

# DfT Community Rail Accreditation – Community Rail Network post-meeting report

## Accreditation Meeting Details

<b>CRP Name:</b>	Purbeck Community Rail Partnership	
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	11:00, 26 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	Via Video Call	
<b>Present at Meeting:</b>	Josephine Foley	Purbeck CRP, Officer
	Mike Whitwam	Purbeck CRP, Vice-Chair and Acting Chair
	Paula Aldridge	South Western Railway, Community Rail Manager
	Robert Hodgkinson	Network Rail (Wessex Route), Franchise & Access Manager (Inter-Operators & Community Rail)
	Mark Woolley	Director, Swanage Railway Company
	Daniel Wright	Community Rail Network, Community Rail Support Officer

## Key

Points highlighted in **Grey** are advisory notes for the CRP to address over the next 12 months and points highlighted in **Yellow** need action by a set date, neither will halt the accreditation process. Points highlighted in **Red** need immediate resolution and will pause the accreditation process.

## Documentation and Information provided for the meeting

Based on the requirement criteria for accreditation renewal as set out in the Community Rail Accreditation Guidance (2018) and the five key principles of accreditation the following documentation and evidence was presented before or at the accreditation meeting.

1. Show willingness to work with Community Rail Network, DfT, Welsh Government and/or other partners as relevant to **resolve any issues or concerns** with these requirements

*The CRP officer interacts regularly with both the Community Rail Network staff team on day to day matters and has regular meetings and contact with SWR. It submitted to Community Rail Network a report showing how the CRP addressed recommendations arising from the initial accreditation meeting, which has been carried out satisfactorily.*

*Community Rail Network is invited to all steering group and stakeholder meetings.*

2. Work with Community Rail Network to **share lessons, ideas and good practice** across community rail.

*The CRP met this requirement by providing an annual report review of the last year's work. **ACTION: This should be edited and given a short introduction, and then placed on the PCR website, as well as being circulated electronically as part of the papers for the AGM (by October 2021).** The CRP also posts news items on its social media channels and website.*

**NOTE:** CRP officer is encouraged to post news items and updates regularly on the CRP website and social media channels as 'on-site' activities build up again during the rest of the year.

**NOTE:** CRP officer is encouraged to send news items to Community Rail Network Communications and Marketing Manager to raise the profile of PCR within the community rail movement nationally.

*Despite a changeover of officers, and the new CRP officer starting in the middle of a pandemic, the CRP has developed a number of useful projects over the last year. A project to tackle youth trespass on the railway as part of the Backtrack competition was a direct response to incidents rising during lockdown. New planters are brightening up stations, and although disrupted by various lockdowns, various larger projects*

are underway. These include the installation of a new and improved bus shelter at Wareham station, a history project in association with Bournemouth University, and the development of a wildlife garden in a disused bay at Wareham station.

The launch of a well-designed website has raised the profile and accessibility of the CRP to the wider public and the rest of the Community Rail movement.

Disappointingly, there remains no firm date for the introduction of the Swanage Railway-operated public service to/from Wareham station. Until this begins, one of the expected key roles of the CRP officer – to promote the public service as a sustainable non-car means of accessing Purbeck – cannot be taken forward.

3. Having appropriate **financial controls** in place.

Detailed accounts for the year end have been submitted to Community Rail Network along with a projected budget that shows the CRP will meet its core running costs including salaries for staff. The forward budget shows (as recommended in the accreditation meeting 12 months ago) a draw down on reserves to fund various capital projects. This will reduce the very large cash reserves held by the CRP. **ACTION: reserves will still be significant in 12 months' time even if reduced as planned, and opportunities to undertake further projects using reserves should be sought for the 2022-23 financial year to allow this funding to generate community benefit (by end of March 2022).** Finances for the CRP are managed through host company Swanage Railway.

4. Having an **appropriate, transparent governance structure** (with an up-to-date Terms of Reference or Memoranda & Articles) and aim to ensure governance is effective, fair and representative.

The last meeting's CRP governing documents still remain relevant. The CRP is an unincorporated partnership with the officer employed and the monies hosted via Swanage Railway, one of the partners in the CRP.

The vice-chair is currently acting into the role of chair while a recruitment process is underway for a permanent chair. The acting chair and officer have established regular and appropriate informal contact between meetings of the steering group.

