



# WSRA Trustee Changes Statement

15<sup>th</sup> December 2015

The West Somerset Railway Association Trustees met yesterday and considered the recently published Review Report (the Coombes Review).

The Trustees resolved that they would all stand down at the next Annual General Meeting. Further, the Chairman (Peter Chidzey), and the two Vice Chairman (Ian Aldridge and David Williams) would stand down from their respective roles, with immediate effect, but remain as trustees until the AGM. Frank Courtney will take up the role of Acting Chairman. In addition the Trustees will be co-opting Michael Rowe with immediate effect, and will be seeking further co-options (and other support) in the near future. (There will be a wide circulation of invitations to join this work.)

Frank Courtney said:

“We now intend to move forward from the period of uncertainty and difficulties which have existed over the last two or three years. Development will be at two levels: there is a great deal to do in terms of governance development and aspects of management. There are some outstanding individual issues which have arisen over the last year or so which have to be resolved. At the same time we need to quickly agree development and associated plans. We will be issuing an overview paper in the next few weeks, followed by a full Development Plan draft for consultation (taking account of the Coombes recommendations). We expect to present that and begin consultation at a members meeting in February. By next July’s AGM we want to have available the final version of the Development Plan, a Business Plan and a Fund Raising Plan.

It is essential, if it is to survive, that the Association becomes again the main membership body that both volunteers and others associated with the railway *want* to join. It is also absolutely essential that the Association engages and works with the PLC and other organisations on the railway in a positive and constructive way. This we intend to do.

I would like to thank my fellow trustees for the decisions they have taken, which have required a considerable generosity of spirit. As I have said on numerous occasions, all of us involved in the last few years difficulties have actually wanted the same thing – a highly successful, secure and vibrant West Somerset Railway.

I also want to add that the Association and the Promotions trading subsidiary owe a very considerable debt to the staff of both organisations at every level. In many ways they have had the hardest task because they have been outside the main decision making process but have had to observe matters at close quarters. They have done some fantastic work and we want to make sure they are fully supported so that they can continue to make their various substantial contributions, but will also have some significant involvement in future plans.

Finally, we all know this is a huge task and is going to have to be a collaborative effort. We look forward to working in an open and constructive way with everyone who has a genuine interest in the development and continuing success of the West Somerset Railway.”