

Minutes of Portishead Railway Group Members Meeting (PRG 164)

Tuesday 18th July 2023 at the Folk Hall, Portishead.

Welcome and introductions. Chairman Alan Matthews welcomed 36 members to the meeting, and outlined the agenda for the evening.

Apologies: Apologies were received from 8 members.

The Accounts for 2022 were presented at the December 2022 AGM , it was proposed by Daisy Bickley and seconded by Yvonne Brimley that they be accepted. It was unanimously agreed.

Membership Secretary Peter Maliphant explained that PRG were updating our records to establish our current membership status.

Presentation by Peter Maliphant, Dave Chillistone and Alan Matthews. The full presentation can be found on the PRG website, (About us :- Membership Information). A summary of the presentation is below, which included question and answer sessions.

1. History of the past 23 years

Peter presented a brief summary of the past 23 years. There were no questions. Daisy Bickley mentioned that a 1995 petition for the line raised over 4,000 signatures.

2. Key features of the new Portishead & Pill line

Dave presented the features of the new line. The Portishead & Pill trains will terminate at Temple Meads, at least initially. There is no information yet, about onwards connections but it is sensible to assume that there will be some coordination of arriving and departing services.

3. What's happening now and next through to 2026

The contract for all the works will go out to tender, there are a small number of pre-approved specialist contractors who will be able to quickly tender for the work.

The new road layout for Quays Avenue – North Somerset Council is ready to get planning approval for this, so it will progress quickly once the Full Business Case is signed off.

Funding – we revisited the sources of funding (see attachment), which highlights how committed all the four local Councils, WECA and the DfT are to the project. All those parties are keen to get this done. The DfT will pick up any further cost increase due to inflation.

Station parking – there were a few questions about this. There will be at least 280 parking spaces in Portishead. There are no details on charges yet, but we have raised the issue of parking on local roads both in Portishead and Pill, and would like to see a parking charge that is prohibitive for non-rail users and somehow built into the ticket price for those travelling by train.

Ticket prices – No information yet. [Current Off-Peak fares for comparable journeys are Keynsham £4.80, Nailsea £5.50, Yate £5.90, Yatton £7.00]

Buses – PRG would hope to see a shuttle bus connecting all of Portishead to the station.

Tourism – It was mentioned that there is an increasing number of people coming to Portishead, both for work and leisure – Lake Grounds, Skateboard Park, Marina etc. Daisy Bickley proposed NSC should organise a traffic count in both directions on the A369

4. What PRG may become as the line reopens

There were lots of comments and suggestions:

- The problem is ensuring people believe it will happen. It's important to spread the word that it is happening (and has been for several years!!)
- We should become the Friends of Portishead & Pill Railway
- Should there be an annual subscription?
- We should join Severnside Rail Partnership as soon as we are able to. This will give us access to sources of funding for improvements e.g. station facilities.
- We should start campaigning for a half-hour service straightaway
- Our objectives should be:
 - o Promote the railway before it opens
 - o Emphasise it is Portishead and Pill!
 - o Ensure supporting bus services are in place
 - o When open, keep pressure on Network Rail & GWR to maintain services
 - o Maintain the stations
 - o Lobby for improvements

Based on those present at meeting, the most common uses of the line would be:

- o Connections, particularly to Bath and London as well as further afield
- o Bristol for shopping, evenings out and medical appointments
- o Commuting and work
- o Sport
- o Passenger traffic inbound to Portishead for work and tourism

The Meeting Closed at 9.15pm.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.