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REFERENCE BT30 2309

**MINUTES OF MEETING BT30 OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE & TRAVEL SOCIETY**

**Held at the Malmaison Hotel, Reading
on Saturday 23rd September 2023**

TRUSTEES PRESENT AT THE MEETING

JM	James Milne	Chairman
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
MSR	Mike Robinson (until 15.00)	Commercial Group Chair
DBB	David Bird	Publications Officer
DC	David Cross	Strategy Group Chair

Others present

BA	Revd. Canon Brian Arman	President
PJC	Paul Chancellor	Minute Taker

2309.01 – CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The meeting opened at 10.30. The Chairman welcomed those present noting that it was David Cross' first meeting since being appointed as a Trustee. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

2309.02 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from John Redgate

2309.03 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF TRUSTEE MEETING BT29

The minutes of BT29 were approved and signed.

2309.04 MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

None

2309.05 UPDATES FROM ACTION POINTS FROM BT29

- AP1** Advise branches of the outcome of Zoom meeting charging trial. *Complete*
- AP2** Report on the commercial objectives for the scanning on 'per collection' basis.
Agenda item
- AP3** Advise branches of VAT rule change. *Complete*
- AP4** Formulate training plan for branch treasurers and circulate. *Complete*
- AP5** Prepare 'current year' asset register. *Complete*.
ARW advised that a year end register would be available in November.
- AP6** Pay library rent. As a signed copy of the lease had still not been received this item remained open. Agreed that APD would pursue but if further escalation was required that would be via the Society solicitors. **APD New AP1**
- AP7** Refine draft H&S policy via new working group. *Agenda Item*
- AP8** Refine proposals on the use of Society funds by year end. **DC New AP2**
- AP9** Discuss digital copies of commercial magazines with editors.
Subsequently agreed that no action would be taken until January 2024 whilst waiting to see if any member or organisation contacted the Society about non receipt of affiliate magazines and that the item would then be closed.
- AP10** Supply and review affiliates list. This remained open pending the outcome of AP9. It was felt that the FNRM and National Transport Trust affiliations should remain active. **APD/DC New AP3**
- AP11** Discuss accounting timetable with certain branches and circulate revised accountancy timetable. *Complete*
- AP12** Advise DBB of bank account details. *Complete*
- AP13** Check non payment of Cheltenham and any other branch expenses. RLM advised that these had still not been paid. ARW advised that he had identified the cause of the problem **REDACTED** **RLM/ARW New AP4**
- AP14** Obtain detailed information on investment possibilities. ARW advised that he **REDACTED** had temporarily invested the Society funds in an interest bearing account with our main bankers whilst reviewing the market to choose a new partner. **ARW New AP5**
- AP15** Advise pricing and product sales proposals for BT30. *Agenda item*
- AP16** Seek contracted person to manage the digital archive. Agenda item but remained open. **MS New AP6**
- AP17** Develop/provide analysis of member recruitment by month/source. *Continuing*. **DC/DPG New AP7**
- AP18** Talk to branches to develop improvement plans for web pages. *Done*

AP19 Request attendance data from branches. *Agenda item*

AP20 Review Society rules and policies. *ongoing*

RLM New AP8

AP21 Discuss Pen Portrait articles with MSR. MSR was happy to include these in the RO but an author was required. **REDACTED** The format of answers to a standard set of questions was suggested.

JM New AP9

AP22 Purchase dehumidifiers for Leatherhead. *Ongoing*

APD New AP10

AP23 Liaise with Cheltenham branch re 2028. DC advised that a note had gone to the branch but RLM advised that it had not been received. Re - send.

DC New AP11

AP24 Include RO sustainability paper discussion in BT30 agenda. *Done*

AP25 Resolve Officer's Conference expenses claim eligibility. *Done*

AP26 Confirm venue for BT30. *Done*

2309.06 Commercial Group Report

a) Commercial Group Meeting 7th September – see Doc 06a

The group meeting had discussed in detail the proposed pricing and sales policy for the photo archive. Most pictures would carry an RCTS logo and caption information. The current resolution of images is more than that required for most personal uses. The Digital Officer now had to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the proposals including the provision of a discount for members.

MS AP12

b) RO Sustainability – see Doc 6b

MSR had prepared a detailed paper on the challenges faced in the continuing provision of a monthly magazine in the current format, due mainly to the ever decreasing pool of volunteers which was already leading to substantial gaps in the operational data being provided. Proposals discussed in depth were a change to a features led magazine and publishing only six magazines per year, although the latter would not in any case be implemented until January 2025. With the Chairman's outreach programme running (see 2309/10) it was agreed to note the concerns but not to make any changes to the RO in the short term.

Another request for volunteers would be made via the Officer's Newsletter.

