RCTS
THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE AND TRAVEL SOCIETY

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

REFERENCE BT28/2005

FINAL

MINUTES OF MEETING BT28 OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE & TRAVEL SOCIETY

Held at the Malmaison Hotel, Reading on Saturday 20th May 2023

TRUSTEES PRESENT AT THE MEETING

ACM	Callum MacLeod	Chairman
DBB	David Bird	Deputy Chairman and Publications Officer
JM	James Milne	Head of Strategy Group
RLM	Richard Morris	Secretary
DPG	David Goddard	Membership Secretary
MS	Matthew Shaw	Digital Officer
APD	Andy Davies	Archivist
ILR	Irene Rabbitts	Branch Liaison Officer
ARW	Reg Wood	Treasurer

Others present

PJC	Paul Chancellor	Minute Taker

2005.01 – CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The meeting opened at 11.00. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

ACM thanked DPG for making the arrangements for the meeting and as retiring chairman thanked the Trustees for their support over the last three years. There were however challenges often caused by disputes between Trustees with another one current with respect to the latest edition of RCTS News.

With the change over of Chair on 22nd May the RCTS e-mail addresses for ACM and JM would need to be amended and the Charity Commission notified of the change plus the addition of David Cross as a Trustee. **AP1 MS/RLM**

2005.02 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from John Redgate (JR), David Cross (DC), Revd Brian Arman (BRA). Mike Robinson (MSR) also was not present.

2005.03 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF TRUSTEE MEETING BT 27

The minutes of BT27 were approved and signed. **Redacted.** The minutes of BT27A were also approved.

2005.04 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED BY THE AGENDA

ARW referred to page 3 of the Finance Report concerning rates of interest being achieved on on-deposit Society funds which was currently 1.7%. A lack of volunteers to help with financial matters made it difficult to actively manage investments and thus he proposed that the funds be manged by an Investment House where typical returns were above 6%, with a management fee being around 0.5%. It was agreed that a detailed paper be prepared for discussion at BT29. **AP2 ARW**

2005.05 UPDATES AND ACTION POINTS FROM BT27

AP1 Advise branches of the outcome of Zoom meeting charging trial. This had only been run by Windsor & Maidenhead Branch and there was one meeting left for the season before results could be evaluated. *Open* **AP3 DPG/ILR**

AP2 Include length of time to complete financial information on renewals in the finance team meeting agenda. A finance meeting would discuss this on 25th May **AP4 ARW**

AP3 Compile/circulate an accountancy timetable. *See item 06a.*

AP4 Prepare plan for Finance Team backup and digital banking options. *See item 06b.*

AP5 Review Gratis *RO* copy list. *See item 10b.*

AP6 Establish a Society policy on the publication of third-party books and publicise in the *RO.* See item in June *RO*. *Closed.*

AP7 Register and view the digital archive. (three Trustees were still not registered to view the archive) **AP5 ALL**

AP8 Assess value of stock held at Booklaw and adjust if necessary. Information required by JR for insurance purposes. *Completed.*

AP9 Prepare Commercial Group report on the commercial objectives for the scanning on 'per collection' basis. *Still outstanding*. **AP6 MSR**

AP10 Prepare draft Health & Safety policy. *See item 08.*

AP11 Set up system to provide totals of donations/bequests to identify amounts donated for specific projects. The system had been set up and the figures would be available shortly. *Closed.*

AP12 Advise ideas for Regional Meeting agendas to ILR. *Done*.

AP13 Prepare detailed specification and project timeline for the MT database project. *See item 15.*

AP14 Complete and circulate the minutes of the Commercial Group meeting held on 16th January 2023. A note on the meeting had been received during the Trustee meeting. *Closed.*

AP15 Prepare paper for BT28 for proposals on the use of Society funds. *See item 10a.*

AP16 Photo competition prize ideas were still required that involve network operations. **Redacted.**

. **AP7 PC/ALL**

2005.06 Finance Group Report

See Doc 06. ARW commented that the independent examiners had given the accounts a 'fully clean' report. A discussion had taken place concerning changing the examiners, but ARW expected that this might double the cost to the Society. He had thus requested the examiners to use a completely new team to carry out the work for the latest report and this was carried out, but with some delay as the new team were unfamiliar with RCTS.

