

Taunton Model Railway Group

Constitution

1. TITLE

The Group shall be known as the "Taunton Model Railway Group."

2. OBJECTIVES

- a. To construct, operate, and exhibit model railways.
- b. To share knowledge and understanding of prototype and model railways.
- c. To exchange and improve individual modelling and operating skills.
- d. To help and encourage others to enjoy our hobby, regardless of skill level.

3. MANAGEMENT AND RULES

- a. The Group will be managed as laid down in this Constitution, which may only be amended by an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. The Group year for accounts and membership to be the calendar year ending 31st December.
- b. The Group will be managed by a committee of three named Officers: namely the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, all of whom are subject to election at AGM. The Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer shall each be elected for a three-year period, the three periods being timed so that, by rotation, one of the three shall be subject to re-election at every AGM, thereby providing continuity on the committee. If an elected member relinquishes his post before the end of his elected period, the committee may co-opt another member to carry out his duties until the next AGM, when the post shall be subject to re-election for the duration of the remaining period above.
- c. These Officers may co-opt additional or replacement members if necessary.
- d. Other rules concerning the conduct of group activities may be decided at ordinary meetings but must not conflict with the constitution.
- e. Two members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Prospective members will be encouraged to visit the Group during normal meetings and for the first four weeks will not be expected to contribute towards doing so.
- b. Subject to a satisfactory probationary period of four weeks of paying a pro rata sum for attendance (after the initial four weeks of non-paying attendance), full membership can be applied for. Temporary membership ceases after 3 months from the initial (non-paying) visit.
- c. Members are required to provide, at their own expense, a train formation which is for the use of all members. This to conform to the accepted Group standards. To achieve the correct variety of stock the composition to be previously agreed with the committee or nominated person for rolling stock as appropriate. The member will retain ownership of the provided train formation and keep it in the clubroom except for repair/replacement, as necessary. All stock to be suitably marked underneath to identify ownership. The committee will be required to review the continued membership of those who fail to comply with the requirements of this paragraph without being granted appropriate dispensation by the committee who are granted discretion in the application of this clause. New members will be similarly required to meet this requirement but will not be levied the current annual subscription for their initial year of full membership to

assist with contributing a train formation, i.e., a locomotive and suitable stock items, to be previously agreed as advised above. It is equally understood that on public open days, train formations that are inappropriate to exhibit (e.g., incomplete construction, failure to fully conform to Group standards, etc.), may be temporarily removed. (Although not a part of this constitution, the purpose for providing a train formation is explained in the minutes of the 2010 AGM held on 28.02.11 – for copy see below).

- d. Following six months full membership, a set of keys to the Group's premises can be requested upon payment of a deposit.
- e. All keys remain the property of the Group and must be returned upon cessation of membership. Deposits will only be refunded upon return of the keys.
- f. Annual subscriptions are to be agreed at each AGM and are payable in full by April 1st. The officers may agree to vary this requirement in exceptional circumstances. If arrears are not paid in full by the next AGM, the member shall be deemed to have resigned.
- g. Prospective members to pay a pro-rata sum until full membership is agreed, after the initial 4 weeks of free attendance.
- h. Members undertake to abide by the constitution, rules, and objectives of the Group. Any member not fulfilling these obligations may be asked to resign at an EGM or AGM. Members are expected to behave in a manner appropriate and suitable for the hobby nature of our activities. Members who become abusive and/or aggressive in their dealings with other members may be liable to sanctions, either in the way of temporary suspension or in the case of persistent poor behaviour be expelled from the group. Either case can be decided by an EGM or AGM, or agreement by the committee. (See section I below) The Taunton Model Railway Group will handle cases as detailed in the Taunton Model Railway Group – Disciplinary Procedure.
- i. Junior Membership
 - i. Junior Membership is open to young persons aged between 12 and 18 years and must have the written consent of their parents or guardians before they can be present on Taunton Model Railway Group premises. Junior membership will be granted in accordance with the Group's Safeguarding Policy.
 - ii. Child Protection - The Group strictly complies with The Children Act 1989 for all Junior Members. Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a close relative or guardian when attending the Group clubhouse. Once a Junior Member achieves their 14th birthday, and if it is agreed by both the Group's Committee and the parents/guardians of the Junior Member, they may attend meetings and other Group events unaccompanied, on receipt of a signed permission form which is kept on record.
 - iii. When junior members are present, there shall never be fewer than two adults on site otherwise the presence of the junior must be declined, in person, to the parent or guardian delivering that child.
 - iv. Subscriptions for Junior Members, i.e., those in full time education, will only become payable when the individual finishes full time education or enters full or part time employment whichever is the sooner.

