

Purbeck Community Rail Partnership

Re-accreditation June 2024



Purbeck Community Rail Re-Accreditation Report April 2023 to March 2024

Background & Introduction

The past year has been subject to many challenges with both funding applications, limited resources and uncertainty regarding the future of CRPs. We are having to demonstrate social value in all the work that we undertake. The key driver is promoting sustainable joined-up transport to and from our stations ensuring people can get to and from railway stations using buses, cycling, walking, and participating in active travel. Community engagement and shared mobility is key to opening up rail to more people for longer and more regular based journeys. There is a need for the rail sector to work with other operators and local communities on 'first and last mile' connections, in line with the sustainable transport policy, with private car parking given less priority. This is our priority.

We would like to thank all those who have supported the Partnership thus far and look forward to their continuing support as we move forward. There are of course some challenges, however we are reaching out with more community and stakeholder engagement activities to develop positive partnerships to achieve the improvements we would all like to see on our railway. The partnership is governed by the Constitution and the Activity plan as a working document agreed and updated by the Steering Group.

Steering Group

The Purbeck Community Rail Partnership Steering Group is comprised of: Community Rail Network, Dorset Council (**VM**), Network Rail, Perenco UK (**VM**), South Western Rail (**VM**), Swanage Railway (**VM**), Swanage Town Council (**VM**) and the National Trust. Meeting quarterly. (**VM** – Voting members)

Stakeholder Group

The Stakeholder Group includes the preceding bodies as well as the following: Wareham Town Council, Corfe Castle Parish Council, Wool Parish Council, BCP Council, Friends of Wareham Station, Friends of Wool Station and Purbeck Transport Action Group Friends of Dorchester South, Dorchester Transport Action Group, Dorchester Town Council, MoreBus, First Wessex (South), and RSPB Arne. Meeting twice per annum.

Funding

There has been much uncertainty regarding the future funding for Community Rail as the DFT look to make savings. As a result, core funding for CRP's is at risk and we have been looking to diversify with alternatives sources where possible and will continue to work with our partners to do so.

The accountable body and employer function has now been with Hampshire CRP from October 2022, for an initial period of one year. This has now been renewed for a further year until October 2024. Consideration to be given to future structure of PCRPs, including whether to join forces with other local CRP(s) or to become Incorporated in its own right.

South Western Railway (SWR) continues to be the main core funder to which we are grateful and wish to thank them for their continued support both financial and advisory. We also appreciate the project funding support given over the period.

We wish to thank the Community Rail Network (CRN) for their support with funding applications, advice, and training.

Swanage Railway continues to support with core funding and ITC provision. Core funding also comes from Dorset Council towards projects who are an active partner and have a place on the steering group. We extend our thanks to these organisations.

Funding Bids (since April 2023)

- CRDF application for £10K for totem for Dorchester South to CRN.
- Dorset Council Organisational Support Revenue Fund funding application £10K.
- Integrated Sustainable Transport in Community Rail Fund 2023/2024 £4.5K
- SWR CR Project Funding application for Dorchester South proposed murals £4K
- CCIF funding application for Dorchester South Totem and Digital Poster Board £14K
- Dorset Council Funding Agreement to make a formal annual contribution to the partnership of £2K.
- Swanage Railway annual funding contribution of £2K

Meeting Dates during 2023/2024 since last Accreditation

Steering Group

- 9th May 2023 (in-person & hybrid)
- 8th August 2023 (online only)
- 7th November 2023 (in-person & hybrid)
- 6th February 2024 (online only)

Stakeholder Group

- 11th October 2023 (online only) AGM
- 17th April 2024 (online only)

Summary of Projects April 2023/March 2024

Purbeck Video May 2023

The Purbeck CRP has now published three promotional Jurassic Coast videos to promote sustainable travel to the area by train. The Purbeck promotional video focussed on the sustainable transport links with Wareham Station, RSPB Arne, Purbeck Park and Studland.



The videos are to promote journeys by train and connecting bus services. While these are more aimed at tourists in the main season, they also help to raise awareness of what the region has to offer with its many attractions, both natural and man-made, when planning a holiday, short break, or day trip. They are particularly aimed at young people, creating a sense of a sense of wonder at beautiful surroundings as well as showcasing sustainability and environmental responsibility by using public transport.

RSPB Arne Bus Trial Service Summer 2023

A trial shuttle bus service has been set up by the RSPB to connect Wareham train station and RSPB Arne. The service has also been extended to include additional runs between RSPB Arne and Purbeck Park (Norden Park and Ride) and Norden Farm Campsite. It operated through the summer until 31 August 2023.



There were four return journeys daily from Wareham Station, and two return journeys from Purbeck Park. The little green bus has improved access to the nature reserve. It has also reduced the number of cars used to get to the reserve at a peak time of the year.

