

WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GROUP (PDG)

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnership Development Group
held from 10.00 on Tuesday 7 August 2018
in the Meeting Room at Bishops Lydeard Station
(Postponed from 26 June 2018)

Present:

Paul Whitehouse (Chairman)	West Somerset Railway Association
Chris Austin	West Somerset Steam Railway Trust
Ian Coleby	West Somerset Railway Plc
Martin Adfield	West Somerset Railway Staff
Cllr Roger Habgood	Taunton Deane Borough Council
Cllr Andrew Hadley	West Somerset Council

In attendance:

Mel Hillman	Administrator
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Apologies for absence were received from:

Martin Howard	DEPG
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Minute

Action

23/18 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 April 2018 were APPROVED with clarification in item 16/18 (Norton Site) that the land referred to was to the East of the Railway and the owner was unknown.

There were no matters arising not covered by the current agenda.

24/18 Gauge Museum and Heritage Lottery Application (HLF)

Chris Austin confirmed that the concept document had been shared with members of the Group since the previous meeting.

He was pleased to confirm that the HLF had awarded a grant of £40,000 towards the project to improve the museum. A further £20,000 would be provided through fundraising by the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust. The funding included the employment of a part-time Learning Officer to develop links with schools to encourage regular visits by school groups. The exhibits would be updated. Research would start on how best to arrange the displays. It would take to 2020 to complete the project although it was intended to have the Learning Officer in place much earlier so that the postholder could be involved in the developments. The post is initially funded for two years.

Chris added that it was intended that the displays would provide an authoritative story of the West Somerset Railway as well as the development of railways in Somerset and the impact they had on community and economic development. The displays would support the National Curriculum requirements especially around science and technology. The Project Group would be led by Steve Williams.

Martin Adfield commented that he had picked up concerns from some members of the model railway group about disabled access to the balcony and lower areas of the museum. Chris Austin assured the meeting that this would be looked at and possible grants investigated.

Congratulations and thanks were expressed to the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust.

25/18 Williton Site Update

Ian Coleby reported that little progress had been made. Discussions had been held and it was thought that WSRA Restorations could be a viable business on the site.

The track plans had not been circulated as agreed at the last meeting and this would be followed up with DEPG.

MH

26/18 Norton Site

Paul Whitehouse confirmed that the wagon shed at Peterborough had been officially declared redundant by Network Rail in the last week. If it were considered worthwhile to obtain it grants would be needed to cover the demolition, transport and re-erection costs. The Railway Heritage Trust was one possibility for the first part.

27/18 Heritage Committee

Ian Coleby reported that since the last meeting, Chris Austin had withdrawn his offer to Chair this committee. Ian had taken over the responsibility but due to other constraints, the committee had not yet met.

28/18 Minehead Rail Link Group

It was reported that the Group had attended the recent WSRA Steam Rally with an information stall. The Group had not yet been able to supply any viable or feasible funding proposals. It was felt that there was a need to continue to engage in dialogue with the WSR.

Cllr Roger Habgood mentioned that the Taunton Deane Borough Council Transport Strategy was open for consultation and the WSR should respond to it. Paul Whitehouse agreed to do this.

[NB: Subsequent to the meeting it was confirmed that the link was: <http://somesetconsults.org.uk/consult.ti/TauntonTransportStrategy/consultationHome> The consultation period will end on 17 August 2018.]

PW

Chris Austin confirmed that his discussions with GWR over a seasonal shuttle service between Taunton and Bishops Lydeard continued and he was hopeful of a pilot scheme during 2019. This was ongoing and he would keep the Group informed.

CA

It was indicated that with the proposed merger of the two District Councils from 1 April 2019, that there would be a more strategic focus to the work. It was agreed that an officer be invited to attend the next meeting.

RH/AH

29/18 Volunteer Committee

The Volunteer Committee had been established under the leadership of Rodney Greenway who was a WSRA Trustee and the WSRA Director on the Plc Board. The Committee was addressing the current shortfall in the overall number of volunteers.

Initiatives such as leaflet drops in villages and other publicity had resulted in an increased number of applications which had risen to 5/6 per week.

Comment was made that the application to the Hinckley Point Community Fund could indirectly provide funds to recruiting new volunteers. Paul Whitehouse reported that there had been a recent request by the Fund administrators for clarification on some aspects of the bid. The process was ongoing.

30/18 Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting would be held from:

10.00 on Monday 8 October 2018 in the Meeting Room at Bishops Lydeard Station.

The meeting closed at 10.50