



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

Minutes of the 86th Annual General Meeting
Held at Grand Station, Sun Street, Wolverhampton, WV10 0BF
Saturday 9th April 2022

In attendance were nine Trustees and 41 other members and officers. A quorum was therefore present.

1. Welcome and Introduction by the Society Chairman – Callum MacLeod.

Good afternoon. As you already know, I am Callum MacLeod, the Society Chairman and first let me introduce all these friendly faces you see sitting on either side of me.

A small reminder at this stage – if you wish to ask a question or make a point, could you please say your name and membership number for the benefit of our Minute Taker? Many thanks.

I now must welcome all of you to our first face-to-face AGM since April 2019 when we last met at the Welcome Centre in Coventry under the chairmanship of Gordon Davies. We all know what caused us to have to hold the 2020 and 2021 AGMs on Zoom, but I consider it highly encouraging that matters have improved enough for us to be able to assemble here in this magnificent venue – because, in my opinion, being members of a society should mean that we meet together socially, which I don't believe is truly possible when our only link is via a computer screen.

However, I will never decry the value of Zoom in keeping the RCTS alive during the darker days of the covid pandemic by enabling the more enterprising branches to continue to hold meetings and, indeed, introducing the entirely new concept of national meetings which have done so much to encourage fresh audiences to join the excellent presentations. Our Treasurer has been kept happy as well, because the Board of Trustees has held almost all its meetings since April 2020 via Zoom, thus saving venue, lunch, travel and accommodation expenses for the Trustees. Of course, I fully accept that not everyone still feels confident enough to join in face-to-face meetings, so it is great that using Zoom allows 'hybrid' meetings to take place where these members are able to participate 'virtually' alongside those who are attending in person.

Now, I must admit that it had been my hope that today's proceedings would also have been a 'hybrid' one to allow more members to join in, but the regrettable yet understandable resignation of Geoff Adams as our Secretary due to his poor health rather stymied me because I was relying on his expertise to help me with the arrangements for today's events. In the event, I'm afraid I just ran out of time to set up the system and to advertise it with sufficient notice through the *RO*. The good news today, however, is that immediately this AGM has concluded the BoT will be meeting briefly to consider the co-option of an excellent volunteer, present here today, to the post of Secretary. If, as I expect, this all goes through satisfactorily, then next year's AGM should be able to be much better organised.

Anyway, thank you for your attention, but that's enough from me – we have an AGM to get through!

2. Apologies for Absence

The Chairman advised that he has received apologies for absence from 38 members and officers.

3. To confirm the Minutes of the 85th Annual General Meeting, held as a Virtual Conference on 19th June 2021, and matters arising therefrom.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting was proposed by David Doulton (21848, Solent Branch), and seconded by Eric Rattray (21162, Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales Branch).

There was one matter arising from those minutes relating to the proposed transfer of *The Railway Observer* nameplate from Network Rail's 43014 to a GBRf cl.66 (minute 11(04) of the 2021 AGM minutes). Callum Macleod reported that the last contact he had was in October last year. He has attempted to contact Sir Peter Hendy (Chairman, Network Rail) and John Smith (CEO, GBRf) since but has heard nothing from either of them.

4. Address by the Society's President – Revd. Canon Brian Arman.

The President commented about the difficulties of meeting with fellow enthusiasts over the past couple of years, so he considered that being able to meet together in person today was really great. It is a testament to the strength of the Society that it has been able to survive and progress during the years of pandemic and Brian expressed his corporate thanks to the Board of Trustees for keeping things going so well. Being able to meet via the on-line medium of Zoom has been a blessing to keep the Branches going, so that we are now in a position of many Branches now able to meet in person again. The President wished for Branches to reach out to those members who have, perhaps, been left isolated by the pandemic and encourage them to return to meeting rooms, if they feel able.

The President was privileged to be able to attend the funeral of his predecessor, Hugh Gould, in Scotland earlier this year, travelling by Great Western Railway and London North Eastern Railway (in tribute to Hugh), to get there. He was invited by the celebrant to talk about Hugh's work as a railwayman and enthusiast, at the service.

