

**Minutes of Okehampton Remote Town Annual Assembly
held at 7pm on Monday 22nd March 2021**

The Assembly was chaired by Councillor Yelland, Town Mayor.

In Attendance: Town Council Members; Cllr's Abbots, Button, Goffey, Holt, Ireland, Jessop, Leech, Marsh, Matravers, Sanger, Tolley, Travers, Yelland and Wood

Christian Irwin, Network Rail Industry Programme Director
Matthew Barnes, GWR Regional Development Manager
Ian Mundy, GWR Dartmoor Route Project Manager
Matthew Thompson, Network Rail Communications Manager

Cllr Ball (DCC)
Cllr Davies (WDBC)
Cllr Vachon (WDBC)
Approx. 50 members of the public
Mrs E James, Town Clerk
Mrs C Ellis, Assistant Town Clerk
Mrs A Horn, Admin Officer & Mayor's Assistant

Prayers were offered for those who wished to take part by Rev Cllr M Davies

- 2021.01 Apologies for Absence** – No apologies were presented.
- 2021.02 Welcome and Introduction** – The Mayor, Cllr Yelland, welcomed those present and advised that the Annual Report was available on the website.
- 2021.03 Minutes of Previous Annual Town Assembly** – The Minutes of the Town Assembly held on 1st April 2019 were agreed as correct on the proposition of Cllr Goffey, seconded by Cllr Marsh, for signing at a later date.
- 2021.04 Questions from the Public to the Town Council** – No questions were raised.
- 2021.05 Presentation from Network Rail and GWR** – Cllr Yelland reported that the Council was delighted by the recent announcement that the reinstatement of a regular passenger service from Okehampton to Exeter would commence before the end of 2021. Representatives of Network Rail and GWR were introduced, a PDF copy of the presentation would be available from the Town Council. A dedicated website had been created and would be regularly updated with progress and information www.dartmoorline.com

Action

A brief outline of the ownership of various areas of the line and station was provided. Funding for the project, £40.5M, had been confirmed by the Government on 3rd March 2021 followed by the announcement on 19th March that the service would commence before the end of the year, a specific date was awaited. Construction work had commenced on 22nd March.

Initially there would be a two-hourly service between Okehampton and Exeter, with an hourly service being introduced before the end of 2022. There were no plans to reopen any of the stations between the two locations, although possibilities in relation to Sampford Courtenay were

being evaluated.

Drainage and culvert clearance was being undertaken but being minimised and 11 footpath crossings would be upgraded with an alarm signal system.

The carpark would be pay & display and CCTV would be provided. Work was being undertaken in order for the reprovision of the buffet and toilet facilities.

2021.06 Questions from the Public – Pre submitted questions and those from the floor were invited and answered. They included queries around ecology, the provision of a bus service to/from the station, the train timetable, the Parkway Station, parking/vehicle access to the station and bicycles on trains.

Network Rail/GWR were working with ecologists in order to minimise clearance work where possible. The first train of the day would arrive at Exeter shortly after 8am, the last leaving Exeter around 8 or 9pm. They were liaising with DCC and Bus Operators in relation to the provision of a service from the station. There would be some limited space for bicycles on the trains.

Cllr Ball advised that DCC had some funding towards the Parkway Station and that Network Rail, GWR and DCC were working together in the early stage of design and costings for its provision. Funding for its construction was not included in the £40.5M provided by the Government.

Cllr Ball answered some traffic related concerns in relation to parking and congestion along Station Road advising that DCC Highways was aware of the potential issues and would be making contact with the Town Council.

2021.07 Conclusion and Thanks – The Mayor, Cllr Yelland, thanked everybody for taking the time to attend and closed the meeting at 8.30pm

Signed as a true record of the Assembly
