

## Question and reply for 2021 IW Railway Co AGM

Dear Chairman

I feel I must write to express my deep disappointment that yet again the election to the board of the Isle of Wight Railway Company is dominated by white males with what seems to be no attempt to attract women onto the board of the Railway let alone of a different ethnic background.

Whilst I appreciate the difficulty in getting people of different ethnicity to join the board, I feel the omission of the female gender is a big mistake and shows a lack of judgement,

Therefore I respectfully request that at the first board meeting after the AGM you look at this specific problem and come up with a plan to rectify it and not brush it under the carpet.  
B. Simpson

Response

14th July 2021

Dear Mr Simpson,

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Thank you for your letter on this important subject. I have been away and only collected your letter from my folder yesterday when working at the Railway for the first time in three weeks. This explains the delay in my response.

At Saturday's AGM, I will be talking about Board Membership. The Directors work hard and only one currently is 'without portfolio' the remainder of us all have functional leadership roles covering all aspects of our business. If elected, then the two new Directors will take the functional leadership roles in rail infrastructure and commercial.

Regulation through the Office and Rail and Road continues to increase and this puts a lot of responsibility onto Directors. When considering new membership for the Board, the skills that those who are proposed to the membership for election have been carefully considered.

We are actively looking for Directors who are still working or only recently retired, having a Board comprising 'elderly white males' is now simply unacceptable - skills and competencies are the driver.

Nothing would please me or indeed my colleagues more to have a female(s) or somebody from an ethnic minority and if we can find somebody within these groups that has the skills which are needed then a proposal for election would be recommended to the membership.

I know this may sound hard given your final line - we simply cannot run the board on a quota system as related to male/female/ethnic minority. That has the potential of devaluing quality and flies in the face of the key decisions and responsibilities which the Directors have to undertake.

I propose using your letter as a question at Saturday's AGM and replying with the above response.

Yours sincerely, Peter Conway, Chairman and Trustee

C. Tagart Question 1, on the full accounts

Page 22 - The tram is being depreciated by 5% pa, but in the last paragraph on page 28 it is referred as a heritage asset; this appears to be a contradiction.

Page 28 - Restricted funds have increased significantly from £124K to £199K during 2021, with most of the increase shown in C&W restoration and the Museum Fund. What are the

plans for the use of these monies, particularly given that inflation is currently eroding the value of these by 10% pa?

#### Question 2

At the 2021 AGM we were introduced to the 16 strategic goals, which replaced the Grand Plan; an update of the goals is to be given at this year's AGM.

Although some detail has been published in IRN for some of the goals, others little or nothing has been published; will there be an opportunity for questions after the presentation?

Looking ahead, whilst it would be impractical to report on each goal in each IRN, but given that each goal is SMART, could at least the following be published prior to the AGM.

- a. The name(s) of the director(s) leading each goal.
- b. A brief update on progress.

This should lead to a better-informed membership.

Responses were given verbally but not recorded