



Invitation for Expressions of Interest: Prospective Trustee of the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust

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1. The Opportunity



The Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust (S&DRHT) is pleased to invite expressions of interest from committed individuals wishing to stand as a prospective Trustee. This is an exciting opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the preservation and development of one of Britain's most celebrated heritage railways. The Trust can have up to nine Trustees. Currently we have just seven Trustees. In addition, at the AGM two retiring Trustees will offer themselves for re-election. Trustees stand for re-election every three years.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 18th October at St Peter's Church Hall, Westfield BA3 3YZ. Full details and AGM papers will be sent by the Trust Secretary later on.

2. The Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust



Founded to preserve the unique legacy of the Somerset & Dorset Railway, the Trust is a registered charity whose mission is to restore, operate, and interpret the historic railway for the benefit of the public. Our work encompasses the maintenance of period infrastructure, the operation of heritage rolling stock, and the provision of educational and community engagement programmes. With a dedicated team of volunteers and supporters, the Trust is committed to keeping the spirit and story of the Somerset & Dorset Railway alive for future generations. The Trust is also committed to supporting the development of the local community as a prominent and engaging visitor attraction whilst also ensuring we maintain high standards of ecological preservation on the railway and our adjoining land. We are 100% volunteer run.

3. The Somerset & Dorset Railway at Midsomer Norton

The Somerset & Dorset Railway at Midsomer Norton operates a one mile heritage railway line towards Chilcompton.



In addition, the S&DRHT owns a further 750 yards of former trackbed and some adjacent land. This section of the trackbed extends from just south of the twin tunnels beneath Tunnels Lane Chilcompton to the just short of the Redan Bridge over Frys Well, Chilcompton.

The railhead and the trackbed are separated by an infilled

deep cutting, leading to the north portals of the Chilcompton Tunnels. This infill is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and rented to a local farmer. The tunnels are owned by the Heritage Railway Executive and both bores are leased to a local target shooting club.

It is our longer term aim to gain access to the infill and twin tunnels with the aim of extending the railhead to the Redan Bridge. We are open to having part of the track allocated to a projected safe cycling route **which is** being developed in conjunction with Somerset Council.

Engineering Workshop and Maintenance Facility



A primary objective is the development of a workshop and maintenance facility and land adjacent to the current railhead along with a platform halt. The halt will enable the railway to offer a journey rather than a simple round trip, as is currently the situation. This will also enable VAT on rail fares to be reclaimed which is not permitted for round trips where passengers cannot alight at a destination different from the point of departure.

4. The S&RDHT Strategic Plan

To guide its activities and future development, the S&DRHT has produced a comprehensive strategic plan, which sets out its vision, priorities, and key objectives for the coming years. Both an Executive Summary and the full version of this strategic plan are available on our web site at **<https://sdjr.co.uk/future-plans>** or upon request, for those wishing to learn more about the Trust's direction and ambitions.

5. The Role of Trustee

Trustees play a pivotal role in the governance and strategic direction of the Trust. As a Trustee, you will work alongside other board members to ensure the charity remains true to its mission and values, meets its legal obligations, and pursues its long-term objectives. Trustees provide leadership, oversight, and guidance to the Trust's activities, ensuring our resources are used effectively and our work delivers lasting impact.

- Governance: Trustees are responsible for the overall governance of the Trust, ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation and good practice.
- Strategy: Trustees help to develop and review the Trust's strategic plans, setting priorities and monitoring progress.
- Stewardship: Trustees are stewards of the Trust's assets, ensuring that resources are managed responsibly and sustainably.
- Advocacy: Trustees act as ambassadors for the Trust, building relationships with key stakeholders, funders, and the wider community.
- Engagement: Trustees are expected to engage with volunteers, supporters, and the public, fostering a spirit of inclusivity and participation.