- j. Voluntary resignations to be presented in writing to the secretary.
- k. Honorary life membership may be bestowed where considered appropriate at an AGM.

I. EXPULSION

- i. Subject to the agreement of the Committee, the Group may expel from membership:
 - 1. Any Member who brings the Group into disrepute or who has acted in a manner prejudicial or detrimental to the running of the Group, the constitution, or its affairs.
 - 2. Any prospective member whom it considers unsuitable or whose application has been deemed unacceptable by the Committee for entry to Membership of the Group.
 - 3. Any Member who does not abide by the Rules / Constitution.
- ii. Forfeit of subscriptions
 - 1. Any Member or prospective member expelled from the Group will forfeit any subscriptions or donations already paid.

5. ORDINARY MEETINGS

- a. Ordinary meetings will normally be held on Monday and Thursday evenings at the Group's premises and will include the Chairman's 'shout' to review activities at the Monday meeting, as required.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

- a. An Annual General Meeting will be held by the end of February each year for the election of Officers and a review of past and future activities; audited accounts will be presented for approval. Proposals for subscriptions, open days, exhibitions, and other relevant items will be discussed, and previously agreed admissions to membership in accordance with the Membership section, clause 2, during the year will be recorded.
- b. Written notice will be given to all Members twenty-one days prior to the intended date of an AGM.
- c. Seconded nominations for officers, and any agenda items affecting the constitution to be addressed to the secretary, in writing, not less than fourteen days prior to the AGM.
- d. The agenda will be issued to all Members seven days prior to the AGM. These will be available for collection in the clubroom. Those not collected by a member (or by another person on their behalf) due to non-attendance will be posted per second class mail on the following day, i.e., 6 days before the AGM, and shall be accepted as the required notice of the AGM agenda, irrespective of actual date of receipt thereafter. Similar arrangements for distribution to also apply in respect of an EGM, i.e., to be available in the clubroom by 14 days beforehand, with uncollected notifications to be posted the next day, 13 days beforehand, irrespective of actual receipt thereafter.
- e. Extraordinary General Meetings may be called at any time by a minimum of one-third of the full membership. Any such request must be addressed to the Secretary, in writing, at least twenty-one days prior to the intended date; stating the reasons. These must concern the constitution or management of the Group. Not less than one third of members must sign the request.
- f. The Secretary will give all members fourteen days notice of the EGM, with a copy of the agenda.

- g. Constitutional matters requiring AGM or EGM approval shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of the full Membership. Other matters shall be decided by a simple majority. In the event of a drawn vote the Chairman shall have the casting vote.
- h. Proxy votes are permitted, and must be submitted in writing to the secretary, to be received at least one day prior to the meeting.
- i. The normal method of communication within the group shall be by email, phone, face-to-face briefing, or where this is not available, by post. The Secretary shall maintain a communication listing showing email address, phone numbers or postal addresses.

7. ASSETS

- a. The Group is based in a dedicated building at Bishops Lydeard Railway Station, which, together with the model railway layouts and contents are collectively owned by the Group.
- b. The site is held under a renewable licence from the West Somerset Railway plc.
- c. Model locomotives, carriage and wagon stock, and other items owned by individual members are the responsibility of those members.

