

# Newsletter of the Bala & Ffestiniog Railway Heritage Trust



B&FRHT



A cold winters view from Cwm Prysor Viaduct taken in 2019

## CONTENTS

Shane Barry



**PAGE 2**  
**Chairman's Report**

**PAGE 3**  
**AGM 2020**  
**Members Fees**  
**Gift Aid**

**PAGE 4**  
**Philip Dumelow**  
**Green Dragon Rail**  
**HRA**

**PAGE 5**  
**Trust Rule Book**  
**Training**

**Page 6**  
**Environmental Issues**

**Page 7**  
**Recruitment**

**Current Members: 72**  
**Regular Donations: 2**  
(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: £235**



**W**elcome to our third newsletter!  
I have been speaking with many

past and current members and I have picked up on some of your frustrations that we are not yet back on the line clearing further sections over and above the work carried out in the original efforts in 2017 and 2018.

For that I can only share your frustrations as I too would like to have my boots on the ground and realising the fruits of our many labors.

Time and time again you will have heard the immortal words "If only it was that easy", and thus here we are. This newsletter will outline the many steps we have taken over the last few months since the last news letter and highlight some steps taken prior to that newsletter to show to you our members and valuable supporters just what we have been doing in your name to make this project a success.

We are pleased to say that at a recent committee meeting we co-opted some engineering experience to strengthen the committee in the form of Philip Dumelow who has a lot of experience working on various civil engineering projects including railways.

As can be seen from this newsletter there has been a lot of small but steady progress and we will continue to maintain the pace over the next few weeks and months until the AGM in March.

As always we are looking for your input and support and look forward to hearing from you.

Happy reading.

Shane Barry  
Interim Chairman (2019 - 2020)



## AGM 2020

The date for our AGM in 2020 has been set for the evening of 28th March to enable members to plan a weekend in the area and hopefully join some of the committee members on a trip on the Ffestiniog Railway over the course of the weekend.



There is a huge amount of other activities to partake in the region including downhill mountain biking (<http://www.anturstiniog.com/>), Llechwedd Slate Caverns (<https://llechwedd.co.uk/>), Zipworld Slate Caverns (<https://www.zipworld.co.uk/location/slate-caverns>), the Ffestiniog Railway (<https://www.festrail.co.uk/>) to name some.

Make it a family affair and come and stay in the region and have a wonderful trip to remember with the family.

A full listing of AGM agenda and votes will be made available by the middle of February.

Please note family will be welcome to attend but only fully paid up members will be entitled to vote at the AGM (or by proxy vote for those unable to attend).

## Members Fees

One of the votes at the AGM will concern membership levels and fees moving forward, to this end the current suggested options are shown below but we welcome the members feedback on these options.

Full Member :	£20.00
Family Membership (2 adults, 2 U18)	£50.00 (£10 discount over buying separately)
Junior Member (under 18):	£10.00

Please do feed back your thoughts on these options and costs to any member of the committee, without your support and feedback we cannot change things for the better.

## Gift Aid

We are pleased to announce that we received confirmation that the Trust has been recognised by HMRC as a charity for tax purposes. This enables us to claim gift aid on any membership fees and donations where the individual is paying tax.

As a part of this we will need people making donations and paying membership fees to fill in the attached form to enable us to claim gift aid for any payments made from 12th September this year.

This enables us to claim 25% on top of your donation up to £100 and then 5% on anything donated above that to the limit of any tax paid that year. At no stage do we need to see or will we see your tax returns.

# Philip Dumelow

At a recent committee meeting it was agreed to co-opt to the committee a member with geotechnical and materials engineering experience to strengthen the committee.

He has worked on numerous projects in the past including railway related ones and retired as a Senior Materials Engineer with Balfour Beatty so we look forward to welcoming and utilising his knowledge and experience to further the aims of the trust.



# Green Dragon Rail

The Trust has engaged the services of Green Dragon Rail to help prepare the Trust and place it on the best footing possible to engage with negotiations with Network Rail.

Green Dragon Rail have extensive experience working with Network Rail and have the right blend of experience, knowledge and contacts to help the Trust to negotiate with Network Rail and help the Trust to avoid any pitfalls in this process.

