

PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP MEETING 31

HELD BOTH IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS
ON 5 AUGUST 2025



In person:

Cllr Beryl Ezzard (BE) of Dorset Council (Chair), Steven Booth (SB) PCR Community Rail Officer, Mick Stone (MS) Secretary; Frank Roberts of Swanage Railway (FR), and Cllr Cliff Sutton of STC (CS).

Via Teams:

Mike Whitwam (MWm) representing Swanage Town Council (Vice Chair), Kelly Flynn of Dorset Council (KF), Andrew Ardley (AA) and Paula Aldridge (PA) of SWR; Jack Wharton (JW) of Network Rail, Ali Rodari (AR) of Perenco UK, Jenni Jones (JJ) of CRN.

The meeting was quorate.

Agenda Item 1 - Chair's Opening Remarks, Welcome and Introductions

BE welcomed all to the meeting. Brief Introductions were made.

Agenda Item 2 - Apologies for Absence

Received from Alex Brocklesby (AB) of National Trust and Rob Smith of Perenco UK.

Agenda Item 3 - Draft Minutes of the Steering Group meeting of 13th May 2025

The Steering Group minutes were agreed.

Agenda Item 4 - Matters Arising Therefrom and Not Appearing on the Agenda

The Actions from the May meeting were reviewed. The incomplete items were as follows:

- SR/Coastal Cruises/MoreBus joint ticketing - **ACTION: SB to clarify with Martin Trott at SR.**
- Dorchester South actions (x 3) - SB and AA are working through these points.
- AA commented that the 'Digital Poster Board' referred to would actually be another Totem, meaning that there would be two of these at the station.
- At Wareham, the Corten steel planters were in situ. However, two might need to be relocated to facilitate the work of the Ecology team (late August/early September).
- Other items were covered in CRPO's report and on the agenda.

Agenda Item 5 - Financial Update

SB had sent round the latest financial information (end of June 2025) as part of his report.

He drew the meeting's attention to CRDF and changes made regarding matched funding. JJ added that volunteer time could now be included in the calculation of that match funding.

JW advised that he had been told that the NR funding for the landscape works at Wareham had been sent to PCR Community Rail Partnership.

ACTION - SB to check.

MS asked for consideration of the recommended 12 month extension of the current arrangements with Hampshire CRP as Accountable Body. This recommendation was agreed. **ACTION: MS to contact HCRP to confirm.**

PA asked for confirmation that CRP expenditure on Station Friends' Groups was reclaimed where possible from CRN or SWR. **ACTION: SB.**

Agenda Item 6 - CRPO's Report & Updates including Railway 200 Events

SB had circulated his report. The main points arising were:

- Reaccreditation - the meeting between PCRP, SWR, NR, and CRN was due to take place on 12th August. Papers for the meeting were being sent round. The Chair, Secretary and Officer would represent the Partnership.
- Constitution - as part of the Reaccreditation process the Partnership had been asked to reaffirm that Steering Group members understood and supported the Constitution, originally drawn up in 2017/18 and adjusted from time to time since then. The Chair read out Schedule 1, which set out the Steering Group's Terms of Reference. On being put to the meeting all confirmed their support.
- Again, as part of the Reaccreditation process, SWR (PA) had sent out a revised Memorandum of Understanding with the Partnership, setting out expectations, but without requirements as such.
- SB referred to the detailed elements set out in his report in respect of Dorchester South, Wool, and Wareham.
- Specific issues raised by SB included the expected second round of Rural Mobility Pilots funding for which Western Gateway would be seeking applications. SB was already in touch with local partners about this. **ACTION: SB.**
- Also, the Dorset Metro SOBC - the final version, with the 'Swanage' element included - was due very shortly. AA underlined the importance of BC&P Council's response as the scheme was to assist with prospective housing numbers in that Borough ie the Dorset Council element was relatively minor.
- PA wanted to make sure that the Partnership put forward ideas for submission to the SWR Awards in October.
ACTION: SB/ALL.

Agenda Item 7 - Purbeck Shuttle 200

SB said that he understood that the Wednesday services were being well supported but the Saturday services were not so well. There was discussion about what changes might be possible in the short time available before the end of August, after which no services would operate. The actual statistics were awaited from Dorset Community Transport. The Chair commented that continuity was key and that, ideally, funding would be located to continue with a service for three or four more years. **ACTION: SB to chase for the statistics from DCT.**

There was discussion about the options available. JJ suggested that there was potential to offer what would probably be 'empty seats' to schoolchildren or other groups. AA said that he had checked and the bus service was not on either RSPB's or Visit Dorset's websites. **ACTION: SB to check.** This underlined the need for a separate resource to manage these services in future, as RSPB had had in the past.

