

The Unconfirmed Minutes of the RMES Committee held at Rainsbrook on Friday 12th December 2025 at 7 pm

1.0 Present:

R D Thomas (Chairman) A T McGeechan (Vice-chairman) S Byatt (Treasurer)
H C Brewer (Secretary) P Hancock P J Hart M Morgan
The meeting was joined for the first hour by Ben and Dawn Culling to discuss item 4.3.1 below.

1.1 Apologies for absence:

Apologies received from Jason Dakin.

2.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the 24th October 2025 committee were accepted without change and were signed by the Chairman and Secretary as a true record.

3.0 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the above minutes other than the actions reviewed below. All other actions have either been completed or form part of the agenda of this meeting.

Actions 4.3.2, 9.1 & 11.2 from the minutes of 24th October were reviewed and were accepted as completed. These are therefore removed from the minutes.

4.0 General

4.1 Correspondence

There had been no postal correspondence. Email correspondence had also been dealt with by committee circulation prior to the meeting and included on the agenda as appropriate.

4.2 Membership Applications / Approvals

4.2.1 Matt Creak

This had been followed up with the applicant who has not attended during the trial period just ended. From his email correspondence he appears to have lost interest. He has approached us on two previous occasions with similar results. The application is therefore withdrawn and any future applications will be rejected.

4.2.2 Jack Colby

This applicant has been in touch and hopes to be able to join us in the New Year.

4.2.3 Paul Caine

Paul's application was accepted by email circulation and the membership has been issued. The application was formally signed off at this meeting.

Action: Secretary (all of the above as required)

4.3 Items for Discussion

4.3.1 External & Internal Marketing for 2026

Ben and Dawn had already submitted their thoughts as to how we could improve our marketing and these formed our basis of the main discussions. However before this the chairman gave a short slide presentation as to what our needs are. These included the priority to sell seats at public events and the need to have a coordinated approach to our advertising for these events on social media, the ticket selling platform and elsewhere. An analysis of ticket sale 2024 vs. 2025 was shown.

We then got into the main discussion on how Ben and Dawn could help, it was thought that both external and internal marketing should reflect the same message. The main points highlighted are as follows:

- Divide the websites so that RMES and RVR are separate. This would slot all the public events into the new RVR website so that the public know exactly what is on offer to them and can be targeted accordingly. The RMES website would continue to service the needs of the membership of the society.
- RVR website to have a new logo – Fridge magnet 'Totem' suggested.
- Signage to be improved by re-introducing the sign on Ashlawn Road when we are running and possibly a 'Next Event' board on the exit to the site.
- Coordinated use of social media Facebook in particular and possibly an Instagram account. Currently our social media accounts can be confusing, plan for what we want and use their language to attract local people. Ensure that the content is kept updated.
- Update the 'Balloon' flyer and ensure visibility on school notice boards, libraries etc. Use of local free advertising – Rugby Advertiser has worked in the past.
- Parties to be separated and have their own promotion.
- Themed events (e.g. Father's Day – free for dads and grandads).
- Profiles on what we are doing on site.
- Encourage photo opportunities with a prize for the best submitted.
- More attractions for public on site, locos running board, loco on display with member to explain history and workings etc.
- Café food and drink prices to be more competitive.
- Current café food and drink prices are low and could be raised.
- Early-bird booking discounts perhaps?
- Sell postcards and other RVR branded souvenirs at the café. Phil Hart offered to cover the cost of initial stock.

Ben & Dawn said they were willing to address a lot of the above to see if they can improve 'sell out' of public events for 2026. Help would be needed in many areas so this and any other requests need to be channelled back to committee via the secretary. They are also willing to take over the newsletter as internal marketing starting January 2026. This would mean editing the content and producing a .pdf for the secretary to distribute to members.

ACTIONS: Cost of new website to be determined: **Ben & Dawn**
Prepare a marketing action plan that leads into the new 2026 season: **Ben & Dawn**
New email for newsletter articles to be set up: **Secretary**
Balloon Flyer update, software: **Chairman/Aubyn - Ben & Dawn**
Café prices: **Phil Hart/Gill Nelson**

4.3.2 Jobs list – priorities and costings

The chairman went through these by priority on the spreadsheet with new items shown in red. Items were update as appropriate in the meeting. An updated spreadsheet is to be circulated to committee.

Action: Chairman

4.3.3 Defibrillator

It was reported that 'Ourjay' foundation would not support the cost of a defibrillator on site so we would need to purchase (£2k) and maintain ourselves. It was suggested that we have a special donation box at events for this purpose.

Action: Mike Morgan

4.3.4 Progress – HLF

The chairman presented the slide deck that had been circulated to the HLF sub-committee. This was based on RBC own published corporate plan and uses a lot of their 'language'. It is now ready for presenting to the three RBC councillors who look after our ward. It was thought prudent to hang on until early in the New Year before contacting them with a view to a meeting in February.

