Trustees' annual report and accounts

1st February 2025 – 31st January 2026

Yr Amgueddfa Rheilffyrdd Bach Cul

The Narrow Gauge Railway Museum

AMGUEDDFA ACHREDEDIG

ACCREDITED MUSEUM

CRONFA DREFTADAETH HERITAGE FUND

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Administrative information

The Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) number 1203380 registered by the Charity Commission for England & Wales on 2nd June 2023 with a 'foundation model' constitution, with the intention of taking responsibility for the assets and operations of the charitable unincorporated association (CUA) of the same name, registered as a charity in England & Wales, number 1040128. The CUA's operations and assets were vested in the CIO with effect from 1st February 2024. At the end of the reporting year the trustees had yet to close the CUA formally, pending finalisation of its financial affairs including claims for Gift Aid tax relief.

Accredited Museum No 1433

Registered office: Wharf Station Tywyn Gwynedd LL36 9EY

Objects of the CIO:

i. to advance and promote education for the public benefit in the history and heritage of narrow-gauge railways (being railways having a gauge between the rails of less than 1432 millimetres) and their impact on society past and present;

ii. the provision, maintenance and administration of a museum for the display of objects related to narrow gauge railways and the sharing of heritage about the people who worked on, used and enjoyed those railways through exhibitions, interactive displays, and projects;

iii. the making of grants to promote the purposes of the CIO subject to such conditions as the charity trustees may lay down.

Personnel

First Charity Trustees	*To serve until 1st June 2028*	
	Ian Evans	Minutes secretary
	Malcolm Phillips	Collections manager
	C Keith Theobald	Chairman
	To serve until 1st June 2026	
	John D Olsen PhD, MRSB, CIBiol	
Nominated Trustees	*Nominated by Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society*	*Appointed on 1st June 2025 to serve for 5 years*
	Diane K Drummond PhD FHEA	Resigned 28th January 2026
	Frank Nolan	
Co-opted trustees	William Apps	
	Shirley Atkinson SFHEA	
	Robert Morgan MRFS BD BSc	
Officers	Tim Bryan BLib, ALA, FMA	Museum mentor
	Chares Fleming	Legal adviser
	Robert Langham	Museum mentor
	Andrew Nock	Secretary
	Stephen Powell	Treasurer

Unless otherwise shown, all personnel served throughout the reporting year. They gave their services voluntarily and received no benefit from their activity.

The Trustees met 10 times during the reporting year, having regard at all times to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. All meetings were held in Tywyn with Trustees attending in person whenever possible; Trustees living at a distance had the option of remote participation by 'Teams' if unable to come to Tywyn.

Bank: CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling Kent
ME19 4JQ

The Narrow Gauge Railway Museum ("the Museum")



Demonstrating historic horse-powered haulage of a Museum slate wagon during the 2025 Heritage Weekend (see p, 9)

The Trust's aim is to record and interpret the history of narrow-gauge railways in the British Isles and beyond. While a number of passenger-carrying railways have been preserved and still operate, primarily now to serve the tourist market, many other passenger-carrying lines, as well as numerous industrial and military ones, ceased to exist in the mid-20th century. The pioneering enthusiasts and collectors of those times laid the basis of the collection while it was still possible, so that today the story of these railways can be told, most of which never achieved the widespread following enjoyed by the main lines but were in their own way important contributors to society and the economy.

The Museum was founded 70 years ago in 1956, in the pioneering days of railway preservation, and in paying tribute to the inspiration and hard work of their predecessors the present Trustees are acutely conscious of the responsibility to carry on their priceless legacy. Accordingly, the Trust's main activity is managing the Museum to ensure its current operation and secure its long-term sustainability.

The Museum occupies a purpose-made building, opened in 2005 as part of the major re-development of the Talyllyn Railway's Wharf station in Tywyn. Its location alongside a working narrow-gauge railway gives the Museum's story a living context, and adds a significant attraction to the pleasure and interest of a journey on the Railway. Elsewhere on the Wharf site the Museum also has use of the historic Gunpowder Store and new building featuring the original Talyllyn Railway weighbridge.

The Collection

The main collection consists of items relating to narrow gauge railways of the British Isles, and to the Talyllyn Railway in particular.

