

THE BELFAST & COUNTY DOWN RAILWAY COMPANY LIMITED



Trustees Annual Report – 2023

1. The Company.

The Belfast & County Down Railway Company Limited is a company limited by guarantee registered in Northern Ireland ((NI 610234) and incorporated in 2011. It is also a charity registered with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission (No. NIC 100107).

2. Reporting year

The Company's reporting year is the calendar year. In this report, the year means calendar year January until December 2023 inclusive.

3. Trustees.

The Trustees of the Charity and Directors of the Company are:

Robert J.A. Pue.	Chair.
Jeffrey Johnson.	Secretary.

4. The purpose of the Company.

In accordance with the Memorandum of Association, the Company seeks to advance interest in the railways of Ireland in general, and the Belfast & County Down Railway in particular.

- a) To acquire, protect, restore, preserve, promote and exhibit for the benefit of the general public, artefacts, equipment, rolling stock, and photographs relating to the Belfast & County Down Railway in particular, and similar items relating to other railways that may come to hand.
- b) To establish, maintain and manage a Heritage Railway Museum, through which the Company will promote the history of the railways of Ireland by arranging exhibitions, publications, interactive displays etc., and to develop the museum as an educational source, and as

a means of promoting unity and co-operation within the local community.

Until such time as a permanent museum is established, the Company will promote its aims and objectives by arranging occasional exhibitions at local libraries, special events, and at other suitable venues.

- c) To work with other preservation groups, schools, and community groups to promote the Company's objectives, and to arrange special community events to help achieve the Company's objectives.

5. The Activities of the Company.

During the past year, the Company has been negotiating with Ards and North Down Borough Council and with other local groups in an attempt to secure a suitable site for the development of the proposed museum at Donaghadee.

Exhibitions:

To further the Belfast & County Down Railway Company's objectives the Company participated in, and organised the following exhibition during 2023.

April, 2023 - The Company, in association with the B.& C.D.R. Museum Trust, mounted a two-day exhibition of photographs and artefacts at an annual exhibition organised at Bangor High School by the North Down Model Railway Society. This exhibition involved no expenditure, and no income, as it was purely a promotional event, and there was sufficient promotional material on hand from previous events.

Only one event was attended in 2023 because of the poor health of the two trustees for a period during the year, and the inability of B.& C.D.R. Museum Trust members to cover two other events on the company's behalf.

The Company has worked closely with the Belfast & County Down Railway Museum Trust, which is a registered Trust, but not a charity. It was the Trustees of the B.& C.D.R. Museum Trust who were responsible for establishing the B.& C.D.R. Co. Ltd., as it is necessary to have a Limited Company to be permitted to operate a Heritage Railway Museum. As a

Limited Liability Company, it is also possible to seek funding from various sources that would not otherwise be available.

The objectives of the B.& C.D.R. Museum Trust, which has a common Board of Trustees with the Belfast & County Down Railway Company Limited, are similar to those of the Company, and consideration is to be given to the possibility of merging the two organisations in the future, as soon as a suitable location for a museum is secured.

Because of the poor health of the two current Trustees of the company, negotiations will be held with the committee and members of the Trust with a view to appointing a few new Trustees in 2024.

6. Public Benefit.

The Trustees have complied with the duty to have regard to the guidance issued by the Northern Ireland Charity Commission.

The major part of the public benefit created by the Company in the year has been by way of the pursuit of the long-term objectives of the Company, which will be of benefit to the general public as defined in the Articles of Association through the mounting of exhibitions, and by negotiating with Ards and North Down Borough Council for the acquisition of a suitable site for the development of the proposed museum.

It is hoped that there will be considerable public benefit achieved through the planning of a two-day VJ Day event for 2025 to commemorate the 80th anniversary -of VJ Day in 2025. This will involve the participation of a number of other organisations and the B.& C.D.R. Museum Trust, with the Belfast & County Down Railway Company Limited being the principal organiser.

7. Financial Report.

The Company's accounts for the calendar year 2023 are attached along with the Independent Examiners Report.