



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

REFERENCE BT21B/1802

Final

**MINUTES OF MEETING T21B OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE RAILWAY
CORRESPONDENCE & TRAVEL SOCIETY. Held via ZOOM on 18th February 2022**

Commencing at 7 pm

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
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
MS	Matthew Shaw	Webmaster
ARW	Reg Wood	Treasurer
PJC	Paul Chancellor	Minute Taker

MENTIONED BUT NOT PRESENT AT THE MEETING

DH	Denis Horseman	Assistant Treasurer, Commercial
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1802.01 – CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS & COI DECLARATION

ACM welcomed the Trustees to the meeting and enquired if anything on the agenda was likely to give rise to a Conflict of Interest (COI) for anyone – nil declared. PJC was welcomed as Minute Taker who could contribute to the meeting but not vote on any item.

ACM then addressed a recent exchange of emails between MSR and MS (and which had been shared with all Trustees), the tone and content of which he said was not acceptable. Such disagreements should be discussed by any individuals involved, not via 'copy to all' e-mail.

Issues identified as still requiring resolution were the use of Page Suite/alternatives and systems for storage and access of images being scanned for the image library. ACM requested further details of both issues of complaint and undertook to prepare proposals for discussion at BT22 on 26 March.

(Action Points 1a and 1b)

1802.02 – APOLOGIES

John Redgate (JR) due to power failure.

1802.03 – TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF MEETING BT21a

No objections from the Trustees. ACM thanked ILR for her work on the preparation of these minutes. ACM

and ILR will liaise re redactions, etc. –

(Action Point 2)

1802.04 – MATTERS ARISING INCLUDING ACTION POINTS

No matters were arising; Action Points were as follows:

1802.04a - 2201.5.1 (b) Rule Changes. Appendix 1 set out all changes required to the rules as identified in previous meetings. The wording of the rule changes was approved by the Trustees.

1802.04b - 2201.5. (e) AGM Arrangements. Provisional arrangements for the Members' Day had been made as set out in Appendix 2. These were approved by the Trustees. Final details to be confirmed at BT22.

1802.04c - 2201.6. (a) 2020/21 Accounts. ARW advised that the accounts had been prepared to a revised format as requested. The changes were that Membership was now treated as a cost centre with the cost of membership administration and membership advertising being shown alongside membership income. The assets of the image library had been changed from current to fixed in the balance sheet. There were no objections from the Trustees to this format and the accounts were now with the Independent Examiners with their approval/comments expected imminently.

1802.04d – Matters arising relating to Administration or Financial groups A proposal from ACM to defer these to BT22 was agreed. Action ACM (Action Point 3)

1802.04e – Action points Administration and Finance. ACM proposed that items related to these groups detailed in Appendix 3 be deferred to BT22. All other actions listed in the document have been completed. This was agreed. Action ACM (Action Point 4)

1802.05 COMMERCIAL GROUP ITEMS

1802.05a Feedback from the Publications Committee DB reported on the meeting held on 25th January 2022. The Royal Scots book was expected to be ready in around two months. 100 additional copies of the Mensing book had been ordered following the sale of the initial 500 copies. A photo format book on DMUs is in preparation and should be available in around six months. Consideration is being given to ordering more copies of various books in the Standards series.

MS enquired about the status of the proposal to revise/re-issue the LNER series. Options range from adding a large section to Volume 1, this covering developments related to LNER locomotives since 1968 and selling this as a hard copy book also giving access to the rest of the series in digital format, to just making the existing volumes available in digital form. MS expressed the view that an urgent decision on the project was required to capitalize on the 100th anniversary of the formation of the LNER in 2023. Costs were suggested as an expenditure of £2000 for the updating of volume 1 by a freelance author plus printing costs of e.g. £3500. ARW suggested that a fully costed proposal for all of the options be prepared so that the Trustees could make a decision at BT22. DB and MS were requested to prepare this proposal.

(Action Point 5)

DB advised that there were still differences of view concerning the presentation of the finances of the publications group in the accounts whilst ARW stated that the accounts conformed with established practice and that the official examiners had approved the format. DB and ARW were requested to prepare proposals to resolve this issue to be presented at BT22. (Action Point 6)

DB suggested that it might be an appropriate time to seek new examiners. ARW expected that fees might double if the examiners were changed. ACM reminded Trustees that the issue had also been raised by a member at the 2021 AGM. It was agreed that the item would be debated at a future Trustee meeting.

(Action Point 7)

1802.05b Feedback from the Commercial Group MSR reported on the meeting held on 10th February which had identified that the two main commercial areas were publications, already being dealt with by that group and the Photo Archive. There had been little consensus on a way forward and MSR had subsequently withdrawn his documented proposal on a way forward and will redraft and resubmit this to the Trustees.

(Action Point 8)

ARW pointed out the need to involve the Finance group in any proposals involving expenditure. MSR advised that DH was a member of both groups and that he therefore considered that the mechanism was in place.

1802.05c Digitising the Photo Archive This had initially been discussed at 1802.01. resulting in Action Point 1. DB gave more details of what had been proposed, but the ensuing debate suggested that there had been a lack of reasonable consultation between various Trustees with specific responsibilities and ACM again reiterated that this was not acceptable. Also see **Appendix 4**.

1802.05d Any other Commercial Matters None.

1802.06 STRATEGY GROUP

1802.06a Strategy Group Action Plan JM had submitted document which appears in **Appendix 5** for information only.

1802.06b New Member Recruitment numbers JM had submitted **Appendix 6** for information only.

1802.06c Member Recruitment Advertising Schedule JM had submitted **Appendix 7** for information only.

1802.06d RCTS Profile **Appendix 8** sets out a ten-point Society profile for use when the Society interacts with third parties. It would require updating as the Society evolves. The Trustees approved the use of the document.

1802.06e Stockton & Darlington 200 JM advised details of the planned celebrations for this event in 2025. No plans for Society involvement had yet been formulated although there had been contact with NE branch about having a Society stand.

1802.06f Paid Life Membership **Appendix 9** sets out a proposal to discontinue offering paid life membership. This could not come into force until 2024 as it would require AGM approval in 2023. The proposal does not propose retrospective action and thus would not affect existing life members. The proposal was accepted.

ARW pointed out that there was a need to have additional 'member retention' benefits. JM agreed that the Strategy Group would debate this further.

(Action Point 9)

1802.06g Membership Offer for Trainees and Apprentices The concept of this proposal as detailed in Appendix 10 was agreed. A pilot project is under discussion with Wabtec and should Coventry University introduce rail apprenticeship courses in September 2022, this is also a possible pilot scheme.

