

PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP RE-CONVENED MEETING 20

HELD BOTH IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS
ON 8 NOVEMBER 2022



In person:

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) of Swanage Railway, Paula Aldridge of South Western Railway (PA), and Steven Booth (SB) Community Rail Officer.

Via Teams:

Rory Pilcher (RP) and Jack Wharton (JW) of Network Rail, Kelly Flynn of Dorset Council (KF).

The meeting was quorate. At the outset there were technical issues affecting those joining via Teams. This resulted in a late start to the meeting.

Agenda item 1 - Chairperson's Opening Remarks, Welcome and Introductions

MWm welcomed all to the meeting and apologised for the technical problems which had been encountered. In particular, MWm welcomed the new Officer, Steven Booth, to the meeting. Members then introduced themselves.

Agenda Item 2 - 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 Dan Wright (DW) of Community Rail Network.

Agenda Item 3 - - Draft Minutes of the Stakeholder Group Meeting and AGM of 1st September 2022 and the Special Steering Group meeting of 12th September

Both sets of minutes were approved. BE enquired whether the appointment of a Chair should have been dealt with at the AGM. MS offered to check the Constitution on this point and advise members. **ACTION: MS.**

Agenda Item 4 - Matters Arising from those Minutes Not Appearing on the Agenda

MS advised that he had not had any response from Cllr Ray Bryan regarding the Beryl Bikes or Furzebrook sidings lease. On the former point, BE thought that she had heard that matters had been resolved. KF offered to check on the Beryl Bikes point. **ACTION: KF.**

Agenda Item 5 - Introduction of the New Officer

The introduction had taken place in Item 1 above.

Agenda Item 6 - Update on the Transfer of the PCRPs Funds and the Accountable Body Function to Hampshire CRP

MS had submitted a report advising that the transfer took place on 1st November. The amount transferred was £56,143. MS reminded the meeting that the arrangement with HCRP was for a minimum of one year, and that Steering Group needed to start its consideration of what it wanted to do after the year has ended. MS confirmed that Swanage Railway had paid £2,000 to PCRPs towards the core costs and this was included in the sum transferred to HCRP. SB would refer later to a bid to Dorset Council for a similar contribution to core costs.

Agenda Item 7 - CRO's Report and Updates

SB had submitted a written report which had been sent round with the agenda. He particularly asked for guidance on what his priorities should be. At present, he was trying to move forward on a very broad front.

Wool Goods Shed was a particular issue. JW had reported that he had been unable to persuade colleagues to release any access or spare land adjoining the goods shed which would have been useful for its future use. GJ questioned whether Network Rail had made the right decision in this regard, and whether it should reconsider. It was generally

agreed that the starting point for any decision about taking the project forward was to decide upon its future use once repairs had been completed. There were various options suggested, including a cafe, a Museum, a Tourism Hub, or a Food Bank base. SB acknowledged that local demand needed to be tested but that there were a lot of visitors to local attractions who alighted at Wool and had no focal point or hub to visit. PA confirmed that SWR had allocated £5,000 to go towards the costs of a Feasibility Study (note: this funding would be returned to the DfT if not committed by end of March 2023). DW had previously said that some funding was available from CRN for a similar purpose. The Railway Heritage Trust had confirmed that it would be prepared to make a grant towards the costs of repairing the building, subject to conditions.

MS stated his concern that, whatever use was proposed, that PCRCP should not be the manager of the space. It needed a separate body to do so.

ACTIONS: JW to go back to colleagues about access and adjoining land; SB and MWm to meet at Wool to inspect the building; SB and MS to set up a Teams meeting with Steering Group, Friends of Wool and Wool Parish Council.

Continuing with his Report, SB turned to the Information Board to be installed at Moreton station. This had been designed, approved, and paid for previously. ACTION: SB to send round the artwork design for information only.

Turning to Wareham Station, SB referred to the proposed new planters, which needed SWR 'sign-off' before a grant application to CRN could be confirmed. ACTION: BE to send photos of the proposed locations for the planters to PA, so that she could get the go-ahead from her colleagues.

At this point, GJ referred to recent SWR events at Salisbury and Sherborne and the benefit of a 'pan Dorset' approach to garden displays throughout the County. He went on to say that there were a lot of benefits to be had by sharing other issues and looking for synergies eg social media campaigns.

SB mentioned the Great Bulb Plant Out at Dorchester South, due to take place the following day, thanks to PA and SWR.

Agenda Item 8 - Review of Funding Bids Submitted

SB referred to the bids to Dorset Council for core funding, and to CRN for the Wareham planters, both mentioned above. MS confirmed that the joint bid (with SR) for the extension of funding for the Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Officer post had been submitted to SWR and receipt had been acknowledged.

