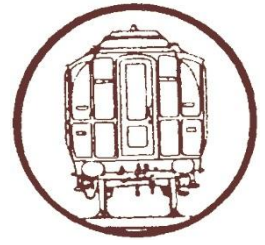


WEST SOMERSET STEAM RAILWAY TRUST LIMITED

Registered Charity No. 265564

President: Lady Elizabeth Gass



Registered Office: The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard Taunton,
Somerset. TA4 3BX
Registered in England No. 1079916

West Somerset Steam Railway Trust Project To Relaunch the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard Wins Heritage Lottery Funding Support

The West Somerset Steam Railway Trust is very pleased to announce that it has received a National Lottery grant of £40,000 for an exciting heritage project to relaunch the Gauge Museum at Bishops Lydeard station. Made possible by money from National Lottery players, the money will improve the displays in the Museum and widen our outreach to the local community and visitors to the railway.

The West Somerset Railway is the longest heritage railway in Britain. It is one of Somerset's most visited attractions. But apart from enjoying a journey behind a steam locomotive, visitors to the railway do not currently have many opportunities to learn about its history. The project will, for the first time, seek to present and develop the Trusts collections in a way which enables and encourages broader public engagement with both the local community (including schools and colleges) and visitors.

The Museum is housed in the historic Goods Shed building which was designed by Brunel and dates from the opening of the line in 1862. The Museum features a unique 1897 GWR Sleeping Car, owned and restored by the Trust. The Trust which took over management of the Museum in January 2017 will improve displays and make use of audiovisual equipment to tell the story of the Railway more clearly and illustrate the social, physical and economic impact of railways in Somerset.

In delivering the Project, we will actively engage with the local community by, for example, recruiting and training volunteers to help manage the Museum and its collections, to research and document the social and operational history of line and to undertake a recording project with retired railway workers and users of the line. The National Lottery grant will also enable us to employ a part-time Learning Officer to promote the use of the Museum for school visits.

Announcing the grant award, Trust Chairman Chris Austin said

"We are delighted with the grant which, together with our fundraising and volunteer input will allow us to make the museum more interesting and relevant to the railway's visitors. It will also allow us to reach out into the community and inspire a new generation with the

excitement of a steam railway and to understand better the rich history of the WSR in the Somerset community."

The Trust is in the process of establishing a Project Group to take the work forward.

Notes to Editors

About the West Somerset Steam Railway Trust

The West Somerset Steam Railway Trust Ltd is a charitable company established in 1972 and is one of two charities associated with the West Somerset Railway. Its charitable objects are to "promote education by furthering interest in and appreciation of, railway lines, equipment, buildings and construction of steam or other traction engines of historical engineering or scientific importance particularly by preserving and displaying the same".

The Trust has three main current areas of activity:

- Preserving and displaying heritage items relating to railways and the West Somerset Railway (WSR) in particular, and interpreting and curating all the heritage assets owned by the Trust;
- restoring the heritage carriages owned by the Trust for display and operation on the WSR; and
- managing the railway museums at Bishops Lydeard and Blue Anchor stations.

The concept document which forms the core of the application for grant funding can be viewed at:

<http://www.wssrt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Gauge-Interp-Concept-April-30.pdf>

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about—from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings that we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife.www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported.

Further Information

For further information, images and interviews please contact Chris Austin on **austinca2@googlemail.com** or by telephone on 07913 653594.

**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**

and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