The Trustees continue to review selectively items offered for sale at auction, and make a reasonable bid for any item which they consider would enhance the collection. Items are also offered to the Museum from time to time, with any accession decision being taken by the Trustees. Accessions now tend to be small items, reflecting the reality of new material availability, and the pressures on the Museum's space.

During the reporting year, 30 objects were added to the **Main Collection.** Representative examples of the items added are:

TYWRM:FR088	document	Petition by the Croesor Railway Company against the Festiniog Railway Act in Parliament 1869
TYWRM:SR016	single line ticket	Southwold Railway Train Staff Ticket; Brown; No.572
TYWRM:TR422	railway letter	Talyllyn Railway First Day Cover marking the 150th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 13th August 1975
TYWRM:WHR045	document	North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways 1890 Act to allow a further two years to complete the railway.
TYWRM:WHR046	stamp	Welsh Highland Railway Parcel Stamps
TYWRM:WHR047	document	North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways advertisement for trips to Snowdon
TYWRM:WHR048	document	Consignment note from the Amalgamated Slate Association to the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railways
TYWRM:ZZ040	photograph	Postcards from the John Smallwood collection
TYWRM:MR002	book	Amberley Chalk Pits Museum Guide and Stock List 1987
TYWRM:TR183.2	timetable	Talyllyn Railway card pocket timetable for 1957
TYWRM:WHR053	booklet	Welsh Highland Railway (Porthmadog) Traeth Mawr Extension 2006

11 items were added to the **Support Collection**, mostly reference books for the Museum library; examples of the additions are:

TYWRM:SUP650	book	Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway by Steve Flanders
TYWRM:SUP653	book	The Tal-Y-Llyn Railway by J.I.C. Boyd
TYWRM:SUP655	interpretation panel	Llechi Cymru - Welsh Slate Interpretation Panel for the Wharf Yard exchange sidings
TYWRM:SUP656	book	The Hendre Ddu Tramway by Dan Quine
TYWRM:SUP657	book	Siwrnai Rheidol / Rheidol Journey by C.C. Green

4 items were added to the **Awdry Collection. including**:

TYWRM:AWD553	book	Thomas the Tank Engine - The Classic Library complete boxed collection
TYWRM:AWD556	book	The Railway Stories published by Marks & Spencers 1982. Three books in each volume.

The Museum has for many years had items on loan from the former Penrhyn Quarry system, principally the De Winton vertical-boiler locomotive “George Henry” and numerous locomotive name and works plates, Having in 2024 agreed a loan extension with Breedon Group, successors to the previous owners, the Museum re-started discussions on future custodianship towards the end of the reporting year.

Some items in the collection – mainly wagons – are displayed outdoors on the Wharf site. Some large items – locomotives and a wagon – which cannot be accommodated at Tywyn for lack of space are on loan to appropriate institutions elsewhere in the UK.

The Museum has inherited photographic collections, among the most recent being the extensive collection by the late John Smallwod of narrow-gauge railways around the world. Work continued throughout the year to digitise this collection, with identification of subject location and date of images a major challenge, met with considerable success. The collection may be viewed on the Museum website.

Risk management

The Trustees maintain and apply policies relating to:

- Emergencies
- Safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Environment
- Data protection
- Managing conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty

The Trustees maintain a Designated Insurance Reserve fund as cover against loss or damage to items in the Collection.

The Trustees also earmark a proportion of the Trust’s cash balance (held in a high-interest account, £82557.94 at the end of the reporting year) as a hedge against higher running costs. The Trust occupies its premises on very beneficial terms from its landlord the Talyllyn Railway, and could face substantially higher costs if changing circumstances caused the Railway to alter its terms.

Review of the year

Visitors

The Museum was open to the public on 243 days, including every day when the Talyllyn Railway operated a public train service. Visitor numbers exceeded those of the 2 previous year and, significantly, the number recorded in 2019 the last pre-Covid year. Also significant is that numbers remained constant while passenger numbers on the Talyllyn Railway (the

primary source of Museum visitors) were 6% lower than in 2024 (which was itself 7% lower than in 2023), and 28% lower than in 2019. Comparative numbers for the last six years are:

Year	Days open	Adult visitors	Child visitors	Total visitors	Visitors per day
2025	243	13110	3873	16983	70
2024	259	12778	3220	16698	64
2023	246	12686	3918	16604	67
2022	258	13523	4304	17827	69
2021	194	10501	2975	13476	69
2020	84	1248	204	1452	17
2019	253	12758	3913	16671	66