8. PUBLIC OPEN DAYS

- a. The Group undertakes to open its premises to the public in support of the West Somerset Railway as required by the licence conditions.
- b. In view of the foregoing all members will be required, within the limitations of their other commitments and physical abilities, to support the organisation and running of these public open days. The committee will be required to review the continued membership of those who fail to comply with the requirements of this paragraph without being granted dispensation from its requirements by the committee.
- c. The Group shall ensure there is appropriate insurance for the premises and contents and for public liability.

9. DISSOLUTION

- a. Should it become necessary to dissolve the Group, the assets and liabilities shall be disposed of by general agreement and mutual consent of the Members at an EGM.
- b. If mutual consent cannot be reached at the EGM, an independent person of suitable stature to be sought to act as an arbitrator.

10. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- a. Proposed alterations
 - i. Proposed alterations to the Group Constitution may be considered at any General Meeting of the Club, convened with the required written notice of the proposal.
 - ii. Alterations or amendments to the constitution must be proposed by a Full or Honorary Member of the Club and seconded by another Full or Honorary Member.
- b. Acceptance of alterations
 - i. Such alterations will only be passed if supported by not less than two-thirds of those Full and Honorary Members present and eligible to vote at the meeting, providing that a quorum has been achieved.

11. FINANCE

- a. The Group is a non-profit making organisation.
- b. The assets of the Group shall only be used for the furtherance of the objectives of the Group.
- c. No Group Member shall receive payment, directly or indirectly, for services to the Group or for other than legitimate expenses incurred in its work.

d. Duties of the Treasurer

- i. The Treasurer should ensure that accurate accounts of the finances of the Group are maintained.
- ii. The accounts should be available for reasonable inspection by Members and should be audited before every AGM.
- iii. The Group must maintain a bank current account and the following Officers should be authorised to sign Group cheques: two from the Chairman; Treasurer and Secretary.
- iv. Annual accounts should be checked and countersigned by one other member of the Committee acting as an internal auditor (chosen on a rota basis).

12. HEALTH & SAFETY

- a. The Committee is to ensure that the Group maintains a Health & Safety Policy.
- b. Members are responsible for ensuring that their actions on Group activities preserves the health and safety of themselves, fellow members, and members of the public.

13. INSURANCE

- a. The Treasurer will ensure that the Group maintains a current Insurance Policy covering both members and third-party liabilities and the assets of the Group. The policy shall also include indemnity insurance for the Group's Officers.

14. DOCUMENT HISTORY

a. The following table details the change history for this document:

Version	Date of Change	Details of Change
V1.1	6 th February 2017	<u>Constitutional amendments:</u> Item 1 – proposal accepted on at least a two thirds majority show of hands as proposed, seconded, and circulated with the Agenda. In accepting this amendment, Bob Eyles reminded us of the original purpose behind requiring members to place a train formation in the clubroom - namely, that in addition to ensuring stock is available for club practice sessions, any item that meets the basic requirements of correct wheel back to back measurement and KD coupling adjustment, is acceptable in the first instance, with the objective to encourage advancement, if needed to consider this, towards improving the item(s) as appropriate. The primary aim is to ensure nobody should feel inhibited to place their models on our layouts, irrespective of individual circumstances / abilities, and be encouraged to progress their modelling skills in parallel with meeting their commitment as part of the condition of accepting membership of the Group. It is equally understood that on public opening days, train formations that are inappropriate to exhibit (e.g., incomplete construction, failure to fully conform to Group Standards, etc.), may be temporarily removed
V1.2	17 th February 2020	At the 2020 AGM, the attendees agreed to add the following sections to the TMRG constitution: - Sections – 4.k Membership Expulsion, 10. Alterations to the Constitution, 11. Finance, 12. Health & Safety and 13. Insurance.
V1.3	8 th February 2022	At the 2022 AGM, the attendees agreed to add a new section on Junior membership to the TMRG constitution.