



Current Projects and Future Plans

The Council of the Friends is currently working on a number of key strategies and projects in order to grow the organisation and fulfil its major aims and objectives. These include:

- **Developing a new approach to external fundraising to support the Museum.** Our first project in this area is focussed on raising funds to meet the costs of urgently needed conservation work on three historic Trades Union banners which are stored at the Museum. Whilst these banners from the 19th century are in safe and secure storage, their current physical condition and size means that they cannot be put on public display, even for short periods. Yet they are an important part of the history of the railway workforce in Swindon and we want to raise funds to ensure their future.
- **Re-vamping the Friends website.** We recognise the importance of using the website (and Facebook) to promote the Friends and the Museum, and to communicate with Members. Up until now the website has been a fairly static resource, with limited recent content and only occasional updates. We rely on the goodwill of just a few Members to maintain our website and Facebook presence, and we want to reward that goodwill by providing them with more up to date and relevant content. This page about current projects is an example of our ambition in practice.



- **Increasing Membership.** We know that a lot of people around the world are interested in railways, and the Great Western Railway in particular. We also know that the benefits of Friends membership, when known, make a very attractive deal. So we want to make more people aware of the advantages of joining the Friends. To this end we have produced a new membership leaflet and a bespoke display board inside the Museum. We hope this will encourage visitors to STEAM to join the Friends. But we also need a broader strategy to increase membership from the wider public, both in the Swindon area and beyond.

Looking to the future we plan: to carry out a review of subscriptions; to celebrate 20 years at STEAM, and to review the roles and responsibilities of the Directors and Trustees.

Member Subscriptions

Keeping the finances of the Friends on an even keel is a key priority for the Council. We need to ensure that the organisation has enough funding to meet its ongoing operating costs and can continue to provide financial support for particular projects and activities at the STEAM Museum. Our operating costs mostly relate to printing and postage – no Directors are paid for their time or contributions. Membership fees form the bulk of our income and so as well as recruiting new members we plan to review fees on a regular basis to ensure they keep up with inflation but still represent good value for money.

STEAM's 20th anniversary

Whilst the Friends of Swindon Railway Museum can trace its history back to 1986 and the old museum on Faringdon Road, 2020 will be the 20th anniversary year of the opening of STEAM Museum of the Great Western Railway in the former R shop and Scraggery of the railway works. STEAM will be celebrating this in a number of ways and the Friends also want to mark the occasion. This has unfortunately been hampered by the Coronavirus epidemic both for the Museum and ourselves, but we will try to do something.

Roles and responsibilities of the Trustees and Directors

The Trustees and Directors of the Friends of Swindon Railway Museum are accountable to the members of the Friends, but also have legal responsibilities under Company and Charity Law. In looking to the future of the organisation, we want to make sure that each of the key activities that the Council is responsible for has at least one Director/Trustee who takes a lead interest in that activity. With this in mind, we are reviewing the different roles and activities and seeking to match them with the skills and experience of the existing Directors. We hope this will lead to a more resilient approach to the affairs of the organisation.

Do you have what it takes to be a Director/Trustee?

Following from the review of roles and responsibilities, and also given the need to periodically refresh the pool of talent that comprises the existing Council, we want to recruit new Trustees with appropriate skills and experience to further enhance the ability to grow the Friends organisation in the future. If you think you have something to offer, please get in touch. We will be publishing details of what is involved and particular areas where your skills might be useful on the website in due course.