A lack of volunteers was influencing the way that the Accounts Group were operating, completing one task before starting another and work to collect Gift Aid was only just beginning. JM said that he thought it might be ultimately more efficient to do this on a quarterly frequency. It was also advised that HMRC had changed the rules on the submission of VAT reports where now any late submission would attract penalty points and ultimately a fine. This had implications for branches and this would need to be advised to them. **AP8 ILR**

In respect of branches ARW said that he thought that there was a need for refresher training for the treasurers and ILR agreed. Branches were not required to complete accounts to the full standards as required by the Charity Commission for the Society as a whole. Discuss/confirm plans. **AP9 ARW/ILR**

a) Accountancy Timetable *(Doc 06a)*. The speed of reporting the outcome of each membership campaign was discussed. ARW said that this was slow in part due to the number of ways that payment could be made for membership. MS thought it would be unlikely to improve as current IT trends were leading to even more payment channels becoming available. There was a balance between stopping work on various processes to provide quarterly reporting to the Trustees versus completing individual tasks in a timely manner. The half-yearly budgetary report had been completed.

ARW suggested that Zenfolio payments should be finalised more frequently but MS said that this was time consuming. As it was likely that Zenfolio would not continue in use by the year end this item was left open. The responsibility for completing library returns would be discussed on 25th May at the forthcoming Finance Governance Group meeting.

b) Finance Team Backups *(Doc 06b)*. ARW advised that in future DPG would be a second signatory for digital banking. With the change of Chair cheque signatories would need to be changed and it was agreed that JM and RLM would be added to maintain a total of five.
AP10 ARW

c) Budget for IT replacement. *(Doc 06c)*. ARW had proposed a 'ring fenced' £7,000 be set aside for replacing aging IT equipment. Most of the Society equipment already had a nil value in the accounts. Due to the fact that if an item of equipment failed it often required replacing at speed it was suggested that such expenditure should not need approval by the Trustees but could be authorised by ARW from the £7,000 fund and this was approved by the Trustees. The asset register needs to be updated. **AP11 ARW**

2005.07 Library and Archive Report

APD had compiled detailed report on the library damp problems *(Doc 07a)* which had been sent to GTR as previous correspondence seemed to make little impact. As well as the structural issues the damp might cause H&S issues in the long term. ACM requested that the matter be escalated within GTR /their contractors. **AP12 APD**

Lease payments were discussed as rent requests had now been received. The required £2,400 deposit had yet to be paid as ARW was concerned that it might not be credited to the right account and there was still no dated lease agreement in our possession. It was agreed that the deposit would be paid, as requested, to Workman LLC (GTR contractor) rather than via our solicitor, this to be accompanied by a printed off copy of the lease in which the Society would insert the relevant dates. **AP13 APD/ARW**

2005.08 Health & Safety Policy

ACM had drawn up a draft H&S policy *(Doc 08)*. ILR had raised some concerns about the style of the document appearing onerous at first sight, but not its contents. PC mentioned that the issue went beyond the publishing of the policy in that the Society should be able to demonstrate that it was being implemented, that being a particular challenge to do at the branches. A working group would be formed to refine the policy, including ACM who had agreed to continue to assist in this project, to provide revised documents for BT29. It was confirmed that this working party would be chaired by RLM, and include ACM, ILR and PC. **AP14 RLM**

It was agreed that H&S would be discussed at the regional meetings as 'policies and procedures were currently under review' and that branches would receive further advice and support in due course.

2005.09 Membership Update

(Doc 09). Since preparation membership had risen to 2598. However this figure was still approximately the same as it had been three years earlier despite recruiting 1000 new members. 7% who had not renewed had simply failed to respond to emails/letters which was a similar number to previous years, but the number of resignations was significantly up. JM and DPG were investigating the effect of the closure of South East branch. Initial results suggested that there had been no effect, but more analysis was to be carried out. A final output would be given to BT29.

2005.10 Strategy Group Report

(Doc 10) The Trustees confirmed the appointment of DC as chair of the group and Development Officer as from 22nd May.