1802.06h RCTS Photographic Competition The Strategy Group proposed that the Society should hold a photographic competition (see **Appendix 11**). JM proposed that the organisation of this should be carried out by Commercial group. Agreed that MSR and PJC would discuss this further and that JM would put a request for a volunteer in 'Running Lines'. **(Action Points 10a & 10b)**

1802.06i Thank You Certificates The proposal to give Thank You certificates to speakers as per Appendix 12 was agreed. The Branch Chairman should sign those for branch meetings and the Chairman for national zoom presentations. JM will draft suitable wording for these certificates. **(Action Point 11)**

1802.06j LSL Saphos Railtours An offer from Saphos to the Society for a group-hire of a buffet car was discussed (see Appendix 13). The Society could be liable for the hire cost of around £5000 if it failed to sell any tickets. MNW branch had been approached to see if they would be interested in joining a tour but had declined. ARW suggested that multi pick-up points would allow a number of branches to participate in any tour. It was agreed that JM would sound out interest from members with an item in 'Running Lines' while Irene will consider advising branch committees via a forthcoming Newsletter. **(Action Points 12a & 12b)**

1802.07 Administration Group update ACM advised that there had not been any activity as following the resignation of the Chair of the group no meetings had taken place. Whilst he was carrying out certain extra duties, he could not chair the group as that was not permissible under Society rules.

1802.08 Finance Group Update ARW advised that due to a need for more volunteers he had not yet looked at opportunities to invest Society funds in order to boost income. Submissions for Gift Aid relief were also delayed. Agreed that a request for assistance would be placed in the Branch Newsletter by ILR with words supplied by ARW. **(Action Point 13)**

1802.09 DATES AND VENUES OF FURTHER MEETINGS

1802.09a Date and Venue of next meeting. ACM confirmed that the next meeting (BT 22) would be held on March 26th at Crown Plaza, Caversham Road, Reading starting at 11am.

1802.09b Further Meetings. BT23 is scheduled as a face-to-face meeting on 11th June. The Trustees were asked to advise their views on the location – either Reading or London- to ACM. **(Action Point 14a)**
The following meeting (BT24) on 10th September will be by Zoom, now starting at 14.00
Amendments/additions to the Society diary should be advised to ACM – All **(Action Point 14b)**

1802.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1802.10a ILR enquired if Regional Meetings should be organised this year. It was agreed that subject to positive soundings at branch level the meetings should be held. ILR to contact branches. ARW stated that there was a budget for holding face to face meetings. **(Action Point 15)**

1802.10b DG advised that in order to maintain the use of the current credit card reader the provider required a declaration of details of each of the Trustees. Some information was not to hand and DG will contact certain Trustees to ascertain this. **(Action Point 16)**

1802.10c DG advised that he had been contacted by the Scottish branch who were attending an exhibition in Glasgow next weekend. The Trustees confirmed that the branch was able to offer digital membership at £5 and printed *RO* membership at £15 at the exhibition.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

- AP1a** **ALL** to provide any relevant detail relating to the issues of Page Suite and photo archive image storage to ACM.
- AP1b** **ACM** to prepare proposal to resolve the issues around the use of Page Suite and photo archive image storage for BT22.
- AP2** **ACM** to carry out redactions on BT21a minutes.
- AP3** **ACM** – matters arising relating to Administration or Financial groups – carry forward to BT22.
- AP4** **ACM** – action points Administration and Finance detailed in document 3 – carry forward to BT22.
- AP5** **DB/MS** to prepare cost of details for the options for updating the LNER book series for BT22.
- AP6** **DB/ARW** – accounts treatment of publications finances – prepare proposal for BT22.
- AP7** **ARW** – change of the Society's Independent Examiners – to be discussed at a future BoT meeting.
- AP8** **MSR** to submit new proposals on the scope of the Commercial Group.
- AP9** **JM/Strategy Group** to discuss additional measures to aid membership retention.
- AP10a** **MSR/PJC** to discuss proposals for a Society photographic competition.
- AP10b** **JM** to put volunteer request for AP10a in 'Running Lines'.
- AP11** **JM** to draft outline wording for branch 'Thank You Certificates'.
- AP12a** **JM** – **SAPHOS** Railtour participation – sound out members' interest via 'Running Lines' item.
- AP12b** **ILR** – **SAPHOS** Railtour participation – consider sounding out branch committees' interest via Branch Newsletter' item.
- AP13** **ILR/ARW** to seek assistance for Finance group via Branch Newsletter.
- AP14a** **ALL (incl. PJC)** to advise preference for future BoT meeting location to ACM.

AP14b ALL to advise any updates to the Society diary to ACM.

AP15 ILR to establish interest in holding Regional meetings.

AP16 DG to obtain information required to maintain Society card-machine use-authority.

APPENDICES attached to these Minutes

1. Proposals to amend the rules of the Society
2. Members Day Programme
3. Relevant action points from previous meetings
4. Proposal for digitisation of the Photo Archive
5. Strategic Plan update
6. New Members Recruitment information
7. Membership Recruitment Advertising plan – update to schedule
8. RCTS Profile
9. Proposal for Paid Life Membership
10. Proposed Trainee and Apprentice Membership Offer
11. Proposed Photographic Competitions
12. Proposal for 'Thank You' certificates
13. Saphos charter train offer

PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE RULES OF THE SOCIETY**(as inserted into March 2022 RO)**

Following that year's AGM, the revised governance of the Society came into effect in late November 2020 when a new set of Rules was adopted. Since then, the BoT has been assessing the effectiveness of these Rules and has identified some areas of inconsistency and potential conflict with the Constitution which always takes precedence. The BoT wants to take cognisance of the disruption which might be caused by external factors beyond the Society's control and also wishes to take forward the approval granted at the 2021 AGM to pursue the future ability of Trustees to join the AVR scheme.

Rule 1b – replace with: These Rules were first adopted by at least 75% of the Society's members present and voting at the AGM in Coventry on 16th April 2016 and have been amended by at least 75% of the Society's members present and voting at subsequent Society AGMs. This version took effect from the date shown at the end of these Rules.

This change would have two effects – it was never our intention that it needed more than 75% of members present and voting, which is what the original wording implied. Also, continually adding the date of subsequent changes to this Rule (as has happened twice since 2016) could make the text become unnecessarily cumbersome over the years – so we now propose just to show the relevant publication date at the end of each current set of these Rules, and not to have that date embedded as an actual 'rule' itself.

Rule 2d (Co-option to BoT) – replace 'until the 31st May' by 'until one month after the next AGM' and replace 'beyond the 1st June' with 'beyond one month after the next AGM'. The rest of this Rule to be unaltered.

This change (and others which follow below) would remove the date constraints which have slightly impeded the Society's governance over the past two years due to the covid pandemic and would be an insurance against further external factors occurring beyond our control.

Rule 6c – replace with: Members (apart from a life member) shall contribute a combined membership and magazine fee at rates and intervals to be determined by the BoT.

