A Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with
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REFERENCE BT27-1803

Final - Redacted

MINUTES OF MEETING BT27 OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE & TRAVEL SOCIETY

Held via Zoom

on Saturday 18th March 2023

TRUSTEES PRESENT AT THE MEETING

ACM	Callum MacLeod	Chair
RLM	Richard Morris	Secretary
MSR	Mike Robinson	*RO* Managing Editor
DPG	David Goddard	Membership Secretary
MS	Matthew Shaw	Digital Officer
APD	Andy Davies	Archivist
ILR	Irene Rabbitts	Branch Liaison Officer
JR	John Redgate	
DBB	David Bird	Publications Committee Chair
ARW	Reg Wood	Treasurer

Others present

BA	Revd Canon Brian Arman	President
PJC	Paul Chancellor	Minute Taker and representing the Strategy Group
DC	David Cross	Guest (part time)

1803.01 – CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The meeting opened at 11.03 and was recorded, solely for the chairman's use later. The chairman on behalf of the Society noted with sadness the passing of David Cole and Alan Cooke, both of whom had contributed much time and expertise to the Society.

REDACTED

1803.02 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

James Milne – Development Officer

1803.03 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF TRUSTEE MEETING BT 26

Since BT26 an amended version of the minutes of BT25 as well as those of BT26 had been issued. Both were accepted as correct.

1803.04 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED BY THE AGENDA

None.

<u>1803.05 UPDATES AND ACTION POINTS FROM BT26</u>

AP1	Advise branches of the outcome of Zoom meeting charging trial. Ongoing	**ILR** **New AP1**
AP2	Advise dates for the Society Diary.	Complete
AP3	Include length of time to complete financial information on renewals in the finance team meeting agenda. Finance team meeting awaited	**ARW** **New AP2**
AP4	Compile/circulate an accountancy timetable. Finance team meeting awaited	**ARW** **New AP3**
AP5	Publicise the WTT collection in *Running Lines.*	Closed
AP6	Confirm agreement of Terms of Reference for Commercial Group.	Complete
AP7	Progress Eric Palmer memorial. The plaque has been received and will be put in place shortly	Complete
AP8	Prepare plan for Finance Team backup and digital banking options. Ongoing	**ARW** **New AP4**
AP9	Review Gratis *RO* copy list. Ongoing	**JM/APD/ DBB** **New AP5**
AP10	Require those receiving WTT collections to provide a letter confirming that they will not be resold. It was agreed that what was required, was an 'anti embarrassment' clause.	Closed
AP11	Circulate Merseyside AGM minutes to all branch members urgently. Subsequently advised that the Branch had carried out this action.	Closed
AP12	Prepare rule change text for Life Membership withdrawal in 2024.	Complete
AP13	Establish a Society policy on the publication of third-party books and publicise in the *RO.* Ongoing.	**MSR/DB** **New AP6**
AP14	Establish percentage of Society members registered for the digital archive. MS advised that as of today 364 people had registered and new registrations were running at 40-50 per month. Around 30% were members.	Closed
AP15	Register and view the digital archive. Three trustees had yet to register. The action remains open	**ALL** **New AP7**
AP16	Increase 2022 Society surplus shown in the accounts by £4,500.	Done
AP17	Investigate/report on drop in Membership income from 2021 to 2022.	Done
AP18	Compile/circulate branch cash balances as at October 2022.	Done
AP19	Advise branches of revision to balance figure from £1,500 to £2,000.	Done
AP20	Review number of *RO*s being printed- Currently 2300	Done
AP21	Advise library opening dates via social media.	Done
AP22	Assess value of stock held at Booklaw and adjust if necessary. Information required by JR for insurance purposes	**ARW/DB** **New AP8**
AP23	Arrange Zoom discussion on Heads of Terms Agreement document.	Done
AP24	Amend Photo Archive plan an accordance with items noted in 2301.14	Done
AP25	Prepare Commercial Group report on the commercial objectives for the scanning on 'per collection' basis. Ongoing	**MSR** **New AP9**
AP26	Prepare draft Health & Safety policy. Ongoing	**ACM** **New AP10**
AP27	Look for new BoT meeting location.	Done

1803.06 FINANCE GROUP REPORT

Documents 06a and 06b refer.

ARW advised that reports for Q4 are not issued as that quarter is included in the year end figure. Despite a large spend on printing of books and the digitisation project the accounts showed a positive cash flow of £11,800. Subsequently a further £10,000 had been advised as received in membership renewals and thus the total figure represented 97.5% of the cash received throughout the previous financial year. In excess of £4000 had been spent on digitisation with a further small spend expected in February.