JM advised that he had written a 'new chairman's inaugural address' for the *RO*. He had planned to follow up on King Charles' opening words at the coronation 'I come to serve, not be served' to highlight the problem with getting members to volunteer. He had subsequently modified the wording following discussion about members who do indeed only want to pay their subscription and receive the service that membership of the Society offers.

a) Proposal for the use of Society Funds. *(Doc 10a)*. This proposed a hierarchy for deciding how any large bequest should be spent. It was agreed that 'large' would be £10,000 or above and that there were no specific usage requests attached to the donation. Specific points discussed were around the payments to carry out tasks where a volunteer could not be found and disbursement of funds to branches. A finalised document will be prepared by the year end. **AP15 JM/DC**

b) Review of AF/EX/GR lists. *(Doc 10b)*. This proved to be complex as it concerned a number of issues. For *RO*s sent to Commercial magazines the Society should attempt to obtain digital copies of those magazines for circulation to Society members. **AP 16 DC**
For Affiliated Society magazine swaps, going forward any such activity should be run under the auspices of the library, ideally as digital copies but further investigation was required to establish which if any were still being received and by whom. **AP17 APD**
JM pointed out that just four Societies were being referred to as affiliated on the AF/EX/GR list but ACM pointed out there were in fact around 20 organisations that were "affiliated". Supply a list to DC for further action/consideration. **AP18 ACM/DC**
JM advised that he had contacted the Chair of the SLS, (current membership around 350) and intended to contact others such as the BLS, LCGB etc. A key affiliation suggested was that with the Transport Trust which was used by the Government as a communication route to sound out new policies etc.

2005.11 Photographic Archive Digitisation Project
(Docs 11 and 11b) – the latter more specifically discussing the Michael Mensing collection. MS advised on a number of the details of the working of the current process with the digitising camera having been in operation for two weeks. The method of capturing the caption information and applying it was described, the latter being able to be done remotely. None of the scanned work has yet proceeded beyond the captioning stage. All processing to date has been on black & white images.
Guidance on products and pricing are being prepared by the Commercial Group. MSR submitted some questions via e-mail during the course of the meeting and they will be answered prior to or at BT29.
Problems encountered with getting the broadband line installed continue and MS did not anticipate a swift resolution.

a) Photographic Collection – Revision E *(Doc 11a)* Document version control of the archive register is also proving challenging at present. The list first issued by Peter King is updated regularly by APD, but those updates are not currently easily identifiable. JM requested that on all future updates, if a front sheet could be issued to provide a synopsis of any additions/amendments, and that any changes in the 60+ page document could use coloured Tracked Changes. **AP19 APD**

MS advised that he would not wish to continue as the project manager beyond the end of 2023 as by that time most of the tasks would be of an administrative nature. He was thus looking for a suitable individual for the role. People suitable to be Library key holders were also essential. Proposals would be required by BT30.

b) Mensing Collection *(Doc 11b*). A summary of why the Mensing collection has been prioritised, and how the items within that were selected was given. All work is concentrated on the pre 1970 images at present. DBB advised that he had some 4000 Mensing colour images already scanned that would be suitable for use in publications. There was no reason why other collections could not be included in the scanning process if required as completing Mensing might be a twelve month task.

2005.12 Regional Meetings
(Doc 12). A plan had been issued and the branches had been informed about agenda items via Newsletter 220. Items for inclusion in the brief for Trustees that were attending the meetings should include branch relationships with heritage railways and other organisations, a summary of the digitisation project, Health & Safety, and the Photographic competition. It was agreed that branches could claim expenses for attending if their available funds were less than £2000.

2005.13 Commercial Group Report
Redacted. In response AP14, DBB forwarded to ACM the Notes of the Commercial Group Meeting held on 16th January 2023.

It was suggested that our website could contain a more "active" view of RCTS publications rather than just the front cover. Using the same application as that for the *RO* it should be possible to allow prospective purchasers to view a sample of the content to aid sales.
AP20 DBB/MSR

2005.14 Administration Group Report
(Doc 14).
a) AGM Minutes *(Doc 14a).* These will be published in the July RO. A minor correction was required to the item near the bottom of Page 1 where 'virtual' should be 'in person' when referring to the 2022 meeting.

b) Quick Check lists for Officers *(Doc 14b)*. These were requested by the branches. To keep text to a minimum links to the various detailed policies should be provided. The draft would be discussed at the Regional Meetings.

