The Newsletter for Exmoor Associates CIC Issue 42 November 2023

Chairman's Report : Constitutional Changes Approved : 2022 Accounts : Caring for EA Property : Bratton Fleming Update : James/Jim Harle

The Chairman Writes

Firstly I hope you are all well, and will enjoy reading Trackbed Trails and Viaduct Views.

My apologies for not getting back to you sooner but it has been a very busy time as Sue and I have just moved house, but I can assure you all the Directors of Exmoor Associates and the Trustees of the Yeo Valley Trust are very focused on the job in hand.

Resolutions

Secondly, I cannot begin to tell you how pleased we are for the overwhelming support you have given by voting in favour of all four resolutions to support the new relationship between Exmoor Associates CIC and the Yeo Valley Trust. Our grateful thanks to you all for voting as the table below shows you will see that we comfortably exceeded the threshold amount required on each resolution.

Resolution	1	2	3	4
Threshold →	75%	50%	50%	50%
Achieved →	79.05%	78.89%	78.89%	78.89%
Votes ↓				
Minimum required	468,219	312,146	312,146	312,146
Actual in favour	492,540	493,440	493,440	493,440
%age of minimum target	105.19%	158.08%	158.08%	157.12%
	Carried	Carried	Carried	Carried

We would especially like to thank Martyn de Young and Peter James who worked together and made the electronic voting system work so well for the first time, also thanks to everyone else who helped secure this satisfactory result.

Both Exmoor Associates and the Yeo Valley Trust have very similar objects and it is our intention to make best use of the benefits afforded by this new relationship, and we hope that we will be able to demonstrate this to those shareholders who have until now didn't feel they could support the changes that we have now made.

Exmoor Associates and the Yeo Valley Trust will work tirelessly together to maintain buildings and land which we already own, purchase further trackbed and infrastructure, we shall build the Bratton Goods Shed, carry out surveys, and get all the bridges designed, etc.

The Team.
Over the past few years, we have built up a fantastic professional team of shareholders and supporters who have kindly provided such expert assistance and advice to the EA Directors to help us contend with a wide range of challenges that we have encountered.

Thanks to the efforts of our team the share capital that you have purchased in EA and kind donations to the Yeo Valley Trust have primarily been spent on the really important things thereby reducing external expenditure employing outside companies, consultants etc.

Exmoor Associates has recently spent a lot of money purchasing considerable lengths of trackbed, woodland and a small quarry plus further land alongside Bratton station.

The Future
Exmoor Associates intends to acquire more trackbed and associated property and we hope you will continue to purchase more shares to enable us to do so. Furthermore, if you are also a UK tax payer and happy to donate to the YVT, remember that as a Charity it can claim an extra 25% back in tax through the Gift Aid scheme. Your generous support of EA has got us here. We hope that you will support both EA and/or the YVT as we have the prospect of very exciting times to come.

I am in negotiation with further trackbed owners and hopefully we will be able to have some good news in the very near future. I know times are very difficult at the moment but we have all come so far together that we hope that we can count on your continued support.

Update on Bratton Station
Following our appeal for the Bratton Fleming Goods Shed by the Yeo Valley Trust we now have the finance in place to enable work to complete the first phase. Ric Auger, who is a Chartered Engineer and shareholder in Exmoor Associates, will be project managing this.

We already have the topographical survey so the first thing is Building Control followed by the footings and the pads for the steel-framed building. We have chosen a steel-framed building as recommended by Ric owing to its size. The goods shed will be clad in timber but it would always allow for changes of the original internal layout if required in the future, and will be built in phases as money becomes available. Ric will be getting us figures as the project progresses. We will publish regular updates in Viaduct Views on progress and of course further help with donations will be gratefully received.

This will be fully funded by the YVT as Exmoor Associates is primarily committed to land and buildings purchase.

We have very exciting times on the horizon, once again without the remarkable support you have given us we could not have done it.

Further details how you can help will be found in Trackbed Trails and the YVT Viaduct Views.

Kind regards to you all.

Mike

We Want To Keep In Touch

When we send email copies of Trackbed Trails there are always one or two email addresses which no longer exist.

If you change your email address please remember to let us know.

You can send an email to peter@exmoor-associates.co.uk or call on 07881 951 400

Summary Company Secretary and Finance Director Report

The Company Secretary's Report

The resolutions were all passed, as shown in the table of results on page 1. The resolutions have been posted with Companies House.

The new share class designation: Ordinary A & Ordinary B have been filed with Companies House. The 100 Ordinary A shares have been purchased by YVT, recorded at Companies House, and a share certificate issued.

The process is under way to convert the current shareholders from 'Ordinary' to 'Ordinary B' class shares – updated share certificates are being sent out over the next few weeks.

Finance report:

EA cash at bank stands at £9,300.

The two loans we have from YVT totalling £22000 are being converted to Ordinary B shares.

Accounts for 2022/23 have been filed with Companies House, and a copy is included with the email edition of Trackbed Trails.

Shareholder Secretary report:

There are 13 new shareholders in this financial year. Total current shareholding is 626,820

Peter James
Finance Director / Shareholder & Company Secretary

The Snapper Navvies

The Snapper Navvies have been busy over the last few months.

Firstly, the Snapper Halt running-in board was beginning to show signs of the effects of the fine North Devon liquid sunshine, so much so that new posts were required, as were new backing and mounting boards, the frame also needed a little attention as it also was beginning to show small signs of water damage, all is now repaired and the board is now back in place.