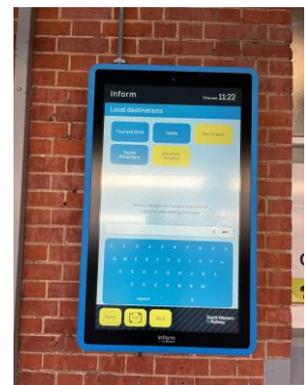
The service 2RN (to Arne) shuttle bus was supported by funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund acquired by the RSPB and PCRFP and operated by Dorset Community Transport. A subsequent limited winter service ran from October 2023 to Easter 2024. This helped the continuity and raised awareness.

We have also funded this project to run again with the support of our partners from May to September 2024. This we hope will establish a regular service and viable operation moving forward.

Totem Information Signs December 2023

We have funded a Totem now installed at Wareham Station and subsequently made a successful CCIF bid to SWR for a Totem at Dorchester South along with digital poster board soon to be installed. They bring a whole new level of access to real time information. This also requires partnership funding.

One of the main advantages of totems over printed matter is that the screens are interactive, and the text size can be varied to meet the individual's needs. It is also far easier to ensure that the information is kept up to date and it is relatively simple to link through to other live sources of information. Passengers will be able to make informed decisions so their journey experiences will be improved saving time and inconvenience during busy times and when unexpected disruption happens. Onward travel information to local tourism attractions, bus times, cycle / walking routes bus timetables and maps can be uploaded. This information and any subsequent updates can all be drawn from individual websites. The output is real time customer information.



Dorchester Promotional Video February 2024

Our new and latest in the series of videos we have produced is "Visit Dorchester" promoting sustainable travel and integrated connections for onward travel. It demonstrates the options

available and links the two stations in the town operating on separate lines and sells the benefits of using public transport.



This was a collaboration between two CRP's involving South Wessex CRP. We wanted to promote the town as a package with places of interest and local attractions and encourage public transport use. This also gives people more confidence to use the train, reduce congestion and reach their destinations with ease. This was aimed at the local community as well as visitors to the town to sell the benefits, appeal to their environmental footprint and influence behavioural change. This was funded primarily from the CRN Integrated Sustainable Travel Fund.

Events

Community Rail Week May 2023

We attended this event at Waterloo Station with other Community Rail Officers to promote our lines and engage with the public travelling through the station. We had our own stand and mobile Totem. The Rail Minister, Huw Merriman MP, attended to meet the CRP Officers. Throughout the day, Officers from some CRPs across the network spoke to customers about community rail promoting travel to the fantastic destinations on the network.



Waterloo 175 July 2023

We had a fantastic celebration of London Waterloo's 175th birthday in July 2023, with a variety of activities around the station. During the event, our SWR colleagues and our fellow CRP officers greeted customers in period costumes and talked about rail travel.



Station in Bloom Awards October 2023

South Western Railway hosted the 'Stations In Bloom' awards at Castle Gardens in Sherborne during October 2023, kindly sponsored by The Gardens Group.

The awards, based on the competition run by the Royal Horticultural Society, recognise staff and volunteers for their work nurturing stations across the railway network into neighbourhood hubs.

They also celebrated all the good that a train station does to add value to local communities and environments. In the Purbeck area the Friends of Wareham Station won a prestigious gold award for best environmental project in the old up-bay which is designated as a natural habitat for wildlife and sustainability.



Stations:

Dorchester South

Mid-Tier Scheme

The Mid-Tier Scheme is now underway involving infrastructure, landscaping and access improvements. Plans for this scheme have been shared with local stakeholders and partners. The improvements include those to the existing station building, additional sheltered waiting areas

(both platforms) and landscaping at the front of the station. The PCRP and station adoption group are involved in the planting and landscape proposals and station art.

Raised Planters January 2023

These planters are produced from reformed plastics and all material has been recycled. They are durable, long lasting and tick all the environmental and sustainable boxes. We ordered three for the Station. These were funded by the SWR sustainability team.

Proposed Murals

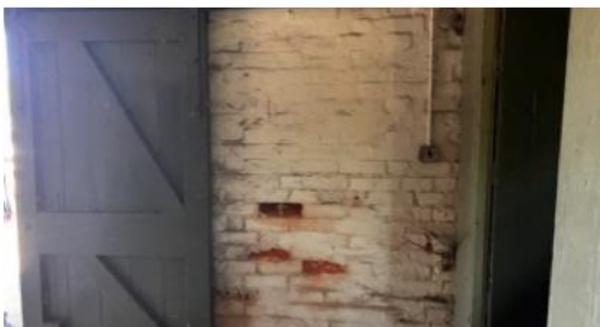


We have commissioned three murals to be installed on three archways on the existing station building. We have had many expressions of interest from local artists to produce designs based on the history, heritage and prominent landmarks within the town. This would create visual and colourful enhancements at the main entrance to the station for all users to see. This also fits in with the planned station Mid-Tier Scheme improvements. Funding for this is via SWR CRP project funding.

