

PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP RE-CONVENED MEETING 14 HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS ON 4 NOVEMBER 2021



Present:

Cllr Mike Whitwam (MWm) of Swanage Town Council, Cllr Beryl Ezzard (BE) and Fiona King (FK) of Dorset Council, Paula Aldridge (PA) of South Western Railway, Gavin Johns (GJ), Mark Woolley (MWy), and Mick Stone (MS) of Swanage Railway, Rob Hodgkinson (RH) of Network Rail, Dan Wright (DW) of Community Rail Network, and Josephine Foley (JF) Purbeck CRPO.

Apologies: Kelly Flynn (KF) of Dorset Council, Jaime Rockhill and Jonathan Cowe (JC) of Network Rail, Ade Parvin (AP) of Perenco UK.

The meeting was quorate.

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

MWm welcomed everyone to the meeting, in his role as Acting Chairman. Introductions were made. At that point, and by agreement, he handed over to MWy for the formal election of a Chairman.

Agenda Item 2 - Vote for Chairperson

Before the vote was taken, GJ asked about the absence of the representative from (voting member) Perenco UK, and was advised that its vote had already been received electronically. At this point, DW explained the role of the Chairperson, to help and support the Officer (but not to instruct them), Chair meetings and publicise the work of the CRP. They would not hold executive powers. Those powers came from the Steering Group, via the Activity Plan, which was updated on a regular basis.

MWy then pointed out that there were 5 voting members, each having one vote each. Those parties were Dorset Council, South Western Railway, Swanage Town Council, Swanage Railway, and Perenco UK. All other Steering Group members, including Network Rail and CRN, were non-voting members.

There were two candidates for the Chairperson role, BE and MWm. Both had previously given written statements (sent out with the agenda), and MWy asked the candidates if they wanted to add anything orally. Both then gave additional comments on why they had stood for election. At that point, GJ asked both candidates the question: 'what can you do to raise the level of advocacy, for instance with regard to the fixing of revised car parking charges at Purbeck Park?'. Both candidates then explained what they had done and were doing to persuade Dorset Council not to treat Purbeck Park as a simple car park, but to treat it as a Transport/Mobility Hub. This distinction would be reflected in the charges to be made. It was very clear that both candidates were working hard to persuade Dorset Council not to accept the recommendation to Cabinet on 8th November, but to re-classify Purbeck Park as a 'Hub'.

BE pointed out that the Lead Councillor on this matter is no longer Cllr Cherry Brooks but is now Cllr Simon Gibson.

MWy said that there were two strong candidates for the Chairperson role, and he hoped that whichever was unsuccessful would be prepared to stand as the Vice-Chairperson. The intention was to use voting technology via 'Teams' software but, in the event, this was not achievable, due to several members not having the appropriate software. Thus, it was suggested and agreed that votes would be sent via email to MWy, JF already having had such a vote from AP. (Note: PA, on behalf of SWR, voted and then had to leave the meeting). MWy then announced that the votes cast were:

3 for MWm

2 for BE.

MWy announced that MWm was therefore elected Chairperson.

Agenda Item 3 - vote for Vice-Chairperson

BE offered her congratulations to MWm on his election and confirmed that she would be pleased to be the Vice-Chairperson. There being no other nominations, BE was elected to that role.

Agenda Item 4 - vote for Secretary

MS was the only member who had offered to take on this role, and was duly appointed. BE took the opportunity to congratulate MS on his recent appointment to the Board of Community Rail Network.

Agenda Item 5 - Any Other Business

- A) Following the discussion earlier, it was agreed that JF would write a short note to Dorset Council about the proposed car parking charges at Purbeck Park. **ACTION: JF**
- B) JF advised that a short submission had been made to Dorset Council's consultants in support of the proposals for the Bus Service Improvement Plan. MS commented that he and JF were due to have the next quarterly meeting with Go South Coast shortly, and the opportunity would be taken to ask for their views on the BSIP and how they saw things progressing. MS offered to ask GSC if it would be willing to write a letter of support for Swanage Railway's submission for Restoring Your Railways funding (see below). **ACTION: JF/MS**
- C) BE thanked RH for getting the 'Wareham' mural installed on the footbridge. She also referred to the Friends of Wareham Station, sign which she hoped would be installed shortly, and looked forward to the unveiling.
- D) GJ confirmed that he is now the representative of SR on the Partnership, following MWy's standing down. He talked about the Restoring Your Railway bid by Swanage Railway (see above), which has to be submitted by the end of November to the Department for Transport. There was a particular need for capital investment on SR. He hoped that members of Steering Group would be willing to write letters of support. MWm as Chairman agreed to write such a letter, once the Executive Summary had been made available for consideration. **ACTION: MWm/JF.**
- E) JF raised the issue of earmarking of funds for specified projects. She pointed out that some projects had relatively long lead-in times and often were dependent on progress by other partners. Other funds were in various stages of commitment. BE asked how much was available to spend. MS responded that, if one assumes that the core funding for the Officer post would continue as in the past, there would be around £60,000 available for projects, and noted the pressure from SWR to get the funds spent. JF referred to the Activity Plan and would provide an updated copy of that Plan and a statement of funds available for the next meeting (2 December). **ACTION: JF.**
- F) BE pointed out that the roof of the cycle racks at Wareham station had come loose in the recent high winds. This should be reported to SWR's Station Manager for Poole to Weymouth, Paul Jones. **ACTION: JF to arrange a meeting at Wareham.**
- G) RH referred to the garden project in the former Up Bay at Wareham. He pointed out that it had taken 9 months so far to progress through the necessary processes at Network Rail. He looked forward to further progress in due course.
- H) BE referred to the level crossing issues at Wareham, and asked RH if he could help. This was out of RH's remit and he suggested that a Partnership approach was necessary. BE reminded the meeting of Cllr Ray Bryan's statement at the AGM in September that the Wareham MP and others were due to meet Network Rail at Basingstoke, and asked if there was an update. None of the members present had heard any update.

- l) it was noted that Re-Accreditation had been achieved by the Partnership, and congratulations were offered to JF for doing so.
- J) MWm offered a Vote of Thanks to MWy, for his service to the Partnership over many years and would now no longer be SR's representative. In thanking MWm, MWy advised that he would still be involved at Swanage Railway but in a different role, and so he might re-appear in due course.
- K) JF reported that a few small tweaks to the Constitution had been made and the proposed changes would be presented to Steering Group for approval or otherwise at its next meeting. The next meeting was due to take place on Thursday, 2 December, at the Sports Bar by Purbeck School. JF said it would be a hybrid meeting, provided that the technology could be made to work.

Date of Next Meeting: 2 December 2021 at 11.00. Hybrid Meeting

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