First quarter expenditure was at 36% of the budgeted year total, which in theory should have been 25%. Whilst there were some underlying reasons, it was suggested that this number reflected that inflation would have a major effect on Society finances during the year.

JR requested information on bank balances and interest. ARW advised that in the post CIO bank account the balance was £233,000 with 30% on deposit earning 1.7% interest. The old account balance was £71,000. Some members continued to make payments into that account which is why it still operates, although ACM recommended that the bulk of its funds should be transferred to the main account. DPG would identify how may members were still using the old account. ARW intended to seek out accounts paying higher interest but did not have sufficient volunteers to give him time to do that in the near future.

ARW advised that whilst the same accountancy practice was being used for the current financial year he had requested that a different team be employed. Their report was still awaited.

MS said that he was unable to identify which members donations were specifically for the digitisation project. It was agreed that those would be identified in the future. **ARW AP11**

The figure for sales of foreign magazines was questioned. These all appeared to be associated with the affiliation scheme but following the passing of the volunteer running the scheme it had not been possible so far to identify the individual payments.

1803.07 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Document 07 refers.

The current membership stood at 2547, thirty less than the same date in 2022, despite a year of high new member numbers. This was due in part to a higher number of resignations than usual. Although the number of ‘digital only’ members was up it was not seen as an ongoing trend. Direct debit uptake was good.

PJC pointed out that the approved Society strategy was supposed to deliver a 5% year on year membership growth. The question for Trustees to consider was if missing that target was due to the need to revise the strategy or, as appeared more likely at the present time, that key elements of the strategy could not be implemented due to the lack of volunteers for major items within it. The high level of non-renewals compared with e.g. the Engine Shed Society suggested that the Society offering needed to be evaluated. MSR said that the Society should review its sustainability and long term strategy.

1803.08 PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE DIGITISATION PROJECT

Documents 08a and 08c refer.

MS advised that the implementation plan was on course except for problems in getting broadband installed and slightly late delivery of the furniture. At present the broadband problem was not causing a delay as users were accessing the net via the server which was running off site.

As reported above expenditure of £4200 had been completed. A further £3100 was to be spent on furniture, this being higher than planned due to the need to pay for installation of shelving. However half the higher cost had been covered by a donation from a member and a donation from Ipswich branch in memory of Eric Palmer.

MS demonstrated the software that was being developed for the identification and cataloguing of images and which would eventually also be for the use of those purchasing images.
The Copyright and 'Take Down' policies had been circulated to the Trustees and PJC. Only two responses had been received and commented on including using examples to demonstrate their impact. Whilst archiving professionals had also contributed to the policy, JR had now arranged for pro-bono legal advice. However the Trustees approved the policies, subject to any update being required when this legal advice was received.

1803.09 ADMINSTRATION GROUP REPORT AND BRANCH LIAISON
Documents 09 and 09a refer.
The Administration Group report was accepted. The report for the Charity Commissioners was being prepared with a draft having been issued for comment and would probably be submitted towards the end of May.
ILR reported on branch matters.

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Dates for most Regional Meetings had been agreed although one currently clashed with the May Trustee meeting. A trustee to join each meeting bar one was agreed.
ILR requested ideas for the meeting agendas. **ALL AP12**
MS questioned which governance group was responsible for advising Trustees of money gifted or bequeathed to the Society. It was agreed that this lay with Administration.
With the passing of Alan Cooke, arrangements for the production of the *RO* index were discussed. MSR would get the document printed and DG would have it available at the AGM.

1803.10 MODERN DATABASE PROJECT
Documents 10, 10a and 10b refer.
DBB advised the background to the project and that the intended next stage was to draw up a detailed specification for the use by an external contractor to build the user interface at a projected cost of circa £4000. In the event that the project went ahead it was agreed that the software did not need to be Wordpress. MS questioned the cost and feasibility of the project whilst ILR wanted to see timescales and a project plan before approving the spend of up to £4000.
The Trustees, **REDACTED** agreed that the full specification should be drawn up so that an accurate costing could be obtained and presented to the Trustees at the May meeting along with the timeline etc. Subject to this being satisfactory, the project would then be approved to go forward. **PJC AP13**

1803.11 COMMERCIAL GROUP REPORT
MSR advised that the Commercial Group had not met since the last Trustee meeting but that discussions were ongoing re book projects and pricing with DBB. It was advised that the life of the Quark software used for both the *RO* and book compilation appeared to be coming to an end and alternative software was being evaluated. The Minutes of the last Commercial Group meeting (held via Zoom on 16th January) had still to be completed – ACM reminded MSR that a Cloud recording had been provided following that meeting but would soon be deleted as it was using up his personal Zoom recording allowance. **MSR AP14**
DBB advised that two new books had just been delivered. Clive Luhrs, who had for many years acted as a distributor for our books had retired. Whilst DBB had been given details of his main outlets it was unclear what effect this would have on our book sales.

