

Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust
Cricket Field Lane extension proposal
Public engagement summary
August 2024



In order to engage with as much of the community as possible over the railway's extension proposal, a special meeting was held with Parracombe Parish Council on Tuesday 9th July followed by open public meetings in Parracombe village Hall on Friday 12th July and Saturday 13th July.

The events were advertised on the railway's web site, Parracombe Parish Council's web site and in addition 165 letters were sent to Parracombe residents.

21 members of the public attended the parish council meeting excluding councillors. 16 attended on Friday 12th and 13 attended on Saturday 13th.

These were run as collaborative engagement sessions based around a series of illustrative display boards where attendees were able to ask questions and discuss ideas, and concerns, with a team from the railway.

The same display material was published on the railway's web site. The closing date for written feedback by email, web form or letter was 2nd August.

After careful consideration of all comments received the Trust has prepared:

- (i) A summary table of questions and answers.
- (ii) Guiding principles in respect of future development of the railway.
- (iii) A list of additional outcomes from the engagement meetings.

Responses to questions raised during the engagement process categorised by key themes.

Environment	
Impacts from coal, e-coal and steam	We recognise concerns with regards to coal impacts. The railway's supplies of Welsh coal expect to be exhausted by the end of the summer. The railway has taken the decision to not, as some other railways have done, use coal imported from other global supplies. Following trials, we currently propose using Heritage Smokeless Steam Coal manufactured by CPL Industries which is made from a blend of Anthracite, Bituminous Coal and a small amount of petcoke. The manufacturer claims up to 27% reduction in CO2 emissions and 80% reduction in smoke compared to traditional coal. This is an evolving situation as commercial manufacturers seek to continually improve their products, and the railway is monitoring and responding to utilise the best products available. Steam, the white puffs emitted from the chimney and from safety and other valves, is simply water vapour, the same as that produced by a kettle.
Upholding our environmental commitments	New legislation introduced during February 2024 requires all planning applications to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain. This will be a requirement placed upon us by Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) and will be subject to their monitoring. We take our environmental commitments very seriously. Wider environmental commitments are governed by a variety of environmental legislation to which the railway is and will be subject.
Noise from locomotive whistles (and horns)	We will be undertaking a review of our operating procedures regarding the use of whistles, particularly away from Woody Bay. Subject to maintaining a safe operating regime we will look to reduce the volume / pitch of train whistles as far as possible. The proposed extension has been deliberately curtailed at Cricket Field Lane, outside of and recognising the village conservation zone to minimise any impact. A noise and vibration assessment is being undertaken to address this concern and will be included with the planning submission.
Use of weedkillers	Like other transport operators we need to ensure the safety of the railway. From time to time, we have to use weedkiller to suppress unwanted plant life which could impact operations although we endeavour to minimise its use. Weedkiller is carefully applied only by licensed operatives. As part of our continual improvement of our operations we are considering how to reduce weedkilling and mowing according to emerging best practice and habitat enhancement.
Impacts on existing flora and fauna.	Diseased Ash Dieback trees are being removed under our existing good stewardship responsibilities to reduce the risks from falling / collapse. Compensatory new planting will be provided on railway property. Specific compensatory scrub and hedge planting is provided within the proposal to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain associated with the extension. We have a duty of care to existing wildlife along the corridor. An Ecological Assessment survey and report is being undertaken to identify any risks to wildlife and to identify any necessary mitigation. This report will be included with the planning submission

