

**Ian Coleby has been an active volunteer on the WSR for more than 30 years. He is a current serving Trustee.**



Dear Member,

The WSR is at a crossroads. There is distrust and antagonism between the Association and the PLC. The constant disagreements take up time, sap motivation, cost money and distract us from what we should be doing. Things like the controversial bid for the railway freehold, running the Quantock Belle dining train, the use of the triangle at Norton Fitzwarren, the income from the ballast sales have all become bones of contention and the focus of argument rather than being used positively. The Association has made no significant progress in resolving this situation and the tension and bad feeling has the potential to damage the beautiful railway that we have spent 40 years building up.

Your Association could be in a very positive and powerful position and should be an essential and core part of the railway. It should be using its charitable status and its valuable assets more to raise further funds to finance projects on the railway and enhance the line. We should be working hand-in-hand and side-by-side with the PLC, working together in harmony supporting activities on the railway and doing the things that the PLC just cannot do. Examples could be working with the PLC to use the triangle at Norton Fitzwarren to maximum advantage, utilising the Association's Quantock Belle train as the premier steam railway dining train or serving cream teas in the Association's Hawksworth Saloon on regular daily services. Given the right level of cooperation, the works at Williton could be used far more effectively to support the railway.

What we should now be thinking about is what's best for the railway and Association. David Williams, Peter Chidzey and Nick Nicholls have contributed a huge amount over many years, but I am sorry to say that the WSR cannot develop effectively with them – there is just too much baggage from the past and too much bad feeling and distrust to allow this to happen. The time has come for a renewal – the sort of renewal and rejuvenation that any organisation needs from time to time to refresh itself and allow new blood and new ideas to come forward. Only by supporting the resolutions can this happen.

*Ian Coleby*