ILR AP13

REDACTED

c) Photo Scanning Priorities see Doc 6c

A re-evaluation of the photographic collections awaiting scanning had been undertaken and the scanning policy had been revised primarily to concentrate on colour slides which it was felt would maximise sales possibilities with a number of collections identified as warranting urgent attention. Up to 60,000 slides might be processed in one year. Those for captioning and adjustment would then be selected for the next stage and the requirement might be influenced by the requirements of the publications team.

2309.07 Finance Group Report

Forecast Out-turn and Budget – see docs 07 and 07a

ARW thought that with changing Society activities there might be a need to review the format of financial reports for 2023-2024.

It was anticipated that Society turnover for the current year would be at around £80,000, a reduction of £2,000 on 2021-2022. However expenditure was forecast to rise from £76,500 to £90,000. A major factor in this had been the sharp rise in postage costs. Another item noted was an AGM cost of £3,700. Overall a deficit of £10-£15K was predicted.

2309.08 Membership Update

Membership figures. DPG advised that membership was slightly down year on year – see Doc 08, thought in part to there being no national or TOC organised open days in 2023 and thus a reduced opportunity for meeting potential members.

Membership rates. This subject had been discussed by the Strategy Group and MS had also prepared a detailed paper (see Doc 08a) looking at the relative costs of providing digital and hard copy magazines, which concluded that (at present cost levels) an increase in the printed RO rate of £9 should apply. It was also noted that Royal Mail had just announced another large increase in some postage rates. The essence of doc 08a was that all members should contribute equally to the cost of running the Society with an additional charge for the printed RO. An alternative view from a member of the SG group was that putting up rates for the printed RO and not increasing digital subscriptions discriminated against those who did not have online access. MSR thought that both the nominal cost of volunteer time in compiling the RO and income from the digitisation of archive publications should be taken into account in any calculations on RO sustainability. An extensive discussion concluded that the 2024 membership rates should be: - Digital membership £20 (unchanged) on the casting vote of the Chairman, hard copy £38 (a £5 increase). The direct debit discount would be standardised at £1. Overseas rates to be finalised.

DPG AP15

The SG had requested that a carefully composed note be placed in the RO explaining the very large price increase.

JM/MSR AP16

The 2024 'new membership discount' was changed from 50% to £10 off thus effectively leaving the digital rate unchanged but taking the printed rate from £16.50 to £28.00.

REDACTED

AVR rates would remain unchanged, nominations were still required from most Trustees and the cover price of the RO should be amended to £4.00 (Members £2.85 post-free) at bottom of page 2.

ALL/MSR AP18

2309.09 Publications Report

Publications Report – see Doc 09

DBB advised that a new Mensing book was in preparation, and he was considering publishing a book on LNER finance that had been offered to the Society. MS highlighted the financial contribution of Digital Archive sales and MS advised that 17 new digital titles were being prepared of which ten were already available, but these would not be advertised until all of the titles were present. These comprised all of the GWR and SR series of books plus all of the coaching stock books published in the 1970s.

It was agreed that sales of 'new' books would be continued to be branded as 'RCTS Publications' whilst digital reprints would only carry the standard RCTS logo but should also have an ISBN code.

The A5 Easy Binder stock should be written off. The existing B5 stock should be sold prior to selling the latest B5 version.

2309.10 Chairman's Outreach Report

REDACTED

2309.11 Library and Archive Report

See Docs 11 (2). Problems with leaks in the roof continue and these would be reported once more to GTR. There had finally been a contact from the rating authority. Three further collections were in the process of arriving. The policy document on collections needs to be reviewed, this to be done for BT31. **APD AP20**

The *Railway Magazine* indexes were currently being scanned. It was questioned if those might be available directly from the *RM*. JM to contact the *RM*'s editor **JM AP21**

Museums accreditation was again discussed and it was felt that at least registration on the National Museums Archive website should be sought. **APD AP22**

2309.12 Strategy Group Report

DC advised that items discussed at the last two meetings had included charges for Zoom meetings (since implemented), use of Society funds (report to BT31) a member's day at the Bluebell Railway and moves for various Society nameplates. There was a suggestion that Royal Mail might be interested in featuring the Society on a 2028 stamp issue and this would be followed up.

REDACTED

Discussions on membership retention were ongoing and a meeting was required to discuss the pros and cons of twelve month rolling membership. To be arranged. **DC AP24**

2309.13 Regional Meetings

ILR advised that the minutes of all meetings had been received and now needed to be summarised. **ILR AP25**

2309.14 Administration Group Report

a) Group Meeting 25th August - see Docs 14 and 14a. The relevant items appear below.

b) Officers Conference. Arrangements were complete for this to be held in Doncaster on 28th October. Details would be circulated via an Officer's Newsletter shortly. Booking to attend is required.

c) Digital Archive Report. See Docs 14C and 14d. The information on digital publications is as given under Publications above.

