



West Somerset Railway Association

The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard
Taunton, TA4 3BX

☎ 01823 431311 info@wsra.org.uk
VAT. No. 682 2810 33

21 December 2015

Dear Member

I now enclose a copy of the Review Report prepared by Robin Coombes and his team entitled *The Road Ahead*. This is being sent by post to those members who have not given us an e-mail address to use.

This report has been produced as a result of the Resolution passed at the Emergency General Meeting on 10th May 2015 which required the Trustees to commission this Review.

In response to the Review Report, the Trustees have determined that they will all retire at the next Annual General Meeting. In addition the three officers (Peter Chidzey, Chairman; David Williams and Ian Aldridge, Vice-Chairmen) have stood down from their posts, but currently remain as trustees. Michael Rowe and I have been co-opted to the Trustee group, and further co-options will be announced shortly. (Some notes about our respective backgrounds are given on the reverse of this letter.)

Michael and I, together with Jacquie Green, Association Manager, and Simon Stretton, Chairman of WSRA (Promotions) Ltd, are currently working through aspects of management and will also be formulating draft plans for the way forward, on which you will be fully consulted. We are working closely with the West Somerset Railway PLC, the railway operators, and other stakeholders in the railway.

I am sure you will appreciate that this is a difficult period for the Association. A strong and vibrant membership organisation is a crucial element in the West Somerset Railway, and we very much hope you will support us in taking the Association through the present period, to a long term successful future.

I will be pleased to receive comments on the report, or on any other aspect of the Association, which should be sent to me at: frank.courtney@wsra.org.uk

It would be of great assistance to us if we were able to communicate with more members by e-mail, and if you have an e-mail address which you are prepared to let us use for communication with you, could you please complete and return the form overleaf. We are also seeking expressions of interest from those who might be interested either in being co-opted to the Trustees or in support in other ways. Co-options last until the next General Meeting, after which co-opted trustees may choose to offer themselves for election. Overleaf is a form which summarises the information we are seeking.

Thank you very much indeed for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Courtney', with a horizontal line underneath.

Frank Courtney
Acting Chairman

Biographical Notes

FRANK COURTNEY has been an active volunteer on the West Somerset Railway since 1986. He is a guard, qualified in all grades, and also manages the annual Thomas event. He has been a member of the association for several years. Although Frank now lives in Wiltshire his earliest railway memories are of travelling many times down the Barnstaple Branch to family in South Molton. His professional career has involved teaching and lecturing in schools and university, and he spent twenty years working at a senior level in various local authorities, culminating in a role at Deputy Chief Executive level. During this period he began to be involved in international collaboration and development. More recently he worked for Serco plc as their Head of International Education, and for the last ten years has been part owner of a small international education management consultancy firm, which manages projects on behalf of the World Bank, the European Commission and other agencies, and also runs courses in Bath and Bristol for European teachers. This work has taken him to many parts of the world, including many developing countries. In Jamaica he was Education Director for education reform project over some years. Wherever he has been he has usually found time to take a train ride, if he can find one.

MICHAEL ROWE has lived in West Somerset for the last eighteen years. He first travelled on the West Somerset Railway in 1949, to Williton to attend scout camp at West Quantoxhead. A life-long interest in Railways includes being lifted on to the footplate of a still streamlined Stanier Coronation Pacific, joining the WSRA in the late Nineties and volunteering as a TTI on the WSR for the last decade. He is Vice Chair of the Railway Performance Society, a school Governor, Chair of Finances and Resources and member of several Railway Societies. He read Chemical engineering at the University of Wales (Swansea), post University Training included a Harvard AMP, an Ashridge Action Learning Set and Arabic at SOAS. He initially worked in Research with BP, then held various Industrial Engineering roles with both Babcock and Wilcox and the Weir Group. Following a period in sales and sales management Michael moved into General Management and ultimately was Managing Director of an International water and waste water treatment group of Companies with a turn-over in excess of £100 million. Michael ruefully admits to having at one time or another worked in 40 different countries, but the last decade with continuing involvement with the West Somerset Railway have been arguably the best years.

To: Jacquie Green, Association Manager, West Somerset Railway Association, The Railway Station
Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3BX

Name: WSRA membership number

Email address

By providing this email address I am consenting to the WSRA using it to communicate with me.

I would like to offer to support the WSRA by:

- i. Making myself available to be co-opted as a Trustee (an accompanying CV would be much appreciated)
- ii. Volunteering my knowledge and experience in other ways (please specify your area of expertise)
 - a. Fundraising b. Legal advice c. Accountancy d. General governance
 - e. Heritage and Restoration f. Education g. Internet and IT
- iii. Volunteering my time to help on a regular basis with: general fundraising; general administration; financial administration; the Steam Rally management team

Signed

Please include any other information that would help us understand how you are able to help.