Railway-themed temporary exhibitions



"1825 and all that" temporary exhibition

The Museum continued its Temporary Exhibition programme, providing an insight into subjects of topical interest and refreshing the Museum experience for repeat visitors. In 2025 the railway industry nationally celebrated "Railway 200", the bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, and the Museum played its part with its exhibition "1825 and all that", illustrating narrow-gauge railway history over those 200 years and good-humouredly showing that the Stockton & Darlington was neither the first railway to carry passengers nor the first to be authorised by act of Parliament, both distinctions belonging to narrow-gauge lines,

Social media

Over the reporting year the Trustees have steadily expanded the Museum's online presence. There have been regular postings on Instagram: the "Mystery Monday" (carried over from Facebook) and also Wednesday's "Weekly Exhibition" and Friday's "Photo of the Week" with almost 400 followers and gaining 30,000 content views; the reach is being expanded via cross-posting. Facebook has grown to have over 1,600 direct followers, with over 800,000 content views. "Mystery Mondays" and "Thursday Delves" continued but with the opening up of thre Museum's photographic collection, "Mystery Mondays" was changed to "More Mondays" to see if captions can be expanded within the collection - it is a challenge stimulating discussion but it is repaid in a clutch of new followers.

Interpretation

"Voices of the Collection" is an accessible audio trail being developed to enhance inclusivity and engagement for all Museum visitors. Its principal aim is to provide an engaging experience for visitors who might find conventional text-based displays difficult to apprehend, for example those with visual difficulties. It complements existing displays, offering extra insight and context beyond what is written, and comprises 12 selected points of interest throughout the Museum. Instead of providing a strict fact file, the audio content, typically between 2 and 2.5 minutes long, narrates narrow-gauge railway history through several overarching themes, including the slate industry, minimum gauge and portable railways, railways in wartime and the Rev W Awdry connection. Visitors interact by scanning QR Codes at each point, bringing up the relevant audio via their mobile device's web browser. Aiming to increase inclusivity, one of the most exciting features is the automatic language detection, where the system identifies the user's preferred language setting on their device and returns the relevant audio. If a preferred language is unavailable it defaults to English. A dedicated group of volunteers is working hard to provide audio files in several languages: Welsh, French, Spanish, Dutch and German. Those who cannot hear the audio can obtain transcripts of the trail. Over the coming year the working prototype is to be developed into a full product to provide an enjoyable experience for all visitors.

Kids in Museums

The organisation Kids in Museums visited during the reporting year, and provided a thorough report and the opportunity to seek grant funding, in which the Museum has subsequently been successful. The money is to be used to improve the Museum's offering to younger visitors, including the neuro diverse.

Special occasions

The Museum contributed to three special events on the Talyllyn Railway: the "Anything Goes" gala and the highly popular "Awdry Extravaganza" both in July, the latter featuring the railway characters created by the Rev Wilbert Awdry, and a "Heritage Weekend" in September, a more recent innovation but rapidly becoming a fixture in the Railway's calendar. As in previous years the Museum's collection featured prominently, with for the first time a demonstration of horse-drawn wagon haulage, as practised for many years on the quarry tramway between Bryneglwys quarry and the incline which gave onward connection to the Talyllyn Railway proper. Two Trustees gave lectures over the weekend, on the part played by LTC ("Tom") Rolt in forming the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society and the Museum, and on "A wander along the Galltymoelfre" – the quarry tramway and the incline which enabled delivery to Abergynolwyn village of goods in wagons from the Talyllyn Railway.



The recreation of Wilbert Awdry's study, centrepiece of the Museum's Awdry Collection

Governance

At the start of the reporting year the Trustees transferred financial operations from the old charity (Charitable Unincorporated Association, registered number1040128) using its new bank accounts, while retaining the old ones in order to receive any payments still made to the old charity. In the coming year they plan, having first satisfied themselves that financial activity has ceased, to close the old bank accounts and formally register the old charity's closure.

