

# PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP MEETING 26

HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS  
ON 21 MAY 2024



## In person:

Cllr Mike Whitwam (MWm) of Swanage Town Council (Chair), Cllr Beryl Ezzard (BE) of Dorset Council (Vice Chair), Mick Stone (MS) of Swanage Railway (Secretary), Frank Roberts of Swanage Railway (FR), Steven Booth (SB) Community Rail Officer, Rob Hattersley (RH) of CRN, Jack Wharton (JW), and Jaime Rockhill (JR) and Rory Pilcher (RP) of Network Rail, Andrew Ardley of SWR (first half of meeting only).

The meeting was quorate.

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

MWm welcomed all to the meeting, and introduced RH, whose first Steering Group meeting this was. MWm advised that he had been re-appointed to the role of STC representative on PCRPP.

## Agenda Item 2 - Apologies for Absence

Received from Kelly Flynn of Dorset Council (KF), Alex Brocklesby (AB) of National Trust, Paul Webster of CRN (PW), Paula Aldridge of SWR (PA), and Cllr Cliff Sutton of STC (CS).

## Agenda Item 3 - Confirmation of Representatives of Local Councils

MWm had already confirmed his position in Item 1 above. BE was absent at this point (but see Item 7 below for her update).

## Agenda Item 4 - Draft Minutes of the Steering Group meeting of 6th February 2024 and Stakeholder Group of 17th April 2024

These and matters arising were held over to the latter part of the agenda because of the need to deal with the Network Rail and SWR presentations. (NB - it was subsequently agreed that the Secretary would send these minutes out separately for agreement or otherwise by Steering Group members. **ACTION: MS.**

## Agenda Item 5 - Matters Arising from Steering Group of 7th November 2023 and Not Appearing on the Agenda.

As above.

## Agenda Item 6 - Next Steps Presentation on the Wareham Station Strategic Plan (SSP)

JR and RP had previously advised of the completion of the SSP. They were keen that their report be acted upon, and wished to have an update from Steering Group on progress with the various actions which had been proposed. The various comments and updates were:

- 'Rover tickets' - AA pointed out that it was taking longer to get DfT approval for schemes like this and this had prevented SWR progressing joint ticketing locally in 2024/25. Also, the £2 bus fare scheme was distorting matters. SWR wished to focus on the promotional side of things for now.
- A Dorset wide Travel App - this would follow what was agreed by BC&P Council in due course.
  - the Jurassic Adventurer joint ticket (City Cruises, Morebus, and SR) was now available with a hard launch to come later in the week. It was assumed that this was a 'seasonal' product only.
- It was agreed that bus frequencies on the main routes were good, in Summer at least.
- Cycle provision - the rack on the south side might be relocated to the north side at Wareham.
- Pedestrian safety - RP would follow up with KF separately.
- Additional car parking - AA was waiting to hear from Network Rail about the future of the signal box and the former 'Up side goods yard'. This was linked to decisions about the future of the level crossing. BE advised about the current problems of rail users parking in residential streets to avoid the parking charge. **ACTION: JR to contact the local rail maintenance team for an update on their requirements going forward.**

- Aesthetic offering by Wareham Landscape Proposal - BE and SB had engaged with JW about this. It might be that funding is required and SB would do his best to estimate costs in concert with the NR and SWR ecology teams.  
**ACTION: SB.**
- Refreshments - AA reported that it was intended to install an external power socket to enable mobile operators to site themselves close to the main station building. It was not clear whether it had been installed, and if not, when it would be. **ACTION: AA to check.** MS confirmed that he had sent the details of two potential operators to Amey.
- Signal box - JW said the future was under review. It currently acted as a welfare facility for the local maintenance team. BE asked if the internal components would be removed in the event of the building being made available to the local community. It was noted that this building was not part of the main station Listing status.
- Staff accessibility - AA confirmed that the closure of the booking office was not proceeding.
- Customer accessibility - no change.
- Toilets - AA said that the remote access trial elsewhere had not been a success. There were obvious security issues in keeping them open when no staff were on duty, and if they were required to keep the facilities open longer then funding would be necessary to do so. BE said that the Friends group would like to be key holders at some point. AA advised that the local Station Manager was the person to speak to in this regard.
- Safe walking route - JR to take up with KF. **ACTION: JR.** AA said that perhaps a future round of mid-tier accessibility might be a source of funding.
- Flora and fauna - was in hand. SB is talking to Leo.
- EV Charging - it was thought that Dorset Council had some funding for expansion. AA said that the DfT was not currently offering any funding for this. Anti-Idling Signage. **ACTION: RP to take up with KF.**

SB asked what would happen next. MS suggested a 6 monthly review, via a sub-group. Thanks were offered to RP who would shortly be leaving his role at NR.

