



West Somerset Railway P.L.C

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WSR Culture Heritage Recovery Fund Award – Implementation Update 2

This note is the second of a series of regular updates to volunteers and staff about how and where the money is being spent in order to achieve the stated aims of the fund.

What was awarded to the WSR?

The WSR has been awarded £865,000 to help secure the railway's longer-term viability as a popular tourist attraction, educational offering, and preserver of heritage locomotives. The money must be invested by the end of March 2021 to receive the full benefit of the award.

List of key projects planned.

In total, there is a list of over 100 potential projects to be completed during this period. A summary of the most visible, larger scale projects includes:

- Repair and upkeep of up to 3 locomotives and up to 20 carriages (contribution up to an approved financial limit)
- Enabling to re-instatement of all expired competencies on the railway
- Completion of track renewal at Alcombe
- Repair of rails which ultrasonic test has highlighted as defective.
- Flailing the overgrown line side vegetation either side of track.
- Concrete sleeper replacement and fishplate oiling
- Rail replacement required at Bye Farm crossing
- Replacement of life expired drainage system at Blue Anchor
- Completion of Doniford curve renewal & drainage
- Up line track relay at Blue Anchor and replace level crossing gate
- Renewal of drivers LED lights at Dunster Sea Lane crossing
- Assessment of the extent of roof repairs required of the DEPG Williton Goods Shed
- Weed spray application - whole line to be done in early Spring

In addition to the above, there are a number of other smaller projects underway to help ensure the railway can operate in a Covid-19 compliant manner, plus several initiatives to update all our safety documentation to reflect the revised operating environment.

Project actions underway

The first projects are now starting to gain momentum and the programme implementation board is seeing the first tranche of spending activities coming in for approval.

A tracker template has been created and the Heads of Department are now aligning their submissions to the template to ensure compliance with the goals of the fund.

As previously stated, there are five key areas where money is planned to be used and here is an update on the activities in each area:

Work already approved includes maintenance of some embankments under threat of slippage and a number of bridge inspections between Bishops Lydeard and Williton.

Further bridge inspections between Williton and Minehead are likely to be done once it is established these can be completed within budget (or with sourcing additional funds).

The board has also approved the replacement of some stolen tools and replacement concrete sleepers as part of the Stogumber Drainage project.

Additional maintenance work on the DEPG Goods shed at Williton and the entrance to the Gauge museum at Bishops Lydeard has also been approved.

The board received briefings from John Jenkins on various planned S&T activities, including the work to improve one of the Blue Anchor crossing gates which has deteriorated in recent times –and this work has now been approved.

As part of the cultural improvement work, significant work is also being done around improvement in operational safety & education/training based on ROGS requirements, including the option to bring in some temporary external resource to support us with this work. Although this item was not originally included in the bid, it might be possible to part fund a percentage of this work if additional funding can be sourced from the PLC.

The board is also looking at the potential for bringing in up to three Apprenticeships in permanent way/engineering/accounting/marketing etc. Whilst the PLC would logically fund the wages, the board may be able to authorise funding for one-off mentoring and initial support aspects.

In addition, as mentioned previously, a significant amount of the monies will go towards ensuring we can keep our skilled workforce in employment in all railway operating areas.

Questions and feedback.

If you have any questions on any of the processes reviewed here, please feel free to approach any of the programme board listed below.

Steve Williams (Chair)
Martin Brown (PLC)
Mike Thompson (WSSRT)
Geoff Garfield (WSRA)
Julien Weston (DEPG)

Note, Joy Boswell is also providing financial support to the programme and will be ensuring that we are keeping within the overall expenditure parameters.