Wool

Wool Goods Shed (ongoing)

The Wool Goods Shed Renovation project, overseen by the PCRP, aims to restore the shed to working order, developing it's use as a community hub. Located on the platform at Wool Station the Goods Shed would be made waterproof, with heating, electricity and a single sink installed to ensure its use as a multifunctional space.



The Railway Heritage Trust has advised that it would, in principle, support an application for funding towards the cost of restoring the building's heritage features. The building is not listed, or in Conservation Area, however it is of particular historic interest and has potential for restoration.

The key question is what are the community usage options? We need to be able to consult with the community to gain feedback to provide a business case for development. Due to access requirements and no specific agreed end usage at this time, this project is currently on hold.

Promotional Banners

These were installed for the summer of 2023. We are also looking at joining up with First Wessex to utilise their promotional poster to publicise the joined-up transport links to Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove both easily accessible from Wool railway station.



The banners which can be easily removed were attached onto the station picket fence. The purpose of this publicity instigated by the local station adoption group is to help visitors make these connections to the manmade and natural attractions located around Wool Station.

Wareham

Wareham Landscape Proposal

The PCRPs would like to improve the land on the approaches to the station adjacent to the level crossing, which are currently overgrown and unsightly. We have produced a draft proposal working with our partners and currently looking to finalise proposals and get them costed to apply for funding. This is to improve the aesthetics and make these areas more welcoming and attractive for the benefit of all users of the station area. This is particularly important with the extra services using the station at peak times and future planning relating to the Wareham Station Strategic Plan. The concept is to make Wareham Station a community hub, which would support the additional services of the 2RN RSPB bus link to Arne and future Swanage Railway services to Wareham.



Station Strategic Plan Completed December 2023

'Strategic Station Plan' is a new term used to develop high level strategy and action plans for stations that have been identified through a strategic study for a service change and being led by Network Rail (NR). This follows the existing SWR Wareham Station Travel plan undertaken March 2022. The Dorset Connectivity Study recommends the provision of the Dorset Metro service changes and so Wareham has been identified as a priority station to undergo analysis. The plan will be built around the proposed service changes and will focus on strategy rather than tactical station changes. The plan involved looking at layout, facilities, accessibility and more to determine future strategy and explore opportunities for the station. The results of this analysis and action plan

produced the 'Strategic Station Plan' The partnership is directly involved as a key stakeholder and will actively contributed into the plan to help shape this important rural hub into Purbeck.

Swanage Railway

Wareham Service

Wareham service 90 Day Trial was the main event we are concentrating on for the SR. The service commencing from April until September 2023 which ran four days per week during the trial. This represents a link with the main line and hopefully have an impact on reducing road traffic congestion from Wareham to Swanage especially during the summer months. Liaising with SWR and SR on marketing and promotion for events happening during 2023 by raising the profile.



Photos by ANDREW P.M. WRIGHT

Raise the Profile Events July August 2023

The Minister of State for Rail and HS2, Huw Merriman MP, made an informal visit to the Swanage Railway in the Isle of Purbeck – visiting the Dorset heritage line via its trial diesel train service from the main line at Wareham. The Minister was accompanied by South Dorset MP Richard Drax and Dorset Council transport portfolio holder Councillor Ray Bryan.



Photos by ANDREW P.M. WRIGHT

Invitations were made to selected personnel from the rail industry to raise the profile of this service with the intention of creating awareness, gathering support, highlighting issues, and showcasing our region by rail and connecting services. Visitors included Andrew Haines CEO Network Rail, Claire Mann MD SWR, Jools Townsend CEO CRN, Anthony Smith Travel Focus and James Abbott Consultant Editor for Modern Railways where we benefited from a sizable contribution in their August 2023 Edition.

Swanage Railway Community Engagement Weekend



The PCRPP had a presence at the Community Engagement Event scheduled for the weekend of the 11th 12th February 2023 school half term. This was a good opportunity to work with SR and engage with volunteers and potential new volunteers and the work that we do and opportunities to get involved and support community rail .

Monitoring and Evaluation

This is done mainly through the Activity Plan, however we have introduced the CRN Impact Tool to enable tracking and recording of activities and associated indicators of change to support and demonstrate their outcomes and impact. The platform is user-friendly and suitable to build a picture of the work we do, resources used, and timescales involved. The platform can also act as a survey tool to gather information and views from the wider community. We have plans in-hand to introduce a business plan.

