

PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP MEETING 28

HELD BOTH IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS
ON 12 NOVEMBER 2024



In person:

Mike Whitwam (MWm) representing Swanage Town Council, Cllr Beryl Ezzard (BE) of Dorset Council, Mick Stone (MS) of Swanage Railway (Secretary), Frank Roberts of Swanage Railway (FR), Steven Booth (SB) PCR Community Rail Officer, Cllr Cliff Sutton of Swanage Town Council (CS).

Present via Teams:

Alex Brocklesby (AB) of National Trust, Andrew Ardley of SWR (AA), and Jack Wharton (JW) of Network Rail.

The meeting was quorate.

Agenda Item 1 - Election of Chair

The Secretary opened the meeting by asking the Voting Members of Steering Group present to appoint a Chair, following the recent AGM and the requirements of the Constitution. MWm and BE put themselves forward. Following a vote, BE was elected Chair. MWm later confirmed that he would like to be the Vice Chair, and this was confirmed by the meeting.

Agenda Item 2 - Chair's Opening Remarks, Welcome and Introductions

BE in the Chair. She welcomed all to the meeting.

Agenda Item 3 - Apologies for Absence

Received from Jenni Jones of CRN (JJ), Paula Aldridge of SWR (PA), Ali Rodari of Perenco UK (AR), and Jaime Rockhill (JR) of Network Rail, Kelly Flynn of Dorset Council (KF).

Agenda Item 4 - Draft Minutes of the Steering Group meeting of 6th August 2024

The minutes were agreed, subject to the following Matters Arising:

- Landscape proposal at Wareham is in progress (SB and JW);
- Proposed external power point at Wareham - **ACTION: AA to check latest position;**
- Anti-idling signage at Wareham - **ACTION: JR and KF to pursue;**
- Small Grants application for Wareham - **ACTION: SB and BE to pursue;**
- Invitation to Cllr Andrews to attend PCR meetings - he had attended the recent AGM;
- Agenda timings - had now been introduced as a standard for future Steering Group meetings;
- Wool Goods Shed update - **ACTION: JW to liaise with his colleague, Mike Terry;**
- MS confirmed that the Accountable Body arrangements had been extended for a further year, from 1st October, 2024;
- SB had applied for and obtained funding for information boards for Wool;
- AA and SB had arranged access at Dorchester South for measuring up during the mid-tier works;
- MS and SB had made the change to the Constitution recommended by CRN during the Reaccreditation process;
- The Reserves Policy had been agreed in principle at the August meeting. The setting of the minimum funds to be held would appear under the Finance section later;
- The Business Plan had been sent round for comments, with little response. **ACTION: SB to send round again;**
- The 'Totem' touch screen at Wareham did not yet include details of local events and information. AA advised that SWR was awaiting a quote from a provider. **ACTION: SB to send AA the information needed by him, including the format, and to suggest the type of local events etc which PCR would like to publicise;**

- 2RN/Purbeck Shuttle 200 - BE updated on discussions which were ongoing, including with DCT, to understand likely costs for the various options. A meeting was planned for January - **ACTION BE and SB.** (Note: AA suggested the SWR CCIF, due to be announced on 21st November, might be a good place to apply to for such funding, possibly for an Engagement Officer or some such);
- Purbeck Rural Pilot proposal - discussions between PTAG, PCRP, and National Trust had taken place. CS wanted STC and SPDT to be involved as well. **ACTION: SB and AB to liaise further accordingly;**
- SR's Restore Your Railway application - no update had been received - **ACTION: JR to follow up;**
- The draft minutes of the recent AGM had only just been made available - **ACTION: all to consider and comment as necessary.**

Agenda Item 5 - Financial Update

SB had sent round an update as part of his main Report (next item). He mentioned the draft Reserves Policy and Business Plan mentioned earlier under Item 4. He highlighted that a bid had been submitted for the 'Running In boards' at Wareham and Wool, but there were some issues which he was discussing with SWR, and this might mean that the project was deferred to 2025/26. The latest Finance sheet for up to end of October 2024 had been circulated and SB asked for any questions to be directed to him - **ACTION: all.**

AA advised that SWR's Business Plan was due to be submitted to the DfT shortly, and all indications were that the level of core funding would remain at a similar level to existing ie with no uplift for inflation.

