

PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP MEETING 30

HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS
ON 13 MAY 2025



In person:

Cllr Beryl Ezzard (BE) of Dorset Council (Chair), Mike Whitwam (MWm) representing Swanage Town Council (Vice Chair), Steven Booth (SB) PCRP Community Rail Officer, Frank Roberts of Swanage Railway (FR), Kelly Flynn of Dorset Council (KF), Andrew Ardley (AA), of SWR Jack Wharton (JW) of Network Rail. Alex Brocklesby (AB) of National Trust, Ali Rodari (AR) of Perenco UK, Jenni Jones (JJ) CRN.

The meeting was quorate.

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

Beryl mentioned the passing of Bill Trite and expressed our deepest condolences to his family and recognised the contribution he made to the Swanage Railway and the PCRP over the years.

BE welcomed all to the meeting. Introductions were carried out for the benefit of Ali Rodari.

Agenda Item 2 - Apologies for Absence

Received from Mick Stone (MS) of Swanage Railway (Secretary), Paula Aldridge (PA) of SWR, Cllr Cliff Sutton of Swanage Town Council (CS).

Agenda Item 3 - Draft Minutes of the Steering Group meeting of 11th February 2025 & Stakeholder Group meeting 16th April 2025 were approved

The SG minutes were agreed. The Stakeholder minutes had one amendment requested by KF on Agenda Item 4 - CRO's Report to state that she could publicise the Purbeck Shuttle 200 service in the Monthly DC newsletter not weekly as previously recorded. **ACTION: AP SB to follow up.**

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

The outstanding Actions from the February meeting were reviewed. Most of these had been dealt with, but the following still needed action:

- High Level Economic Analysis (Dorset Metro) ALL
- SR/Coastal Cruises/MoreBus joint ticketing FER stated that Martin Trott was dealing with this one and at this stage it is not clear where discussions are with MoreBus and other partners. **ACTION: AP SB to clarify with MT.**

Agenda Item 5 - Financial Update

SB had sent round the latest financial information (end of March financial year) as part of his report. The main headlines were that there was approximately £35k in the Account, and a list of project bids which had been submitted since the last meeting of which the main points are listed below.

SWR Core Funding set at £23,062 SWR Project Funding approved £3,000 SWR Sustainability Team Grant for Dorchester South Planting £2,500

Dorset Council Funding £2,000 CRDF Funding Grants from CRDF amounting to a total of £9,214.44 expected before end of June 2025 We are also expecting a £1,500 contribution to Wareham Landscape work as part of match funding.

SB stated he was positive about the financial situation once things have settled down and even though there has been no uplift in 3 years there is additional money within the SWR project funding pot this financial year that we are able to bid for.

ACTION: AP SB to send updated statement when received from HCRP end of May.

Agenda Item 6 - CRPO's Report & Updates

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

Dorchester South

- Mid-Tier great success and PR event for the town. PCRPF facilitated Murals, Planting, Parklet for Beryl Bikes, and Interactive Totem.
- The artwork in the new shelters is ongoing with Arts Society for Dorset Council who have pledged £500 for this project. Other partners including two local schools, Artwey and Art in Poundbury. This will produce vinyl decals for the 4 shelters at the station.
- The proposed date mentioned at the meeting for Network Rail volunteer time (5th June) for large scale planting on Platform 2 raised beds has subsequently been postponed post meeting due to area still overgrown and not ready. There is also NR signaling equipment to go in in this location during the summer.
- The Poundbury Garden Centre has given us 25% discount on all purchases. We now have an account set up there which is quite useful for bulk buying.
- Raised planters are due to go in at the front of the station alongside the existing ones due to frequent vehicle incursions at this location. **ACTION: AP SB to facilitate.**
- We are looking at the possibility of an attractive Welcome to Durnovaria sign produced by Dorset Museum shared with SWR. **ACTION: AP SB/AA.**
- SB raised the question on when we might see water butts. AA said they are chasing. **ACTION: AP AA to follow up.**
- SB asked about the digital poster board. AA said they have agreed to put in a mobile totem in addition to the wall mounted one. **ACTION: AA to follow up.**

Wool

- Wool Mural design has now been produced and is currently with SWR for approval.
- Wool Railway 200 project with Bovington Tank Museum is underway and we await a design from Bovington. We currently have the poster frames ready for installation.
- The vegetation has been cut back to expose the tank loader within the NR sidings and litter removed in the surrounding area that exposed. Thanks to JW for organising.