Action: Chairman

4.3.5 Member's subscriptions 2027

A discussion followed on this and the meeting were shown a listing of MES both locally and nationally with their subscriptions when published. The meeting agreed that with what the site has to offer members it was now time to increase subscriptions. Subject to agreement of the members at the AGM, subscriptions from January 2027 would be:

- Full members: £55
- Country members: £35
- Junior members: Remain unchanged

Action: Chairman

4.3.6 Storage Requests for decision

A total of 10 members had put in requests – all for long term storage. This divided into 3 requests for Raised track and 7 for Ground level. Unfortunately not all these were available to discuss but two had no nominated drivers other than themselves so were not in accordance with the storage policy. These owners will be contacted. All 10 forms will be scanned and circulated to committee.

Action: Secretary

5.0 Treasurers Report

5.1 Report on income and expenditure from 1st January to 30th November 2025

	2025 Jan	2025 Feb	2025 March	2025 April	2025 May	2025 June	2025 July	2025 August	2025 Sept	2025 Oct	2025 Nov	2025 Dec	2025 Total
Income													
Standing Orders	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Member subscriptions	1,060.00	1,150.00	529.50	45.00	145.00	50.00	25.00	24.00	54.00	-	45.00	-	3,121.50
Party income	-	50.00	250.00	200.00	300.00	450.00	500.00	950.00	200.00	200.00	-	-	3,106.00
Public running income	-	-	-	2,306.33	2,560.96	3,176.63	2,202.00	4,160.27	156.44	4,245.34	-	-	18,808.97
Refreshments income	-	-	-	581.42	708.92	507.32	1,134.93	1,242.24	569.35	445.29	-	-	5,189.47
Clothing income	-	-	887.00	53.50	45.00	-	-	-	125.00	23.00	-	-	1,133.50
Donations	-	25.00	20,200.00	1,364.80	92.17	441.58	635.72	70.98	-	75.80	150.00	-	23,896.14
Donations to development fund	110.00	110.00	110.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	-	1,260.00
Easy fundraising	-	54.21	-	-	37.05	-	-	24.56	-	-	71.25	-	187.07
Gift aid payments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stream fund income	10.00	10.00	15.00	10.00	10.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	34.43	15.00	15.00	-	164.43
Club and external events	-	-	-	-	-	30.00	-	-	540.00	-	-	-	570.00
Key sales	-	20.00	5.00	100.00	-	107.00	-	-	5.00	-	-	-	237.00
Club shares	-	1.00	2.00	-	2.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00	-	8.00
Fridge marginal sales	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	150.00	-	150.00
Sundry items	-	45.00	-	30.00	8.00	-	4.00	547.87	321.37	-	-	-	954.24
Sub total	1,180.00	1,465.21	21,992.50	4,781.05	3,997.10	4,898.53	4,807.65	7,124.92	2,098.59	5,094.52	522.25	-	57,732.32
Interest savings account	-	-	48.40	-	-	90.59	-	-	94.48	-	-	-	233.54
Total income	1,180.00	1,465.21	22,040.99	4,781.05	3,997.10	4,959.12	4,807.65	7,124.92	2,193.05	5,094.52	522.25	-	57,965.86
Expenditure													
Electricity	303.59	489.75	423.20	372.43	300.00	139.29	255.70	228.93	221.12	82.97	371.17	-	3,188.15
Water	-	1,418.44	-	-	-	-	182.85	212.97	-	-	-	-	1,794.26
Insurance	-	-	3,436.08	-	-	-	1,119.89	-	-	50.01	-	-	4,605.78
Club subscriptions	10.00	209.77	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28.00	-	247.77
Rent	-	596.00	-	-	-	-	-	596.00	-	-	-	-	1,192.00
Rates	-	-	-	-	125.62	63.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	188.62
Stationary	-	57.75	-	-	-	-	77.00	-	-	-	-	-	134.75
Fixed costs sub total	313.59	2,771.71	3,859.28	372.43	425.62	202.29	1,615.24	1,037.90	221.12	132.98	399.17	-	11,351.33

Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	538.04	(2,550.12)	15,453.95	(1,307.57)	(123.38)	3,382.22	809.08	1,554.39	508.28	(295.91)	(933.83)	(45.80)	18,989.75
Transfer from other funds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	538.04	(2,550.12)	15,453.95	(1,307.57)	(123.38)	3,382.22	809.08	1,554.39	508.28	(295.91)	(933.83)	(45.80)	18,989.75

Liquid Assets 30th November 2025:

Current Account	£1,570.27
Deposit Account	£30,525.00 (£9,526 set aside for new loco frame, £7,343 set aside for 5" steaming bay)
Petty Cash	£1,174.57 (Floats + Petty Cash)
Total	£33,269.84 (from £34,268.47 in October)

The treasurer explained various items on the report. The main items of income being donations, fridge magnet sales and Easyfundraising. Expenditure included costs involved in the new raised track steaming bays and electricity.

5.2 Loan repayments

These are complete for this year with £2.5k to pay back in 2026 and £2k in 2027 to complete the loans taken out.