Some new machinery has been supplied courtesy of the YVT; a larger brushcutter and a couple of kombi tools with a small range of attachments which will all help with the land management. A secure cupboard was required to store these items in within our garage which has now been built and is in the process of further fitting out as required.

Have Tools, Have People ..... Navvies Will Travel

We have also had a working day at Bratton Fleming Station with annual hedge cutting taking place and also strimming of the bridle-path and cutting back of bamboo on the boundary bank, further work has been planned for the Station site which will hopefully take place when we next have a full gang.

New Information Boards

As some of you may have seen at our recent meeting there were a couple of new information signs on show. This was an idea suggested by Anne Belsey as an initiative to highlight the existence of the railway on sections owned close to or that have public access. Four sites of EA's have been chosen, Bratton Fleming Station, Collard Bridge, Snapper Halt and Raleigh Weir. Chris Duffell kindly designed and put the format together and has others in the pipeline. They are quite expensive at approximately £220.00, the Bratton Fleming one has been done and paid for by EA, the Snapper Halt one has been done, too, kindly sponsored by the Snapper Navies themselves, this one is now in place on the platform at Snapper, there are two more to do with a third being considered, the posts are also quite expensive at approximately £50.00 each so any donations towards these costs would be greatly appreciated

Graham Lee shows off the new information board at Bratton Fleming

At the meeting in Lynton on September 23rd a collection was taken to help with EA property maintenance costs. The collection raised a very satisfying £512.50 and this has been gratefully received by the Snapper Navvies.

Andy Hearn

News From Bratton Fleming

Open Day

We had our first public open-day at Bratton Fleming on the Sunday following the Lynton meeting. A big thank-you must go to Andrew Naish and Carole who kept the kettle on the boil most of the time. A steady stream of interested locals came to see what their old station looked like. EA CIC was represented by David Cameron and Mike Buse who answered any questions visitors threw at them.

All visitors were overwhelmingly positive and supportive – and I don't believe any negative was encountered from anyone; perhaps it was the lure of free coffee and cake? This is an exercise well worth repeating (Andrew and Carole permitting!) … perhaps again in '24 or '25?

Boundary Post
Our embryo 'museum' has recently been the recipient of a L&SWR Rly cast-iron boundary marker post, kindly donated by EA shareholder Alan Dixon. It has been transported down to Devon from Essex and is now in safe storage. Our grateful thanks go to Alan for this generous gift. Alan also donated a quantity of railway books, and these went to Chelfham, to be sold in the shop there.

ThRoB / Quarry House
The 'appeal' notice went out with the L&BR Trust's most recent newsletter; it is not an appeal *per se*, rather a testing of the water - to see what support there might be for the idea of trying to buy Quarry House?

For the scheme to have any chance of success, the target figure of 200 supporters, each willing to lend £6,000, needed to be reached … so far, we are well over 50% of the way there … but not quite as close as 75%. The number of supporters stepping up to the plate has tailed off lately, so it is possible that the target might be missed?

David Cameron and Mike Buse met with the vendors over coffee in September. The meeting was very amicable, but they remain resolute that the only way that EA can guarantee getting their trackbed is also to buy their house! There are apparently interested parties, and the vendors assure us that our desire to acquire the former railway land will be made known to any purchaser.

Bratton Fleming Parish Magazine
We have been most fortunate that the Bratton Fleming parish magazine has a very supportive editor, who has been keen to include any news about the old station. Sadly, the lady has decided to call it a day, and the Winter 2023 issue will be the final one that she edits. I am aware that an appeal has gone out to the parishioners for someone else to take up the reins … I await with keen anticipation to see what happens. In the meantime, I should like to wish Lesley McLean a long and happy retirement.

David Cameron

James Henry Harle
It was with regret that we learned of the death of James (Jim) Harle. A man of many parts, he was naturally clever and, from an early age, loved taking things apart to see how they worked. He trained as a teacher at St Luke's teacher training college in Exeter (now part of Exeter University) and it was in Exeter that he met his wife, Jenny. After marriage they never strayed far from Exeter. Jim had a deep feeling and affection for the natural world and would have delighted in the ever-lengthening linear, green corridor of former L&B trackbed which EA is progressively drawing together. He was, indeed, tremendously interested in the L&B and enjoyed having train rides from Woody Bay amidst the glorious scenery. Sadly, he will not be able to ride a train through the Yeo Valley in years to come.

Jim asked for any donations made, in his memory, at his funeral to be divided between The Bible Society and the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway Trust – a wonderful supporter of the L&B to the end.

Exmoor Associates & Yeo Valley Trust Need a Solicitor and an Accountant

For many years Exmoor Associates enjoyed the voluntary help of a qualified solicitor. They provided their services for trackbed purchases at no cost other than scale fees and duties. This was a magnificent contribution to the work of EA.

Could you contribute your skills as a volunteer Solicitor or volunteer Accountant to support the work of EA and YVT in the Yeo Valley? ***Yes?*** then please contact Mike Buse – details on the last page.

Share Availability in Distant Point

Photo: Nigel Thompson,
Chelfham Volunteers' Team Leader

Distant Point is the former Station Master's house adjacent to Chelfham Station, which we have operated as a time-share on a non-profit-making basis since we purchased it in 1998.

From time-to-time resale shares are sometimes made available by shareholders who may wish to sell.

Enquiries in the first instance to Distant Point Company Secretary, Barry Marshall barry@distantpoint.co.uk or telephone 01237-476999.

Exmoor Associates

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