Volunteering

Although we now have station adoption groups on three out of five of our SWR mainline stations, we still lack resources to recruit more at this time. However, plans are underway to address this, and we look forward to working in close partnership with the Swanage Railway Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Officer to recruit new volunteers.

We would like to thank all the Friends Groups who undertake many hours of volunteering looking after their respective stations with hard work and dedication. We will endeavour to support them with ongoing projects, funding applications and ideas for improvement as we move forward.

Stakeholder Engagement

There has been much activity in this area in addition to the partnership stakeholders. We have been reaching out to new stakeholders to work together where we have common aims, relevant skills and the desire to move things forward. We realise the potential of working together to make an impact for shared goals and mutual benefit.

Relationship Building

This is key for the long term and the partnership recognises this, thus the drive on networking and partnership working. We are building our stakeholder group to be more diverse and representative of the region. This will build trust and recognition by bringing people together to utilise limited resources to get things done. This also creates a sense of local ownership and responsibility where your contribution matters. This work will be ongoing and be part of all that we do.

Partnership Development

We are a relatively small partnership with one part time officer, therefore to secure resources for project development and delivery we must work in partnership with other stakeholders and the wider community. This work is a key aim, and being expanded and ongoing.

Marketing

The PCRCP promotes tourism to the region in the form of line guides, promotional videos, posters, flyers, our website, social media and through our partners. There is scope to work more with DMO and local tourism officers to maximise impact as well as attend public events to showcase Community Rail.

Social Media

We have our own YouTube channel to sit alongside Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. Stories are shared and posts are created on a regular basis. We are constantly looking at our stakeholder social media accounts to share good news stories. This year we engaged a social media professional as part of a ISTF successful funding bid to promote our videos and projects we are involved with. The objective was to push the content and target to the right audience. This was aimed out upwardly mobile young people who are likely to support environmentally sustainable travel. If we are to influence behavioural changes, we feel this market will be more responsive and engage with the messages we are attempting to put out.

Website Development

This work has been ongoing and news stories, contact information minutes from the meetings, links with local attractions and places of interest are all there from the relevant stations. We will continue to update as appropriate.

Training Undertaken by SB PCRO

Date	Provider	Name of Course
24 th April 2023	CRN (online)	Project Management and Delivering Outcomes
26 th April 2023	CRN (online)	Small Grants Fund - Information Session
18 th July 2023	CRN (online)	How to submit an outstanding Awards entry & showcase your work
1 st November 2023	CRN (online)	Community Engagement Workshop

Networking Events Attended

Date	Provider	Name of Event Attended
20 th April 2023	CRN (online)	Educational Network Meeting
21 st April 2023	Dorset Council	Weymouth Station Launch
23 rd May 2023	CRN/SWR Waterloo	Community Rail Week
8 th June 2023	CRN (online)	Tackling Loneliness with Transport Webinar
19 th June 2023	CRN (online)	CRP Networking Event
11 th July 2023	SWR	Waterloo 175
20 th July 2023	CRN (online)	Educational Network Meeting
2 nd August 2023	PCRCP/SR	Andrew Haines CEO NR Visit to SR Wareham Service

15 th August 2023	CRN/CRL	SWR Education and Youth Engagement Event
22 nd August 2023	PCRP/SR	Rail Minister Visit
29 th August 2023	PCRP/SR	Claire Mann MD SWR Visit to SR Wareham Service
9 th October 2023	SWR	Community Rail Conference
17 th October 2023	Blackmore Vale CRP	Station in Bloom Event
31 st October 2023	National Trust Corfe Castle	Purbeck Heaths NNR Sustainable Tourism Plan
13 th and 14 th November	CRN	Rail Conference Nottingham
4 th December 2023	CRN (online)	Meet the Corporate Partners'

Projects Under Consideration

- Restoration of the Swanage Railway Wareham to Swanage link.
- Wool Goods Shed Refurbishment for community use.
- Wool Community Garden adjacent to the entrance to the station.
- Wareham Landscape Project to make the approaches to the station more welcoming and attractive.
- Wareham Signal Box Development for community usage.
- Dorchester South as a hub for Beryl Bikes
- Dorchester South Art displays using local schools working with the Arts Society Dorset County
- Dorchester South Totem Interactive Information Point to improve communications and customer service.

Aspirations for the Future

To promote sustainable transport usage across the region, reaching out to all the community to get their input to help shape what we do. To develop our stakeholder and community engagement techniques to encourage grass roots involvement in projects we undertake with a view to establishing responsibility and local ownership. The aim is to build firm foundations working through our partnerships by creating awareness, utilising resources and maximising our collaboration opportunities to achieve shared aims and desired outputs. Our aim is to be an inclusive and proactive partnership.