



**SWANAGE  
RAILWAY**

**Strategic Plan  
to 2030**

All photographs are courtesy of Andrew.P.M.Wright.

## **SWANAGE RAILWAY STRATEGIC PLAN to 2030.**

This document, approved by the Swanage Railway Trust's Council of Management sets out the strategic plan for the railway for the period to 2030, and it supersedes the previous 2011-2016 plan.

The Council of Management considers it important to set out its plans for the future, both to meet its obligations in delivering the Trust's charitable objectives but also to provide a framework for future investment and management decisions including achieving those good governance practices recommended by the Charities Commission.

The Trust's wholly owned subsidiary company, the Swanage Railway Company is responsible, as the Trust's Agent, for the direct management of the Swanage Railway train service, and this document will provide guidance for the Company's decision making.

This plan will be reviewed every two years or so.

The Swanage Railway Trust Council of Management,  
January 2015

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## **I: Strategic plan structure and approach taken to produce the plan.**

1.1 The Plan comprises a new vision and mission statement developed and agreed at a number of meetings in 2013/14. A number of strategic objectives have been created to deliver them. The strategic objectives in turn are supported by action plans. These action plans summarise what needs to be done, by when and at what estimated cost.

1.2 A risk assessment has been completed and risks measured using a method published by the Charities Commission. For each risk a series of mitigating actions have been identified. In addition we have developed and applied to those action plans requiring capital in the period to 2019, a prioritisation tool that enables us to decide how to progress our plans as funds become available either from our own resources or from grants made available to us at times and to the criteria published by grant funding bodies. The same tool can be used to prioritise our Business Plan and Funding Plan.

1.3 The Trust's charitable objects are to preserve and restore for the public benefit, items of historical, architectural, engineering or scientific value in connection with railways and to advance the education of the public in the history and development of railway transportation. In addition to the archive, library and museum activities at Corfe Castle and Norden, the principal way we do this is by operating the Swanage Railway and creating/maintaining its stations and other infrastructure in a style and way reflecting a branch line of the Southern Region of British Railways in the mid 1950's to early 1960s.

## **2: Our vision, mission and strategic objectives.**

### **Vision**

2.1 To be a vibrant volunteer led heritage railway serving the community.

### **Mission**

2.2 We aim to secure the ongoing safe heritage operation of the Swanage Railway by meeting the twin aims of the needs of our customers and visitors to Purbeck and our charitable objectives.

2.3 We will develop our heritage service to cater for more customers by:

- carefully developing services to meet their needs and by integrating fully the use of the new connection to Wareham;
- by providing quality catering and retail services;
- through provision of excellent museums and interpretation for visitors and school parties; and
- presenting well maintained buildings and infrastructure that provide adequate capacity.

2.4 We will encourage more volunteers and retain them to provide published services; implement a new self-reliant motive power policy with new maintenance and repair facilities; deliver our rolling stock plans.

2.5 Underpinning this we recognise and will develop our role in the wider community as a transport service, an employer, a neighbour and our contribution to Purbeck's overall economic and environmental well being.

## Strategic objectives.

2.6 The vision and mission statements can be summarised into six strategic objectives, set out in the following table:

Growing our business by safe operation and increasing passenger numbers.
Enhancing our passenger experience by providing shops, education, catering, museums and activities.
Improving our rolling stock, with reliable and well presented locomotives, passenger and goods vehicles.
Having well maintained infrastructure and buildings.
Growing our staff through improved recruitment, training and facilities.
Developing and maintaining good stakeholder and community relationships.

The colours are used to tie action plans to the relevant strategic objective.

### **3. Our business environment.**

3.1 In 2014/2015, the Trust will complete:

- new long term leases for the entire line;
- reach a founding goal of establishing a fully signalled rail link to Wareham; and
- complete a Sequential Test to determine optimum sites for locomotive and carriage overhaul and maintenance.

3.2 These provide a new base from which to plan. The leases provide a basis for longer term development and grants. Development of improved servicing facilities will not only provide more jobs, and economic opportunities but will also enable the core heritage business to be better supported as well as the planned new services to and from Wareham.

