

## GWSR volunteers take occupation of 'The Goods Shed'

May 7, 2021



Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway (GWSR) volunteers have taken occupation of a new welfare building, which is a tasteful extension of the former Great Western Railway-built goods shed at Toddington station.

The completed new building – known as 'The Goods Shed' – has doubled the size of and is sympathetic to the original 1903-built building.

The approximately £500,000 project offers in total, around 380m<sup>2</sup> (almost 4,200ft<sup>2</sup>) arranged over two floors, including an 81m<sup>2</sup> (872ft<sup>2</sup>) ground floor yet-to-be-fitted-out extension to the machine shop, which occupies the original building. Funding came from a grant of £371,000 from the charitable Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Trust (GWRT) while over £20,000 has been raised by volunteers (including Gift Aid).

The new facility comprises a sign-on lobby with noticeboards, ground floor male and female toilets, changing rooms and showers; while on the first floor are meeting and training rooms for footplate and mutual improvement sessions, medical and testing room, office, washing facilities and a spacious mess room. The latter incorporates a kitchen complete with fridge, microwaves and dishwasher. There is 'clean'

and 'dirty' access to the first floor, the former via an internal stairway and the latter via an external steel flight and the first-floor external mezzanine.

Local firms were involved in the construction, the main contractor being Middicott & Rodway while sub-contractors were ABS Heating, Buzz Electrical, AJ Furniture and Steelway Fensecure Ltd for joinery and steelwork. The architecture was by volunteer

Keith Smith while Mark Young, also a locomotive department volunteer, oversaw the contracts through his own business, Berry & Young. There are 'nice touches' in the construction such as replica external lanterns while windows and brickwork match the original.

Although largely for the steam and diesel locomotive departments, the facility, replacing a former Mk 1 coach that has been used since the 1980s, is open to all volunteers and it is where they sign on and off, if not done via a recently-commissioned online system.

Completion of the building is about a year overdue, thanks to the coronavirus pandemic. Concurrent with the construction, the siding giving access to the unloading road in the car park (Road 5) has been re-laid and the surface between the David Page locomotive shed and The Goods Shed concreted, thanks to a further GWRT grant of £20,000.

John Cruxon, Steam Locomotive Department Chairman commented: "This is a game-changer for the railway and it is a testament to the volunteers who have provided a significant amount of funding for the fitting out of the building.

"It is an exciting time for our railway as it emerges from lockdown restrictions and this facility must be one of the, if not the, best of its type on any heritage railway, providing outstanding standards of welfare and hygiene. Our regulator - the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) - is rightly taking in increasing interest in the welfare of volunteers on heritage railways and The Goods Shed certainly more than satisfies such requirements."

Added Glyn Cornish, GWRT Chairman: "This type of project is exactly what the Trust is there for. I would particularly like to thank all those volunteers who have contributed to help fund this facility to reach such a high standard, especially as we have been able to recover Gift Aid from their donations. 'The Goods Shed' provides an exceptional standard of welfare accommodation and it does great credit to our railway.

"Above all it recognises the importance of our railway's 950 or so volunteers by giving them the facilities they deserve which can only enhance their enjoyment."

An official opening of The Goods Shed, a name chosen by ballot among volunteer staff that also recognises the past use of the original building, is planned for later in the year.

Photo credit: *Ian Crowder/GWSR*