Agenda Item 8 - Reports from Group Members

Dorset Council

- The Chair referred to the likelihood of forthcoming staff redundancies at DC. KF had made several comments in the Chat which were relevant to the Dorset Metro scheme.
- KF stated the SOBC due for completion imminently. This is just the first step. It is her understanding this will be included as part of their joint Local Transport Plan. She knows BCP officers would be happy to come along to this meeting if the group agreed. The Dorset Metro is almost wholly in BCP.
- KF mentioned if there's any merit in contacting Bournemouth University to see if there's anything their media students can help with regarding research and marketing. She stated she didn't know if this is achievable or what the costs would be.
- KF stated their joint local plan with BCP is on track to go out for consultation this month. This will set our longer-term aspirations and ambitions.

Network Rail

- JW reported that the next phase of ecology works at Wareham would be taking place in the Autumn. The work would include an Information board for the former Up Bay. It was thought likely that two of the new planters on the North side at Wareham might have to be relocated to accommodate the ecological work.
- There had been an initial meeting with SB, MS and AA to discuss a refresh of the Station Strategic Plan, which included the availability of suitable station facilities. A follow-up meeting would be held in due course.
- NR and SR would shortly be concluding a Joint Collaborative Working Agreement.
- JW mentioned again the upcoming engineering works and blockades between the 15th and the 22nd of November. This is to enable some significant engineering work, particularly around the earthworks.
- The Chair mentioned continuing anti-social behaviour at Wareham Station, on the North side.

Swanage Railway

- FR reported that it was now Peak Season. A major feature was the High Fire Risk locally which meant that steam traction's use had to be limited.
- The Governance Review was now reaching a point where the current membership of SRT was expected to be asked to support an appropriate resolution at its AGM in October. If successful, the new Body would be in place in February 2026.
- Plans for a Temporary Halt to serve Blue Pool were being drawn up for the 2026 main season.
- The Stakeholder Day in July had been well attended.
- JW had already referred to the joint Collaborative Working Arrangement between NR and SR.

Perenco

- AR had initially joined the meeting remotely but then had to leave the meeting due to an urgent matter. She agreed to send some written notes for appending to the minutes. (appended to the minutes - note: further clarification being sought).
- BE advised that she had heard that there might be an application from Perenco to DC as Minerals Planning Authority, to extend its Drilling Licence at Wytch Farm and other local sites beyond 2038. This would likely mean that the access road at Norden would remain open to road traffic for an extended period.
- FER wondered what the impact might be on the lease of Furzebrook Sidings.

South Western Railway

- The move to Public ownership took place on the 25th May 2025.
- The new managing director, Lawrence Bowman, has visited Swanage Railway, having also attended the Parliamentary Reception on 7th July and was due to attend the SWR Community Rail Conference on 16th October.
- PA reported that the judging for the Celebration Stations event had been completed, ahead of the Awards at RHS Wisley at the end of September.
- Inspiration the R200 special train had visited Waterloo recently but the event was marred by major signal failures preventing many people from attending. Still, it would be appearing elsewhere on the SWR network in the months to come.
- AA advised that he was due to attend a site meeting with SB at Dorchester South shortly, to discuss Platform 2 planting etc.
- AA anticipated that the Access for All Feasibility Study at Dorchester South would soon be considered for funding by NR and the DfT.
- AA asked if KF had heard any more about the BSIP Capital allocation being vired across to Revenue Support (check Chat!).

- AA advised that the Jurassic Coast publicity drive would now go ahead in Spring 2026. SB confirmed that he had sent a lot of information through to colleagues at Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership in this regard.
- PA confirmed that she now had a colleague helping her with Social Value reporting, an increasingly important element of her work.
- In answer to a question from SB it was confirmed that the Station Manager for the line west of Poole was currently off work, and a colleague based at Bournemouth was covering the role.

CRN

- JJ mentioned the Reaccreditation meeting, for which the agenda was about to be distributed.
- JJ asked BE what was needed to deal with the anti-social behaviour at Wareham Station. She would try to help.
ACTION:SB/BE.
- She also mentioned the Travelling with Confidence programme, and that a new 'pot' of funding would shortly be available from Siemens, who had an office in Poole.
- The 2026 CRN Awards ceremony would be held in Derby in March 2026. Submissions would be welcome from September.

Swanage Town Council

- CS advised that STC was seeking to extend the main season by holding regular weekend events in the 'shoulder' months. Data is being gathered to support the continuation of such events.
- CS was keen to progress Cycle Routes and additional bike parking in Swanage.

National Trust

- No report available.

Agenda Item 9 - Any Other Business

SB mentioned Platform for Change which he was working on with colleagues at Severnside and South Wessex CRPs to produce leaflet for family days out via SWR Stations distributed via the local schools.

Date of Next Meetings:

Stakeholder Group AGM (In-Person Only) Wednesday 1st October, 1pm – 4pm 2025 (lunch provided from 1pm before the meeting) Main meeting to commence from 2pm.

Steering Group (Online) - Tues 18th November 2025 from 11am.

MS – V1 - 10/08/25

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