

Trustees Report AGM 8 February 2025

This year has brought a number of changes and challenges to the Trust, as we begin the move from our first premises at the old diesel shed at Sharpness to our site at Oldminster Sidings. We have to complete this by August 2025 when the 10 year lease expires. The lease has been an expensive item for us and the shed building is now in a very poor state, but on the positive side we are right on the cusp of an exciting new chapter in our development.

We have been working hard to ensure the ground at the sidings can cope with heavy vehicles delivering and moving around the site. The 'haul road' down the west side of the site is essential to achieving this. It's proved more expensive than expected but it should be finished this winter. A lot of credit for the design of the site must go to members of the Oldminster Sidings Steering Group (OSG) for their expertise and knowledge regarding the best way to take this forward.

Our 'container city', made up of 10 (or maybe more) 20' containers, is now taking shape quite quickly, with most already on site. It has been designed to provide storage and work facilities to replace what we were previously doing at the shed. We should have enough space in these containers to continue working until we have the funds to build our permanent shed and workshops. We expect this part of the development to be completed in the next few months, despite the winter conditions!

The Portakabin has been renovated at speed for staff accommodation by the woodworking team, who are making a superb job of it. It is almost ready for habitation now although heating, lighting and water is still an issue. Since we are still 'off-grid', this requires some imaginative thinking, probably involving generators and solar energy.

The first items of rolling stock have now been delivered and we expect the remaining ones to arrive as soon in the new year as possible. One of our Pacer units is now at Oldminster. It starts but requires a lot attention after its 18 months in storage at Wishaw, to make it fully operational like its sister unit over at Llanelli.

The Planet and Ruston diesels arrived at the sidings after starring at the South Cerney show and there is an urgent need for them to be protected from the elements. To this end a temporary shed structure has been provided, generously sponsored by one of our members for this purpose.

This shed will also house the Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST steam loco that arrived from the Swindon and Cricklade Railway earlier in the year. We are particularly pleased to welcome the small team of younger volunteers that accompany this loco, because they bring a variety of skills that we

will need as we seek to develop our capacity to overhaul steam locomotives on site.

We have been compiling a planning application to Stroud Council for our all-important storage and maintenance shed. This has become very complicated, particularly when it has involved dealing with the very detailed environmental protections that all building projects must now adhere to. This was beyond our collective skill set and we made the decision to hire a planning consultant (Urban Vista Ltd) who understood our needs because of their experience of working with Network Rail. The application is almost complete and should be submitted any time now. We have also gained a volunteer architect who has advised us on design issues, so as soon as we gain approval, the building can be constructed. The specification, of course, will depend crucially on the success of our fundraising.

The fencing project around our Oldminster site has been a huge achievement. Over 100 panels have been erected to date along our eastern boundary, by a dogged team that have kept this activity going over the past year. The fence should serve to defy all but the most determined trespassers and provide peace of mind for our heritage assets. This work continues into 2025, with the end in sight probably in another 3 months.

Permanent Way work continues with a small but very enthusiastic team. Roads 5 and 6 were made fit to take rolling stock last summer and attention is now on replacing the timbers on our **four** points, to allow us to move rolling stock further down the site for storage, restoration and maintenance. Point timbers are expensive items and we welcome donations for this essential work.

Rolling stock movements at Oldminster depend on our application to Network Rail to use the headshunt beyond the boundary fence at the south end. They have raised no objections so we're now completing the paperwork that will, when submitted to the Office of Rail and Road, allow us to operate on the site. The **next step up** in this process would be to gain access to more of the branch line but that is still a long while away.

Other matters being progressed, albeit more slowly than we would like, are provision of an easement for water and electricity across Canal and River Trust land and for a permanent right of access to the site from Bridge Road. We note this is unlikely to occur until CRT have put forward a new master plan for the whole Sharpness estate, and we are working to convene a local stakeholder group so the views and perspectives of local

groups such as local residents and ourselves can be integrated into the plan.

Following the disappointment of our departure from the Berkeley station site, relationships with Nuclear Transport Solutions (DRS) have become much more positive with two productive meetings held last year. This will assist our continuing efforts to gain access to the branch line in a few years' time.

A massive achievement in 2024 was the success of the Sharpness 150 celebrations, where a talented team of VoBR members worked with other local groups to host several events celebrating the anniversary of the opening of Sharpness New Dock. These included a Sea Shanty Festival and the production of a video dramatising the opening of the Docks. This did a great deal to raise our profile within the community and develop excellent relationships, including with the Dockers Club, where we hope to host further events in 2025.

We also gained powerful and widespread publicity for the railway and the area in general, and we plan to take this work forward to really put Sharpness 'on the map' as a unique place to visit.

2025 will celebrate 'Railway 200' which is a national celebration of the birth of the modern railway era 200 years ago, when the Stockton and Darlington Railway ran its first trains in 1825. This is another great opportunity for us to gain welcome attention and support for our **aims**. We welcome imaginative ideas for what we might do to celebrate this throughout the year.

The next six months

Some of you may have heard that there is currently a dispute between Andrew Goodman, a trustee and owner of Railway Support Services, and the rest of the Board. We are mindful that it was thanks to Andrew that the VoBR has been able to call the old diesel shed its home for the last ten years, and grateful for his support for the railway during that time. As he begins his withdrawal from the project, negotiations to achieve an equitable settlement are taking some time and are not without difficulty, but we are confident that we will ultimately **reach** a conclusion that will satisfy both parties.