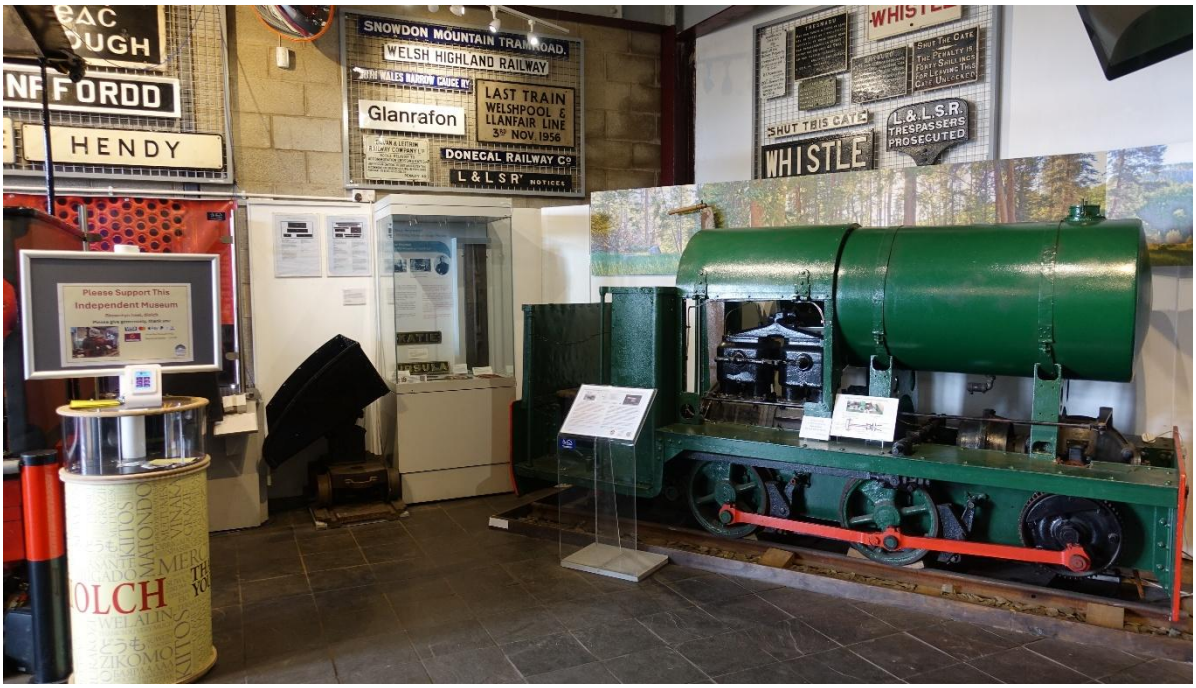
The same trustees served through the reporting year, with one resigning shortly before the year's close.

Recognition

Following an inspection in October Visit Wales re-affirmed the Museum's status as a Quality-Assured Visitor Attraction.

The Trustees' policy is to maintain Accredited Museum status; the museum accreditation scheme, operated by the Arts Council England and administered in Wales by the Welsh Government, helps ensure that the Museum maintains professional standards of display and collection, safety and financial management, and accreditation is a vital precondition for grant applications. The Museum was last re-accredited in 2018, with the next re-accreditation process then delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. During the reporting year the Trustees had been working towards a submission in July but this was delayed by unforeseeable Museum personnel unavailability outside the Trustees' control, and coincidentally very serious administrative problems at the Arts Council. The Trustees were

finally able to submit their application in November, and at the reporting year's close were about to receive a Welsh Government site visit, the final stage in the process before a re-accreditation decision, expected in April 2026[1].



Inside the Museum – historic station nameboards displayed on the walls, and the pioneering narrow-gauge diesel locomotive Baguley 774

People

Without people, and notwithstanding its excellent building and extensive collection, the Museum would be nothing. The Trust employs no staff, and volunteers receive no financial benefit. In addition to the eleven Trustees, the Museum was served by around 30 regular volunteers during the year, putting around 2000 hours (1355 attendant hours + 655 working party hours), and the Trustees acknowledge this commitment with the deepest gratitude. The Trustees and officers themselves were 'hands-on' in the fullest sense of the term, putting in an estimated 3000 hours.

The position of Museum Mentor is an important one, providing professional advice on museum management and collection conservation in the absence of a paid professional. Throughout the reporting year the Museum had the benefit of two mentors. Following his appointment Tim Bryan made visiting the Museum an early priority, doing so in March. He provided many helpful observations on the Museum's activities and gave invaluable support during the process for seeking re-accreditation.

