

# PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP NOTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2022



## Present:

Mike Whitwam of Swanage Town Council (MWm - Chairperson), Beryl Ezzard of Dorset Council, Wareham Town Council, and Friends of Wareham Railway Station (BE - vice Chairperson), Josephine Foley (JF - Community Rail Officer), Mick Stone (MS - Secretary), Cllr Ray Bryan of Dorset Council (Cabinet Member for Transport, Travel, and Climate Change - RB), Gavin Johns of Swanage Railway (GJ), Jonathan Evans of Swanage Railway (Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Officer - JE), Stephen Dru Drury of Corfe Castle Parish Council (SDD), Tony Smale of Friends of Wool Station and Purbeck Transport Action Group (TS), Dan Wright of Community Rail Network (DW), Ade Parvin of Perenco UK (AP), Alex Brocklesby of National Trust (AB), and Paula Aldridge of South Western Railway (PA), Jack Wharton (JW) and Jonathan Cowe (JC) of Network Rail, David Budd (DB) of Wareham Town Council, Alistair Chisholm of Dorchester Town Council (AC).

## Apologies

Jaime Rockhill of Network Rail (JR), Fiona King (FK) of Dorset Council, Andrew Ardley of South Western Railway (AA), Nick Ward of Purbeck Transport Action Group (NW), Kelly Flynn of Dorset Council (KF), David Garney of First Bus Hampshire, Dorset & Berkshire (DG).

## Agenda Item 1 - Chairperson's Welcome & Opening Remarks

MWm welcomed all to the meeting, noting that it was JF's last day of employment with the Partnership. He thanked her for all of her sterling work and wished her well for the future.

He also noted that Flying Scotsman had been confirmed as visiting Swanage Railway at the end of October, and this would benefit Purbeck and South Dorset as a whole.

AC spoke briefly to introduce himself as the new representative on Stakeholder Group for Dorchester Town Council, and said he looked forward to helping to get the Friends of Dorchester South group off the ground.

## Agenda Item 2 - Approval of the Notes of the Stakeholder Group Meeting held on 7 April 2022

MS pointed out that these notes had been agreed by Steering Group in accordance with the Constitution. MWm asked for any comments or corrections. There being none, the notes were agreed as a true record.

## Agenda Item 3 - CRPO's Presentation on PCRPs Projects undertaken since the last AGM

JF gave a Powerpoint presentation indicating the projects undertaken along the line, including the Southampton & Dorchester 175 celebration, working with existing Station Friends' groups, joint working with the 'Mind The Gap' project run by Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council, Beryl Bikes at Wool, and various others. It was particularly noted that the launch of the new Friends of Dorchester South group should soon be confirmed.

JF also showed a Jurassic Coast video (Wool, Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door) which had been commissioned by PCRPs but created by Devon and Cornwall Partnership. Two further videos (Wareham, and Swanage/Corfe) should soon also be available.

Forthcoming projects included the proposed Totem (Real Time running information for trains and buses, etc) for Wareham Station and the potential refurbishment of Wool Goods Shed.

AB asked if the Jurassic Coast videos would be available for sharing. JF confirmed that this was the case. PA suggested that a member of staff at SWR could help with publicising the videos. AB then asked for details of the Beryl Bikes scheme at Wool as the National Trust was considering installing some at Studland.

### **Agenda Item 4 - Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Officer's Report**

JE listed the events he had taken part in, which included the Roads to Rail event at Norden in late June, the S&D 175 event earlier in June, Britain In Bloom (Swanage Station), talks to various local groups including Rotary Clubs etc. He reported that Swanage Railway had received approximately 80 new volunteers since the start of his tenure, almost all with Swanage Railway rather than the PCR. The exception was the two new volunteers who had agreed to start a Friends Group at Dorchester South. The paperwork for this new group was with SWR for processing and final approval.

### **Agenda Item 5 - Update on the proposed Transfer of the Accountable Body Function to Hampshire CRP**

MS explained the background to this proposal, following difficulties with PCR being currently an un-incorporated body. There were likely to be future contracts (eg Wool Goods Shed refurbishment) and so the decision had been made to transfer the Accountable Body function from SR to Hampshire CRP, which was a Community interest Company, and thus an incorporated body. MS had referred to the case of the Beryl Bikes at Wool as being the issue which had caused the difficulties mentioned, and RB expressed the view that his Council should have been the body taking that contract. He said he would seek an explanation as to why that hadn't been the case. BE wanted to know if it would be possible for Wareham to have Beryl Bikes in future, too.

### **Agenda Item 6 - Update on the Recruitment of a replacement Officer**

MS reported on progress. It was hoped that a new officer would be starting on 3rd October, subject to the finalisation of the contract. In answer to a question from BE, MS said that the contract was for 24 hours per week and the person would be home-based. He confirmed that Steering Group had ratified the recommendation of the sub-group which had been tasked with the recruitment.

### **Agenda Item 7 - The Year Ahead for the Partnership**

GJ talked about the prospects for the 90 day Swanage to Wareham Service operating in 2023. The backdrop was that 2022 had been a challenging period financially for SR. The visit of Flying Scotsman offered the prospect of some much-needed income in the Autumn. The Christmas period operations would be Steam & Lights once more rather than 'Santa' themed.

The Cost of Living crisis and reduced spending power were factors to be taken into account in planning 2023 operations. Notwithstanding, the SR Board had recently agreed to support the PCR's core income financially. He also said that he would support proposals for improved access to Arne and Norden via the RSPB's minibus services.

He had heard nothing more from the DfT about SR's application for Restoring Your Railway funds.

## Agenda Item 8 - Any Other Business

- JE advised that his role would be changing as he had been appointed to another post at SR, but that the advertising of the VR&RO post had commenced.
- BE referred to the termination of the arrangement with Wareham Town Council for the troughs at Wareham Station. These had proven to be too shallow to allow to retain water during hot spells. It was hoped to acquire tubs as replacements.
- SDD asked about the lease of Furzebrook sidings and if there was any progress. Neither GJ nor MS had heard anything from Dorset Council since May. RB had left the meeting by this point so MS took an action to ask him to follow up on this matter.
- AB referred to the Cost of Living Crisis and the impact locally. The National Trust and other local bodies would be preparing an Action Plan to try to deal with the issue. Further AB wanted to discuss joint Comms with the new officer when appointed. MS agreed to put them in contact when appropriate.
- PA said that there would be an SWR Community Rail Conference at Salisbury on 29th September. The second round of CCIF was open for applications, closing on 16th September. Additionally, the Projects fund had just opened, for Station Friends and CRPs only, and this would close on 31st October. Finally, she advised of the Big Bulb Plant Out, including at Dorchester South.
- AC was concerned about funding for Dorchester South, in view of timescales for the new Friends Group to get up and running. PA referred to other small funding pots available from SWR and CRN which were intended to support the new Friends group.
- BE congratulated JE on his new post at SR and thanked him for all his help in his time as VR&RO.
- The Chair asked for confirmation that the VR&RO post recruitment was underway, which GJ confirmed was the case. GJ also said that the intention was to extend the post for a further year till March 2024.

## Agenda Item 7 Date of Next Stakeholder Group Meeting

11am Wednesday 11 th January 2023 on MS Teams.

MS September 2022

ENDS

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