In the meantime, our efforts to vacate the Shed and complete the Oldminster Sidings groundworks continue apace. The permanent way work should soon reach the stage when vehicles can move across at least some of the tracks and some rolling stock restoration will resume.

For 2025, we also aim to reach out to more people, both locally and further afield, by refreshing and increasing our presence online particularly in social media, to attract more members and volunteers – **especially** the younger generations who will be driving the VoBR forward in the decades to come.

Most importantly, we will be increasing our fund raising efforts so that we can start building and that's why the **'Buy the VoBR a Coffee Fund'** is so important. A purpose built machine and woodworking building is by far the most urgent item so that engineering work can be done in comfort and if the money continues to come in as we hope, the next stage after that will be building the 2-road shed.

2025 is shaping up to be an exciting if demanding year. Thank you for your continued support and please see if you can make a one-off or regular donation to help us set up Oldminster Sidings as a fully functioning railway depot and heritage centre for the future.

VALE OF BERKELEY RAILWAY CHARITABLE TRUST

Trustees' Interim Report and Accounts

For the financial year ending Sept 2024

VALE OF BERKELEY RAILWAY CHARITABLE TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Governors of Trustee

Francis John Wooldridge	Appointed 10 January 2018	
Graham Leslie Sturgess	Appointed 10 January 2018	
Julie Snell	Appointed 15 October 2022	
Howard Patten Parker	Appointed 10 January 2018	
Andrew Charles Goodman	Appointed 10 January 2018	
Brian Whitfield	Appointed 15 October 2022	
Andrew Woodhall	Appointed 15 October 2022	
Edgar Craggs	Appointed 20 October 2018	
David Snell	Appointed 19 October 2019	Resigned July 2023
Robert Gerrard	Appointed 15 October 2022	
Philip McNamara	Appointed December 2023	Deceased 9 May 2024
Carolyn Jones	Appointed December 2023	

Registered number **1176597** (Registered 10 January 2018)

Bankers

TSB
P O Box 373
Leeds
LS14 9QG

VALE OF BERKELEY RAILWAY CHARITABLE TRUST

Trustees' Interim Report and Accounts

For the financial year ending Sept 2024

Trustees' Report

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 30 September 2024

Principal activities

The Trust's principal activity during the year was working towards the restoration of the Berkeley branch line as a heritage railway and railway centre

At present the work is concentrated at the Oldminster Sidings where the VOBR is establishing a railway engineering facility

Establishment of Trust

On 10th January 2018, the Vale of Berkeley Railway Charitable Trust became a registered charity. It was decided by the VOBR Company Ltd that all assets & liabilities would now be transferred from the company to the VOBR CT. The balance of £16,681 was transferred from the Company bank account on 31/07/18 and the account closed.

Locomotive and rolling stock restoration has continued at the shed throughout this year. At Oldminster sidings the security fencing round the perimeter continued as did some of the preparations to site containers to house the equipment from the engine shed. Several containers are now sited. Planning is now progressing behind the scenes for the development. Much effort went into the Sharpness 150 events. Fundraising continues .

The Total Income for this financial year has been £58,105. Last Year it was £39,132. There has also been an increase of asset values of £41,000.

The Gift Aid recovered in the year is £6,444,

The scrap metal income is £3,269 which is down on last year reflecting the decrease in scrap metal prices.

Total Expenses for this financial year are £72,345 . Some of this is for the surveys to obtain planning consent. Some spent on Oldminster sidings, the rent is most of the rest

Signed by Trustees of VOBR

Frank Wooldridge

Approved on

08/02/2024

(Date)

VALE OF BERKELEY RAILWAY CHARITABLE TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income from:					
Donations	1	26,461.00	4,267.00	30,728.00	13,104.00
Other	2	27,377.00	0.00	27,377.00	26,028.00
Total income		53,838.00	4,267.00	58,105.00	39,132.00
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	3	26,177.97	0.00	26,177.97	16,298.00
Charitable activities	4	19,580.00	0.00	19,580.00	0.00
Project costs	4	26,587.00	0.00	26,587.00	24,902.00
Total resources expended		72,344.97	0.00	72,344.97	41,200.00
Net movement of funds		(18,506.97)	4,267.00	(14,239.97)	(2,069.00)
Fund balance at 30 September 2023		91,636.00	20,560.00	112,196.00	
Prior Year adjustment of closing balance					(161.94)
Fund balance at 30 September 2024		73,129.03	24,827.00	97,956.03	



Vale of Berkeley Railway Briefing Note

No Record of Independent Verification of Accounts for YE 0924

Document Number: SGAZ0017 v1.0 Independent Accounts Examination

Author: Board

Date: 28 July 2025

To The Charity Commissioners

A reminder was received by the trustees on 3rd July to submit the Annual Return. This is usually done by our Treasurer and it was presumed that he would do so again this year. An e mail and further messages were sent to him to remind him from the Chairman so that we could meet the 30th July deadline .

Subsequently the Chairman and Secretary of the board met on Friday 25th July to review the entry and in doing so realised that it had not been completed. We began the process of completing the return and uploading documents, which should be lodged within our internal document management system "Box". It was at this point that we discovered that there appears to be no record of Independent Examination of the accounts for 2024. We have tried to contact him about this but have been unable to do so by the deadline. We understand that he is currently away at a Trade Show without access to e mails and messages.

We will ensure that the missing document is forwarded to you as quickly as possible.

Regards

Howard Parker & Carolyn Jones

Chairman

Secretary