By removing the existing references to dates and periods of membership, this change would effectively allow the BoT to offer (say) an extra three months' membership to a new applicant and to request payment of the combined membership and magazine fee by (say) 30th November, rather than 1st January, in order to ease the pressures on the Society's renewal team.

Rule 6d – replace with: A former member whose membership has lapsed may not use any reduced-price membership offer to rejoin the Society until a period of twelve months has elapsed since their membership of the Society ceased.

If the change to Rule 6c is adopted, then the existing first sentence of Rule 6d, referring to variations to the membership fees, is no longer necessary. In the surviving sentence, '.... a reduced' would be replaced by '.... any reduced' as shown.

Rule 6g – delete this Rule.

Legal advice received is that the Society's AVR scheme is just another part of the variable rates for the combined membership and magazine fee, which is determined by the BoT under Rule 6c above.

Rule 6h– renumber to 6g.

If Rule 6g (above) is deleted, then this minor change is necessary.

Rule 11c – replace with: The rule shall be proposed at the AGM of the Society and must be adopted by at least 75% of those present and voting.

This would bring this Rule into line with the proposed change to Rule 1b as outlined above.

Rule 11e – replace with: A new rule, adopted as above, shall take effect from one month after the date of the AGM unless a ballot is required as in Rule 11d above when it shall take effect from one month after the announcement of the result of the ballot.

As with Rule 2d above, the previously unexpected problems and AGM delays caused by the Covid pandemic in 2020 and 2021 highlighted the need to be less date restrictive and thus this revision would remove 1st June as the required start date for any new or amended Rule.

Rule 11f – replace with: When exceptional circumstances outwith the control of the Society require the date(s) of these events to be changed from those normally applicable, any new rule or amendment thereto shall take effect from one month after the date of the relevant AGM, or ballot, provided they have otherwise been passed in accordance with the provisions of Rules 1a to 1e above.

This amendment would allow the Society to react to any situation similar to the recent Covid pandemic by removing the date limitations and would, in effect, help clarify changes to arrangements proposed under Rules 1a to 1e inclusive.

Rule 12b – replace with: The date when decisions taken at the AGM shall be implemented, including the appointment or re-appointment of members of the BoT, will be one month after that AGM or one month after any subsequent ballot taken in accordance with Rule 11d above.

This amendment would match the earlier changes by removing the specific date limitation.

The BoT hereby gives the required one month's notice that it will be seeking approval at the 2022 Society AGM, to be held in Wolverhampton on Saturday 9th April, for the adoption of the above proposed changes to the Society's Rules.

Callum MacLeod – Society Chairman

Members' Day – 9th April 2022

(Items inserted into March RO)

**2022 MEMBERS' DAY and AGM at
Grand Station Conference Centre, Sun Street,
Wolverhampton, WV10 0BE on Saturday 9th April at 11.00.**

Lunch Arrangements. An excellent buffet lunch for just £7.50 a head will be available, but this must be pre-booked. The lunch comprises: sandwiches (ham/cheese/chicken/tuna), sausage/cheese & onion rolls, quiche, samosa mix salad plus Kettles crisps with unlimited tea/coffee (this last will be available free to everyone all day). Please send a cheque for **£7.50** each, payable to 'The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society' together with your name, membership number and e-mail address (so that receipt of your application can be acknowledged) to: **Jacky Wood, 70 Heathfields, Downend, Bristol BS16 6HS**. No SAE is necessary as a list of those who have prepaid for the lunch will be available at the venue. Partners and friends are welcome to attend all the events that day, apart from the AGM commencing at 13.15, which is strictly for members only.

Programme for Members' Day. 11.00: Welcome & refreshments, followed by Chris Youett presenting a selection from the Ron Vincent colour archive; 12.30: buffet lunch; 13.15: 2022 Annual General Meeting; 15.30 (approx.): refreshments, followed by David Jackman with "The Midlands – as seen from the RCTS digital archive". Full details will be provided in next month's RO.

Relevant Action Points from previous Minutes
(to be deferred to BT22 meeting on 26/03/2022)

- AP4 **JR** to revise the wording of Rule 1b and circulate it to the Trustees.
[Minute 2201.05b]
- AP5 **ALL**. Annual reports to be written and submitted to ACM by 19 February 2022.
[Minute 2201.05c]
- AP6 **ALL**. Trustees to make sure they have completed an annual Conflict of Interest Declaration and send it to Secretary.
[Minute 2201.05d]
- AP7 **ACM** to sort out speakers/presentations for the AGM Members' Day on 9 April 2022.
[Minute 2201.05e]
- AP8 **ARW** to redraw the layout of the accounts as agreed.
[Minute 2201.06a]
- AP11 **ILR** to look into booking the BT22 meeting at the hotel under consideration for the 2022 Members' Weekend and to liaise with ACM over the arrangements.
[Minute 2201.09c]

Digitising the Society Photo Archive

Introduction

With the existing RCTS photographic archive containing well in excess of 100,000 images, and less than 50% of these digitally scanned to facilitate scanned exploitation through sale or publication, the Trust have agreed a review of the process to both reduce the backlog of existing non-digitised material, and equip itself to cater for the many future requests which can be expected.

There is therefore an immediate need to identify a robust, and cost efficient process by which both volunteers skilled in image digitisation and cost effective technical digitisation systems are blended together so as to vastly increase the annual volume of images which can be reliably captured and added to the publicly accessible Photo Archive. A number of Commercial Group members have been considering this possibility over recent months this paper outlines what we consider the most practical financial and culturally achievable process.

The Digitisation Process

Historically the scanning of RCTS owned images has been carried out as part of the Societies Library Archiving activity and based on the Leatherhead Archive. In all cases work has been undertaken whether at - Leatherhead or elsewhere - using purpose designed scanning devices based on purpose built flatbed or frame scanners available commercially. However, as with many system based offers regular use by a skilled operator is necessary to ensure consistently high standard of outputs and reliance on the existing process limits the extent to which the throughput of material can be practically increased. If sufficient skilled volunteers were available to operate the Leatherhead scanner on perhaps a daily basis this would not be a problem but in practice this is never likely to be an option.

However the Society is fortunate in that many of its members are keen photographers who have equipped themselves to scan personal hard copy images into digital form. Several such members were asked to both outline details of their personal process and provide examples of the representative scans.

Until recently scanning needed a software driven flatbed or frame based scanner from the likes of Epson, Nikon or Plustek costing anywhere from £200 to £2000, and some photographers, including both the author of this proposal and other members of the Commercial team use such facilities. However the response by some of the photographers canvassed suggests a significant move away from dedicated software sensitive scanners towards much more user friendly - and arguably faster solutions based on their existing personal high quality 35mm DSLR SLR camera. This process is not only confined to slide scanning as it is understood that Nikon camera software can also scan black and white negatives to digital positives.