In addition to its local volunteers the Museum values its supporters far and wide and runs a formal Friends of the Museum scheme to encourage such interest; Friends (55 as the reporting year closed) pay an annual subscription yielding more than £1000 in income and are kept fully up to date with events at the Museum through 4 newsletters every year.

The Trustees shared the sadness experienced by family members following the deaths during the reporting year of some long-standing and significant supporters; Keith Walton, 565 of

[1] The Trustees received notice of re-accreditation on 30th April 2026.

whose photographs are in the Museum archive, Tom Place, a long-serving attendant, and David Young (killed in the Lisbon Funicular accident in September).

From time to time the Museum Trust benefits from generous bequests by departed supporters. Don Newing, former Trustee and Secretary had bequeathed a substantial model railway collection, and its careful disposal through specialist dealers realised £5530 for Trust funds. During the reporting year the Trustees were informed of a bequest from Andrew Procter another long-standing supporter; the Trust will benefit financially from liquidation of his estate, and has already received some narrow-gauge related items for its collection.

The Museum would not survive without its working parties, generally with 4 or 5 regular volunteers, that continued to meet on Thursdays throughout the year. Their work falls into two categories – care and maintenance of the Museum's fittings and displays, and conservation of the Trust's historic wagon fleet, on public display at Tywyn Wharf station and occasionally used for special train workings on the Talyllyn Railway. Much of this work has to be done outside and therefore depends on the vagaries of the Welsh weather.



Some of the Museum's restored wagons outside the Weighbridge and Gunpowder Store

Work inside the Museum during the year included

- Replacement of the LED light ropes on diesel locomotive Baguley No. 774 and under the "children's loco" 'William Finlay'
- identifying the locations and subjects of the vast John Smallwood photo collection and then cataloguing them for future reference
- starting the process of restoring the points indicator from the Chattenden and Upnor Railway
- starting to catalogue the contents of the Gunpowder Store





Outdoor working parties – hard work, achievement and camaraderie

Highlights of outdoor work during year included:

- continuing recreation of the Aberllefenni incline counterbalance wagon using new timbers supplied by a volunteer in the Netherlands. Stripping the old Aberllefenni incline wagon of usable metal parts for use on the new wagon.
- restoration of ex-GWR stee-bodied slate wagon – cleaning, treatment of rusted areas, and re-painting; floor plate cleaned of rust and comprehensively painted on both sides. The wheels were cleaned and painted and then re-united with the frame, floor and the metal basket to become a complete wagon once more.
- Cleaning and repainting the Corris Mail Waggon wheels, and attaching two new door bottom retaining clips.

A working party with a difference supported the Museum in May when a gang from Talyllyn Tracksiders (the Talyllyn Railway's family volunteer working group) spent a day painting the wagon turntable and weighbridge deck.




Talyllyn Tracksiders painting the wagon turntable and weighbridge deck in May 2025

The future

With constant visitor numbers and income, substantial cash reserves, and a long lease on its accommodation, the Museum is in a good state to face the future. That future however is uncertain, most strikingly and locally illustrated by the continuing decline in Talyllyn Railway passenger numbers reflecting economic pressures and sharper competition among visitor attractions, with tourists and holiday makers increasingly seeking best value from their spending. The Museum will be increasingly unwise to rely on the Railway as its source of visitors and must re-double its efforts to be regarded as an attraction in its own right.

For some years the Talyllyn Railway Company, the Museum Trust's landlord, has had ambitious plans for developing facilities at Tywyn Pendre (the Railway's engineering base), and also at Tywyn Wharf station which would directly affect the Museum. As the reporting year closed the Railway secured substantial grant-funding for its plans, but in the face of

rapidly rising construction costs it is concentrating its efforts on Pendre (where the need is most urgent) and also on a property adjacent to Wharf, while the works at the station itself have been deferred *sine die*. From the Museum's immediate perspective this gives welcome stability, and it is significant for the Museum that external funders are showing continuing confidence in the Railway's future.

Maintaining an adequate workforce is and will remain a challenge and attendant availability remains problematic in spite of repeated efforts to attract new volunteers.