Previous hedgerow impacts	The hedgerow between Killington Lane and Parracombe Lane was reinforced with new whip planting during March 2024 to strengthen and thicken the hedgerow as part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme. We can only apologise for the manner in which the works were undertaken. Controls have been put in place to prevent a recurrence.
Use of turntable / turning plate	There is no proposal to use a turntable or turning plate. A conventional loop with points, as currently used at Killington Lane, is proposed. There is no road access to the proposed halt. It is very rare that anyone comes to watch the existing operational arrangement at Killington Lane, and we would expect the same at Cricket Field Lane.
Impacts upon water courses	There is little scope for ground pollution from steam locomotive. Steam exhausts from the chimney and ash is collected in an ash pan fitted below the locomotive firebox. A local Water Resources Impact Assessment was submitted to discharge condition 21 of the 2018 planning approval. The report was accepted by the Environment Agency.
Impacts on horses and riders	We understand that horse owners / riders in the area may have concerns. As we operate to a fixed, publicly published timetable we would hope that any impacts from the trains are minimised. As described in other responses we are examining our policy on locomotive whistles. We will engage with local equine groups and individuals to mitigate risks.
Opening of existing cuttings	The infilled original cuttings will be cleared, with arisings being transported and reused at other locations and the surplus going for disposal at a licensed disposal facility.
Drainage impacts at reopened cuttings	The railway operated between 1898 and 1935. Removing infill from cuttings and re-establishing the circumstances that then existed, including appropriate drainage, will not cause detriment. A surface water drainage management plan was submitted to discharge condition 10 of the 2018 planning approval. The report was accepted by Devon County Council Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team.
Risk of flooding to Cricket Field Lane	Cricket Field Lane is not within the site planning boundary and flooding here has nothing to do with extending the railway. This is an extant problem arising from water running off from the A39. The railway has previously offered to enter into a tripartite arrangement with the highway authority and the owners of Heddon Hall to resolve the issue because the water from Cricket Field Lane floods the railway track bed beyond Cricket Field Lane in the direction of Parracombe.
<i>Business / strategic case / strategy</i>	
Benefits case	As a heritage railway we are not required to judge the merits of the proposal with a Department for Transport-compliant business case. The railway has its own business plan that demonstrates that operation of an extended railway is economically beneficial. Our visitors tell us repeatedly that they would like a longer journey experience from Woody Bay. Whilst there is no strict transport benefit (in traditional appraisal terms) in extending only to Cricket Field Lane there is in terms of the tourism offer for Exmoor and North Devon, their spend in the locale, and positioning of the region on the national and international stage. No railway capital works projects are funded from revenue from operations. The cost of construction will be entirely funded by the Trust from donations and legacies. The Trust has a proven record of fund raising for a wide range of projects from property acquisitions to new-build steam locomotives.

	<p>The 2018 planning approval included documents that demonstrated the economic benefits of extending the railway. The 2020 section 73 planning application included reports that demonstrated extending the railway in small lengths produced incremental financial benefits. As stated in our exhibition material, the railway currently uses a number of local suppliers and thus contributes to the local economy accordingly.</p>
<p>The railway's strategy</p>	<p>The Trust is developing an integrated strategy which will encompass matters including heritage, education, environment, fixed and moving assets, fuels and carbon, staff, volunteers and community. This will provide the framework against which all major decisions will be made. In advance of this and recognising the helpful and valid contributions made by the community through the engagement period we have agreed a number of strategic principles which will frame future developments (as below).</p> <p>The Trust stated in 2007 its aim for a railway from Wistlandpound to Lynton. The legislative, political and environmental landscape has changed significantly. The Trust is realistic in its ambitions for the railway which may take decades to come to fruition. As stated above we are developing an integrated strategy, and we have agreed a number of principles to which we will adhere so that we work collaboratively with stakeholders and neighbours.</p>
<p>What are your ticket sales vs. stated carried passengers</p>	<p>In 2023 the railway carried approximately 45,000 passengers consisting of approximately 31,500 ticket sales of various categories. Tickets sales don't include children, (who are carried free of charge) and passengers who choose to travel multiple times. We are now measuring both as a result of upgraded electronic point of sale systems. However, our business planning is based around passengers carried because it is a reliable figure for operational purposes.</p>
<p>Anticipated passenger numbers as a result of the extension</p>	<p>In 2023 we carried approximately 45,000 passengers, including special events and galas. We anticipate an uplift of approximately 10% to 50,000 when the extension opens.</p>
<p>Impact upon Pavilion Stores and Cafe</p>	<p>Currently an average of 1.9 passengers a day leave the train at Killington Lane, and we anticipate similar levels at Cricket Field Lane. Pavilion Stores and cafe will not be advertised to our passengers unless requested by the shop management team.</p>
<p>Wider acquisition of assets</p>	<p>The Trust owns land at Old Station Inn and track bed to Wistlandpound reservoir. The Trust does not actively seek property south of Wistlandpound dam, although it does own two assets, the award-winning restoration at Chelfham station and a short section of track bed just north of Bratton Fleming station that was offered to the Trust to protect it from ad hoc development. Exmoor Associates and the Yeo Valley Trust who are separate entities from the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust have acquired various other sections of track bed south of the dam and in the Yeo valley.</p> <p>Land south of Blackmoor Gate is not within Exmoor National Park.</p>