Effectively this involves re-photographing the original slide or negative using an extension to the camera lens. The digitally photographed image is written to the camera's memory card as either a jpg or raw image in the same way as a regular photographed scene and is capable of manipulation etc by the usual Photoshop style processes. Exposure settings for this scanned image are controlled entirely by the camera's inbuilt software and controls and once set are considered to allow a much faster throughput of images than possible with dedicated scanners. In acquiring a camera based facility to supplement the existing Leatherhead scanner it may be possible to identify a wider pool of operatives in the Surrey area than is currently the case.

However dispersed around the UK there is a potentially wide population of members with appropriate suitable imaging equipment, who may be persuaded to participate in a centrally controlled scanning process. With minimal canvassing, over half a dozen members have been identified who possess some form of home based high quality scanning capability. Assuming we can establish appropriate scanning criteria for the work of such dispersed volunteers, and provide a robust process for cycling source material between Leatherhead and the volunteers, we could

massively increase our production rate of finished images scanned images by many times.

Image Selection.

The present heavily capacity limited system necessitates a pre-process to select slides that are suitable for the limited scanning capacity. By increasing overall digitisation capacity by involving dispersed member based digitisation, could potentially increase scanning volume by a factor of five or more and much reduce the need for rigorous pre-selection of images to be scanned to a general collection wide decision regarding the worth of scanning a complete bequest rather than simply parts of it.

Indeed leaving the decision in the hands of the experienced railway photographers who are likely to be carrying out the digitisation, allows them in carrying out the scanning process to exercise their personal judgement as to whether any given image they have been asked to scan is indeed worthy as to whether it is to be retained or disposed of.

Image Identity.

The final slide identity should be applied as part of the scanning process. This should be a combination of an RCTS preferred master code for the collection as is currently the case followed by either a progressive number if the inherited collection has no pre-set reference system of listing, or if the original photographer has already assigned an identity that in full.

Thus in photographer John Doe's unreferenced (pretend) collection the number might be **JD-001** - indicating the first image to be scanned from the John Does collection.

However in future scanning of the Michael Mensing collection we should assign **MM** followed by the unique ID assigned by Michael when recording the image in the notebooks via which relates his images to the notebooks containing the captions - thus for Michael's slide C226.29 - which identifies the image as being the 29th frame of colour film 226, the RCTS archive reference should be **MM-C226.29**. This preserves the link between the image and its recorded notebook description, thus ensuring eventual accurate caption creation. Sadly to the detriment of caption accuracy, some already scanned Mensing images recently extracted from the archive suggest that this link may previously have been ignored.

Image Caption.

This would be a separate post scanning process carried out by any of a number of participants AFTER the satisfactorily digitised images have been added, with a reference, to the archive. Ideally a process would be introduced whereby appropriately qualified members would be allowed to add caption information to the image record on an on-line ad-hoc basis.

Overall Process Management

Irrespective of technical solutions used and volunteers recruited to make it happen, the most important element of the entire process is the presence of a dedicated Photo Archive Curator located at the site of the source material - Leatherhead.

The PAC would be responsible for making the entire process, comprising :-

- prioritisation of archive collection to be scanned,
- allocation of scanning responsibility,
- packaging and despatch of material,,
- managing digitisation and identification of the material by selected outbased volunteer,
- acceptance and recording of both source and digitised images back into Leatherhead Archive,
- and addition of the scanned image to the 'master'databases to allow on-line captioning.,

Conclusion

Subject to general Commercial Group agreement, the essence of these process recommendations will be presented to the RCTS Trust within the CG presentation at the next RCTS Trust meeting.

MSR 6/2/22

STRATEGY GROUP ACTION PLAN 2022: UPDATE 4th February 2022

NOTE: The Actions contained within this 2022 Plan majorly derived from the Strategy Group's brainstorming session in September 2021. Many of them do require further scoping and setting of deliverables, and as a consequence may change or be withdrawn or delayed. Some new Strategic Plan Actions may be added during 2022.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT	SPECIFIC ACTION	TARGET COMPLETION	STATUS	OWNER(S)
NEW MEMBERSHIP	Social Media use	Ongoing		KM/MS
	Attracting Younger members through industry apprenticeships	Pilot organisation partner identified by end 1Q22	Proposal to BT21b	RWh/DCr
	Determine interests of existing members under 50 years of age	End 2Q22		DJ/JM
	Promotion of Charitable Status	Ongoing		All/Trustees
	Benchmark RCTS membership offer	End 2Q22		JM
	Leveraging electronic capture of new members details	2Q22		MS
	Dialogue with younger railway interest groups	3Q22		JM/RWh/DCr
	Design & launch questionnaire for new joiners to capture essential data & opinion	January 2022	COMPLETED	JM/MS
MEMBERSHIP RETENTION	Review status of Paid Life Membership & make recommendation	1Q22	Proposal to BT21b	JM
	Review of renewal process with view to optimisation and streamlining; signing up to DD when joining; appraisal of a rolling year membership	End 2Q22		AC/MS/David Goddard/Steve Ollive
	Leverage Society history and exploit Archives	End 2Q22		JM/Andy Davies
	Expand range of members' benefits	ongoing		JM/KM/RWh

	Feasibility of Annual photographic competition	3Q22	Proposal to BT21b	PC/DK/D B/ Mike Robinson
	Closer co-operation and contact with Heritage railway groups	Ongoing		RMcA
THE SOCIETY'S "PRODUCT"	Developing relationships with publishers and industry figures	4Q22		JM
	Leveraging Randall legacy of shareholdings in heritage railways	2Q22		IR/Geoff Adams
	Evaluate market for RCTS rail tours	3Q22	Position Paper BT21b	KM/RWh
	Evaluate and explore Partnership opportunities with RTT	2Q22		JM/MS
	Identification of key speakers for National Meetings	Ongoing		(Co-opt) Jeremy Harrison/ RMcA
	Evaluate benefits of joint rail tours with BLS	3Q22		(Co-opt) Geoff Plumb, Watford Branch
	Feasibility of organising Society Centenary railtour for 2028	2027		KM/SL
	Visits to heritage railways/infrastructure centres	ongoing		SL
	Encouraging Branches to own their product and news on website	End 2Q22		IR/DJ
	Leveraging association with other railway groups	ongoing		RMcA
	Use of RCTS Membership logo to widen "reach" of Society	Trial project completed end 1Q22		DK
ADDITIONAL	Appointment of National fixtures officer/visits co-ordinator	1Q22		Trustees via JM
	Developing RCTS Profile on-pager to inform potential partner organisations	1Q22	Completed & circulated to BT21b	Strategy Group

	"Thank You" certificates to presenters	1Q22	Proposal to BT21b	Trustees
	Investigation of Society providing a speeding up of industry event reporting	2Q22		PC/DJ
	Review of Bequest policy for artefacts	1Q22		IR/Geoff Adams
	Display of nameplates at Leatherhead	2Q22		DCr
	Appraisal of requirements for printed publicity leaflets	2Q22		AC/DB
	Align financial year with membership year	4Q22		JM/RW
	Promote provenance of Society's nameplates	2Q22		DCr/John Redgate

Identified personnel.