3.3 The Railway has over time, become a success (turnover is now in excess of £2M pa and ridership at around the 200,000 pa mark despite the tough economic circumstances since 2007) providing a significant lift to the Purbeck economy by contributing, up to, a £14M pa (in some estimates) spend by our customers. The surpluses generated by Company trading are re-invested in the railway by carrying out maintenance and expanding facilities to support our charitable objectives and services. We are firmly rooted in Purbeck and aim where possible to procure supplies and services locally, contributing about £2M pa further spend to the local economy.

#### **Our market.**

3.4 Our traditional market (tourist, visitors and local users) remains our core activity addressed by our heritage services between Swanage and Norden. We are fortunate being based in an area of high landscape value and have the twin advantages of serving the seaside resort of Swanage and the iconic castle at Corfe Castle. The new link to Wareham will complement this activity, and also provide an opportunity to consider new markets with services wider afield in Dorset and the Poole employment area. The new link provides further opportunities for rail charter traffic, even in our traditional closed seasons, which may on examination be a market to develop in collaboration with local stakeholders.



## **Planning framework.**

3.5 Dorset County Council and Purbeck District Council have set a strategic transport planning objective to achieve a reduction in road use for journeys into and out of Purbeck. In tangible terms this is a huge support for developing our railway. Other planning documents such as the Purbeck Transportation Plan and Purbeck Local Plan Part 1, add to this support, and latest consultation versions of the Swanage Local Plan seek to identify ways to use rail, as opposed to road, to facilitate movement into and out of Purbeck. We are keen to understand the role our railway can play in meeting these objectives.

3.6 To sustain our present heritage and planned Wareham services, suitable rail connected engineering workshops are needed to maintain and service our steam and diesel locomotive fleet and rolling stock. Provision of secure covered storage accommodation for the Railway's passenger coaches is becoming increasingly crucial to protect and maintain them. The support and involvement of stakeholders in securing planning consent and finance for both these essential requirements will be necessary during the currency of the Plan.

## **Our business model.**

3.7 As a charity, the Trust uses its wholly owned subsidiary Company to operate the railway. Our success is dependent on the support of our members and active volunteers who work with the Company's paid staff to deliver our train and ancillary services. This approach enables us to operate at a relatively low cost base while providing a railway that has a distinct period feel. We fully recognise that all our staff (both volunteer and paid) have a vital role to play in operating a successful railway and our ability to offer growth in employment opportunities in Purbeck, can be a significant positive factor for our potential funders.

3.8 However, the volunteer base in the UK is rapidly changing. Those driven by an interest in steam railways derived from the time when steam operated on Britain's main line railways, are, unfortunately, naturally diminishing. Pension changes are causing people to have less discretionary time and younger generations, less driven by an attachment to railways, are requiring something in return for their voluntary contribution.

3.9 We intend to respond to these changing demographic needs by looking at how we retain and recruit volunteers including those younger volunteers joining through our Sygnets group, and what we can do to support and keep them by providing training and facilities. Failure to respond in the medium term threatens the longer term existence of our business model. The Government endorsed framework 'Investing in Volunteers' quality standard provides a structure to assess and implement excellence in volunteering. It gives the opportunity to look at ways to respond to these changes both for the Swanage Railway and within the broader heritage railway movement.

#### **4. Action plans.**

4.1 We have prepared 16 action plans to achieve our strategic aims. For each plan there is a description its outcome, identification of the stages together with target timescales and indicative costs for implementation. Against each Action Plan a party or person responsible for delivering the Action Plan has been identified.

4.2 For many plans the first task is to complete a study of the work required, to cost this and prepare a resource plan. When this has been completed and agreed in principle, the strategic plan will be updated with cost information and target timescales as part of the regular review.

