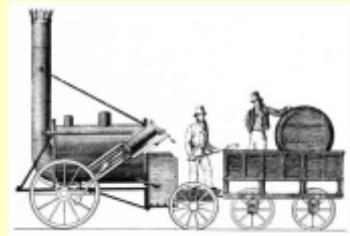


An urgent call to all members of the WSRA!

Your Association is in crisis and we need your vote now.



Why another EGM?

An EGM of the Association was held on 10 May. This was called by the Reform Group because the Trustees were acting with complete disregard for members' views, they were acting against the best interests of our railway and they were continuing to bring the association into disrepute.

In particular, in 2013 the WSRA Board sprang a bid for the freehold of the Railway on the WSR plc despite the fact that the plc was negotiating for an extended lease. A WSRA Trustee was on the plc Board, and used his inside knowledge of the plc's negotiating position to disadvantage it. There was no consultation with the membership and not every trustee was told in advance. Some of the Trustees appointed a representative to negotiate with Somerset County Council (SCC). This person conducted an improper relationship with a Senior Cabinet Member of the county council. The SCC Standards committee found the Cabinet Member acted improperly and disciplined him. The trustees have wasted a significant amount of your money on this disaster and refuse to say exactly how much has been spent.

Communications between the WSRA and its members has been dreadful. Members' questions and e-mails go unanswered and statements by the Trustees are littered with misrepresentations, half-truths or downright lies.

General meetings have been a disaster. Members have been shouted at, had questions ignored or have been insulted. For example, one member asked a perfectly valid question and was asked, "What's it got to do with you?" A trustee swore at members calling them a "f***g rabble". At the 2014 AGM, most members walked out in disgust, yet David Williams later wrote that the 160 members left to catch a train! (The train left with 11 people on board.)

The abortive freehold bid significantly damaged relations with the PLC and has generated bad feelings and infighting. The founding members of the Association who did so much to support the railway would be appalled at the trustees' behaviour.

The PLC has now issued a very clear letter to the Association expressing its concerns and asking for action. You should read the letter, which can be found at www.wsraplus.wordpress.com

So what happened at the May 10th EGM?

The organisation of the meeting was abysmal. The proxy voting forms sent to members were poorly worded, unclear on who the member's proxy was being given to and how to use the form. Proxy votes were counted prior to the meeting by the very trustees whose removal was sought and may not have been allocated correctly.

The trustees lost a vote of no confidence. However, they have ignored this. David Williams, the then Chairman, told the meeting that he would resign from the Board but following the EGM in contempt of the vote, he and Vice Chairman Peter Chidzey merely exchanged roles.



The motions to dismiss three trustees were narrowly won by the trustees – but the voting was questionable. Proxy votes were counted incorrectly, some members did not have their votes counted at all and the counting of hands in the hall 'averaged' the numbers. The trustees have resisted efforts to have the vote verified. Trustee Ian Coleby made arrangements for himself and his legal representative to inspect the EGM voting forms, but the day before the inspection he was illegally suspended by the other Trustees.

What has happened since:

We were hopeful that after the EGM the trustees would change their approach and seek peace with the members. They might have decided to act in the best interests of the railway, sought solutions to regain the lost trust of the members and started joint working to overcome differences. To begin with it looked as if this might happen – but our hopes were dashed when the trustees announced that four members – people who had been in the lead to reform the association - were to have their memberships illegally terminated and expelled without proper justifications. There has been no change of behaviour by the Trustees.

Why do we need to vote six of the existing trustees out of office?

The only way now is for complete renewal in the board of trustees. We need to remove the intransigent trustees and replace them with fresh blood, with people who have the best interests of the whole railway at heart, people who can work across the WSR family so that we can pull together rather than against each other.

Our motion which we urge you to support is to remove all of the trustees except for Ian Coleby who is the only one to have stood up for what is right and the only one who has the respect of the PLC.

So what would happen then?

Standing for election at the AGM are some excellent candidates and we urge you to vote these people into office. Nigel Adams, Barrie Childs, Rodney Greenway, David Randles, Paul Whitehouse are all highly qualified and experienced people who are well placed to help your association recover from the current crisis. Together they will work with members and with the PLC to rejuvenate the association, to put financial management back on a firm footing, to recruit new members and to increase profitability so that more money can be returned to the railway to improve it further.

The Association's employed staff and administrative volunteers would remain in place.

The WSRA will say that this will cause disruption and that we wish to damage the association. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our only aim is to restore proper management of the Association so that it may regain its central position supporting the railway.



In order to do this, we sincerely urge you to vote FOR the motion.

For extra information and instructions for completing proxy forms please see www.wsra-action.org or telephone 01984 656423 or 07710 336807