2005.15 Modern Traction Database

Docs 15a and 15b had been issued well ahead of the meeting to allow for questions to be answered in advance. MS questioned the ability of the programmer to complete the work within his suggested time scale. PC advised that this was a fixed price contract with no stage payments so if additional programming was required there should be little impact on the overall time scale of the project which was to go live within twelve months. DBB confirmed that he was the Trustee responsible for delivering the project which was as much about protecting Society data held/collated by members as it was about the commercialisation of the records. Ultimately we would always be vulnerable to the availability of a volunteer to maintain the database but that would have an equal impact on the production of the *RO* loco change data. ARW stated that he could not accept the proposal as there were no financial projections on income that the project would generate. It was agreed that these would be prepared and circulated via e-mail by 31st May with the Trustees voting to proceed or not, also via e-mail.
AP21 DBB/ALL

Following the meeting a financial proposal was circulated and DBB, ARW, JM, APD, ILR, DC, DPG, RLM and MSR voted via email in favour of the project going ahead. MS had approved the go ahead at the meeting.

2005.16 Any Other Business

ILR asked if there was to be an Officers Conference in 2023 as there would not be a Member's Weekend event. The consensus was that at least a possible venue should be investigated with Doncaster being nominated with either the 21st or 28th October being the date. Contact proposed venue. **AP22 ILR**

It was advised that items left to the Society by David Cole were being collected shortly.

JM then spoke of the long and varied 'career' of ACM in various Society roles and thanked him for his significant contribution over many years. The Trustees had unanimously agreed that he should be appointed as a Society Vice President and a suitably framed certificate was presented to him.

2005.17 Date and Venue of Next Meeting.

Agreed to meet again at the Malmaison Hotel on Saturday July 22nd 2003. DG will make the necessary booking. **AP23 DPG**

The meeting closed at 16.10

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

05 Stock held at Booklaw re AP8
06 Finance Report
06a Accountancy Timetable
06b Finance Team backup
06c IT Equipment fund
07a Station Masters Hose Damp report
08 Health & Safety Policy
09 Membership Statistics
09 Admin Group Report
10 Strategy Group Report
10a Proposal – Large donations
10b Gratis list report
11 Photo archive report
11a Photo Digitisation Process
11b Mensing Collection digitisation
12 Regional Meeting Locations
14 Administration Group report
14a AGM Minutes
14b Branch Quick Check Lists
15a Modern Traction Database Project timescale
15b Modern Database Traction Project costings

ACTIONS ARISING FROM BT28

AP1	Change e-mail addresses and notify the Charity Commission about Trustee changes.	**MS/RLM**
AP2	Investigate use of an Investment House.	**ARW**
AP3	Advise branches of the outcome of Zoom meeting charging trial.	**DG/ILR**
AP4	Finance timetable-renewals.	**ARW**
AP5	Register and view the digital archive *(three outstanding)*	**ALL**
AP6	Prepare Commercial Group report on the commercial objectives for the scanning on ‘per collection’ basis.	**MSR**
AP7	Suggest/follow up photo competition prizes.	**PC/ALL**
AP8	Advise branches of VAT rule change.	**ILR**
AP9	Formulate training plan for branch treasurers.	**ARW/ILR**
AP10	Register new cheque signatories.	**ARW**
AP11	Update the Society asset register.	**ARW**
AP12	Escalate library damp issues with GTR etc.	**APD**
AP13	Pay deposit on Library rent with accompanying lease documentation.	**APD/ARW**
AP14	Refine draft H&S policy via new working group.	**RLM**
AP15	Refine proposals on the use of Society funds by year end.	**JM/DC**
AP16	Discuss Digital copies of commercial magazines with editors.	**DC**
AP17	Continue work to try to establish who gets copies of what affiliate magazines.	**APD**
AP18	Supply and review affiliates list.	**ACM/DC**
AP19	Peter King list to highlight changes.	**APD**
AP20	Allow sample pages to be added to website for RO publications.	**DBB/MS**
AP21	Prepare/circulate financial case for Online database and Trustees to advise decision via e-mail. *Action subsequently closed.*	**DBB/ALL**
AP22	Check availability of Doncaster venue for the Officers Conference.	**ILR**
AP23	Book Malmaison Hotel, Reading for BT29 meeting.	**DPG**