirmed that they had withdrawn their resignation e-mails.

1106.06 Administration Group Report (Doc 06b)

a) The AGM minutes were confirmed as going to appear in the July RO after some minor changes to the financial information. (Doc 06a)

b) RLM advised that he had collected all of the paperwork and a laptop from Geoff Adams and would send some items to Leatherhead. Some items should in future be stored in the cloud and MS would show RLM how that should be done shortly.

c) ACM had notified the Charities Commission of the appointment of a new Secretary.

d) The problem of fixing the North West regional meeting was discussed and it was agreed that Paul Treby (Group Secretary) would be contacted to try to expedite this. (Doc 06c) **Action Point 7 ACM**

e) £5.45 had been received from Amazon following members nominating the Society as their preferred charity.

f) RLM REDACTED

had reviewed the minutes and other documentation and concluded that the project was possibly not pursuing its intended purpose. BT22 had indicated that physical membership cards may no longer be required but that the subject should be discussed at the Regional Meetings, although as noted earlier it was not on the agendas. He had concluded that the process should be halted until the feedback from the regional meetings had been received.
ARW said that as the process involved financial matters he should be involved but conceded that Steve Ollive, as a member of his team, could oversee financial interests.
MS advised that two major relevant developments had occurred in the last few months - an e-mailing tool that could reach 80% of members and a re-designed website that would allow new ways of processing membership renewals, both of which could allow the process to be run in a different way. His frustration was that he had been unable to arrange a further meeting where the use of such tools could be discussed.
JM set out the history of the project starting with its inclusion in the Strategy Group Action Plan in January 2021 and that the Trustees at BT22 had decide that a physical membership card was not required. There was also the issue that new membership cards were being sent to some 10% of members who then failed to renew.

REDACTED

MS proposed that a further attempt to get an early meeting date be undertaken. It was agreed that the lead should be taken by the Administration Group and a meeting date, via Zoom if necessary, be fixed urgently to try to complete the review, prepare a report and implement its recommendations.
Action Point 8 RLM

g) The Trustees expressed their gratitude for the work done by Geoff Adams and that this should be recognised via a letter of thanks to him. **Action Point 9 ACM**

1106.07 Commercial Group Report

a) DBB outlined the plans of the publications group. The printing contract for 750 copies, of the *Royal Scot* book, to be priced at £29.50 (£25 for members), had just been signed with delivery expected by 1st August. This would be followed within three months by the book of images by the late John Cowlishaw and then a pictorial book on the first generation DMUs.

b) MSR touched briefly on the photo archive stating that in his view attention needed to be given to what is currently scanned but not available for sale and the storage of the originals relating to these images, this to take priority over further scanning. He then explained the current difficulties in producing the RO and the loss of the Eastern editor and potential problems coming from other major contributors. He believed that the Society would shortly have to review the future of the RO with the only area showing strength being the rise in the number of good quality photographs submitted. More features were need and a note was required in the RO that these could be accepted in non-digital formats.

c) MS presented a paper on digital services (Doc 07a). JM enquired if branches had the option to opt out of the use of the Society Zoom licences. It was likely that only ten branches would continue using Zoom and that five licences in total would suffice. These had been paid for centrally to date but for the coming year branches would be asked to pay £40 to continue Zoom use.

d) ARW raised the subject of the use of Facebook etc., and why was it so difficult to find a volunteer. MS advised that it needed to be a young person and that the amount of time required to be effective was much the same as needed to run the RO.

e) MS presented a paper on the LNER book series (Doc 07b) which was almost ready to launch subject to Trustee approval which was granted. Subject to this running successfully the digitised RO would be then proceeded with. There was discussion about the writing of a promotional article for the LNER series. Rodney Lissenden was contacting Eric Fry but it was also suggested the Maurice Boddy might be able to help.

f) MS provided a paper on Zenfolio sales of photo archive products for information (Doc 07c).

1106.08 Finance Group Report

a) ARW advised that the completion of the renewals process to ascertain the true financial outcome appeared to be taking longer each year and was now causing late reporting of VAT with the Society being fined by HMRC. Discussion ensued as to why this might be and it was agreed that solutions would be discussed both within the membership process review but also at a Finance Group meeting

Action Point 10 ARW

b) Once the VAT return has been completed attention will turn to the annual Gift Aid claim compilation. A bequest of £2500 has been received from the estate of Roger Newman. The income in the first half year was £65K with a net expenditure of £39K. Administration costs were well down mainly due to the use of Zoom and there had not been any capital expenditure. (Doc 08)

c) ARW advised that late claims for expenses were also causing problems with reclaiming VAT and contributing to the fines from HMRC. It was essential that expenses claims were submitted in a timely manner. JM questioned if the Society should remain VAT registered. ARW advised that in years with high publications sales we would exceed the VAT threshold and that overall we received more in VAT refunds than we paid in contributions.

d) ARW could not find any confirmation of the budget for the current financial year in the BoT minutes although two proposals had been put forward. It was agreed that there should be an approved budget and that the two original proposals be recirculated so that one could be approved by the Trustees.