Wareham

- The Corten Steel new planters are now in situ and have been fully planted. After a visit from the NR Ecologist some minor location adjustments have been requested **ACTION: AP SB to organise.**
- The Wareham 178 Anniversary Celebration event for Railway 200 is still being planned. BE mentioned the Stevenson's rocket replica that's going to go on the north side of the station close to the planters and currently been made by the local men's shed group. Also, there will be a static DCT minibus on standby for visitors to see and to help promote the new Purbeck Shuttle 200 service. BE invited everyone present to come along and wear your Victorian costume.
- SB informed the group that we had a recent update from NR Strategic Planning Team regarding the Dorset Metro Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) work and ongoing discussions with Dorset Council and Western Gateway. MS has now passed two reports to the NR economic planners including the Mayor Brown report and the Halcrow Group report, to help with demand forecasting for the potential extension of some services to the SR. JR has now included MS, FR and SB in future DM SOBC steering group meetings.

Agenda Item 7 - Purbeck Shuttle 200

Due to limited available funding (as a result of the unsuccessful CCIF bid) we are having to scale down the original project aims and operate a two day a week community bus service from 28th May until the end of August 2025 from Wareham Station to RSPB Arne and the Blue Pool and from Purbeck Park to the Blue Pool and RSPB Arne timetable has now been confirmed and service registered.

BE mentioned all the contributions we have been pledged in addition to the DCT grant we have already received.

BE thanked Tim Christian for his hard work registering the service and producing the timetable. The new timetable link was put in the chat for members to see. AA asked a question regarding information on how to get to Purbeck Park from the station when operating from there on a Saturday. BE said there is a bus link from WRM station to Purbeck Park. The fare will be kept at £2 for adults and £1 for children which is very reasonable.

BE reported that we have collectively worked really hard on this and mentioned the possibility of applying for a Heritage Lottery grant for future years. AB mentioned that we could look at a more collective application that possibly PTAG could lead.

Agenda Item 8 - Reports from Group Members

Dorset Council

- KF mentioned the draft strategic outline business case (apart from the economic analysis), has been issued to DC by Network Rail and whilst the BCR, the cost benefit ratio, isn't that great they are aware that the timing perhaps isn't quite right and there might be things happening or could happen with the Local Plan, once published, that could change things.
- KF also mentioned the £2,000 to the PCRP is being processed.

Network Rail

- JW asked about the clearance work around the tank loader at Wool. SB said he was going to visit the next day and would let him know, however as far as he was aware from Tony Smale the work had been done.
- JW mentioned that as far as possible signal box tours during the Wareham anniversary event in June, he was still working on that. Although the initial response was no, due to possible trackside access.
- JW mentioned upcoming engineering works and blockades to be aware of now and he will have further information by the next steering group. This is between the 15th and the 22nd of November, there will be a line closure between Bournemouth and Poole and then down to Dorchester Southampton. This is to enable some quite heavy engineering work, particularly around the earthworks.
- JW also mentioned that he was going to have a separate call with FR regarding the partnership with the SR.
- BE emphasized the need for seating in front of the planters on the North side of the station. She also mentioned community use of the signal box and adjacent land for additional parking. JW stated that the signal box community usage was not going to happen in the short term and car parking was not an option due to access.
- JW also stated that Leo (ecologist) was down there last week doing some fine tuning on the old up bay habitat.