Agenda Item 6 - CRPO's Report & Updates

SB had circulated his report. The key points and discussions arising therefrom had largely been discussed earlier in the Agenda.

Agenda Item 7 - Reports from Group Members

Dorset Council:

- BE reported that the Council was keen to pursue active travel and integrated transport when funding allowed. They were working with BC&P Council, too, and Cllr Andy Hadley of that Authority had attended the recent AGM. FER asked BE to contact colleagues to seek a response to a letter sent by SR in January 2024. **ACTION: BE.**

South Western Railway:

- AA reported that the Dorchester South mid-tier scheme was progressing, albeit slightly behind schedule. He asked for ideas for an Opening Ceremony in early 2025, possibly including reference to Railway 200. **ACTION: ALL to respond. He expected SWR to transfer to public ownership in May 2025.**
- He was aware of pressure for SWR to do more in regards to rail/bus integration but, currently, SWR had limited resource to progress this. The 2025/26 Business Plan would try to address this. There was a proposal to extend the 'Jurassic Coast' branding further eastwards, and there was mention of improved facilities at the bus stops at both Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door. Both First South and MoreBus were included in those talks/discussions. Suggestions of re-branding of buses and bus stops might mean a need to reconsider the design of the Running In boards proposal mentioned earlier - **ACTION: SB to keep under review.**

National Trust:

- AB advised that there was nothing further to report since the recent AGM. She said that the Studland Master Planning consultation had now closed and collation of responses was underway. Asked about the Ferry Road consultation, she said that the Inquiry had been postponed following much public interest. It was now to be held in December in Poole.

Network Rail:

- JW mentioned various recent activities on Wessex Route. With regard to the Wareham Landscaping proposal he asked SB to send the appropriate invoice - **ACTION: SB**. Discussions were needed re volunteers working near the 3rd Rail and maps of services etc. **ACTION: JW and SB**. Further, he mentioned that another Network Change consultation re the connection to the down sidings at Wareham would be taking place shortly. This time the proposal would be to temporarily take the connection out of use. MS commented that the concern that he had was that this would inevitably increase the costs of bringing the connection back into use in due course. Finally, JW mentioned that he would be progressing the landlord's consent for the Dorchester South murals - **ACTION: JW**.

Swanage Railway:

- FER expressed his concern from an SR perspective that the consultation on Wareham down sidings connection should not mean the removal of the sidings or the connection thereto. He went on to thank JW and colleagues for the visit to SR in October by the Wessex Route MD, and spoke of the hopes that the proposed Framework Agreement between SR and NR Wessex would work to the benefit of both parties. BE mentioned that the future of Wareham level crossing was to be discussed at Dorset Council meeting on 19th November. She expected the meeting to look at alternative options.
- FER went on to mention that SR would be participating in Railway 200 and also Swanage Railway 140 in 2025.
- Various special events were coming up over the Winter of 2024/25. Budget setting for 2025/26 was underway - he re-iterated that it was important to have a response from DC to the letter of January 2024 mentioned earlier, to enable the budget to reflect DC's requirements. Increased costs would flow from the recent Budget ie national insurance employer contributions. Interviews for a new CEO post were due to take place in the next few weeks. Bridge 9 repairs were needed before any through trains could run in 2025.

Perenco UK: No report.

Swanage Town Council:

- CS reported on various local issues on which the Council was engaged. He thought that a local Community Bus would help to reduce traffic in the town, and was thus interested in proposals for Rural Mobility Pilot mentioned earlier in the agenda.

CRN:

- Jenni Jones had circulated a written report.

Agenda Item 8 - Any Other Business

- Railway 200 - SR and SWR would be working together on various strands of this. JW agreed to keep all posted - **ACTION: JW**.
- CS mentioned pavement works in Swanage in early 2025

Date of Next Meetings:

- (Online only) Steering Group - Tuesday, 11th February 2025

ENDS

MS – V1 - 17/11/24

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