Action Point 11 ARW

1106.09 Strategy Group Report

The Updated Strategic action plan is attached as doc 09d

a) JM had submitted two papers proposing variances to new membership offers for Crewe and Barrow Hill open days. The Trustees approved both suggestions. (Docs 09a and 09b)

b) Advertising appeared to be producing diminishing numbers of new members. A review of the current programme and the style of the adverts has led to a JM decision to temporarily halt new member advertising from June. A refresh of the adverts and the investigation of the use of digital adverts is to be undertaken before resuming advertising. This does not affect publications adverts. Digital advertising offers have been received from Mortons but these require further clarification. The publicity officer is not conversant with the use of Facebook to promote the Society and consideration is being given to finding a member to take on the task with an appeal in *Running Lines*. (Doc 09c)

c) Some magazine publicity was generated with the loan of the *Falkland Islands* name plate. The only nameplate still to be physically placed is the industrial *Jubilee* with the problem of retrieving it from Carlisle causing a delay but this should be on display at the Middleton Railway shortly. A visit to the IOW Steam Railway found that there was no RCTS publicity boards or leaflets supporting our loaned nameplate. This is being taken up with the railway.
[Post meeting note: this has been resolved; the railway has two "Ryde" plates, with the RCTS plate properly acknowledged with the correct citations on display.]

d) Liaison with NE branch concerning the S&D 200 exhibition continues. However, it was noted that the branch website page is currently unused.

e) An approach was made to Mortons concerning the running of a joint photo competition in 2023 and a positive response was received. The Trustees agreed that the Society should pursue this option and that further discussions should be held, initially with Paul Bickerdyke.
[Post meeting note: contact from Society is to be Paul Chancellor, replacing MSR.]

Action Point 12 MSR

f) Plans for the Barrow Hill RCTS Members' Event have not progressed with a proposed meeting not scheduled until July. It is felt that this would be much too late to effectively organise the event. Attempts are to be made to bring this forward using Zoom if necessary. The absolute deadline for copy for the RO would be 8th July. **Action point 13 JM**

1106.10 Membership Update

Membership stood at 2637 at the end of May being some 3.5% lower than at the same time last year. A report on the retention of new joiners is being prepared. (Doc 10)
ARW questioned why 10% failed to renew. In previous years there had been a review of resignation letters but very few yielded anything that the Society could act on. If DPG found any useful comments, these would be passed to ACM. **Action Point 14 DPG**

1106.11 Library & Archive report

APD had submitted a written report which showed a large number of visitors for the book sale weekend. After many months, repairs to the leaking roof were under way. (Doc 11)

1106.12 *Railway Observer* Nameplate

A letter had been received from Sir Peter Hendy advising that Network Rail wanted to transfer the name on 43014 to a class 66 but that in the short term it was likely to be transferred to another power car. (Doc 12) Concern was expressed that this might be to a 'tatty red one' and it was agreed that a polite request be made to fit the plate to a yellow-painted power-car. **Action Point 15 ACM**

1106.13 Working Timetable Collection

a) MS presented a paper (Doc 13) which identified three elements of the Society WTT collection viz pre 1970 (currently stored at no cost to the Society by MS), post-1970 in the care of Kurt Sicklemore (in a store but cost not being charged to the Society) and the Roland Pittard collection stored at Leatherhead. Proposals made were 'do nothing', which would shortly lead to a monthly storage charge for the Society with the cost (£75/month) currently being met by MS, get rid of the whole collection or dispose of the pre-1970 material and the Roland Pittard collection which duplicated much of what we already have. After discussion, it was agreed that the post-1970 collection be retained and choice items from the pre 1970 collection should go to the library taking the space currently used by Pittard which along with the pre 1970 collection would be disposed of. The WTTs should firstly be offered to like-minded organisations (e.g. the Bluebell Railway) to take the complete disposal batch. If not completed by the end of August then the Society would be invoiced for storage charges.