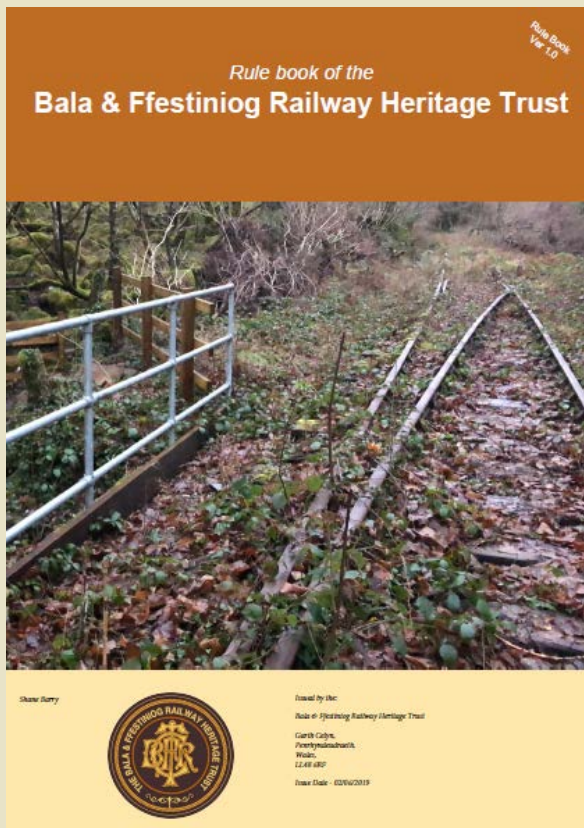
They are currently in the process of preparing the Safety Management System documentation which combined with the other paperwork created by the committee is expected to strengthen our hand when it comes to negotiations with Network Rail with the view of returning to the line as soon as practical. The initial draft will be available to the committee around the 18th November and the hope is to have the final version completed by this Christmas.



# Heritage Railway Association

The cheque for our membership of the HRA has been received and banked by them, we are just waiting for our sponsors to send emails to them to confirm proposal and seconding and then our membership application will be presented to the HRA committee for approval.

# Trust Rule Book



The Trust Rule book is currently in the process of being completed and as with any heritage railway set up it is not a small document.

The good news is this document in combination with the Safety Management System and the other documentation put together by the trust will give us a good basis for negotiating with Network Rail with a view to returning to work on the line and ultimately restoring it to service.

In combination with the Rule Book and the Safety Management System the Trust is putting together policies to help the members to understand their responsibilities within their day to day role.

## Training

One of our commitments to returning to the line will be to ensure that every volunteer has received training to work safely on the line. To this end preparation of training courses has started and the intention is that every volunteer will have a minimum of a PTS course completed prior to being able to assist in any work on the line including clearance works.

The reason for this commitment is two fold,

- 1) To instill good habits amongst volunteers from the early days of the Trust
- 2) To help to build up trust of the Trust and volunteers by Network rail by showing we intend to and will do things properly and professionally from day 1.

We will be rolling out the details of the training courses towards the middle of 2020 although some elements may have to wait until we have permission to be on the line to carry out practical elements of the training.

# Environmental

## Protected Species and what this means for us

The term protected species relates to a worryingly large number of plants and animals that are close to extinction. These range from small mammals right up to large trees, with there being a list created in the 1970s of each endangered or at risk species, known as the Red List. There are different levels of risk listed on the Red List from at risk (where the population is such that a recovery is possible with little effort) to Critical (where the population levels are so low that the species could disappear overnight)

In the UK we have a fair number of protected species from small amphibians (like the Great Crested Newt) up to a few species of tree (one being the Elm following the disastrous Dutch Elm Disease of the 1980s.) These species are protected both nationally and internationally with hefty fines and possibly prison time for anyone found to be deliberately disturbing or destroying them.

What does it mean when we say disturbing them? With plants this means either cutting them down or digging them up without the permission of the local environmental bodies or without mitigation measures being put into place, such as relocating them to a site that is still local but not within the area of work being undertaken. For animals a disturbance is anything that can cause a change to the regular routine or being excluded from the places they call home.

So, what does this mean for us? Before any work can be started in clearing the line we will have to undertake surveys to determine if any protected species have made the line their home in the last 20+ years. If the surveys show no signs of protected species then clearance can go ahead with no extra work needed, if however we do find protected species within the boundary fences, we will have to agree with Natural Resources Wales and the Snowdonia National Park Authority as to what mitigation measures we will need to undertake to protect whichever species we find.

If we do find a protected species anywhere along the line that can not be safely relocated (for whatever reason) we will cooperate fully with the SNPA and NRW teams and make sure that the site they are in is safe for both us and the species we find, but we will still be able to re-open the line with just a bit more time taken to do the required work.



# We are recruiting!

## Website Translator

We have a need for an individual who can assist us with the translation of our website from English to Welsh to help ensure our website is bi-lingal and accessible to all. This is a post which would be suitable for an individual to work from home.

This is a volunteer unpaid position.

## Membership Secretary

We have a need for an individual who would be interested in managing our membership system and assisting members with any queries they have with their membership, ensuring receipt of gift aid forms and recording receipt of cheques (including banking). In time the role will also involve issuing of members ID cards either through direct printing or liaising with an ID card printer to print the cards on our behalf.

This is a volunteer unpaid position.