

PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP RE-CONVENED MEETING 19 HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS ON 26 JULY 2022



Present:

Cllr Mike Whitwam (MWm) of Swanage Town Council (Chair), Cllr Beryl Ezzard (Vice Chair) (BE) of Dorset Council, Mick Stone (MS) of Swanage Railway (Secretary), Gavin Johns (GJ) and Jonathan Evans (JE) of Swanage Railway, Jonathan Cowe (JC) and Jack Wharton (JW) of Network Rail, Josephine Foley (JF) Purbeck CRPO, Ade Parvin of Perenco UK (AP), Dan Wright (DW) of Community Rail Network (item 3 onwards)

Apologies: Jaime Rockhill (JR) of Network Rail, Paula Aldridge (PA) and Andrew Ardley (AA) of SWR, and Fiona King (FK) of Dorset Council.

The meeting was quorate.

Agenda item 1 - Chairman's Opening Remarks and Welcome -

BE (in the Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, as MWm was having technical difficulties in joining in the meeting. BE asked all to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item 2 - Draft Minutes of the Steering Group Meeting on 9th June 2022 (Meeting number 18)

The minutes were approved. The Action points would be dealt with in the Agenda items. However, one point was dealt with at this stage, and that was the action on BE in Agenda Item 5 - the potential locations for future in-person meetings at Wareham. BE suggested that the Youth Centre building close by the Purbeck Sports Centre was worthy of consideration. **ACTION: MS TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE VENUE.**

Agenda Item 3 - Update on the Recruitment of a New Officer

(MWm had now overcome the technical difficulties and took over the Chair role from BE)

MS advised the meeting that discussions with Hampshire CRP were proceeding regarding the transfer of the Accountable Body role from Swanage Railway. However, at this stage, discussions were centered around the recruitment of the new Officer, on a one year rolling contract.

About 20 'expressions of interest' had thus far been received, all but one arriving via the 'Indeed' website. Many of these could be immediately discounted because of lack of suitability for the role and HCRP were re-defining the role slightly to increase the chances of finding more suitable applicants. Other points to note were that MWm had agreed to take on the 'Line Manager' role and that the previously suggested closing date of 29th July had been extended to 16th August. In answer to a question from GJ, MS confirmed that the Sub-group had no executive powers and thus final decisions would need to be taken by Steering Group.

DW had joined the meeting by this point. MS asked him to confirm his advice that the non-Accreditation of HCRP at this point would not debar PCR from being Re-Accredited once the new officer was in place. DW confirmed this, saying that he believed that the way forward for HCRP itself to become Accredited was now clear and obvious.

GJ advised that Swanage Railway believed that a Transfer of Funds to HCRP could take place at a few days' notice, upon a request being made. MS thought it would be ideal if the formal Transfer to the new Accountable Body and the appointment of a new Officer could be contemporaneous.

GJ then asked if he could respond to the issue raised at the last meeting of what SR's future commitment to the Partnership might consist of. He re-affirmed SR's commitment going forward and stated that he would be recommending his Board to make a financial contribution of £2,000 or so in the current financial year, to boost the amount of core funding and hopefully ensure that the costs of employing the new officer could be met without taking funds from the Reserves, which are held for Projects. GJ also thought that there might be some assistance 'in kind' going forward, from SR. He said he would seek formal authority and then advise.

Finally, under this item, MS advised that the next available round for potential financial support from Dorset Council's Community Fund would be in November 2022. BE offered her help and support to MS for the making of that bid.

ACTION: MS/BE RE COMMUNITY FUND APPLICATION; AND GJ RE SR'S FUTURE CONTRIBUTION.

Agenda Item 4 - Update on Transfer of Accountable Body to Hampshire CRP

This item was dealt with as part of Item 3 above.

Agenda Item 5 - Stakeholder Group Meeting/AGM - 1st September 2022

asked what format Steering Group would like to see e.g. presentations from each of the bodies represented on Steering Group. GJ thought that the AGM offered the opportunity to look forward as well as back, and this was important. JF offered to arrange for one or more Jurassic Coast videos to be played to the meeting as an example of the work undertaken. This was agreed. JF would also write-up, as part of the necessary handover to a new Officer a fuller explanation of the activities undertaken. **ACTION: JF.**

At this point BE re-iterated her thanks to JF for the work she had undertaken in 2022, particularly with regard to the '175' celebrations. JF was a credit to us all. MS joined in to echo those views and to add that JF's legacy would be substantial.