4.3 The Action Plans have been ranked against two criteria.: firstly, whether the action plan enables the current business to be maintained or whether it facilitates growth and secondly, whether the plan mitigates high or medium risks in the Trust's risk register. This approach prioritises plans which secure our base operation, important for sustainable growth and those which contribute most to reducing perceived risk. As a tool it enables us to have a clearer understanding of our priorities. It does not though prevent us from responding, as resources permit, to external factors, such as special funding opportunities, that may require lower priorities to be brought forward. We will maintain the broad direction while keeping an eye on other opportunities.

4.4 In the Action Plan, the term 'Project Wareham' is specifically used to refer to the Coastal Communities Funded project to upgrade the new line from Motala to Worgret, refurbish main line compatible rolling stock and the delivery of the two years of trial services.

	<b>ACTION PLAN</b>	<b>WHAT, WHEN, and COST</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1	Develop ways to recruit and retain more volunteers and staff to help meet the railways objectives, including: improved facilities and induction and training plans	Implement proactive ways to retain and gain new members and more volunteers. Overhaul volunteer induction and training structures consider use of 'Investing in Volunteers' framework. Target: plan produced 2015. Produce improved facilities for staff. Target: Identify and plan for physical delivery by March 2015. Outlay: to be identified in plan.	SRT (COM)
2	Introduce ways to create a more stable and predictable financial outcome.	Identify, get agreement and implement ways to manage income and expenditure to improve viability and certainty, so as to produce a sustainable financial position for the Trust and Company. Develop ways to better understand the net contributions of parts of the railway business. Produce Business and Funding Plans. Target: complete 2015.	SRT (Treasurer) and SRC (Finance Director)
3	Continuously review and develop safety management.	Establish and monitor Safety Action plans to achieve safe operations and compliance with our SMS. Target to produce plans: ongoing.	SRC (General Manager)
4	Create maintenance strategies and plans for infrastructure and buildings consistent with safe operations, lease obligations and commercial requirements including weather proofing.	Prepare forward five year plans for all asset categories (P-Way; Structures: Buildings: telecoms; Signaling: Locomotives: Rolling stock). Target: produce detailed 5 year plan in 2015. Outlay to be identified in plan. Integrate weatherproofing assessment and work into the 5 year plan as required.	SRC (General Manager)
5	Implement a steam and diesel locomotive policy that complies with the Railway's objectives.	Maintain a locomotive plan that secures fleet requirements based on service need for at least 10 years ahead. Target; For Stage 1 identify and complete negotiations by August 2014. Outlay: the outcome of negotiations with suppliers.	SRC Board and General Manager
6	Implement plans to raise additional capital from new sources consistent with the Trusts objectives.	The Trust's strategic plan requires funds (capital and incremental operating income) to deliver the objectives. Action Plan 6 targets income growth. This Action Plan will look at all options to better secure capital income, and put forward proposals for the Company and Trust to consider. Target: to complete report on options by April 2015.	SRT (COM)
7	Ensure the railway's museums and archives contribute to an improved visitor experience.	Co-ordinate the museum and education activity into one plan to improve collections, interpretation and services to customers and users. Achieve Arts Council of England Accreditation standards. Target: achieve Standard by 2018.	SRT (COM)

