

SHILDON RAILWAY INSTITUTE CBO RELAUNCH

MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY

Draft Version 0.5 - for review

Note: this document - version 0.5 - continues to set out a 'long list' of ideas proposed by members of the steering committee. It does not yet constitute a refined draft proposal.

1. COMMUNITY

We will let our community know that we are Community Owned through the following means:

- (1) We will place notices up inside and outside our building using the notice boards we have.
- (2) We will stress the community ownership when we place stories in the local press and media.
- (1) We will take information with us to display when we are represented at Fun Days, Fetes and Fairs offsite.
- (2) We will create a leaflet that we can share at other locations around the community such as Locomotion museum and the town library.
- (1) We can state our ownership on our event posters.
- (2) We will make a short film when we relaunch as a Community Benefit Organisation, explaining our ownership model and post it to Social Media and our Website.
- (1) We can announce it on our social media channels.
- (1) We can explain our ownership on our website.
- (1) We will encourage other organisations locally to become Members so that word spreads among their own users.
- (1) We will host a public event to explain it and enable people to ask questions.
- (1) We will create a banner to place on the railings outside the building when we relaunch - explaining the change, how to get involved and where to find more information.

2. CUSTOMERS

We are starting from a position of having some existing Membership, which we will need to convert to the new Membership model. We will invite customers and potential new customers to become new Members through the following means:

- (1) We will tell the story of Shildon Railway Institute - how it began and how it reached where it is today.
- (1) We will publish a list of Member benefits in the building and on our website.
- (2) We will communicate encouraging messages through our social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) and potentially extend our social media activity to new social channels that appeal to a younger audience.
- (1) We will promote and respect inclusivity, diversity and accessibility wherever we can.
- (1) We will be creative in formulating Member only events and offers.
- (1) We will formulate, and where necessary and viable work with partners to create a rich and varied programme of activities that people can participate in.
- (1) We will make joining forms available in the entrance foyer, behind the bar and also set up the ability to join online via our website.
- (3) We will look to schedule a number of welcome events for new Members that want to know more about the Institute and Membership.
- (2) We will investigate the potential for more remote 'supporter' Membership for people who may not live close enough to take part and use services but wish to support our aims.
- (1) Where groups permit, we will publish updates and events for and from groups that use our Institute.

3. BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

The benefits of Membership of Shildon Railway Institute will be as follows:

Tangible Benefits

Statement	Initial Effort	Ongoing Effort	Cost
ONE - Members will receive a Membership leaflet as a 'Thank You' for joining and explaining their role as Members and what we offer them	Low	Low	Low
ONE - Members will be able to attend, or buy tickets for (where applicable) 'Member Only' events	Low	Low	Low
THREE - Members will have their names recorded on a Members Wall	Medium	High	High
ONE - Members will be able to access 'Member Only' special offers (e.g. money off event tickets, money off room hire, NOT money off drinks)	Medium	High	High
Members will benefit from not having to pay 'Non-Member Surcharges'.	Medium	Low	
Members will receive a discount on hire of the Hall, Hackworth Lounge or MacNay Room	Low	Low	
Shareholding Members will benefit from having a say in the future of the Institute, how it is run and being able to vote on key decisions.	Low	Low	
Members will be able to present themselves to Committee meetings to be heard on ideas they have or issues they have experienced.	Low	Low	
Members will be able to earn service awards, with special badges and lists being provided for things like meeting volunteering hour thresholds, Committee service, fundraising achievements	Medium	Medium	
Members will be able to sign up to participate in 'Member Only' trips - where ticket costs may where applicable be discounted	Medium	Medium	
We will implement a monthly Membership Number draw where Members can win a small prize as a reward for their Membership	Low	Low	

Intangible Benefits

- Members will be able to benefit from our friendly service.
- Members will benefit from knowing that they are part of something historic and special, and through their Membership will share an experience in common with family ancestors and the first railway pioneers that founded the Institute
- Members will benefit from being involved with our wider community of Members young and old, sharing great experiences together.

- Members will attain a sense of ‘ownership’ as shareholders in this unique organisation.
- Members will benefit from an enhanced sense of belonging

4. TRANSFER OF EXISTING MEMBERS

Shildon Railway Institute, though becoming a Community Benefit Society, is already an organisation with 190 years of history and an existing legacy membership base. We would want existing legacy members to become shareholding Members of the newly reconstituted Community Benefit Society. This will require sensitive treatment with respect for some of the Institute’s traditions.

