

PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP MEETING 21

HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS ON 7 FEBRUARY 2023



Present:

Cllr Mike Whitwam (MWm) of Swanage Town Council, Cllr Beryl Ezzard (BE) of Dorset Council, Mick Stone (MS) of Swanage Railway (Secretary), Gavin Johns (GJ) of Swanage Railway, Steven Booth (SB) Community Rail Officer, Rory Pilcher (RP) and Jack Wharton (JW) of Network Rail, Kelly Flynn of Dorset Council (KF), Dan Wright (DW) of Community Rail Network.

The meeting was quorate.

Agenda item 1 - Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair in accordance with clause 5.1.4 of the PCR Constitution

The Secretary asked for nominations for the position of Chair and Vice Chair. Cllr Whitwam was proposed and seconded for the position of Chair and Cllr Ezzard was similarly proposed and seconded for Vice Chair. There being no other nominations the Chair and Vice Chair were elected unopposed.

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

MWm welcomed all to the meeting. There had been a minor issue with some members accessing the meeting, which SB said he would address. ACTION: SB. RP introduced himself to all, pointing out that he worked with Jaime Rockhill and his team.

Agenda Item 3 - Apologies for Absence -

Had been received from: Jaime Rockhill (JR) of Network Rail, Andrew Ardley (AA) of SWR, Ade Parvin of Perenco UK (AP), and, Paula Aldridge of South Western Railway (PA).

Agenda Item 4 - Draft Minutes of the Steering Group meeting of 8th November 2022 and Stakeholder Group Meeting of 11th January 2023.

Both sets of minutes were approved.

Agenda Item 5 - Matters Arising from those Minutes Not Appearing on the Agenda.

MS advised that a letter had been sent to the MPs for both South Dorset and Mid-Dorset, signed by MWm and GJ on behalf of both the PCR and Swanage Railway, asking them to reaffirm their commitment to the Restoring Your Railway bid and seeking a visit by the Rail Minister to Purbeck to see the issues for himself.

BE confirmed that she had sent photos to SB showing the proposed location of the new planters at Wareham station. Further, she pointed out that the Cordite Way had now been confirmed as a Statutory Right-of-Way, and that she wanted Network Rail input into the new structure necessary to replace the former bridge over the line near Rockley Point.

ACTION: JW to put appropriate colleagues in touch with the contractors/engineers for the new structure.

Agenda Item 6 - Financial Update and Report on Grant Applications Made

The latest financial statement had been sent round to members. MS noted the recent advice from PA that it was anticipated that the SWR core funding for 2023/24 would be agreed by the DfT at the same sum as 2022/23, but probably without any increase for RPI. A decision was expected to be announced in March.

KF reported that Dorset Council had agreed to make £2,000 available to PCR in 2023/24 as funding towards core costs, and would also be willing to make a similar payment in 2022/23 ie before the end of March, if the paperwork could be completed in time. **ACTION: KF and SB to liaise, to make this happen, including a discussion on what the deliverables would be.** KF was thanked by BE and other members for her help in this regard.

BE noted with thanks that Hampshire CRP had agreed to look after the funds held by both the Friends of Wareham and the Friends of Wool. **ACTION: SB to liaise with HCRP to make the transfers happen.**

SB's report, which had been circulated, and was to be discussed later, set out the funding bids made and the status thereof.

Agenda Item 7 - CRPO's Report and Updates (Incl Training Undertaken and Activity Plan)

SB's report had been sent to members and was tabled. It dealt with a wide range of issues, including:

Discussions with RSPB, Arne, about the proposed 2023 '2RN' minibus service: a new member of staff was now in post covering the Hyde's Heath project, of which the trial minibus service was a key part. An initial meeting had taken place and the Partnership's aspirations for running services via Purbeck Park wherever possible, and perhaps on more days of the week over a longer period were set out. Steering Group was reminded in this regard that it had set aside £3,000 of funding towards the promotion of these services, and had made a bid to SWR Projects funding for a further £5,000. The latter might well be swallowed up in promotion of the services at main SWR stations, if the bid is accepted by SWR and DfT.

GJ indicated his support for the proposals and asked for the proposed operating dates to be circulated when possible.

The new RSPB officer will consider the potential with SB and the manager at Dorset Community Transport to see what was achievable within the budgets set.

ACTION: it was agreed that promotion of the service via a new Jurassic Coast video featuring Arne and Studland should be funded from the PCRPs Reserves allocation of £3,000. SB to submit a further report to Steering Group when more information was available.

Funding Bids.