Design & infrastructure	
Is Cricket Field Lane halt temporary?	The halt at Cricket Field Lane will remain until such as time as the availability of land, support from the wider community and the availability of funds allows for further extension through Parracombe.
Cost of infrastructure	A project budget estimate has been prepared using previous cost estimates and tender returns received in 2022 suitably uplifted. The current project cost is estimated at £1.6m.
Use of the railway as a permissive path	The Trust is willing to consider options for integrating defined permissive paths along the route of the railway to provide a community amenity in advance of any potential re-openings. This would be a long term project unrelated to this planning proposal and subject to collaborative working with Parracombe Parish Council and Exmoor National Park.
Status of tenants in the Bungalow at the former Parracombe Halt	The Trust has no intention of removing the property from the residential letting market for at least 5 years.
Construction staging	We have considered in detail the construction sequence and timing paying due regard to weather conditions and holiday season traffic. Our provisional programme of work would commence with construction of Killington Lane Bridge during 2025 followed by reconstruction of the cattle creep bridge on Higher Bodley Farm during 2026. Groundworks and removal of cutting infill would follow in 2027-28 leading to operational opening by September 2029. Staging will be carried out as a set of work activities on distinct sites to minimise the duration of works at any one location.
Disposal of spoil	The majority of spoil will be reused at sites as part of the extension project or at other sites owned by the railway requiring fill. The surplus will be disposed to licensed facilities. Machine access to the track bed will be from Killington Lane Bridge site and from Parracombe Bridge site. An excavation assessment has been carried out, quantities calculated, and road traffic estimated.
Article from the Purbeck Gazette dated 6 December 2020 titled "Railways and Preservation-Swanage, An Environmental Disaster"	The Swanage Railway is a standard gauge railway using a variety of mainline steam and diesel locomotives and bears little comparison with the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. The L&B is a 2ft narrow gauge railway where the engines and carriages are significantly lighter and smaller and the impacts from both construction of the railway and subsequent operational points of view, are significantly less. Our construction period is also not comparable.
Visiting train spotters to Parracombe Lane Head	We do not see any noticeable numbers of visiting train spotters / photographers at Killington Lane and therefore we would not expect to see similar at Parracombe Lane or Cricket Field Lane.
Impact on the primary school and residential properties	The nearest residential dwelling is Heddon Hall which is approximately 130m away and we will be discussing our proposals with the new owners when they take up occupancy. The school is in Churchtown Lane and there is no road connection to the proposed halt location which is 600m from the school via a footpath from the bridge in Churchtown Lane.
Implementation timescales	The financial climate is constantly changing, and this impacts the cost of everything. The time period 4-5 years that has been quoted has been conservative to enable full funding to be accumulated before each work contract is let.