	<b>ACTION PLAN</b>	<b>WHAT, WHEN, and COST</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
8	Implement a proactive education support plan providing tools for schools, support for visits and aiming to encourage more visits.	Co-ordinate the museum and education activity into one plan to improve collections; interpretation and services to customers and users. Put in place education facilities and support and roll out delivery. Use the opportunity to promote younger volunteering opportunities. Target: complete by 2015. Outlay: to be identified in the plan.	SRT/SRC
9	Progress a rolling stock policy, to meet railway policies and enhance our customer experience.	Prepare a rolling stock plan by 2015. Outlay: to be identified. Deliver the Heritage Coach restoration plan. Target: 2020. Outlay £1.1M.	SRT (COM)
10	Develop locomotive and DMU preparation and maintenance facilities.	Complete sequential test to establish potential locomotive and carriage maintenance site(s). Develop site options and feasibility. Target: complete sequential test 2015. Deliver first stage of new facilities by 2018. Outlay: Sequential test and site options: £30,000. Build: estimated at £500,000.	SRT/SRC
11	Develop ways to work with major stakeholders so as to better promote the railway and the contribution it makes to Purbeck.	Deliver a proactive stakeholder plan identifying key messages and responsibilities. Target: Complete and implement plan 2015.	SRT/SRC
12	Manage the integration and use of Motala - Worgret infrastructure into the SR.	Integrate and renovate the line between Motala and Worgret using Coastal Communities Fund Grant. Target: achieve upgrade 2016. Outlay: c£200,000 from grant. Examine commercial potential and implement plans for the new line including working with other stakeholders to identify longer term aspirations and to secure funding and implement at a pace that is affordable. Target: complete plan 2015. Outlay: to be identified in the plan.	SRC Board and General Manager
13	Manage the integration of the Wareham service into the SR minimising risk to the existing heritage operation.	Evaluate options, taking into account stakeholder and funder requirements to deliver Swanage to Wareham services ensuring integration with current services. We will continue to work with the PCRCP to develop services at a pace that is affordable. Target: commence services in 2016. Outlay: to be identified in the plan.	SRC Board and General Manager

	<b>ACTION PLAN</b>	<b>WHAT, WHEN, and COST</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
14	<p>Prepare an overall commercial development program, to meet increased use target of 300,000 customers by 2020 including (but not exclusively):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. six coach trains;</li> <li>2. improved facilities (catering, retail, toilets);</li> <li>3. individual location strategy plans (Swanage to Wareham) - see I6;</li> <li>4. Heritage service extension to Furzebrook</li> </ol>	<p>Decide and implement ways to increase passengers: 1 by using existing services better and 2: planning to provide more seats in line with demand. Target: evaluate and agree plan by 2015. outlay: to be identified in the plan. Improve secondary retail offer. Target: Identify and start implementation by 2015. Outlay: to be identified in plan. Develop a case to extend heritage services to Furzebrook including signaling new requirements and a new halt at Furzebrook (Blue Pool). Target: Complete evaluation by 2015. Outlay: to be identified in plan.</p>	SRC Board and General Manager
15	<p>Develop covered coach storage, maintenance and repair facilities.</p>	<p>Complete sequential test to establish potential locomotive and carriage maintenance site(s). Develop site options and feasibility. Target: complete sequential test 2015. Deliver first stage of new facilities by December 2017. Outlay: tba</p>	SRT (COM)
16	<p>Create individual location development plans setting out how all action plans impact at a location fit together, to provide a guide for maintenance, renewal and improvement investment.</p>	<p>Develop individual location strategy plans: 1: Norden (2015) : 2: Swanage (2015) : 3: Furzebrook (2015); 4: Wareham and Corfe Castle (2016); 5: Harmans Cross and Herston (2016). Target: deliver plans by dates stated. Outlay: to be identified in plan.</p>	SRT