Why we do this. Wales in good weather in unbeatable; the Museum's restored wagons bask in the sun alongside an original Talyllyn Railway train carrying happy passengers. The Museum building is in the background with the viewing platform, looking over the whole station area and the adjacent National Rail standard-gauge line, clearly visible.

Financial Report

Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust Charitable Incorporated Organisation No 1203380 Annual Accounts 2025-26							
Fund Type	unrestricted	designated		*all*		2024-25	
Fund Name	General	Insurance Reserve					
RECEIPTS							
Donations in Museum	£3,096.00			*£3,096.00*		£5,659.03	
Other Donations	£8,407.73			*£8,407.73*		£2,736.53	
Friends Subscriptions	£1,138.00			*£1,138.00*		£905.37	
Legacies	£5,480.00			*£5,480.00*		£78.51	
Grants	£0.00			*£0.00*		£0.00	
Gift Aid Tax Reclaim	£0.00			*£0.00*		£741.35	
Sponsorship	£0.00			*£0.00*		£0.00	
Fees	£0.00			*£0.00*		£0.00	
Miscellaneous	£150.00			*£150.00*		£61.23	
Bank Interest	£1,148.33	£3,133.76		*£4,282.09*		£3,554.30	
Transfers from old trust	£35,000.00						
Total Receipts	£54,420.06	£3,133.76		*£57,553.82*		£13,736.52	
EXPENDITURE							
Collection							
Acquisition	£0.00			*£0.00*		£89.00	
Repair & Maintenance	£11,219.39			*£11,219.39*		£4,431.18	
Presentation	£944.47			*£944.47*		£617.10	
Subscriptions	£106.00			*£106.00*		£427.56	
Grants	£0.00			*£0.00*		£0.00	
Miscellaneous inc bank chgs	£6,122.83			*£6,122.83*		£280.00	
Transfer to Ins Res	£35,000.00			*35000*			
Total Payments	£53,392.69			*£53,392.69*		£5,844.84	
Net Receipts	£1,027.37	£3,133.76		*£4,161.13*		£7,891.68	
Balances b/f 01/02/25	£95,063.82	£44,424.18		*£139,488.00*			
Balances c/f 01/02/26	£61,091.19	£82,557.94		*£143,649.13*			

31/01/26						
Fund Balances						
General					Insurance Reserve	£82,557.94
Represented by						
			£0.00			
CAF Cash A/C 31/01/26						
less unpresented cheques etc.						
	£0.00	£0.00				
plus unstatemented credits						
	£0.00	£0.00				
CAF Cash A/C net			£2,681.88			
CAF Gold A/C 31/01/26		£58,409.31				
plus unstatemented credits						
	£0.00	£58,409.31				
CAF Gold A/C net			£58,409.31			
			£61,091.19		1-year Bond	£0.00

Financial commentary

As noted in this Report, the Museum's operations were transferred to the CIO at the start of the reporting year. However, the CUA's bank accounts were kept open to receive any trailing payments, the only significant amount being £3325.70 Gift Aid tax relief. This amount needs to be added to the Gross and Net Receipts reported in the above accounts to show the true picture of the Museum's finances.

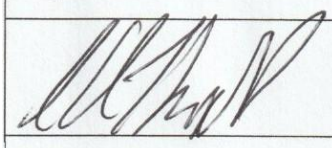
"Normal" income was broadly in line with the previous year, discounting the exceptional legacy income and the funds transfer from the CUA.

Expenditure, discounting the transfer to the Insurance Reserve, and non-recurring expenditure on lighting, specialist commercial scanning of the John Smallwood photographic collection, and other equipment itemswas similar to that of the previous year.

"Normal" net receipts including Gift Aid receipts were in line with the previous year, reflecting an overall stable financial position.

Approval

This annual report for the year 2025-26 was approved by the Trustees at their meeting on 23rd April 2026.

Signed	Signatory	Date
	CK Theobald Chairman of Trustees	28th May 2026
	Trustees	28th May 2026

Appendix

Independent examiner's report

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	**The Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust**		
On accounts for the year ended	31st January 2026	**Charity no (if any)**	1040128
Set out on pages	Not applicable		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/01/2026.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:		**Date:**	21st March 2026
Name:	Nigel Ronald Roscoe		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):			
Address:	35 Kenilworth Road Cheadle Heath Stockport, SK3 0QL		

IER 1 October 2018

Independent examiner's report (continued)

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	Not Applicable