6. Who We Are Looking For?

We seek individuals who share our passion for industrial heritage, community engagement, and the advancement of historical education. The Trust welcomes expressions of interest from candidates with a wide range of skills and experiences. Whilst prior experience as a Trustee or in the heritage sector is not essential, the following qualities and expertise would be particularly valuable:

- Professional experience in one or more of the following: heritage management, finance, law, fundraising, marketing, public relations, civil engineering, education, railway engineering, or volunteer management.
- A strong commitment to the values and aims of the S&DRHT.
- An understanding of good governance and the legal responsibilities of charity trustees.
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to fulfil the role, including attending board meetings and supporting events.
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to work constructively as part of a team.
- An interest in building partnerships and advocating for the Trust within the local and heritage communities.

We are especially keen to encourage applications from people of diverse backgrounds who can bring fresh perspectives to our board and help us to engage more widely with the public.

7. What You Will Gain

Serving as a Trustee of the S&DRHT is a highly rewarding voluntary role. Trustees have the chance to develop new skills, broaden their networks, and make a tangible difference to the preservation of railway heritage. The role offers:

- An opportunity to shape the future of an historic railway and contribute to a nationally significant heritage project.
- Experience in charity governance, strategic planning, and project management.
- The chance to work alongside a committed and friendly team of fellow enthusiasts and experts.
- The satisfaction of supporting a cause with deep roots in the history and identity of The Somerset & Dorset railway and its historical importance to the local community.

8. Trustee Responsibilities

Trustees are collectively responsible for:

- Ensuring the Trust acts in accordance with its governing documents and the law.
- Setting and reviewing policies to guide the Trust's operations.
- Overseeing financial management and ensuring the **short and long** term sustainability of the charity.
- Assessing and managing risks to the Trust's activities and reputation.
- Supporting the recruitment, retention, and recognition of volunteers.
- Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of the Trust's work.

- Setting commercial objectives for the operating company and providing the support they need to deliver a safe and commercially viable business.

9. Our Activities

The Trust's work includes:

- Restoration of historic railway buildings, track, and rolling stock.
- Development of the railway infrastructure, facilities and extension.
- Operation of heritage train services and public open days.
- Educational programmes for schools, colleges, and the public.
- Community events and partnerships to promote railway heritage.
- Development of museum and interpretation facilities.
- Fundraising and grant-writing to support ongoing projects.
- Encouraging younger people to volunteer and enjoy the railway experience.

10. Time Commitment

Trustees are expected to attend on-line board meetings, which are usually held monthly, as well as the Annual General Meeting. Additional time may be required for subcommittees, working groups, or special projects, and Trustees are encouraged to participate in events and outreach activities where possible. The total time commitment is typically 6-10 hours per month, but this may vary depending on individual involvement and upcoming initiatives.

11. Eligibility and Application Process

To stand as a prospective Trustee, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Not be disqualified from acting as a charity trustee under current legislation.
- Be willing always to act in the best interests of the Trust.

To express your interest, please provide:

- A brief statement outlining your reasons for applying and what you would bring to the role (max 500 words).
- A summary of relevant experience, qualifications, or interests.
- The names and contact details of two referees (these will not be contacted without your permission).

Applications should be sent to the Secretary of the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust via email at jbsdjr@btinternet.com. Please indicate "Trustee Expression of Interest" in the subject line of your application.

12. Selection Process

All expressions of interest will be reviewed by the current board of Trustees. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an informal interview to discuss their interest and suitability for the

role. Decisions will be made based on the skills, experience, and motivation of the applicants, as well as the needs of the Trust at the time.

Prospective applicants must offer themselves for election at the AGM. If you have questions about the role or would like to discuss your potential application, please contact the Trust Secretary at jbsdjr@btinternet.com or visit our website at sdjr.co.uk for further information about activities.

13. Join Us in Shaping the Future

The Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust stands at an exciting juncture, with ambitious projects and a growing supporter base. By becoming a Trustee, you will help safeguard our railway heritage for generations to come and inspire others to discover the stories, skills, and spirit of the Somerset & Dorset line.

We look forward to hearing from candidates who are ready to make a positive, lasting contribution to our Trust and the communities we serve.