Swanage Railway

- FR reported a very busy start to the year, with lots going on due to the recent Steam Gala last week. The new CEO, Abby King, is settling in very well and helping to move things forward.
- They had a meeting with Jon Andrews back in April at DC and that was productive as well as a separate meeting DC regarding the Perenco sidings which was positive.
- Swanage Railway Company approved £2,000 to be paid to the PCRP.
- FR mentioned the 140th anniversary of Swanage Railway opening on the 22nd of May. They will be celebrating on Saturday 17th May with the Lord Lieutenant amongst the guests. On Monday from the 19th, they have five days with a stand on the concourse at London Waterloo.
- FR also asked JW about the exhibition train and when it might come down to Dorset. JW explained what was already published and said he would call FR regarding SR visit.
- FR mentioned the positive discussion with DC and others regarding raising the profile of Purbeck Park.
- SB mentioned the positive video produced on YouTube detailing the benefits of the Wi-fi now installed on the SR. FR mentioned there was a link for this on the SITREP report 40.
- FR mentioned the discussion with the Blue Pool on installing a temporary Halt for a diesel service close to Motala next year.
- FR mentioned the text details for the BTP being 61016 and stated that this works well and passengers should have confidence to use it if required.

Perenco

- AR apologized for not attending the previous two meetings. Furzebrook sidings discussions are ongoing and DC have appointed a new surveyor.
- Regarding Purbeck Park development, as part of the Wytch Farm Enhancement Fund, Perenco are working on connecting the Park to the cycle and bridle way network. There has been a route agreed, and AR mentioned Rob Smith is the company representative on this. There will be an update in more detail at the next meeting.
- AR mentioned the access road will be eventually closing.
- MW asked about the hydrogen option for fuel and the redundant LPG pipeline. AR stated that they are not pursuing this option at the moment.

South Western Railway

- The move into Public ownership was due to take place on the 25th May 2025 and is likely to see little change for the foreseeable future.
- SWR have a new managing director, Lawrence Bowman, who comes from Network Rail. He will start initially what they call Alliance Direct, and he will be the SWR Managing Director, with the intention that he will become the Alliance Director as well as the move is made towards GBR.
- AA mentioned the Rail Link branding to be consistent across multiple operators and the wayfinding and integration work being undertaken at Wool, Wareham and Dorchester stations. There was a meeting scheduled with partners for this on the 15th May 2025.
- A big push on Jurassic Coast which is a mixture of promotional initiatives, which is being led by the Devon and Cornwall Partnership.
- As far as SWR are aware, the Access for All Feasibility Study at Dorchester South is still going through the process with NR and the DfT.
- Moreton and Holton Heath are getting repainted this year.

CRN

- JJ mentioned Community Rail Week commencing 19th May 2025 with lots of activities going on throughout the week.
- The Community Rail Development Fund and the Small Grants Fund will be opening soon. Keep an eye on the CRN website for more details.
- CRN are pleased that several of their corporate partners have renewed with them, so their services are once again available for free to members.
- JJ mentioned her plans for a rail trail on each of her 25 CRP's that she looks after and would welcome any recommendations.
- Community Rail Conference will be at Nottingham on the 6th and 7th October 2025.
- Any good new stories on projects and activities would be gratefully received.
- JJ sent a separate report with more details which SB will circulate with the minutes of the meeting.

National Trust

- AB Mentioned the Purbeck Park working group and how this can function across the whole landscape and pushing PTAG to move forward with a vision and business case.
- They are moving ahead with creating a tourism plan however they don't have any funding at the moment.
- She mentioned Purbeck Goes Wild, connecting Purbeck kids to Purbeck nature, has launched. A group of about 30 organisations have come together to really push forward and commit to making change for local young people.
Purbeck Goes Wild - Planet Purbeck - www.planetpurbeck.org/purbeckgoeswild
- Morebus are sponsoring some of these events with the aim of getting local young people to think about non-car ways of being able to transport around Purbeck to get to all these different experiences.

Agenda Item 9 - Any Other Business

None declared.

Date of Next Meetings:

(Hybrid) Steering Group - Tuesday 5th August 2025 - Wareham Youth Centre Worgret Road, Wareham. BH20 4PH

SB – V2 - 10/06/25

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