**Tracing the Rails® and Tracing the Rails Productions– Social Media Guidelines**

**1. Tone & Branding**

* Our tone is **friendly but professional**. We aim to engage warmly with our audience while maintaining a clear brand identity.
* We should always reference **Tracing the Rails** as a brand rather than as individuals.
* **TTR** is a short from of the brand for use in short posts, but not as a preference to the main brand name.
* The **“®” logo** must be used wherever possible, as *Tracing the Rails* is a **registered trademark**.
* Standardized **hashtags** for all posts:
  + **Core Hashtag**: #TracingTheRails
  + **Main Hashtags (3 total)**: #TTR, #RailwayHistory,
  + **Optional Hashtags (5 total)**: #TheLostRailway, #TheSteyningLine, #LostRailways #WalkingTheRails #RailwayWalks

**2. Platforms & Posting Strategy**

* **Primary Platforms:**
  + **YouTube Channel Comments**
  + **Facebook**
  + **Instagram**
  + **Patreon**
* **Posting Frequency:** Aim for **one post per week per platform**, ensuring variety in content themes.
* **Content Ownership:**
  + Personal reflections (e.g., directing insights, individual achievements) belong on **personal accounts**.
  + Posts on official **TTR accounts** must **always benefit the brand as a whole**, rather than focusing on any one team member’s achievements.
  + Team members posting about *Tracing the Rails* on personal accounts should ensure their posts reflect the collaborative nature of the project rather than positioning it as an individual effort.
* **Press Releases:**
  + All **press releases must be reviewed and approved by the producer** before they are issued.
  + Any media requests should be **discussed with the director or producer before responding**.
* **Sidings & Behind-the-Scenes Content:**
  + *Sidings* (YouTube short-form deep dives) and *Engine Shed* (behind-the-scenes content) will release to **Patreon first**.
  + The **main show** releases on **TV & YouTube first**, with the **Director’s Cut** (longer version) exclusive to **Patreon.**

**3. Community Engagement & Comment Policy**

* We respond to **all comments with interest and engagement** where possible.
* Whenever relevant, we should **link replies to specific TTR episodes** to drive viewership.
* **Handling Criticism:**
  + **Face it head-on** with **honesty and politeness**.
  + If a response isn't clear, **the core team (5 members)** discusses the best approach.
  + The **director has the final say** on contentious issues.
* **Trolling Policy:**
  + We are **not actively concerned about trolls** at this stage, but if necessary, we will apply a standard block/report approach.
* **Reposting Audience Content:**
  + We **do not reshare audience content** unless there is a **clear and measurable benefit** to TTR.
  + Resharing can imply **endorsement**, which we want to avoid with the exception of local press, national press and RewindTV.

**4. Collaborators & Credits**

* All contributors, regardless of size or scale, are **credited in the show credits**.
* **Patreon Supporters Get Special Credit:**
  + **Associate Producers** – for lower-tier Patreon supporters.
  + **Executive Producers** – for high-tier Patreon supporters.
* Patreon supporters receive **early access** to all three brands:
  + **Tracing the Rails** (Main Show)
  + **Sidings** (Short-Form Deep Dives)
  + **Engine Shed** (Behind-the-Scenes Content)

**Why "Engine Shed"?**

We’ve chosen *Engine Shed* as the behind-the-scenes brand name because railway sheds were historically where locomotives were maintained and prepared.

**5. Legal & Copyright Considerations**

* TTR operates as a **non-profit** and has **permissions** for all materials used.
* **We do not use copyrighted materials in marketing.**
* The **main show credits** contain a **disclaimer** covering:
  + **Accuracy of historical sources**
  + **Editorial responsibility**

**6. Crisis Management**

* **All crisis issues** must go to the **Director or Producer** first.
* If necessary, the issue will be escalated to **insurance policy providers or external advisors.**