As this day of the AGM coincided with the birthday of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the President invited attendees to pause for a moment to remember Hugh, and all other members who have passed away in the past two years, particular those who succumbed to the virus. The President concluded with the prayer of blessing written by Cardinal John Henry Newman, (who, incidentally, served some of his priesthood not far from where we were meeting!) which he used at the end of Hugh's funeral.

5. Adoption of Reports

Reports from the Society Chairman, Administration Group, Commercial Group and Strategy Group

The reports from the Society Chairman, Administration Group, Commercial Group and Strategy Group were presented as published in the AGM supplement, which was sent out with the April 2022 *Railway Observer*, and also available via the Society website.

- a) There being no questions relating to the above reports adoption was proposed by Peter Brown (10201, Surrey Branch) and seconded by Denis Horsman (22099, Thames Valley Branch). A show of hands approved this adoption. There were no abstentions.

Report from the Finance Group

At the meeting Reg Wood noted that, regrettably, some of his report was missing from the printed version. Reg drew the meeting's attention to the financial figures on page 8 of the AGM supplement with the following amendment at the top of the page under REVENUE ACCOUNT where the sub-heading 'cost of sales' should read 'publications costs'. On page 9 of the AGM supplement under FIXED ASSETS, £8425 of this figure relating to the old website has been written off. Under CURRENT LIABILITIES, sub-heading Creditors, of the sum quoted £36,000 is set aside in relation to rental and utility costs for the Library, at Leatherhead Station. The Society owes this money to the owner of the station building, but the flux within the railway industry means that our rental agreement has yet to be finalised. We are unable to pay the rent, and other costs, until this has happened.

Peter Brown (10201, Surrey Branch) expressed concern about the Railway Observer costs. He asked about the costs of remaining with Amadeus as our printer, and recalled the Managing Editor being tasked, a while ago, with obtaining quotes from other printers for comparison. Peter noted a marked increase in RO costs in 2021 compared with 2020. He recalled a postal cost saving in 2020 when the pandemic disrupted production of the magazine so that members received their copies of two months in one envelope. Mike Robinson advised that £4000 of the cost increase in 2021 was the result of moving from A5 size to B5. Reg Wood reminded the meeting that the postal cost saving in 2020 was reflected in the account for the year ending 31st October 2020. He also noted that postal costs have risen in the period under review. Callum MacLeod reminded the meeting that a majority of those attending the 2020 AGM had voted for the increase in magazine size from A5 to B5. Peter also asked about the process of budgeting for future increased costs. Mike Robinson commented about possible cost savings, such as moving to a quarterly journal (a poll of members in the past had indicated this would not be a favourable move). Reg Wood advised that the summer Trustee meeting is presented with a financial report showing current costs, alongside projected budgets for future years, based on current and projected inflation figures. He also noted that inflation is 'going mad' at the moment, which is making forward cost budgeting a bit of a lottery! The September Trustee meeting considers a range of budget options, and thus membership rates, for the next period.

Eric Rattray (21162, Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales Branch) enquired about the Railway Observer print run. Mike Robinson reported that this was currently 2500 copies per month.

David Cresswell (24249, West Midlands Branch) recalled that he joined the Society after being shown a copy of the Railway Observer, which he considered to be a quality journal.

Roger Higgins (23971, West Midlands Branch) compared costs from his industry with the RO costs and considered the RO to be an excellent magazine.

Tom Kolisch (22316, Surrey Branch) asked about environmentally friendly envelopes. Mike Robinson recalled that we had changed to paper envelopes in 2020 but had to revert to plastic in 2021 as 'environmentally friendly' packaging is not possible for the B5 size.

