

# Newsletter of the Bala & Ffestiniog Railway Heritage Trust



B&FRHT



View of the formation at one of the several bridges and viaducts on the line.

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Shane Barry



**W**elcome to our second newsletter!  
I think you will all agree that it has

been a busy few months with a few changes including the resignation of our first chairman for personal reasons. I am grateful for his support for the project before his election and in the short but busy period between the AGM and his reluctant resignation.

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**12 Month Objectives**  
(No particular order of importance)

Register for Gift Aid  
Establish contacts with Stakeholders  
Outline plan for Maentwrog Road  
Outline plan for full length of line  
Establish Fundraising team Establish  
Feasibility of project Publish dates  
(Newsletters & AGM 20) New  
membership fees  
History Display Boards  
Completion of:  
Trust Rule Book  
Safety Management System  
Environmental Policy/Impact  
Statement  
Other relevant Trust Paperwork

Achieved to date  
Register trust with ICO  
1st Trust Newsletter released Initial  
Document drafts created  
Dual Signatory Bank Account  
Register with HRA (started)  
Strategic Plan

**Current Members: 67**  
**Regular Donations: 1**  
(Regular donations is payments  
by DD or SO on a monthly or  
more frequent basis NOT  
reflected in funds below)

**Funds:**

Trolley Fund  
Target: £2,000  
Contributors: 4  
Pledged to date: £450  
Raised to date: £55

Since then things have progressed rapidly with various registrations being applied for such as the Information Commissioners Office, starting of HMRC for Gift Aid and the Heritage Railway Association to name 3 of them.

It has also seen the launch of the trusts first project, namely the restoration of three Permaquip trolleys for use on the line and work has started on these more of which is reported in this newsletter.

In addition to that the Trust has completed several other goals and made significant progress in the background including the opening of a bank account in the Trusts name which simplifies many of its actions and plans for the future.

The key piece of work over the last few months is the launch of our strategic plan which is intended to be a living document which will be updated and changed as and when necessary.

The document outlines the key aims of the Trust as they currently stand and its plans and aspirations over the next 10 plus years. It is not going to be a quick project and is likely to see the trust needing to purchase small parcels of land to enable it to recreate lost stations along the route which were sold by British Railways

The document as presented to you with this newsletter is simply the initial draft and we welcome any thoughts, opinions, discussions etc from the members to help us improve the direction and flow of the plan.

On page 7 of this short newsletter is a nice surprise which I suspect many of you have been waiting for and looking forward to....

Happy reading.

Shane Barry  
Interim Chairman (2019 - 2020)





## Permaquip Trolley Project

The trusts first project, namely the receipt of three permaquip trolleys and the subsequent restoration of them to operational status for use on the line during works to restore the line and subsequent engineering possessions.



So far the trolleys have been stripped down and by the time you read this the initial stages of stripping paint and rust from the trolleys will have started with a view to having all the work on them completed by the end of summer.

All the brake mechanisms have been found to be fully working (just add new brake pads!) and two wheels out of 12 need replacing due to various kinds of damage sustained by them in the past.

We are still looking for contributions to the Permanent Way Equipment fund to help with the restoration of these trolleys and acquisition of any other suitable PW Equipment as we get closer to the day we return to the line.

## Tractor and Chipper

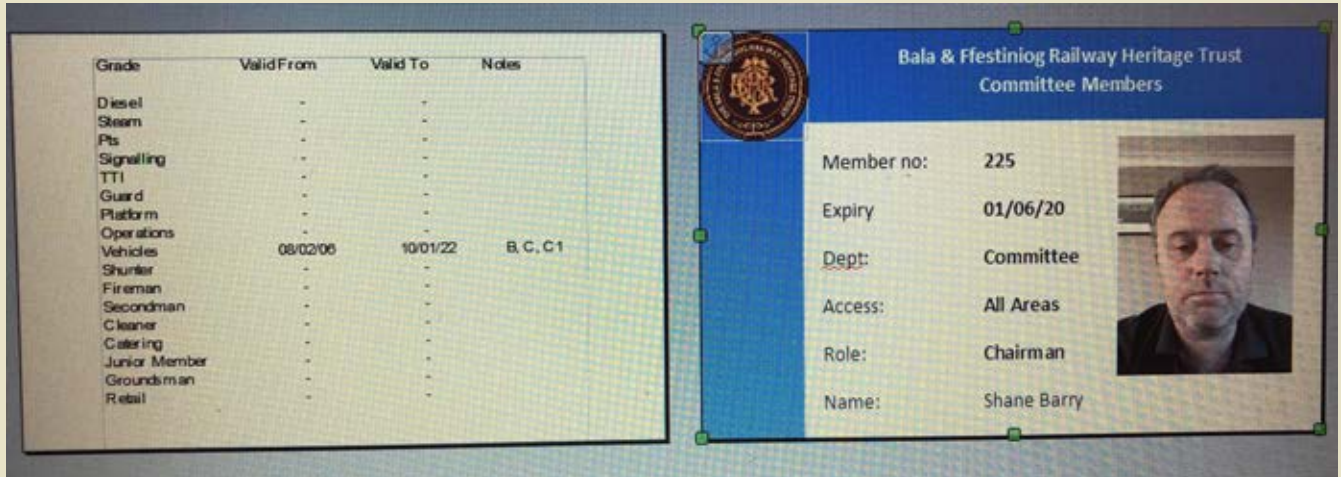
One of the things the committee did was a review of the assets that it had and the question of the Tractor and Chipper arose. The information the committee received was that the tractor needed repairs carried out to make it operational again. This combined with the likelihood that it will not be used in the near future saw the trust accept an offer of £1,000 for the tractor and chipper from an individual who restores old tractors as a preservation project they are involved in. The tractor and chipper have not yet been handed over to them but arrangements are being made to do this in due course on receipt of the agreed £1,000.