Agenda Item 6 - CRPO's Update on Projects

JF shared updates on a number of projects, including the Bee Friendly at Dorchester South (see separate item below), the mystery shopper assessment of SR services and stations, changes to the website which were ongoing, the installation and commencement of the Beryl Bikes at Wool, the publication of the Line Guide, the board at Moreton, and the 3 x Jurassic Coast videos, of which the first (Lulworth and Durdle Door) was played at the meeting.

BE thanked JF and PA for getting the tap installed at Wareham. The aim was to replace the current shallow flower troughs with larger tubs, which could retain water for longer, thus reducing the need for watering visits by the volunteers.

Arne minibus services by RSPB - JF thanked BE and Tony Smale (Friends of Wool) for their help with the advertising of these services. Other issues were:

- Wool Goods Shed (see separate item below).
- MWm asked JF to ascertain that his car registration number was held on the system at Wareham Station.

ACTION: JF TO SEND AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THE NEW LINE GUIDE TO STEERING GROUP, AND TO CHECK WITH SWR ABOUT THE REGISTRATION.

Agenda Item 7 - Income & Expenditure Update

This had been sent round with the agenda. JF apologised that so much of the project funding had been spent in recent months, but this had just been how things had unfolded.

At this point, BE asked for an update from Network Rail colleagues on the heras fencing at Wareham Station, close to the foot crossing. It was agreed to deal with this later in the meeting.

Agenda Item 8 - Dorchester South Update

JF reported that the replica Southern Railway 'Target' signs had been ordered. The work undertaken by the Bee Friendly Trust did not seem to accord with what had been ordered. Discussions with SWR (co-funder) and the supplier were continuing. The Station Manager had located funding for a section of 'Living Wall' on the 'Up' platform.

JE reported that it was proving a slow process to get a Friends groups up and running. However, he was pleased to say that a meeting was due in two days' time with 2 x volunteers and SWR, to finalise the paperwork for station adoption. There were other potential members for the group and discussions continued. Also, a member of ticket office staff was keen to play a role.

BE added that Dorchester Town Council were keen to help and would send details to JE. This was understood to include Alistair Chisholm, who was now on the Partnership's Stakeholder Group. BE also said that the Friends of Wareham and Friends of Wool bank accounts had now regrettably been closed.

In the absence of an SWR representative, MS added that he understood SWR and Network Rail would be looking at proposals for a wildlife garden and walking route through from the station car park to Maumbury Rings. JW confirmed this and said he would keep PCRCP informed.

Agenda Item 9 - Wool Goods Shed

JF had made bids to both the Community Rail Development Fund (CRDF) and the Railway Heritage Trust (RHT) for funding of the necessary investigations and feasibility. SWR had already committed £5,000 to the cause. MS advised that he would be meeting Anna from RHT on site on 8th August. JW added that the Clearance process at NR was ongoing in respect of a piece of land and access adjoining the building.

Agenda Item 10 - Any Other Business

BE raised the issue of the proposed wildlife garden at Wareham and the 'mess' where the Heras fencing has been removed, close to the foot crossing. JW referred to the presence of sand lizards and the need for monitoring of same. A further survey would follow in 2023. JW asked if BE could send a photo to illustrate the issue regarding the heras fencing.

MS referred to the proposal from SWR to start a second round of CCIF funding within the next year or so. GJ suggested that the Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Officer post (currently JE's post) had provided exceptional benefit to SR. The funding comes to an end in April 2023. He could provide data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the post and wondered whether further funding might come from SWR towards extending it. GJ further stated that SR was keen to provide the Swanage to Wareham services in 2023 and, to this end, the process of applying for its licence to operate on the main line had been restarted. He said he was 'optimistic' that the services could operate in 2023.

BE stated that she was pleased with the input of the VR&RO, and that the celebration of the 175th Anniversary had increased awareness and knowledge of the local railway.

Purbeck Community Rail Officer
Josephine Foley
josephine.foley@swanagerailway.co.uk
Tel: 07508 513354