All current legacy members will automatically become Subscribers of the new CBS and will therefore qualify for all Subscriber benefits*. We will make all reasonable attempts to contact the legacy members to let them know that they can buy a share to become a Member. Shareholding Members must agree to the new CBS framework and purchase a minimum of 1 share, priced at £1 each. Each shareholding Member is entitled to vote at Members’ meetings. *(need to summarise/ briefly stress the importance of having a voice but ultimately the shareholder benefits will be intangible).*

Existing SRI Life members

We will create a register of who we believe to be existing SRI Life legacy members and we will make all reasonable attempts to contact them. Shildon Heritage Alliance CIC will donate a budget sufficient so that there will be £1 for 1 share to each Life legacy member who agrees to the new CBS framework, thus retaining their right to vote at Members’ meetings. They will then become a shareholding Life Member of the new CBS and enjoy all Life Member benefits*** without paying the annual subscription. Those legacy members who we fail to contact or who do not wish to become a shareholding Member of the CBS, will still qualify for subscriber benefits*** and be able to visit the Institute but will not be entitled to a vote at Members’ meetings.

Amnesty for Existing SRI members due to qualify for Life membership.

As an important recognition of long-term contribution, we will create a window of opportunity for any member who believes that they are within 5 years of qualifying for Lifetime Membership, when they will be invited to pay the balance of their lifetime subscription**. If they have not already done so they must also buy a share for £1 and thereby become shareholding Life Member and enjoy all Life Member benefits***. On relaunching as a CBS we will enter a period of Amnesty of 1 year in which legacy members can take advantage of this offer. Those who fail to pay the final membership balance** by the end of the Amnesty period will lose the opportunity to become a life member.

We will not be carrying forward the Life Member scheme after the end of the Amnesty

*as specified in the Membership Strategy

**as defined in the current SRI rules, subject to verification of individual status

*** the same benefits as any subscribing member without the obligation to pay an annual subscription

“SRI” – Shildon Railway Institute

“SHA” – Shildon Heritage Alliance CIC

“CBS” – Community Benefit Society

5. COMMUNICATION

We will communicate with Members in the following ways:

- We will provide updates on selected events and Member Only opportunities by placing posters inside the Institute and at selected locations across the community.
- We will look to canvas Members views by conducting surveys.
- We will create a Members news page on our website.

- Our Committee Members will communicate directly and verbally with Members on individual matters.
- We will set up a What'sApp Chat group for Members that use What's App, and a Members Group on Facebook but would not communicate via these channels exclusively on any matter.
- We will communicate news to our Members and wider community via our social media feeds on Facebook and Twitter.
- We will publicise significant news and events through the Shildon Town Crier and, where appropriate, other titles in the South West Durham News group.
- We will maintain an email distribution list with Membership renewal reminders and where Members have given us permission (see our GDPR Policy) we will use this channel to notify Members of upcoming events or new products and services.
- We may periodically produce a digital newsletter.
- All critical Member communications, including minutes and notices of meetings, will always be posted to the Institute's noticeboard in the entrance foyer, and placed on the main bar.
- Where appropriate we will deliver event news through flyers direct to customers homes in the community (doorstep drop)
- We will never exclude Members from receiving communications from the Institute on the basis of not being digitally engaged or not having access to digital technology. We will ensure that Members are able to request that essential communications about their Membership can be received in physical form.

6. ACTIVITIES

Members will be able to interact with us through the following opportunities.

- We will allocate a part of each Committee meeting that any Member can attend to address the Committee with an idea or issue.
- We will provide a feedback email address feedback@shildonrailway.Institute to which anyone can send feedback on the Institute, positive or negative, to be considered by the Committee.
- Every Member of the Committee will have a responsibility to liaise, communicating in both directions, on an ad-hoc basis between Members and the Committee as a body - however we will appoint a Membership Champion who will channel more formal communications to Members - this responsibility may be occupied by a different Member of the Committee on a rota basis (e.g. monthly).
- We will make a suggestion postbox available to the Members on the premises into which Members can contribute ideas and thoughts anonymously or otherwise.
- We will post contact detail for ideas or questions or information on the Institute notice board.
- We will post information regularly on the notice board.
- Minutes of meetings will be posted on the notice board after meetings and also via our website.
- We will also post information regularly via our Facebook and Twitter social media feeds, and encourage appropriate interaction and engagement there.
- We will endeavour to ensure that there is a Member of the Committee present, and available to approach in person, as much as possible (on a best endeavours basis) during normal opening hours.
- We will encourage a bi-monthly Members Forum at which Members can get together to discuss the Institute and Membership with the Membership Champion (or another delegated Members of the Committee present).
- We will look to write letters to the Membership.
- We will encourage a monthly social gathering for all Members.
- We will encourage our staff to act as ambassadors for the Institute, channelling 'in person' feedback to the Committee.

7. VOLUNTEERING

We will encourage and reward volunteers for providing their valuable skills and time through the following means:

- We will implement a volunteer of the [period] award, which may or may not include a small reward as a gratuity, to be selected by the Committee.