Previous ENPA planning conditions	The previous conditions that were applied were relevant to that application. We have carefully considered how to undertake these works in a well-managed manner to minimise impact. We propose a programme of delivery whereby the development is split into sequential works packages. No works package will be commenced until each is fully funded.
Disruption from bridge constructions	There will be an adjacent temporary road diversion to allow Bridge 65 (Killington Lane) to be built over a period of approximately 4 months without significant disruption to traffic using Broadoak Hill. Parracombe Lane bridge is in place and no road closure is necessary apart from under traffic signal control to allow the missing parapet to be reconstructed.
Access	
Status of Cricket Field Lane access	The railway owns all of the land required to construct the extension to Cricket Field Lane. Ownership of Cricket Field Lane except for the crossing of the lane which is owned by the railway appears to be undocumented, but we understand local residents have used it as a walking route for many years and the railway has a signed statutory declaration that the lane was used for access to the track bed by its previous owner.
Maintenance of existing bus services in the event of Parracombe Lane being closed.	The original bridge over the railway is still in place at Parracombe Lane and it is under the care of Devon County Council as a highway structure. The missing parapet wall will have to be reconstructed and we expect this to be done under traffic signal control with traffic access being maintained at all times over the bridge. We will of course be liaising with Devon County Council over the detailed works proposals.
Joining passengers and traffic at Cricket Field Lane	The railway will operate and market services to Cricket Field Lane as per the arrangements at Killington Lane. There will be no parking for passengers, there will be no ticket facilities and there will be no marketing advertising it as a joining point. All vehicular traffic will be targeted at the Woody Bay car park as per the existing arrangements.
Loss of walk to Higher Bodley	The footpath across Higher Bodley existed before the railway was opened in 1898 and continued in use when the railway was operational. It will be retained in use beside the reinstated railway.
Encouragement of visitors to Parracombe	The railway concerns itself with providing the best visitor experience for those visiting the railway. We have people from the UK and around the world who visit for a variety of reasons, railway and non-railway related. Some of our visitors choose to continue with a walk from Killington Lane and our current records show that on average 1.9 per day leave the train to walk and return later. Clearly any visitors who choose to visit St Petrock's or the Fox and Goose is a benefit to those establishments.
Planning matters	
Why did we not engage with Parracombe Parish Council when the railway was having pre-application discussions with ENPA?	Both our engagement with Parracombe Parish Council, and our discussions with the ENPA planners, were undertaken during the pre-application period. Our discussions with the ENPA planners were necessary primarily to ensure that we develop planning application documents that comply with the relevant local and national planning legislation and address any specific issues and concerns that they may have, to avoid any procedural delays to them providing a positive and timely planning consent.
What are the timescales for the planning process	We intend to submit the planning application as soon as possible, in 2024. Once verified and registered by Exmoor National Park Authority,

	the statutory consultation and 8 week determination process will commence.
Are you wasting ENPA resources?	The railway as a visitor attraction and employer in the national park is entitled, like any other business (or residential property owner) to make applications to improve or change its property.
Provision of (equivalent) Grampian Conditions	The Trust has no intention of piecemeal construction. We propose a programme of delivery whereby the development is split into sequential works packages. No work packages will be commenced until that work package is fully funded.
Request to co-host planning application documents on the L&B website for ease of access	As has been good recent practice at other railways we will look to do this with a dedicated page after documents have been lodged with ENPA.
The consultation was not a proper consultation	As we stated clearly on our website and in letters to residents this was an engagement exercise in advance of the planning application and does not in any way replace any part of the formal planning process. As is usual in transportation planning exercises for both road and rail, the proposed scheme is presented to allow for a discussion and subsequent changes. Our responses to the questions raised and the principles that we have now adopted are as a direct result of the exercise with the community.
All options presented to L&B members were not presented to Parracombe residents	As a Trust, our primary duty is to our c.3,000 members, and we therefore consulted them to understand their aspirations following the withdrawal of the Section 73 application. Having established that their preference was still to pursue a westwards extension from the existing railway we began exploring the practicalities of this intent and consulted with Parracombe Parish Council and residents at the earliest date possible.
Alternative westerly locations in Parracombe	For absolute clarity, we are not proposing to extend to the previous site of Parracombe Halt, we are proposing extending to Cricket Field Lane only.
Repeated applications are divisive within the community and cause anxiety and stress	We have to follow statutory process. If the previous condition on the original application had not been so restrictive the section 73 would not have been necessary nor would have been this application. That was not within our control.
General	
Extension towards Caffyns as an alternative	The Trust does not currently own any land between Woody Bay and Caffyns and the costs to bypass the existing engine shed and engineering facility as well as that to cross under the A39 are significant.
Actions of previous trustees with regards to planning matters including use of Transport and Works Act Order powers	The current Trustees can only apologise for the unacceptable actions of previous Trustees who are no longer in office.
Impact on community wellbeing	As a responsible neighbour the railway recognises its duties to the wider community. We accept that we may not have been as open and engaging in the past as we could have been and are working hard to rectify this.