MWm asked JR when the Dorset Metro SOBC (Strategic Outline Business Case) work would be starting. It had been noticed that Siding 1 in the Down sidings had been re-sleepered/ballasted recently and MWm wondered if this was to do with the SOBC works. Presumably this siding was intended as a layover point. JR replied that he would keep in touch as the SOBC study progressed. FER commented that access to the Down side sidings were essential for any future Swanage to Wareham Service. Thus, the level crossing issue needed to be resolved.

- in regard to the level crossing issue, BE advised that the new Portfolio Holder for Transport & Travel at DC was Cllr Jon Andrews. Matt Piles was the lead Officer. NR would be speaking to DC to finalise their draft report on the options available.

(Note: AA, JR, and RP all left the meeting at this point).

### Agenda Item 7 - Financial Update

SB had sent round his latest report with the agenda. The key points were:

- the core funding from SWR for 2024/25 had been received. The 2024/25 core funding from Dorset Council was expected shortly.
- Both the SWR CCIF and Projects funding bids for Dorchester South had been successful.
- BE advised that the Friends of Wareham's summer planting would need some funding. This might come from CRN's Small Grants Fund, if available. **ACTION: SB to assist BE in completing the necessary form.**

### Agenda Item 8 - CRPO's Update incl Draft Business Plan

SB had sent round a report. The key points and discussion arising were:

- the work at Dorchester South (Access for All mid-tier scheme) seemed to have slowed in recent times. The reason was unknown.
- SWR's Access & Integration Manager had toured Wareham, Wool, and Dorchester South. SB and other had been in attendance. The resultant report would be followed up.
- The Jurassic Adventurer joint ticket had gone on sale (see above), and would be promoted via the website and social media.
- BE spoke about the proposed sub-group to discuss ways of promoting the 2RN bus service. She would proceed with setting this up now the local elections were out of the way. It was agreed that the new Portfolio Holder at DC (Cllr Jon Andrews) should be invited to attend the next Steering Group meeting, as well as the new Leader (Cllr Nick Ireland).

#### **ACTION: BE.**

- Reaccreditation - SB wondered if PCRCP was late in applying for this, but RH said that it was not a problem, as the new member of staff, to replace Dan Wright, was not due to start until June 18th. It was possible that Paul Webster would lead on this.
- The draft Business Plan had been circulated with the agenda and papers. SB reminded the meeting that this document would be needed if some other sources of funding were to be accessed, and asked for any comments on the draft by 30th June latest. BE was supportive.
- Try The Train - SB reported on a very successful first trip. He particularly praised the SWR Community Ambassadors for their professionalism and enthusiasm. SB showed the video of the day.
- Re the funding required for the land adjoining Wareham level crossing, JW advised that it was possible that NR might be able to contribute towards the cost. **ACTION: SB to confer with JW.**
- JW confirmed that access to the rear of Wool Goods Shed was still a problem for NR, in view of the needs of the local maintenance team. SB wondered if it would be possible to move the gates back rather than to restrict the width of the access itself. Only having access from the platform constituted a safety issue. **ACTION: JW and SB to confer to try to find a way forward.** MWm believed that funding would be less of an issue if the access could be resolved.
- At this point, BE advised that she is not yet formally appointed following the local elections. It was possible that another local councillor might be tasked with representing DC at Steering Group. The Democratic Services department at DC would advise.

### Agenda Item 9 - Wool Goods Shed

Dealt with above.

### Agenda Item 10 - Reports from Steering Group Members

Swanage Railway - BE was grateful for the regular updates coming from SR to its members. It was suggested that the new administration at County Hall be invited to visit the Railway. FER responded that it was proposed to hold a Stakeholder Day on a mid week day in July (details including the date to be finalised). The likes of the Town Clerk at STC and the Chief Executive at DC would be invited amongst others.

### Agenda Item 11 - Any Other Business

- BE suggested the Corn Exchange at Wareham as a possible future venue for face-to-face meetings. There would be a charge. **ACTION: SB.**
- The Secretary to send round the Steering Group and Stakeholder Group minutes asking for comments, and confirming the next meeting on 8th August. **ACTION: MS.**
- SB would be at Corfe Castle Station later in the week, with the Officer from South Wessex CRP, as part of Community Rail Week.

- It was agreed that the regular SR member updates, known as 'SitReps' would be forwarded to Stakeholder Group members. **ACTION: SB/MS.**
- FER commented that he could not afford in the current situation to spend two hours at each PCRCP meeting. It was suggested that time limits be placed on each item as part of the agenda papers. It was further suggested that there might be separate sessions with main colleagues eg NR, SR, DC, and SWR, feeding into subsequent Steering Group meetings. **ACTION: MS and SB to consider further and report back.**

ENDS

MS - V1 - 27/05/24

Steven Booth  
Purbeck Community Rail Officer  
steve.booth@purbeckcrp.org.uk  
Tel: 07485 372137