JM	James Milne	PC	Paul Chancellor
IR	Irene Rabbitts	MS	Matthew Shaw
KM	Keith Merritt	RW	Reg Wood
DB	David Bird	AL	Andrew Lait
SL	Steve Lacey	DJ	David Jackman
RWh	Richard Whitehead	DCr	David Cross
RMcA	Ronnie McAdam		

Strategy Group Membership (as of 5th November 2021)

James Milne, Development Officer & Trustee

Paul Chancellor, Strategic Planning Officer

Irene Rabbitts, Branch Liaison & Trustee

David Kelso

Dr. Steve Lacey, Exhibitions & Events Officer

Keith Merritt, Publicity Officer

Ronnie McAdam, Publicity Communications

Alan Cooke

Matthew Shaw, Webmaster & Trustee

Richard Whitehead

David Jackman

Updated (JM) Friday 4th February 2022

Appendix 6

(Minute 1802.06b)



RECRUITMENT NUMBERS BY MONTH

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2001	20	13	14	10	16	7	13	7	12	19	3	19	153
2002	12	7	18	6	14	20	12	10	8	7	3	11	128
2003	24	17	9	12	4	11	12	5	11	25	14	17	161
2004	12	17	20	6	6	15	4	3	2	19	11	7	122
2005	13	11	8	5	7	7	5	2	11	12	20	13	114
2006	16	7	8	5	9	5	7	7	3	16	10	8	101
2007	17	13	10	6	11	10	11	6	5	16	18	26	149
2008	17	10	12	11	12	7	6	9	4	17	12	5	122
2009	23	13	10	13	6	13	11	9	3	22	21	15	159
2010	23	13	27	3	3	7	12	6	4	13	9	8	128
2011	12	8	7	3	11	3	7	6	3	21	16	11	108
2012	18	14	14	7	4	6	7	4	7	15	13	21	130
2013	26	24	19	7	9	7	4	11	5	12	9	17	150
2014	25	14	7	11	10	10	8	3	14	12	29	16	159
2015	18	22	19	20	6	10	6	5	24	37	20	18	205
2016	24	17	18	10	15	2	4	2	18	21	16	13	160
2017	14	10	17	9	14	8	5	4	41	29	20	16	187
2018	23	9	10	12	44	256	229	136	143	58	50	59	1029
2019	51	38	41	21	20	86	48	5	60	52	41	37	500
2020	56	31	29	15	8	10	13	1	23	21	30	28	265
2021	41	50	58	35	30	8	7	7	23	40	29	23	351
2022	28												

Quarterly Analysis

1Q22	28	-32%
1Q21	41	

YTD Analysis

2022	28	-32%
2021	41	

Rolling Year

To Jan 2022	338	35%
To Jan 2021	250	



NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP ADVERTISING 2021/2022

Cover Month	Magazine	Ad Size	Picture	Text	Cost
Calendar	The Railway Magazine	Small	General		£ 448.00
Nov-21	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	RO Front Cover	RO Extended	£ 150.00
Nov-21	British Railways Illustrated	Quarter	RO Front Cover	RO Extended	£ 20.00
Nov-21	Steam Days	Quarter	RO Front Cover	RO Extended	£ 60.00
Nov-21	Modern Railways	Quarter	RO Front Cover	RO Extended	£ 150.00
Nov-21	Trackside	Quarter	Heritage	RO Summary	£ 150.00
Dec-21	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	Modern traction	RO +Zoom?	£ 150.00
Dec-21	British Railways Illustrated	Quarter	RO Front Cover	RO Extended	£ 20.00
Dec-21	Steam Days	Quarter	RO Front Cover	RO Extended	£ 60.00
Dec-21	Rail Express	Quarter	RO Front Cover	RO Extended	£ 100.00
Dec-21	Modern Railways	Quarter	General	RO Extended	£ 150.00
Dec-21	Heritage Railway	Quarter	General		£ 150.00
Dec-21	Facebook	n/a	General	TBC	£ 10.00
Dec-21	Facebook	n/a	Targeted	TBC	£ 10.00
January	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	General		£ 192.00
January	Rail	Will not go ahead			
January	Rail News	Quarter	General		£ 195.00
January	Trackside	Quarter	General		£ 150.00
January	Heritage Railway	Quarter	General		£ 125.00
January	British Railways Illustrated	Quarter	RO Front Cover	RO Extended	£ 20.00
February	Steam Days	Quarter			£ 84.00
February	Rail	Quarter	General		£ 295.00
February	Rail News	Quarter	General		£ 195.00
February	Modern Railways	Quarter	General		£ 150.00
February	Heritage Railway	Quarter	General		£ 130.00
February	British Railways Illustrated	Quarter			£ 20.00
March	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	General		£ 192.00
March	Bluebell News(Q)	Quarter			£ 120.00
March	Moors Lines (NYMR) (Q)	Quarter			tbc
March	Mid-Hants magazine (Q)	Quarter			£ 100.00
March	National Trust magazine (Q)	Will not go ahead; cost: £1,800			NA
March	English Heritage magazine (Q)	Will not go ahead; cost			NA
March	Middleton Press Catalogue (Q)	Quarter	n/a	n/a	FOC
March	Facebook	n/a	General	TBC	£ 10.00
March	Facebook	n/a	Targeted	TBC	£ 10.00
March	Trackside	Quarter	General		£ 150.00
March	Modern Railways	Quarter	General		£ 150.00
March	Rail				
March	Rail News	Quarter	General		£ 195.00
March	Heritage Railway	Quarter	General		£ 130.00
March	British Railways Illustrated	Quarter			£ 20.00
April	Steam Days	Quarter			£ 84.00
April	Modern Railways	Quarter	General		£ 150.00
April	Rail				
April	Rail News	Quarter	General		£ 195.00
April	Heritage Railway	Quarter	General		£ 130.00
April	British Railways Illustrated	Quarter			£ 20.00
May	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	General		£ 192.00
May	Trackside	Quarter	General		£ 150.00