1803.12 DIGITAL SERVICES REPORT
A written report had not been prepared but almost all of the work in the period was as reported under the digitisation project.

1813.13 STRATEGY GROUP (SG) REPORT

Documents 13 and 13a refer.

PJC advised that work was ongoing to find a new home for the 6014 nameplate. The SG had debated the subject of possible uses for Society funds and would produce a paper for discussion at the May Trustee meeting. MSR said that serious consideration should be given to the upgrade of the Society's IT equipment and software. **JM AP15**

A Society dinner was under consideration for 2028 with the location being a choice between London, the Midlands or Cheltenham. If the latter then the meal might be taken aboard a train at the GWSR.

a) Photographic Competition. The Society has agreed to run a photographic competition jointly with Mortons group running from September until March 2024. Whilst accessed via the RCTS website the competition will be hosted by Mortons. Announcements in the RO need to be aligned with those in the Mortons publications. In due course decisions will need to be taken on the display of winning entries in the RO and if the Society wishes to publish a book of the winning photographs. Ideas and contacts for prizes were required. **ALL AP16**

b) Affiliated Societies At the request of APD, the Strategy Group had debated the subject of Affiliated Societies. In respect of future policy the recommendation was that affiliations should only be entered into if a) they benefitted members or b) benefitted the Society. This strategy was approved by the Trustees. A discussion took place concerning the existing affiliations and it was agreed that they should continue.

1803.14 LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE REPORT

APD reported that he had been in discussion with Andy Carr, a representative of GTR, and that he anticipated that a signed copy of the lease would be received shortly. Issues with damp and rot at Leatherhead continue. Some reorganisation of furniture etc. was underway to accommodate the digitisation project and window blinds were to be fitted to both protect the books from sunlight and aid VDU work. *(Subsequently completed on March 24th).*

1803.15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Practicalities for the AGM were discussed.

1803.16 DATE & VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

BT27a would immediately follow the AGM, with the intention that David Cross should be co-opted as a Trustee at that meeting.

BT28 would be at the Malmaison Hotel, Reading on 20th May.

The meeting closed at 15.13.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

06a 2021-22 forecast and 2022-23 budget
06b RCTS Budgetary Control Report Q1
07 Membership Statistics
08a Photo Archive Progress Report
08c Copyright Policy
09 Admin Group Report
09a Annual Report and Financial Report 2022
10 Database Project Proposal
10a Modern Database Traction Project
10b Objectives of the Modern Traction Database project
13 Strategy Group Report
13a Photographic Competition Ts & Cs

ACTIONS ARISING FROM BT27

AP1	Advise branches of the outcome of Zoom meeting charging trial.	**ILR**
AP2	Include length of time to complete financial information on renewals in the finance team meeting agenda.	**ARW**
AP3	Compile/circulate an accountancy timetable.	**ARW**
AP4	Prepare plan for Finance Team backup and digital banking options.	**ARW**
AP5	Review Gratis *RO* copy list.	**JM/APD/DBB**
AP6	Establish a Society policy on the publication of third-party books and publicise in the *RO.*	**MSR/DBB**
AP7	Register and view the digital archive. (three outstanding)	**ALL**
AP8	Assess value of stock held at Booklaw and adjust if necessary. Information required by JR for insurance purposes	**ARW/DBB**
AP9	Prepare Commercial Group report on the commercial objectives for the scanning on 'per collection' basis.	**MSR**
AP10	Prepare draft Health & Safety policy.	**ACM**
AP11	Set up system to provide totals of donations/bequests to identify amounts donated for specific projects	**ARW**
AP12	Advise ideas for Regional Meeting agendas to ILR	**ALL**
AP13	Prepare detailed specification and project time line for the MT database project	**PJC**
AP14	Complete and circulate the minutes of the Commercial Group meeting held on 16th January 2023.	**MSR**
AP15	Prepare paper for BT28 for proposals on the use of Society funds	**JM**
AP16	Advise ideas and contacts to PJC for photo competition prizes	**ALL**