

# Destination Okehampton – A Council Working Group

---

## **Present:**

Kevin Ball, Sue & Tom Baxter [DRSA], Chris Bligh, Sue Eberle [Sourton PC] Jan Goffey [OTC Mayor], Michael Ireland, Anne Johnson [Tavistock TC] Maureen McDonald, Richard Proctor, Bob Rush, Paul Vachon, Paul Voaden [DRSA] Derek Webber [Okehampton Hamlets PC]

## **Apologies:**

Claire Gladstone [Hatherleigh TC] Cllr. Tony Leech [OTC] Cllr. Christine Marsh,

## **Welcome:**

The working group welcomed Cllr Sue Eberle from Sourton Parish Council to the meeting.

## **Matters arising:**

The OkeRail banner has been found. One of the smaller banners was displayed by Richard Searight at Tavistock Carnival.

Cllr. Ball raised the issue of the report from DCC presented to Council by D Black [Officer] on the Dawlish avoiding route and Northern Route. The report stated that “the Northern route & Dawlish alternative were unlikely to come forward”.

This statement was refuted by Cllr. Ball who asked for the fact that he wasn't pleased; to be noted. Cllr. Andrew Leadbetter [DCC] has now presented amendments to make the report more favourable and positive [toward the Northern Route].

Action – Cllr. Ball to e mail document to MI for distribution. It was also noted that the latest copy of *Rail Magazine* has an item referring to Cllr. Leadbetter and the value of the line. Chris Bligh commented on the resulting uplift to the economy resulting from rail routes.

Cllr J. Goffey reminded the meeting that the Okehampton Medical Centre has 14 thousand patients, so the population of “Okehampton” is not 7 thousand. In reply Cllr Ball said the Peninsula Rail Task Force [PRTF] are aware of the potential population and referred to other railways which are successful despite ‘failing’ the cost – benefit ration test.

## **Marketing Okehampton**

It was not that the last report present to the group by Paul Vachon had been presented to Okehampton Town Council and approved.

## **Report from Okehampton Rail Forum**

Richard Proctor commented on the presentation given at the Forum by *Dartmoor Railway* saying it was possibly not what we wanted to hear because of the proposed restrictive arrangements and views conflicting with that of the community.

Michael Ireland reported that the Forum has set up three task groups; business, communications & technical. MI told the meeting that the idea of having a special train from Okehampton to London Paddington named the '*Royal Oke*' with the aim of promoting OkeRail was been explored. Cllr. Ball indicated that a price of 15 thousand pounds was the estimate for a 450 seat HST train.

Chris Bligh reported on the work of the Technical Group. Chris reported that he had tried to present options for the service, but Dartmoor Railway would not consider anything but their own plan.

Cllr Ball made the point at the Forum on traffic from the Parkway to Okehampton. option is to have access to Okehampton Town.

Paul Vachon stated that Okehampton Parkway is not suitable as a terminus and queried whether Dartmoor Railway could make money from extending their service.

Jan Goffey thought commuters would be happy with Okehampton Parkway, though walkers and tourists would not, unless a shuttle bus operated.

Michael Ireland felt that discussions of the options were needed at future meeting of the OkeRail Forum with some room for negotiation.

Derek Webber agreed negotiations were needed but not conducted in an aggressive manner.

## **Sunday Rover**

Richard Proctor gave an excellent report on his survey work on the Sunday service and distributed some copies. The Chair and meeting thanked Richard for his hard work which provides vital statistical evidence to support the reinstatement of the line.

## **OkeRail CIC**

Bob Rush reported that he had sent letters to Mel Stride MP, Chris Grayling, Okehampton Times, Heritage Lottery, Local Enterprise Programme, Angela Welch DCC, M&S, Wetherspoons, WMN and the Crediton Courier. The objective of these letters was to make OkeRail CIC's aims clear to the wider population. The business plan would incorporate submissions from Chris Bligh and Richard Proctor, with aim of securing funding – particularly from the Government.

## **Hatherleigh – Okehampton Rail Link**

A trial bus link would operate on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August and be publicised in the local press. Community Transport is providing the bus and Richard Proctor will take the bookings. The bus service will also be featured in the Hatherleigh Parish Pump

magazine. The timetable for the bus will be put up on lampposts and removed at the end of the day.

### **Date of next meeting**

This was originally scheduled for Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, but has **been moved to Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October at 1900 in the Conservative Club, Okehampton.**

Michael Ireland

Chair

Sunday, 25 September 2016