May	Modern Railways	Quarter	General		£ 150.00
May	Rail				
May	Rail News	Quarter	General		£ 195.00
May	Heritage Railway	Quarter	General		£ 130.00
May	British Railways Illustrated	Quarter			£ 20.00
June	Bluebell News (Q)	Quarter			£ 120.00
June	Moors Lines (NYMR) (Q)	Quarter			tbc
June	Mid-Hants magazine (Q)	Quarter			£ 100.00
June	Facebook	n/a	General	TBC	£ 10.00
June	Facebook	n/a	Targeted	TBC	£ 10.00
June	Steam Days	Quarter			£ 84.00
June	Middleton Press Catalogue (Q)	Quarter	n/a	n/a	FOC
June	Modern Railways	Quarter	General		£ 150.00
June	Rail				
June	Rail News	Quarter	General		£ 195.00
June	Heritage Railway	Quarter	General		£ 130.00
June	British Railways Illustrated	Quarter			£ 20.00
July	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	General		£ 192.00
August	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	General	TBC	£ 192.00
August	Steam Days	Quarter			£ 84.00
September	Bluebell News (Q)	Quarter			£ 120.00
September	Moors Lines (NYMR) (Q)	Quarter			tbc
September	Mid-Hants magazine (Q)	Quarter			£ 100.00
September	Facebook	n/a	General	TBC	£ 10.00
September	Facebook	n/a	Targeted	TBC	£ 10.00
September	Middleton Press Catalogue (Q)	Quarter	n/a	n/a	FOC
September	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	General	TBC	£ 192.00
October	Steam Days	Quarter			£ 84.00
November	The Railway Magazine	Quarter	General	TBC	£ 192.00
December	Bluebell News (Q)	Quarter			£ 120.00
December	Moors Lines (NYMR) (Q)	Quarter			tbc
December	Mid-Hants magazine (Q)	Quarter			£ 100.00
December	Steam Days	Quarter			£ 84.00
December	Facebook	n/a	General	TBC	£ 10.00
December	Facebook	n/a	Targeted	TBC	£ 10.00
December	Middleton Press Catalogue (Q)	Quarter	n/a	n/a	FOC
Note: Quarterly issue magazines denoted by "(Q)" and are allocated to March, June, September & December					

Note: Costs shown in purple are provisional, based on last known RCTS advertising charges

RCTS Profile – Who we are and what do we provide?

Overview

The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society (RCTS) was formed in 1928 by railway enthusiasts for people interested in all aspects of railways, past, present and future. RCTS has grown to be Britain's leading railway society and is highly regarded by professional railway people and enthusiasts alike. We have a growing membership of more than 2,500 members supported by a network of local Branches throughout Great Britain.

Highlights/Milestones

Some of our activities and achievements over the past 90+ years since our formation are shown below:

1. We have been a Charitable Incorporated Organisation since 2016
2. Members receive a monthly, 72-page glossy colour magazine – *The Railway Observer* – which includes details of train workings, stock and livery changes, and infrastructure updates, as well as Heritage and International news
3. An extensive Branch network who meet frequently so that railway enthusiasts can meet like-minded people
4. The Society strengthened during the Covid-19 pandemic by enthusiastically embracing Zoom technology and holding regular virtual meetings, thereby enhancing its reputation for resilience under adversity
5. The Society caters to the widest range of railway interests
6. Respected long-time publisher of railway titles, including large-scale projects to document the history of all steam locomotives that worked on mainline railways
7. An extensive book and photographic archive at Leatherhead, with on-line sales from our extensive collection of over 50,000 railway images
8. The Society has established a reputation for organising visits to railway infrastructure locations, rail tours, and for presentations from professional railway people.
9. An informative and high quality website, last updated in November 2021, which can be found at : <https://rcts.org.uk/>
10. Incredible value-for-money with a UK membership subscription equivalent to the price of a cup of coffee per month.

For further details contact:

James Milne Development Officer e-mail@ development@rcts.org.uk

January 2022

PAID LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Background

During the implementation process associated with posting 2022 Membership rates onto the RCTS website, it became evident that Paid Life Membership (PLM) rates were predicated on fixed multiples of the “Full” membership rates, be they on-line or printed RO, viz.:

Membership Type	2022 Rates	Over 50 PLM	Over 60 PLM
On-line	£20.00	£600.00	£400.00
Printed	£33.00	£990.00	£660.00
Effective Multiple		30 x	20 x

It would appear that these multiples were based on actuarial tables for life expectancy. Using such actuarial numbers suggests a certain rigour in establishing a relationship between life membership rates and normal annual membership subscriptions. However, the application of a multiple based upon the life expectancy at the lowest end of the age range provides a major disincentive to attract new PLMs.

Scope of Review of PLM

A thorough review of PLM was to be carried out to determine a policy for 2023 Membership and ongoing to assess the success of attracting new PLMs over the past 5 years; whether the application of different multiples would increase PLM applications; what similar organisations offer; and whether to recommend abandonment of PLMs.

[Note: there would be no retrospective action to existing PLMs, and Honorary Life Memberships would remain available and untouched by this review]

PLM Memberships – past 5 years

Membership Year	Full over 50	Full over 60	Online over 50	Online over 60
2016		2		
2017	2			
2018		2		
2019		3		
2020		2		
2021		1	1	1
5-year totals	2	10	1	1

These statistics for new PLM memberships undoubtedly support the view that the over-50 rate does not incentivise new PLM applications.

At an average of 2 new PLMs every membership year in the over 60-year category, stopping the PLM offer would result in potentially lost revenue of £1,320 per annum.

Application of Actuarial Tables

As stated above, the life expectancy rate to set the multiple is associated with the lowest age in the bands 50 – 59 years and 60 – 69 years. This choice has been said to be arbitrary and a disincentive. A comparison of potential multiples follows:

Age Range	50 to 59	60 to 69
Current RCTS Multiple	30 x	20 x
Life expectancy (LO)	29.69	21.61
Life expectancy (mid)	25	18
Life expectancy (HI)	22.37	15.09
Life Expectancy (Ave)	25.97	18.31

Use of the mid-point in either age band would result in PLM cost dropping by £165.00 for 50 to 59-year olds; and by £66.00 for over 60's.

Profile of PLMs as at January 2022

	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	Totals
Number	3	31	77	47	17	175
Percentage	1.7%	17.7%	44.0%	26.9%	9.7%	
Cumulative Percentage	1.7%	19.4%	63.4%	90.3%	100.0%	

If one assumes that the actuarial figures applied in past showed a life expectancy of 80 years of age, then some 36% of the Society's current PLMs have already lived on past that assumption.

This paper's purpose was not to debate the financial aspects of PLM, but from these figures it is evident that continuing PLM is a financial drain of the Society's resources. Therefore it is not a sensible policy to continue to offer PLM, which would only worsen the financial situation.

Competing Railway Societies

A survey of our “competitors” and other random Societies was undertaken in the Autumn of 2021 to establish life membership offers. The findings are summarised in the table below:

Society	Annual Membership	Life Membership	Multiple
LCGB		None	
SLS		None	
HMRS			
Gresley Society		None	
L&Y Railway Society		None	
Nene Valley	£30	£395	13 x
Industrial Railway Society		None	
InterCity Railway Society		None	
Southern Electric Group		None	
Engine Shed Society		None	
Stanier 8F Locomotive Society	£18	£ 240	15 x
Derbyshire CCC	£200	£2000 (50 - 64)	10 x
Essex CCC	£177.30	£2100 (at 50 yrs.)	11.84 x

The evidence suggests that railway societies with an older membership profile, such as ours, have not sought to target life membership as an additional revenue stream, or cannot determine a multiple sufficiently low enough to attract new joiners, but not so low as to encourage a wholesale transfer from ordinary annual membership. In the case of the Nene Valley Railway and The Stanier 8F Locomotive Society, both of which do offer life memberships at multiple rates considerably lower than us.