Action Point 16 MS

b) Concerns were raised about the WTTs with Kurt Sicklemore in respect of proof of ownership by the Society. It was agreed that RLM should check the records and, if necessary, request a signed declaration from him confirming his custodianship and Society ownership. **Action Point 17 RLM**

1106.14 Regional Meetings

These had been discussed earlier – see above (see also Doc 14). Although two had taken place, no formal feedback had been received owing to the respective Chairs being on holiday.

1106.15 Any Other Business

a) ACM raised communications received from Richard Bowry concerning a UK directory of Railway Clubs and offering the Society a sale and profit sharing deal. The Trustees agreed that the offer be declined and that instead the publication would be mentioned in the RO and website with a view to the Society receiving recompense from Bowry. JM requested a copy of the letter.

Action Point 18 ACM

b) RLM advised that he had received a request from the Charities Commission for us to submit our annual report and accounts. The AGM minutes and accounts would be the main documents submitted. These were required by 13th August. **Action Point 19 RLM/ACM**

1106.16 Date of Next Meeting

This was confirmed as 10th September 2022, being a hybrid meeting based at Somers Town Coffee House. DPG will supply camera/microphone and ACM will confirm use of digital screen at STCH.

Action Point 20 DPG/ACM

The meeting closed at 16.10.

Appendices:

Minute 05 (AP7) Branch Funds

Minute 06 (a) AGM Minutes
(b) Admin Group Report
(c) Branch Liaison Update
(d) Review of Membership Renewal Process

Minute 07 (a) Digital Services Report
(b) LNER Series proposal
(c) Zen Folio Sales

Minute 08 Half Year Finance Report

Minute 09 (a) Membership Offer Barrow Hill
(b) Membership Offer Crewe
(c) RCTS Recruitment
(d) Strategic Action Plan Update

Minute 10 Membership Update

Minute 11 Library Report

Minute 12 Letter from Sir Peter Hendy

Minute 13 WTT Options

WTT Catalogue – a copy of this substantial document is held by the Secretary and is available on request

Minute 14 Regional Meetings update

Action Points from meeting BT23:

AP 1 ACM to bring signed copies of all BoT meetings since 2020 to RLM. *(Minute 1106.03)*

AP 2 MSR terminate contract with Page Suite. *(Minute 1106.05-AP1)*

AP 3 JM organise further meeting of the Photo Archive group and advertise for a volunteer to run the project. *Minute 1106.05-AP2)*

AP 4 MSR Submit new proposals for the scope of the Commercial Group. *(Minute 1106.05-AP2)*

AP 5a PJC Send information for the RO to MSR. *(Minute 1106.05-AP5b)*
AP 5b ACM Send the winner a congratulatory e-mail, in due course. *(Minute 1106.05-AP5b)*

AP 6 ALL Advise updates to the Society Diary to ACM. *(Minute 1106.05-AP5d)*

AP7 ACM to contact Paul Treby about organising the North West Regional meeting. *(Minute 1106.06d)*

AP 8 RLM fix new date for Membership Process review ASAP. *(Minute 1106.06f)*

AP 9 ACM send 'thank you' letter on behalf of BoT to Geoff Adams. *(Minute 1106.g)*

AP 10 ARW to include length of time to complete the financial information on renewals in both the process review and finance team meeting agenda. *(Minute 1106.08a)*

AP 11 ARW to recirculate 2021/2 budget proposals to the Trustees for retrospective approval of preferred version. *(Minute 1106.08d)*

AP 12 MSR [post-meeting replaced by PJC] to contact Paul Bickerdyke at Mortons to discuss a joint photographic competition in 2023. *(Minute 1106.09e)*

AP 13 JM to re-arrange Zoom session earlier to discuss possible Members' Event at Barrow Hill. *(Minute 1106.09f)*

AP 14 DPG to review 'resignation' letters and pass any useful comments to ACM. *(Minute 1106.10)*

AP 15 ACM to write to Sir Peter Hendy re the RCTS nameplate currently on 43014. (Minute 1106.12)

AP 16 MS manage the disposal of the pre-1970 and Roland Pittard WTT collections. *(Minute 1106.13a)*

AP 17 RLM to check records and, if necessary, write to Kurt Sicklemore to confirm Society ownership of the WTT collection. *(Minute 1106.13b)*

AP 18 ACM to confirm Trustee decision on Railway Club directory to Richard Bowry and send a copy of the original letter to JM. *(Minute 1106.15a)*

AP 19 RLM/ACM complete and submit report to the Charities Commission by 13th August. *(Minute 1106.15b)*

AP 20 DPG/ACM arrange equipment for hybrid session at BT24 meeting. *(Minute 1106.16)*