Removal of the “Private Land” sign at Heddon Hall	The Trust has no knowledge of this action.
Wider staged re-instatement	This proposal is only for the extension of the railway to Cricket Field Lane. Whilst wider ambitions exist for the whole former railway the Trust recognises the fiscal and planning realities of current climate.
Creation of ‘new assets’	The only new asset is a halt at Cricket Field Lane, the remainder is reinstatement of the former railway on its alignment, The halt is necessary to avoid bringing the railway into the old Parracombe halt in Churchtown which was opposed by many people during the Section 73 planning consultation.
Creation of a museum	As an educational charity the Trust is always seeking new ways to tell the story of the Lynton and Barnstaple Railway and thus intends to create a museum at Blackmoor Gate. We are in the early stages of planning the necessary management functions to enable the creation of such a museum.
Why isn’t the proposed extension to what was Parracombe Halt?	We have taken notice of the objections raised during the Section 73 consultation exercise. Stopping short outside the conservation zone further from dwelling houses should mitigate most of those concerns, whilst giving our passengers and supporters the extended journey that they have been seeking for so many years.

Guiding principles for future extension of the railway

Following the engagement exercise the Trust has considered its approach to future extensions of the railway and has set the following 5 guiding principles.

- 1) The Trust commits to a collaborative approach with neighbours and landowners and affirms that it has no intention of applying for compulsory purchase powers to acquire property. It will do this through mutual negotiation over time.
- 2) The Trust will work with Parracombe Parish Council and Exmoor National Park Authority to investigate the viability of providing permissive paths on Trust owned track bed as a community amenity until such a time as the railway is reinstated and to investigate where permanent paths may be accommodated, adjacent to but separate from the railway.
- 3) The Trust will consider options for future extensions as part of an Integrated Strategy for Management and Development of the railway.
- 4) The Trust will welcome dialogue and joint working with local nature and ecology groups to improve the railway corridor as part of biodiversity net gain aims.
- 5) The Trust will welcome dialogue with local walking and equine groups to mitigate any concerns.

Additional outcomes from Parracombe engagement meetings

- (i) A series of guiding principles has been established by the Trust for any extensions of the railway.
- (ii) The Trust has no intention of removing the bungalow at Parracombe Halt from the residential letting market for at least 5 years.
- (iii) The Trust commits to opening regular dialogue with Parracombe Parish Council recognising the council's role within the local community.
- (iv) A review of operating practices regarding use of locomotive whistles and horns at Cricket Field Lane will be undertaken recognising proximity to the village
- (v) We will engage with local equine / walking groups with regards to any impacts during construction and operation of the Cricket Field Lane extension.
- (vi) In addition to recording annual total passenger journeys the railway will start recording actual ticket sales now we have an electronic till and online booking facilities.
- (vii) The railway will not advertise Pavilion store and café to our passengers unless requested to do so by the shop management team.
- (viii) The railway will not advertise Cricket Field Lane halt as a passenger boarding point, parking location or point of interest for photographers and enthusiasts
- (ix) The Trust will prepare an Integrated Strategy for Management and Development of the railway that will provide a framework for the consideration of wider development aspirations for the railway.
- (x) A programme of delivery has been developed to ensure the project will be delivered in a manner which minimises impacts, through a staged construction programme, with each stage being fully funded before commencement.
- (xi) Copies of the Trust's planning documents will be made available on the railway's website after they have been registered and published by Exmoor National Park Authority on their website.