**Appendix : I**  
**Risk matrix and mitigations.**

<b>SWANAGE RAILWAY TRUST: RISK MATRIX</b>			
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Impact/ likelihood</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Insufficient capital funds to achieve plans.	Fundraising does not match expenditure plans in strategic plan or business plan.	16	1. Prioritise spend; 2. Task fundraising group; 3. Source grants.
Lack of skilled volunteers.	Changes in social and economic trends influence availability of volunteers.	20	1. Update recruitment process; 2. Update facilities; 3. Create training plans; 4. Achieve Investing in Volunteers standard.
Poorly informed decisions by trustees.	Trustees do not have a broad set of essential skills and experience. Culture of optimism bias.	12	1. Evaluate and recruit trustees with relevant skills; 2. Ensure investment and decision processes include good cost estimates and evaluate project risk.
Planning consents not granted to support development delaying or preventing plans being implemented	Failure to obtain and maintain need for railway development and support in strategy and planning fora.	9	1. Resource planning meetings to build relationships with planners; 2. Commission expert advice; 3. Create and maintain a strategic plan to support wider community dialogue.
Rolling stock restoration costs increase ahead of funds.	Restoration costs are outside our control.	6	1. Prioritise spend; 2. Review specifications; 3. Keep stock in better conditions pending work.
Company performance requires support from Trust funds.	Trading conditions and cost base varies producing trading losses.	9	1. Maintain close scrutiny of Co performance (business plan, cash flow etc); 2. Ensure Co risks are identified and managed.
Impact of Wareham service commitments.	Failure to meet contractual and stakeholder expectations damages reputation.	12	1. Maintain close scrutiny of Co performance in planning the service; 2. Ensure Co risks are identified and managed.
Unforeseen large scale investment required in assets due to events not covered by insurance	Significant failure damages economic viability of Co and Trust by disrupting services; requiring significant payments.	12	1. Ensure Co adequately plans for infrastructure and asset condition; 2. Require insurance cover review to identify gaps.
Public interest in railway history declines.	Declining appreciation of our product and objectives reduces use and reduces donations.	12	1. Maintain marketing and interpretation plans to maintain relevance and maximise interest; 2. Maintain relevance of the railway to the Purbeck community.
Environmental pressures reduce ability to provide steam and/or diesel services.	Emissions legislation tightens in the medium/ longer term.	10	1. Monitor emerging legislation; 2. Source cleaner fuel; 3. Adopt better working practises.

v2.0 14.11.14

The Risk Matrix is ranked using a standard model recommended by the Charities Commission in their document 'Charities Risk Management' version 1.10.2010.

The risk is measured on two axis; Impact and Likelihood. Impact is measured on a score of 1 - 5 (where 1 is insignificant and 5 is extreme/catastrophic). Likelihood is measured on a score of 1 - 5 (where 1 is remote and 5 is highly probable).

The score obtained by multiplying the impact x likelihood is weighted by adding the impact score. For example where Impact 2, Likelihood 3 the final score is  $(2 \times 3) + 2 = 8$ . This methodology, recommended by the Charities Commission, reflects a bias in managers of charitable activities to under estimate the impact of a risk.



**Appendix 2:  
Prioritisation tool.**

**SWANAGE RAILWAY TRUST INVESTMENT PRIORITISATION.**

		Investment impact areas					
Impact		Safety	Condition	Staff/volunteer	Strategic fit	Commercial	Contract/statute
HIGH	5	Statutory notice served; significant failure occurs; catastrophic; injury loss of life	Failure occurred or is imminent.	Work stops; statutory requirements failed/no staff	Specific project mandated in Plan with target date.	Train service suspended. Specific funding received e.g. bequest/grant etc	A defined contractual obligation triggered e.g. dilapidations notice; statute breached
	4	Reports state potential for failure high/soon; impact would be significant	Bad; operable but significant weathering; creates poor impression	Work stops some days; when wet/cold.	Contributes directly to achieving stated Plan objective with target date.	Facility/asset out of use impacting on sales. Significant increase in sales and/or significant reduction in operating costs.	Concerns expressed by other party/regulators etc.
MEDIUM	3	Failure will impact on safe operation but not imminent.	Poor; can maintain operation but of concern.	Concerns expressed over working conditions.	In Plan but choice when implemented.	Moderate impact on earnings, some ways of working around. Moderate impact on reducing operating costs.	Building listed; facility leased; custodianship decisions not wholly with SRT.
	2	Failure may impact safe operation but not imminent.	Minor weathering; deterioration as expected.	Minor improvement	Associated with a Plan objective.	Low impact at present; monitoring required.	Slight impact position may change in 1 year.
LOW	1	No identifiable impact on operation.	Fair/good.	No change to working conditions.	Not in plan.	No impact.	No obligations exist.

## Scoring.

Based on scores for all six investment impact areas. Average for six if an impact area is not wholly relevant.

Score	
21 - 30	Urgent; top priority; fund and undertake immediately. Use funds and source other funds as a priority.
11 - 20	Undertake if funds available or postpone but review in 12 months. Prioritise seeking additional funds.
5 - 10	Postpone over 24 months but regularly review: or proceed when surplus funds available.