Proposal

The current offer for Paid Life Membership of the Society is predicated on survival until 80 years of age from a basis of either over-50 or over-60. This is an equivalent of either a 30 times or 20 times multiple of annual membership respectively.

As this is patently an unattractive offer, evidenced by the lack of new PLM over the past 5 years, it is recommended that PLM is withdrawn totally with effect from the renewals for the 2023 Membership year.

Existing PLMs and HLM will remain unaffected by this decision, which would apply only to new PLM applications.

This decision would simplify the Society’s membership/fee structure and reduce administrative burden.

Endorsement

The Strategy Group were presented with this paper at their meeting on 6th January 2022 and endorsed this proposal's content in full by a majority vote, and thus recommend that the course of action proposed are authorised by the Board of Trustees at their meeting on 18th February 2022.

Risk

The downside risk from adopting this Strategy has been assessed using an extrapolation that the Society does not receive 2 full PLM applications a year, at a loss of revenue of £1,320. This revenue loss would be mitigated by those “theoretical” lost members continuing to be annual members of the Society.

In addition, donations ranging between £1,000 and £2,300 a year have been received from Life Members in the past 5 years. There is no segregation within these numbers between PLM and HLM. It is opined that closing PLM to new applicants would not affect this figure, but would cut-off new donations from new PLMs, although there would be no actual barrier preventing donations from PLMs, or any Member for that matter.

Actions

- Removal of PLM rates and associated textual references on Society's website – Webmaster
- Removal of PLM as a membership category on any renewal materials – Membership Secretary
- All publicity leaflets to be reviewed for PLM content – Alan Cooke/David Bird

Consideration by Trustees should also be given as to the timing of these actions – either at 2023 renewal time (September 2022) or immediate “effective” withdrawal, i.e. removing all mention from the website until such time as the relevant Society's Rule change can take place.

JM
V 2.0
13th January 2022

RCTS MEMBERSHIP FOR RAILWAY INDUSTRY TRAINEES & APPRENTICES

Background

Following an initiative and discussion at the preceding Strategy Group meeting, it was announced at BT19 on 21st August 2021 that a new initiative to target trainees and apprentices in the railway industry with an offer of free or discounted membership. This could achieve a joint benefit of increasing membership and bring the Society to a younger audience. At the time of this announcement it was not fully determined how this would be done, but opinion was expressed that it was hoped to do this through the employers in both the train operating and infrastructure areas, via targeted mailshots or letters perhaps under consideration.

This announcement was met with enthusiasm by the Trustees and in subsequent Strategy Group meetings in September and November 2021 and January 2022, discussion continued as to how this element of the 2022 Strategy Group Action Plan could be initiated.

Much of this extended debate involved the RCTS “offer” and the improvements required for that issue held by various members of the Strategy Group. This prevarication, whilst understandable, was not driving the business forward, and it was the Development Officer’s view that the Society’s offer would always be capable of improvement, and therefore that was no longer a valid reason to delay proposing this paper to the Society’s Board of Trustees.

Rationale

The Society’s recruitment drive should be predicated on a modern and up-to-date offering at the same time as embracing initiatives to gaining (and retaining) younger members. There is an immediate horizon that the Society cannot survive in the longer term by just attracting members over 60 years of age, although recent analysis of new joiners suggests that we can successfully do just that.

It can be witnessed in other railway societies an erosion of their (older) membership bases, which does not offer a positive prognosis for RCTS. There are many young rail enthusiasts who fail to connect with any society, have different (shorter) attention spans, yet determinedly follow You Tube and Tik Tok railway feeds in their multitudes. Francis Bourgeois attracted 500,000 followers with some of his Tik Tok uploads attracting millions of views; he is now an ambassador for GBRf.

The point is that there is an untapped and latent pool of potential members that the Society should exploit. We need to start to aim our recruitment at younger age groups right now, and trust that an evolution into a different offering that appeals to the (say) under-40 age group can happen over the next 5 years, such that the attraction of the Society has something to offer railway enthusiasts of all ages.

This proposal and pilot scheme

The railway industry employs trainees and apprentices in all aspects of its current operations, such as passenger and freight operating companies, infrastructure providers, construction industries and even heritage railways.

In October 2021, website *Railstaff* carried an article that stated that across 4 TOCs, apprenticeships would increase by a quarter in 2022, with 250 new apprentices required. Network Rail is one of the UK's biggest apprentice employers and recruiters. The potential pool of prospective Society Members is undoubted.

It has been agreed within the Strategy Group that a pilot scheme should be tried first with a smaller organisation (than say Network Rail) to learn lessons and make judgements on the logistical issues that may face volunteers processing the applications.

The responsibility for launching this pilot will be with Richard Whitehead (Strategy Group member) and David Cross (Nameplate administrator), supported by other Strategy Group members.

This pilot scheme will target one of the smaller operating companies such as Direct Rail Services (DRS) a company with £80 million turnover a year, and a total of some 480 staff, or WABTEC a railway technology company.

The pilot membership offer would be free on-line only Society membership for the remainder of 2022.

Dependent upon the success of this 1Q22 pilot, other trainee and apprentice-employing railway organisations would be approached, without further approval proposals being placed before the Trustees.

Through the Development Officer's own contacts, we would hope to extend this offer to about 40 railway personnel who may start a rail apprentices' course at Coventry University in September 2022. This information should be treated with sensitivity, as the client company have not yet confirmed the award of this training contract with Coventry University.

The Strategy Group will, however, take on an obligation to keep the Trustees updated and informed. Rolling out a launch to (say) Network Rail would only occur after a re-validation by the Board of Trustees, due to the finance implications of free Society membership.

Validation of individuals

Validation of qualification as either a trainee or an apprentice is predicated upon this function being carried out by the employing organization, ideally through their Human Resources department. This will save valuable RCTS volunteer time, in addition to which Society officials cannot be expected to determine entitlement at a distance or by some arbitrary application of characteristics, such as age of applicant.

Risk evaluation

This is based on a cohort of 50 trainees from the organization.

At current (mid-year 2021/22) subscription rates of £9.50, discounted as a "welcome" offer, the cost in any subscription year would be £ 475; this is roughly the cost of 3 quarter-page recruitment advertisements in *The Railway Magazine*, but with a guaranteed return of 50 new members.