- We will publish a list of ‘volunteer opportunities’ setting out what kinds of things we need people to contribute.
- We will endeavour to publicly thank volunteers for their contributions. Where appropriate this may take the form of social media posts or local press contributions.
- Where appropriate we will offer free tea, coffee, or soft drinks to volunteers while they are undertaking their volunteer activities or duties.
- We will organise an annual Volunteer’s function to thank Members that have volunteered throughout the year.
- We will regularly post social media updates showing photos and stories of volunteering activity (with the permission of the volunteer).
- We will seek to source local discounts through other organisations in the locality for our volunteers.
- We will have a monthly Volunteers Draw (perhaps where volunteers get a ticket for each hour they have volunteered) in which a volunteer can receive a small prize as a thank you.
- We will implement special badges and certificates to recognise volunteer service.
- We will issue Thank You cards for volunteers.
- We may offer volunteers discounted rates on drinks for a limited period.
- We will provide volunteer initiation training to ensure that Volunteers are aware of the important safety and responsibility criteria.
- We will ask our volunteers to log their volunteer time either on paper forms or through an online form (whichever is most convenient to them)
- We will publish a Volunteer ‘Expression of Interest’ form on our website for anyone who would like more information about how they can volunteer.
- We will encourage businesses in the area to work with us to provide volunteering opportunities for their employees.

8. ENGAGEMENT

We will encourage Members to play an active role in our democratic activities, elections and AGM by:

- Possibly combining the AGM with a social event with entertainment for those that took part or formulate other incentives such as drinks discounts if appropriate and affordable.
- Display examples of where we ‘listened’ and ‘acted’.
- We will advertise all full Members meetings well in advance - in the local press, on our noticeboards, on social media, through flyers on tables and by email.
- We will maintain a suggestion box for Members ideas.
- We will implement Membership referenda on key decisions regarding the future of the Institute with voting boxes and per Member ballots where such approach is appropriate.

9. TRAINING

Members will understand the organisation and how they can play a role in it through the following measures:

- We will publish information on our website and noticeboards - perhaps in the form of a video with some animations and refer to already digitised versions of our history to tell the story of our past.
- We will have a series of short briefings post-relaunch
- We will make Members leaflets or booklets available
- Interested parties will be able to talk to Members of the Committee while in the Institute.
- We will post social media links to the key information.
- We will invest in Committee induction training so that position holders understand their responsibilities, our policies and obligations.
- Face to face ‘training’ will be conducted by someone able to inspire and bring the Institute to life as a “must go to” place to be.

10. GOVERNANCE

We will refresh our democratic structure by encouraging participation and supporting the development of existing participants through the following means:

- We will seek to establish additional sub-Committees with specific focus, encouraging Members in the relevant constituencies to take part as a step toward full Committee positions:
 - Womens sub-Committee
 - Young Members sub-Committee (Members aged 16-30)
 - Volunteers sub-Committee
- We will encourage participation and involvement in all age groups.
- We will post information and vacancies on the notice board and website.
- We will foster a culture of empowerment and both ‘your Institute” and “use it or lose it” mentalities.
- We will encourage Members to “be the change” they want to see.
- Committee and post holders will be expected to listen, encourage and be open.
- We will have a succession plan for Committee roles and where appropriate seek to appoint deputies as part of that succession plan to ensure knowledge transfer and sustainability.
- We will source funding to train our role holders, staff and volunteers where that is appropriate.
- We will encourage representation from our team of staff in Committee discussions and sub Committees.

11. MONITORING MEMBERSHIP

We will seek to understand that our Membership strategy is working by:

Tracking Measurements

Statement	Initial Effort	Ongoing Effort	Affordability
Quantifying movements in the number of Members that have provided contact details to subscribe to our email updates	Low	Low	High
Quantifying movements in the number of Members recorded on our Membership database.	Low	Medium	High
Quantifying the number of volunteer hours contributed by Members that choose to volunteer their services toward Institute aims.	Medium	Medium	Low
Quantifying the regularity of Member engagement with the Institute (we may need to elaborate on this)			
Quantify the Membership renewal rate year on year to understand how many Members do, and don't renew.	Medium	Low	High
We will measure the volume of positive and negative feedback from both Members and non-Members.	Low	Low	High

Additional activities:

- We will form a sub-Committee to review the Membership model, strategy and benefits and practices - learning and refining on an ongoing basis.
- We will appoint a Membership champion within the Committee
- We will issue general and specific surveys to Members occasionally to gauge how they value their Membership, how satisfied they are and take suggestions on how Membership could evolve.

- We will include presentation of a Membership Report at each Annual General Members Meeting.
- We will maintain a database of Membership that allows us to produce reports in Membership uptake and movements.
- We will implement a Members ideas box - and will reply to suggestions made through our communications to Members.