



IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY
Patrons: Rt Hon Lord Barker of Battle PC, Chris Green MA FCIT
**ROBERTSBRIDGE JUNCTION STATION, STATION ROAD,
ROBERTSBRIDGE, EAST SUSSEX. TN32 5DG**
www.rvr.org.uk

Our ref: RVR/Chairman/690

16 March 2017

Robertsbridge to Bodiam Reconnection Project Planning Application - Approved

Rother Valley Railway (RVR) is delighted that its application for restoration of the Northbridge Street to Junction Road section of the Robertsbridge to Bodiam Reconnection Project has been approved unanimously by all members of the Rother District Council (RDC) Planning Committee.

The reconnection is included in RDC Plan Policy EM8 and RVR has already made significant progress in progressing the scheme and meeting the three criteria laid down for continuing RDC support.

At the Eastern end RVR has rebuilt this section of the railway from Bodiam to Junction Road so Kent & East Sussex Railway was able to start running passenger trains in 2011.

At the Robertsbridge end of the line RVR has purchased further land since 2006 and is building a heritage style terminus station for Kent & East Sussex Railway allowing it to run passenger trains in 2013. The reconnection between Rother Valley Railway and the Network Rail main line was formally opened by Sir Peter Hendy, Chairman of Network Rail on 6 December 2016.

The central two mile section of the railway to be restored is included in RDC Plan Policy EM8 and required the Rother Valley Railway to meet three key criteria, which it has. RVR is aware that in spite of overwhelming support for this restoration scheme, there are local people who have expressed concerns about level crossings and excessive parking in Robertsbridge itself. Their fears will be addressed as the scheme progresses and it is to be hoped that the economic benefits of the scheme will become apparent.

The remaining landowners have additionally expressed concern and RVR fully appreciates that a railway crossing their farms represents some disruption. RVR has met with the three landowners and will continue to engage with them with a view to acquiring the original trackbed by agreement.

All of this work is financed by private benefactors, without recourse to public funds. Independent studies have shown that the reinstatement of RVR will bring economic benefits in excess of £2m p.a. to the area. To-date RVR has spent over £3million in implementing Rother District Council's Policy EM8 and RVR looks forward to the Council's continuing support to complete the project.

Next steps are to complete construction of the toilet block at Robertsbridge Junction Station (RBJS) for the benefit of visitors to the site and to prepare for the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO). This will provide the statutory powers to build and operate the railway. When complete the line will be operated by Kent & East Sussex Railway using its staff, rolling stock, and procedures.

Gardner Crawley BSc(Eng) FICE
Rother Valley Railway Chairman