The steering group remains quite compact, with some members unable to regularly attend. The steering group is considering inviting other local stakeholders onto the steering group to widen experiences and viewpoints available to the group. **NOTE – this is welcome and should be kept under review.**

5. Produce an activity plan which is in line with the requirements set out in the Community Rail Development Strategy and is responsive to suggestions and ideas put forward by CRP members and communities (**First Principle of Accreditation**).

An activity plan for Purbeck CRP was provided listing overall activities that the CRP will deliver.

Alongside consideration of the activity plan from the previous year, these plans show the CRP continues to be effective through strong links and engagement with the communities it serves, responding to suggestions and ideas put forward by local communities and station adoption groups.

The activity plans set out a wide range of activities which potentially each cover at least one of the four pillars of the Community Rail Development Strategy, and often several pillars.

Each activity on the plans clearly shows a link to the line's main objectives, and the CRP itself is strongly focussed on delivering projects in a manner consistent with the four pillars of the Community Rail Strategy.

**NOTE: With the new CRP Officer now firmly established in post, and acting as the eyes and ears of the CRP on a day-to-day basis, they should feel confident in suggesting new projects for the activity plan, based on their evolving understanding of local needs and desires.**

6. Transparency, openness, and ease of contact (**Second Principle of Accreditation**).

*The CRP website is clear about the purpose and activities of the CRP and has a contact webform. The officers name and contact details are available (**NOTE** – the “Background Information” page needs updating to reflect the appointment of a new CRP officer). In addition, the CRP uses Twitter and Facebook to share information.*

*The officer of the CRP is easily contactable and responsive to phone and e-mail contact.*

*It has taken some time for the officer to be provided with basic IT equipment and services such as a laptop and a business subscription to Teams/Zoom (or similar). This has meant that the officer has found it difficult to set up meetings themselves and relied on Teams/Zoom accounts held by others for anything other than short meetings. This has recently been rectified.*

7. Provide appropriate **policies and procedures** which ensure the CRP is holding itself to high standards in its organisation, working in a safe, responsible and ethical manner and compliant with all relevant rules and regulations. (**Third Principle of Accreditation**).

*As the CRP officer is employed by Swanage Railway, it is Swanage Railway’s policies and procedures which apply to the officer. All the appropriate policies continue to be in place and are reviewed as appropriate. New/revised policies were provided relating to media management and environment.*

8. Use an effective **review and planning cycle**, using Community Rail Network’s support and advice through its annual planning process to review progress and priorities and discuss the next year’s plan engaging and consulting rail industry and other local partners (**Fourth Principle of Accreditation**).

*Ideas for projects and activities are discussed with staff from train operators before being added to activity plans to ensure they are feasible, meet their strategic aims for community rail and to seek match-funding and operational permissions. Projects are also discussed with station adopters and other local groups as appropriate. Positive relations and engagement with Network Rail have also been observed, helping shape the work of the CRP.*

*The officer has sought advice from Community Rail Network on the development of projects, for instance asking for examples of successful ‘living wall’ projects at other community rail organisations.*

Show activities to be undertaken support the strategic aims of the CRP, including desired outcomes of the activity, and how this will be assessed; how the activity will be delivered and resourced to maximise the benefits for the community and timescales for delivery.

*The activity plan shows desired outcomes for most activities together with how they will be judged as successful. It was noted that the officer had positively engaged with Community Rail Network training on project evaluation, and had availed themselves of the opportunity to attend the Community Rail Conference.*

*The action plans also include details of relevant training that CRP staff members will undertake during the next 12 months to develop themselves and their skills.*

Ensure the work of the CRP considers diversity within local communities, and strives to contribute to more inclusive, cohesive communities. (**Fifth Principle of Accreditation**).

*We are satisfied that there are a good range of activities that include work to encourage local communities to travel by train or get involved with activities at their local stations.*

9. Adherence to the five principles of accreditation

*The CRP is upholding the **five key principles** of accreditation in all activities listed in the CRP’s annual activity plan.*

10. Be a **member of Community Rail Network** and display its membership on its website

*The CRP is a member of Community Rail Network and displays its membership on its website.*

**Summary**

**I recommend that Purbeck Community Rail Partnership continues to be accredited by the DfT for the period of 12 months from the end of its previous accreditation.**

**Daniel Wright**  
Community Rail Support Officer, Community Rail Network  
**2 September 2021**