Action: Treasurer**5.3 Purchase of red carriages**

One payment has been made and next is due in the New Year. The agreement wording is to be corrected and updated with the owner.

Action: Chairman**6.0 Buildings and Grounds****6.1 Water leak**

It is hoped to get a separate gang working on this with Geoff Broad leading it. Geoff is to be contacted to see if this can be arranged.

Action: Chairman**6.2 Green Maintenance**

Phil Hart had submitted a report and this states that things are under control. An additional volunteer to operate the ride on mower on Wednesdays would be helpful. Also requests for expenditure in 2026 include Mountfield maintenance (£250); selective weedkiller (£60); Wild flower seeds (£60); Ground level weedkiller (£150); modifications to weedkiller truck (£50); Self-propelled mower to replace Hayter (£200) and a long reach Strimmer (£250). Items over £100 were added to the Jobs List and will need to be sanctioned before purchase.

Action: Phil Hart**6.3 Drainage into cutting**

The vice-chairman reported that a hole will need to be dug on the roadway alongside the cutting to expose the pipe and repair it. This therefore will need to be a winter job when the road is not in use. This is to be added to the jobs list.

Action: Vice-chairman**6.4 Car Park field**

A response has been received from RBC and a new agreement is to be drawn up.

Action: Chairman**6.5 Additional loco Storage Space**

Groundworks for this is hoped to be completed over the Christmas holidays. The container is scheduled to arrive in the New Year. This is almost totally funded by two members.

Action: Chairman**6.6 Empty gas cylinders – disposal?**

We have empty 'Calor' gas cylinders spare now we are using 'Flowgas'. It was decided to store these in the gas cabinet in case we need to swap back to 'Calor' in the future.

Action: Phil Hancock

7.0 Elevated Track + Loco's and Rolling Stock

7.1 *Signals*

It was reported that this work is now all but completed and most of the expenditure has been claimed. The system will be ready for full testing and commissioning next season.

Action: Secretary / Peter Hill

7.2 *New carriage stock*

Work is continuing on three carriages for use next season.

Action: Phil Hancock / George Cannon

7.3 *New Steaming Bays*

Some of the foundations are now in but more excavation will be needed and the spoil kept on the heap for the moment. This will then be moved using a hired dumper later next year to the top of the site.

Action: Chairman / Aubyn Mee

8.0 Ground Level Track + Loco's and Rolling Stock

8.1 *Club Loco update*

8.1.1 Criccieth Castle

Now reported as complete and under trial and should be available for next season.

8.1.2 Shay

Boiler is away at DLR having extra washout bosses fitted. Loco is stripped down for maintenance, repair and re-painting.

8.1.3 Garratt

The clacks are being re-done and a boiler inspection is scheduled for March 2026.

8.1.4 Dr John

Saddle tank is being painted prior to fitting, with only some plumbing to the axle pump to complete. The loco should be available for next season.

Action: Phil Hancock / Engineering

8.2 *Signal switch out*

This is to be fitted over winter as resources allow.

Action: Secretary / Peter Hill

8.3 *Carriage maintenance & repair team*

The latest bogie swap was to guard's carriage 304 with just some vacuum work to make it serviceable again. The bogies continue to be checked for springs and further swap outs will occur as modified bogies become available.

Action: Vice-chairman / Phil Hancock

8.4 *Track re-alignment*

This is progressing well with the majority of ballast washing done. Fresh ballast has been brought over from the dump and it is hoped there will be enough to complete. If not, ballast will be purchased in 1 tonne bags.

Action: Track Gang

9.0 Events

9.1 *Additional revenue earning events?*

This will be looked into in conjunction with our new marketing project. Parties are a significant revenue earner and are usually staffed by about 6 members. It was discussed in terms of charges for 2026 and it was agreed to increase to £300 for ground and £250 for raised track. Sandra is to be informed.

Action: Secretary

9.2 Public Running Ticket Prices?

This was briefly discussed and the general feeling was that the price for a ride should be £2, which given 4 rides in a session make a wristband £8. A final decision at the next meeting is needed so this can be built into the marketing for next year.

Action: All to note

9.3 Winter Talk?

A member had offered to do a talk on guarding on a heritage line. It was thought at this time we would decline. The member to be informed.

Action: Secretary

10.0 Safety**10.1 Safety Concerns**

No new safety concerns have been received by the secretary since the last meeting. Concern 01/2025 can now be closed as the safety fence has been installed.

Action: Safety Officer

10.2 Speedo's on all guards carriages

Speedos have been fitted on all other 300 series guards' carriages. The 100 series has only one guards' carriage fitted with a speedo. Solutions are to be looked at by the carriage maintenance team supported by engineering.

Action: Vice-chairman / Phil Hancock

11.0 Any Other Business**11.1 Date of next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the RMES Committee is to be held at Rainsbrook on Friday 23rd January 2026 at 7 pm

The meeting closed at: **22.04**

12.0 Confirmation of Minutes

Approved as a true record:

Date: _____

Date: _____

R D Thomas – Chairman

H C Brewer – Secretary