On the basis of a pessimistic 33% renewal rate for 2022/23, then the "at risk" total would be in the order of £ 300, representing some 33 entrants to the scheme who participated only during the free incentive period. It would be hoped that as the offer is aimed at railway industry professionals, the retention rate is higher than that experienced by the Society when we have made such free offers in the past.

Aside from volunteer time in initial set-up and dialogue with prospective employers of trainees and apprentices, there is no further downside financial risk, other than that expressed above.

Strategy Group discussion and Recommendation

This paper was produced by James Milne, Development Officer, from a joint initiative by Richard Whitehead and David Cross.

Much discussion has ensued in the Strategy Group in the period between August 2021 and January 2022, resulting in this position and proposal paper seen here.

The Strategy Group endorsed this decision and recommendation at their meeting on 6th January 2022, and it is wholeheartedly proposed for adoption by the Board of Trustees at their forthcoming meeting on 18th February 2022.

James Milne, Development Officer

4th February 2022



RCTS Photography Competition

Background

The Society has run photographic competitions in the past as part of the AGM, when the whole membership could vote for their favourite photograph from a selection provided for them.

[Note: was the choice predicated upon already-published photographs over the past 12 months in *The RO*?]

It is understood that LCGB have a photographic competition, as do Network Rail. A Young Photographer competition was held in Autumn 2021.

Why might the Society run a photography competition?

- To encourage a better standard of photography
- To encourage more people to submit photographs
- To encourage more members to participate
- To raise the profile of the Society
- For the Society to be seen as the home of 'good photography'

Why we should not run competitions

- Volunteer availability and time
- Judging expertise and objectivity
- Cost of prizes or organizing sponsorship (if available)
- Partnering with an inappropriate external organisation

Suggested Formats

- Members to vote on selected images that have been submitted for use in *The RO*. Pre-selected images could be posted on the website
- Select from centre-spread photographs in *The RO*
- Images to be requested from members specifically to be entered into a competition
- Sponsoring an existing photographic competition
- Working with another railway or photographic magazine to jointly promote a competition or sponsor their own (new) event.

Other considerations

- Should non-members be allowed to enter the competition?
- Should voting also include non-members
- Frequency of competition – annual preferred

Rationale

Getting members to vote for the best *RO* 'image of the year' should improve quality and the quantity of images submitted, whilst building a 'community spirit' within the Society and also encouraging armchair members to participate, if only in casting their vote. Once the systems are set up, little volunteer effort would be required.

Running a competition with another organization or as a standalone would raise the Society's profile whilst hopefully the hosting magazine would do a lot of the work with a small number of society members being involved with the judging.

Strategy Group discussion and Recommendation

This paper was produced by Paul Chancellor in line with a specific element in the Strategy Group's action Plan 2022. The owners of this action were Paul, together with David Kelso, David Bird and Mike Robinson.

Much discussion ensued in the Strategy Group with an expected difference of opinion on format of competition, selection of previously *RO*-published photographs or specific entries. There was, however, no dissent within the Group on whether a photographic competition should be run.

It was therefore decided that the Strategy Group should endorse the following proposition for approval at the BT21b meeting on 18th February 2022:

That the Commercial Group develop a plan to instigate and implement a Society Photographic Competition for 4Q22 in a format they deemed suitable, and that such Photographic Competition would enhance the reputation of the Society and extend its reach through such an event.

James Milne Development Officer

13th January 2022



RCTS “Thank You” CERTIFICATES TO PRESENTERS

Precedent

It would always be courteous and appropriate for speakers and presenters to be given a vote of thanks and a round of applause elicited from the audience by the meeting chairman in a physical meeting. With the advent of Zoom presentations, whilst this is always made, the approbation so afforded perhaps does not convey the same weight and sincerity, especially to those speakers and presenters outwith the Society.

Rationale

In the same way as the recently introduced “*Certificate of Appreciation*”, the suggestion is that a “*Thank You*” certificate is produced, which names the individual recipient, and is signed by the Chairman and the Branch Chairman.

In a similar manner to the spirit of the “*Certificate of Appreciation*”, these should only be produced for presenters who are not members of the Society at the time of giving their talk or slide show.

It is envisaged that these “*Thank You*” certificates should be given to both face-to-face and Zoom meeting presenters.

Strategy Group discussion and Recommendation

This paper was produced by James Milne, Development Officer. This proposal has been listed as a specific action in the Strategy Group’s Action Plan for Trustees’ action, and therefore needs no further endorsement from the Strategy Group.

This proposal is therefore wholeheartedly proposed for adoption by the Board of Trustees at their forthcoming meeting on 18th February 2022.

James Milne, Development Officer

4th February 2022



RCTS & LOCOMOTIVE SERVICES CHARTER TRAINS: POSITION PAPER

Background

Through David Cross's contacts, the Society was approached in mid-December 2021 by Locomotive Services Limited (LSL) as they were bringing into operation a new buffet car as part of their Saphos Trains charter programme. LSL have a roster of 13 steam locomotives available to haul Saphos Trains excursions.

LSL's offer was to give RCTS an option to book/reserve all 32 seats in their newly refurbished buffet car on one of the 2022 charter trips, with "*First Class*" service featuring white linen tablecloths, steward at-seat service, unlimited tea/coffee with a light snack on both outward and inward legs of the trip.

This proposal has been extensively aired between Strategy Group members and is seen as a stepping stone to gaining up-to-date experience of organising rail tours and selling seats leading (eventually) to our own proposals for a centenary special trip in 2027, which our Publicity Officer has volunteered to own that project.

Risk

We did not take up LSL's offer to date, due to the financial exposure of some £5,600 to the Society if we did not sell any seats after confirming a booking. In addition, the start point of any Saphos charter would influence which RCTS Branch may be interested.

Progress since December

During one of the internal Strategy Group discussions, it was suggested that the Development Officer should approach the Chairman of Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales Branch, as they have been pro-active in organising outdoor events for their members to see if they were interested in marketing such a trip for 16 of their members plus their partners.

This was discussed at Committee level by MCNW and rejected as improbable for that Branch to take up the offer, as they thought the cost would be expensive, that an early morning departure coupled with a late evening arrival would not appeal to their aged membership, and that travel without the "other half" was more appealing.

Current Position & Trustee action?

Assuming that LSL have not tired of our inaction, the Society could choose a future Saphos Charter train offering and market this to the whole society, publicizing in *The RO* and *Running Lines*, to gauge reaction and interest.

Saphos Train departures are not London-centric and start from a variety of locations throughout England (see <https://saphostrains.com>).

Financial risk of unsold tickets remains; it would be inappropriate to try and negotiate a “sale or return” basis, as Saphos/LSL are commercial organisations that are endeavouring to earn a return.

Is there an appetite for the Trustees to endorse a pilot trip sometime in high summer 2022, to allow for sufficient time for marketing to our members?

James Milne, Development Officer

4th February 2022