Totems - SWR had confirmed that the DfT had agreed that the £5,000 of 2022/23 Project funding could be used towards the cost of the proposed Totem at Wareham. An order would be placed with SWR as soon as AA had confirmed the purchase price with its supplier, which needed to be done before the end of March. The bid to CRN for £10,000 towards the balance of the purchase price and installation of both the Wareham and Dorchester South totems was still outstanding **ACTION: DW to chase his colleagues for a decision.**

New Planters at Wareham station - the CRN funding of £1,000 had been received and the planters were due for delivery within days. **ACTION: RP to send BE a plan to show the Railway land ownership at Wareham, both SWR and NR ownerships.**

Other matters dealt with in SB's report included updates on station Friends' groups at Wareham, Wool, and Dorchester South, discussions at Wool with Dorset Innovation Park regarding sustainable transport alternatives, a potential meeting with Friends of Dorchester South, Dorchester Transport Action Group, Dorchester Town Council, and South Wessex CRP, looking at promoting links between the South and West stations in Dorchester, and reporting on a meeting with the Destination Management Organisation at Dorchester.

SB also reported on the planned participation at SR's Community Engagement weekend (11th/12th February, at Swanage). Coming events were the International Dinosaur Week at Dorchester in April, as well as others (see item 10 below).

SB had set out in his report twelve suggestions for projects in 2023/24. He pointed out that it would not be possible to pursue all of them, as well as those on the existing Activity Plan, within existing resources. He therefore asked for guidance on where he should best use his time and the financial resources. BE asked about the proposal for a living wall at Wareham and made clear her view that the Friends' group should not be expected to maintain such a wall. MS pointed out that, if both the Arne minibus services and the SR's Wareham services (see later) were to take place in 2023 they would take up a lot of SB's time and Steering Group should take that into account when forming a view.

ACTION: All to consider.

Agenda Item 8 - Re-accreditation Update

SB advised that he was working on the Annual Report, which would cover the whole period since the last Reaccreditation in July 2021 to March 2023. MS was helping him in regard to the period between July 2021 and October 2022, when SB started work with PCR. DW confirmed that SB should suggest a few dates in March when a face-to-face meeting might take place. This would involve the Chair and PA of SWR, plus preferably JW of Network Rail. HCRP as the employer should also be invited.

ACTION: SB to suggest some dates for the meeting.

Agenda Item 9 - Reports from Steering Group Members

South Western Railway - in the absence of PA and AA a written report had been submitted. It was noted that defibrillators were planned to be located at Wareham, Wool, and Dorchester South.

Swanage Railway - GJ advised that negotiations were at an advanced stage for the operation of the 90 day trial service between Swanage and Wareham. The thinking was that it might start at Easter and it was hoped that an announcement could be made shortly. He asked if the Friends of Wareham might be able to help during the trial service. BE agreed to speak to the group accordingly. GJ also mentioned the need for additional, short term, signage on the Northern side of Wareham station, to indicate the station car park. BE offered to speak to her contacts in Highways at Dorset Council to see what could be done. **ACTION: BE.**

GJ advised that Trevor Parsons and Martin Trott would be speaking to SB to co-ordinate promotion and marketing of the service. Regarding the currently vacant VR&RO post, GJ said that discussions with SWR were continuing about the use of their remaining funding together with separate SR funding, to offer a new 12 month contract in the near future. He confirmed that the Partnership would be involved in finalising that contract.

GJ advised that he was due to meet with Dorset Councillors (Messrs Bryan and Suttle) on 14th February about a number of matters between DC and SR, including the Trial service and also the lease of Furzebrook sidings.

He referred to the forthcoming Community weekend (see above) as an opportunity to attract new volunteers, and also mentioned that some Swanage Town councillors were to attend and be shown 'behind the scenes'. SB asked what volunteers were being sought specifically. MWm replied that it was best to try to attract volunteers on a general basis and then see what role(s) they were most suited to.

Network Rail - re the Wareham station Strategic Plan, RP reported that there would be workshops arranged to take matters forward once the remit had been finally approved. BE was pleased that the Friends group had been invited to comment. RP would be pleased to receive any further comments and feedback.

Agenda Item 10 Special Events incl Coronation and Waterloo 175

- these had been discussed earlier.

Agenda Item 11 - Any Other Business -

a) SB suggested that the Constitution needed to be updated to reflect the change in Accountable Body, from SR to HCRP. He also suggested that a new clause, 5.1.9, might be added, to state that Steering Group should agree a spending limit for the Officer to authorise without prior notification (currently £300), which could be varied from time to time. Both changes were approved after discussion. ACTION: SB/MS.

b) MS pointed out that the agreed date for the next meeting, an In-Person one, on Tuesday, 9th May, was now the day after the recently-designated Bank Holiday in respect of the Coronation. MS asked if that might now make it difficult for all to attend, and might necessitate a change of date. ACTION: MS/SB to offer alternative dates.

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ENDS

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