REDACTED

The Society now had a 500 person Zoom licence and it was hoped that the introduction of both Zoom charges and 'encouragement' to make a donation would cover the annual cost of the licence.

d) Health and Safety Policy. The AG had drafted a H&S policy document and sought approval from the Trustees for its approval- see Doc 14e (2). JM raised some questions, principally about the practicality of safety briefings for meetings at Network stations where people could join the group at any time and what action should be taken where risk assessments at venues identified safety issues. Subject to amendments to address those issues the policy was approved and would be presented at the Officer's Conference. Amend Document. **RLM AP26**

e) Society House Style. See Doc 14f. A question raised in the document was 'Should the Society strap line, *'Britain's Leading Railway Society'* be changed. It was agreed to leave it unchanged. The policy document was approved by the Trustees. A template for both a letter head and compliments slip would be made available in the officer's area of the website. **APD/MS AP27**

f) Branch Meeting attendance data. 16 of 28 branches had responded to the request for information on meeting attendances and subjects. It was too early to draw conclusions. Chase other branches and advise conclusions. **ILR AP28**

g) Other items. The availability of a Silver pass for the West Somerset Railway should appear in the Officer's Newsletter. **ILR AP29**
A revised edition of the Officer's Handbook should be circulated for the Officer's Conference. Copy in advance to JM. **ILR AP30**
REDACTED

2309.15 Dates for Trustee Meetings

JM circulated his proposals for 2024 with four face to face meetings with others on Zoom. He requested to be advised of any dates that were already unsuitable. **ALL AP31**

He also requested that the Society diary be revived for 2024 with all group meetings added. **RLM/ALL AP32**

2309.16 Date of Next Meeting

2nd December via Zoom, time to be confirmed. The meeting closed at 15.45

N.B. Post meeting note - at the request of the Chairman, Date of Next Meeting revised to Tuesday 5th December at 18.00 via Zoom

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 06a Commercial Group Minutes 2309
- 06b RO Sustainability
- 06c Images Scanning Priorities
- 07 Budgetary Control Report
- 07a Budgetary Control Figures
- 08 Membership Statistics 31/08/23
- 08a Membership Rates Discussion
- 09 Publications Report
- 10 Outreach Report – ICRS
- 10 Outreach Report – others
- 11 Line Society Liaison Report
- 11 Archive & Library Report
- 14 Admin Group Report
- 14a Admin Group Minutes 2308
- 14c Digital Publications Report
- 14d Digital Archive Sales
- 14e H&S Guidance
- 14e Proposed H&S Policy
- 14f House Style Policy

ACTION POINTS – BT 30

AP1	Escalate Lease signing issue	APD
AP2	Refine proposals on the use of Society funds by year end.	DC
AP3	Finalise Affiliates list for BT31	APD/DC
AP4	Re-submit/settle Cheltenham expenses claim	RLM/ARW
AP5	Investigate Society Funds investment opportunities	ARW
AP6	Appoint Digital Archive Manager	MS
AP7	Develop/provide analysis of member recruitment by month/source.	DPG/DC
AP8	Review Society rules and policies.	RLM
AP9	Discuss Trustee pen portraits with Andrew Lait	JM
AP10	Purchase dehumidifiers for Leatherhead	APD
AP11	Resend 2028 note to Cheltenham branch	DC
AP12	Evaluate feasibility of proposed archive picture pricing policy.	MS
AP13	Place editorial team volunteer request in the Officer's Newsletter	MSR/ILR
AP14	Contact <i>Railway Magazine</i> re traffic observation reporting.	JM
AP15	Advise Overseas Members renewal rates to MS	DPG
AP16	Write and insert RO note explaining new Membership Rates	JM/MSR
AP17	Prepare note for Loco donations to database project	PJC
AP18	Advise AVR nominations/change RO cover price	ALL/MSR
REDACTED		
AP20	Review Collections policy document for BT31	APD
AP21	Contact <i>Railway Magazine</i> re scanned copy of their magazine indices.	JM
AP22	Seal archive accreditation on the National Museums Archive register.	APD
REDACTED		
AP24	Arrange meeting to discuss rolling membership	DC
AP25	Summarise Regional Meeting minutes	ILR
AP26	Amend/finalise H&S Policy document	RLM
AP27	Add templates for Letterheads and compliments slips to website	APD/MS
AP28	Complete and analyse branch attendance data	ILR
AP29	Advise availability of WSR Silver Pass in Officer's Newsletter	ILR
AP30	Circulate revised Officer's Handbook.	ILR
AP31	Advise JM if any proposed 2024 meeting dates are unsuitable	ALL
AP32	Add 2024 meeting dates to diary supplied by RLM	ALL