Peter Brown (10201) asked about use of cash resources rather than just leaving money in the bank. Reg Wood agreed that bank interest rates for savers is very low at the moment with no incentive for savers. Whilst bank rates for loans have increased recently, rates for savers have

not. Reg said that the Society is exploring other investment options for 'spare' funds, but also reminded the meeting that quite a lot of the money sitting in our accounts is waiting for the Library accommodation and running costs (rental, business rates, energy costs etc.) situation to be resolved. Callum MacLeod reminded the meeting that the Amazon Smile feature allows the Society, as a Charitable Interest Organisation, to receive a small donation on any purchase made by members from the Amazon site. Members have to nominate the RCTS as a chosen charity on the Amazon site.

- b) There being no further questions or comments, adoption of the Financial Report for the year ending 31st October 2021 was proposed by Peter Brown (10201, Surrey Branch) and seconded by Eric Rattray (21162, Merseyside, Chester and North Wales Branch). A show of hands approved adoption of the Financial Report. There were no abstentions.

6. Proposal from the Board of Trustees that the Rules of the Society be amended

The proposed amendments to the rules were published in the AGM supplement, which was sent out with the April 2022 *Railway Observer*, and also available via the Society website.

Callum MacLeod (Chairman) introduced the item relating to amendments to the rules. These are intended only to untie the Society from some rather restrictive date constraints which were in the rules. There were no questions. Adoption of the rule changes was proposed by the Board of Trustees, and seconded by Peter Brown (10201, Surrey Branch). Approval of the proposal to amend the rules was by a majority show of hands. There was one abstention.

7. Reappointment of Trustees for a further period of three years:

a. David Bird – proposed by Steve Hodge (11501, Surrey Branch) and seconded by Steve Ollive (14617, Windsor and Maidenhead Branch)

b. Reg Wood – proposed by Arthur Turner (4751, Bristol Branch) and seconded by Stewart Jolly (18755, Bristol Branch)

c. Mike Robinson – proposed by Tom Kolisch (22316, Surrey Branch) and seconded by Max Birchenough (10893, West Midlands Branch).

The reappointment of these Trustees was approved by a show of hands. There were no abstentions.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiners.

The Board of Trustees recommends that R.S. Porter & Co. be reappointed as Independent Examiners. This was approved by a show of hands at the meeting.

9. To confirm the date and venue for the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

The Chairman announced that the 2023 Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 20th April 2023 at The Grand Station, Sun Street, Wolverhampton.

10. Any other previously notified business.

a. Irene Rabbitts notified the date and location for the 2022 Members Weekend which is to be based in Reading over the weekend of 21st-23rd October.

b. James Milne reminded the meeting that this year is the 40th anniversary of the Falklands Campaign. This will be commemorated at a ceremony, at Ingrow, on the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway on 15th May when it is hoped that the Society owned nameplate from Jubilee 45606 *Falkland Islands* will be attached to one side of 45596 *Bahamas*, maybe with the locomotive to run on the line with our nameplate attached.

c. James Milne highlighted an enthusiast event at Barrow Hill Roundhouse on 27th August this year when it is hoped that at GBRf cl.69 diesel will be named after the Society. This is separate to the proposal to move *The Railway Observer* from a Network Rail cl.43 to a GBRf cl.66.

d. James Milne also advised that the strategy group are looking to running a national rail tour sometime during 2028, the Society's Centenary year.

e. Peter Brown (10201) commented about the AGM supplement and noted the lack of captions with the photographs. Mike Robinson advised that all the images used had previously been published in a 2021 issue of *The Railway Observer*.

f. And finally...! The Society Chairman, Callum Macleod, and President, Revd. Canon Brian Arman presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Jeremy Harrison (16696, Croydon and South London Branch) for his work with running Zoom meetings over the past couple of years on behalf of the Branches, and also National Zoom meetings.

g. And finally, finally...! The President was delighted to award Honorary Life Membership to David Jackman (16198, Croydon and South London Branch). David has been Society Webmaster for many years, developed and managed a new website, and has also more recently been managing one of the Society's Zoom accounts and running Zoom meetings on behalf of the Branches.

There being no other competent business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 1435hrs.

Richard L Morris
(acting minutes writer)

A Callum Macleod
(Society Chairman)