The view point long term is that when we regain access to the line the intention is to sell any logs or kindling produced from line clearance or to utilise it to create living hedges either side of the line to further promote and support wildlife in the area by creating new habitats for them.

# Members Benefits

At a recent committee meeting it was agreed to provide each member with a membership card (sample image below). The membership card in the short term will be used by a member to show their membership number and in time can be utilised to show relevant qualifications that the member has obtained. Different color codes will be used depending on whether an individual is a committee member, a volunteer or a member (volunteers must be members).



On the back of the card when we are operational we will include recognised qualifications on the back of the card and all volunteers on the line will have to have completed a PTS course that is taught by the Trust to ensure compliance with our rules and requirements. A volunteer has already started preparatory work to creating this course to enable us to start teaching it as soon as permission is obtained to access the line.

# Members Fees

A review of the membership fees is currently underway and will be brought to the members for a vote at the AGM in early 2020. Membership levels have been agreed at the latest committee meeting to be the following:

- Adult
- Child (under 18)
- Family

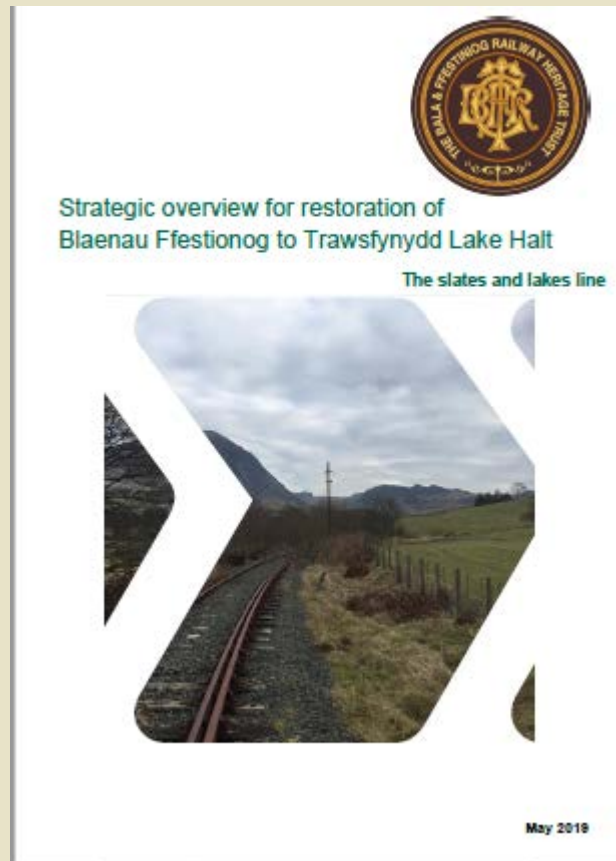
Revised fees will be decided at a committee meeting in the future and we as a committee would like your input into what level the fees should be and any other thoughts you have about the membership structure and fees. Please feel free to contact us utilising whatever method is convenient to you.

# Heritage Railway Association

The paperwork and accompanying cheque for membership of the HRA has been dispatched to the HRA to register the trust as members of the HRA and we expect to have this completed by the time we release the next Newsletter.

# Strategic Plan

Over the last few weeks the committee has been working on a Strategic Plan for the line (screen shot below) and this has been included with this email. The document is a living document and is subject to change based on new information that can emerge at any time.



The Strategic plan is designed to outline the work and plans for the Trust over the next few weeks, months and years until the line is fully restored and operational again as a Heritage Railway.

The plan will be shared with you the members first and then following any feedback from members it will be updated before being shared with the wider stakeholders of the project including local home and land owners, councils, Welsh Assembly members, the Snowdonia National Park Agency, Network Rail and any other individuals or organisations that are likely to be impacted by the line or who would be supported by the line or likely to support the line in the months and years to come.





# Network Rail

At the committee meeting of 16th June 2019 the committee voted to agree to open formal discussions with Network Rail with a view initially to surveying the line prior to seeking a formal lease with Network Rail to operate the line as a Heritage Rail concern.

The reasoning behind seeking permission to carry out a survey first is to enable the committee to determine if the costs assumptions made in the Strategic Plan are realistic in light of the conditions on the line itself



The Trust is going to engage the services of an external provider known as Green Dragon Rail who have been recommended by other Preservation Groups as a body that can support us in approaching Network Rail and helping to conduct the negotiations to provide practical, technical and other support based on their past interactions with Network Rail.

An agreement will be confirmed with Green Dragon Rail over the course of July with a view to starting Negotiations in August or September and going from there.

The plan (subject to Network Rail agreement) is to create a small base at Maentwrog Road with a view to carrying out a full line survey from Trawsfynydd Lake Halt to the limits at Blaenau Ffestiniog and over the course of the survey inspecting all structures (including locating some which cannot currently be accessed) and evaluating the track formation. We will also be carrying out environmental surveys and wildlife surveys during this time. The results of this survey will be given free of charge to Network Rail and any other organisations that may benefit from the results.