MS then raised a point about SR's Restoring Your Railway bid to DfT. Whilst SR had not heard anything in recent times from DfT it was believed that the scheme was still included within the possible schemes for taking forward in due course. MS had heard a speech by the now previous Rail Minister, speaking highly of those schemes which were being taken forward at that time. MS suggested that now was the time to make contact with the local MPs to ask them to reconfirm their commitment to SR's bid. This would enable SR and PCRCP to try to put some pressure on the current Rail Minister to bring forward some funding. He proposed a letter jointly signed by SR and PCRCP. Network Rail's reconfirmation of support would be welcome.

ACTION: MS, MWm, and GJ to contact both of the local MPs.

Agenda Item 9 - ReAccreditation

MS reported that, now the Accountable Body had transferred to HCRP, the process of ReAccreditation could commence. The Chair and Officer would be the key players for PCRCP. ACTION: MS to ask HCRP to get the process under way in liaison with DW.

Agenda Item 10 - Agreement of Dates of Future Meetings

MS had submitted a report advising that the transfer took place on 1st November. The amount transferred was £56,143. MS reminded the meeting that the arrangement with HCRP was for a minimum of one year, and that Steering Group needed to start its consideration of what it wanted to do after the year has ended. MS confirmed that Swanage Railway had paid £2,000 to PCRCP towards the core costs and this was included in the sum transferred to HCRP. SB would refer later to a bid to Dorset Council for a similar contribution to core costs.

Agenda Item 11 - Reports from Steering Group Members

Network Rail - RP reported that there had been a re-organisation in the Wessex Strategic Planning team and this had resulted in them being currently a few posts short of their normal establishment. He advised that there had been a recent meeting with Dorset Council regarding the Wareham level crossing. The Wareham Master Planning initial meeting had been postponed from October. **ACTION: JW to arrange a new Date.**

BE reported that the Cordite Way (footpath 30) Right of Way had recently been cleared from Formal Objections by Dorset Council and would be ready for clearance work in the New Year. NR had removed the bridge over the Railway, but had also removed the abutments without consultation with the landowner or the Council. The leasehold owner of the land had offered to replace the bridge but funding would be needed for new footings and abutments, for which NR consent would obviously be needed. (Note: Poole Harbour Trails had put in a bid for SWR CCI funding for a Feasibility Study for an additional bridge across Lychett Gap to join up with Hamworthy, and eventually achieve a cycleway/footway link with Poole).

JW reported that a new NR Asset Manager had been appointed for the Outer Wessex area. BE was keen to get the area around the level crossing looking tidier. **ACTION: JW to deal.**

SWR - PA reported on various matters, including:

- The successful Salisbury CR Conference and the forthcoming online Stakeholder Conference;
- The Big Bulb Plant Out, at 35 stations;
- Dorchester South Station adoption was now in place; - The Stations In Bloom competition referred to earlier;
- Plaques for Station Adopters;
- The Wareham 'totem', in common with others, would have messages developed by the SWR Apprentice (Matthew) to record both local and wider information.
- 'Dinosaur Month' was a concept SWR was working on and would appreciate involvement from CRPs.
- The Coronation and Waterloo 175 ideas were being developed. Any thoughts would be welcome.

Swanage Town Council - Nothing further to add.

Dorset Council - BE wanted to report that progress on the Cordite Way footway/cycleway was being made. NR had removed the old bridge over the main line near Rockley Point, apparently without consultation, and this needed replacement including new abutments. Some funding was available for the new bridge. A CCI funding application had been made to SWR. **ACTION: JW to investigate who at NR might be able to help re a new bridge.**

Swanage Railway - GJ advised that SR had had a very challenging year, with passenger numbers down by 30% compared to 2019. The visit of Flying Scotsman, however, had been more successful than predicted. Coal had gone up in price from £185 per tonne to £405, as an example of the cost pressures being faced. Current plans for 2023 were that there would be a reduced steam service between Swanage and Norden, but this would be balanced by running a through DMU service between Swanage and Wareham on certain days between 2nd May and 10th September. A major issue was the increased

cost of Insurance which would become necessary for operating on the main line, if the visit of ORR on 30th November approved the grant of the TOC Licence to SR. MWM asked about the days of operation (proposed to be Tues/Weds/Thurs/Sat) and if this could be increased if demand required. **ACTION: GJ to put SR's Commercial Director in touch with SB, so that joint publicity and promotion campaigns could be achieved. PA to check SWR's May 2023 timetable proposals, to check for connectivity.**

MS pointed out that a successful Restoring Your Railways bid would greatly assist in the event of a shortfall of revenue, thus enabling SR to plan with more confidence.

Agenda Item 12 - Waterloo 175 and Coronation

These had been referred to in earlier discussions. Ideas and thoughts would be welcome.

Agenda Item 13 - Any Other Business

- SB raised the issue of the 3 x Jurassic Coast videos which SR had commissioned and paid for. It was confirmed that these could be passed to any and all potential outlets for further promotion of the area.
- PA reminded all of the forthcoming virtual SWR Stakeholder Conference on 22nd November.
- SB wanted advice on how much cost he could incur without prior authority from Steering Group. Following discussion, it was agreed that the maximum should be £300 per item.

V1 - ENDS

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