

## **DARLINGTON INTEREST GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE S&D RAILWAY**

### **Notes taken at meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at Railway Tavern.**

Present: Ross, Angela, Keith, Neil, DaveW, Andy, Stephen, Yvonne

Apologies: Dave M, Neil Parker, Hugh, JT

#### **Updates on previous minutes:**

- Westbrook: Yvonne has asked the Residents' Group about any progress.
- Walk Booklets 5 & 6: 2 requests have been sent for support to fund the revision and reissuing. Others are planned.
- Sleeper Blocks: Letter sent to SGPetch to see if they have any interest in supporting our work on the Line which is adjacent to their business.

#### **Tornado Way Sleepers:**

Much discussion on the report from Andy and Hugh about a setting for the sleepers to enhance display, suppress weeds and make maintenance easier.

Decided:

- 8 inches surround for each block ensuring no encroachment on the Line or Highways property.
- Timber to make surround and weed suppressant has been offered free by a local gardening company.
- Painted grey – Andy has the paint.
- Hopefully source ashla ballast, free, from Weardale railway.
- Bags to contain the ballast Andy obtained free from a local company
- Neil can help with transport.
- Dates to be arranged.

We could publicise the names of the companies that have donated materials. Andy to get permissions first and we can include on the facebook page. The previous photos of the Sleepers and the Throstle's Nest Bridge work both got a lot of interest and some praise so could be a good advert for them.

#### **Hopetown Events Meeting Report:**

- It was confirmed that events by community would be promoted alongside the Main Festival, as The Fringe. There will be Festival and Fringe branding and a website will have comprehensive 'searches' for events.
- Each organisation to be responsible for organising, running, financing their events.
- Details about the Main Festival will be announced in September, and will run from next Spring.

#### **Guided Walks:**

- Stephen, Hugh and Simon walked Route 5. Agreed that some of it is now embraced by the Hopetown attraction and it seems more appropriate to focus on the town and evidence of the story of how the S&D came into being and Skerne Bridge.
- There was discussion about other guided walks that could be done, whilst the Walk Routes can be self guided.

- A meeting with John Raw last week had discussed provision of Walks along the Line with John in the West, Peter Bainbridge in the East and Darlington in the middle.
- Agreed the Friends Walks should be part of the Main Festival and organised centrally. Ross will report on this to the Members' Meeting next week.

### **Walk Projects:**

Potential for 'info boards'/murals/art work.

- There will be way marking for the Discovery Route which the Line is now called.
- Ross read his proposals for 8 boards which would need funding/permissions.
- Potential for local businesses to support, especially as they may not be aware of their proximity to the S&D history and the potential for visitors to use their business.
- Hopetown will be contacting businesses with branding once the Festival is announced.
- Discussion about the use of QR codes which allows information direct to your phone.
- This relies on a phone signal, and being able to access the tech! But would minimise the vandalism that occurs with signage. Can QR codes be vandalised?

### **Walk Maintenance:**

- A calendar of work dates at the identified sites to be agreed, starting maybe in September.

-Skerne Bridge: Andy had found the Skerne Bridge area in a horrible state with overflowing bins and mess just before the visit of Le Monde newspaper a few weeks ago. Today the same area he found is pristine!

-Will the Council be prioritising that area once Hopetown is open (July 16)?

-Should we be trying to get local residents to look after the area too, especially the Riverside Estate on the other side of the bridge?

-Andy suggested removing the bench to a site on the other side of the bridge which would help prevent people gathering to drink.

-Yvonne will contact local councillors.

-Albert Road railings: Ross had no reply to his email about painting these railings.

### **Any Other Business:**

-Conservation Area – Consultation on the extended Conservation Area has now been put back to September to ensure people don't miss the opportunity to comment during the holidays.

### **Events:**

-Carnival, 29<sup>th</sup> June: We will have a table to tell people about the Friends and sell some books.

- Monday 1 July. 6 pm. Meet McMullen/Tornado crossroads and walk to green bridge.

- Sunday 7 July. 11am. Town Walk, meet St Cuthberts.

- Thursday 4 July. 7pm. Members' Meeting. Cricket Club

- Sunday 14 July. Tanfield Visit.

**Date of next meeting:** 25 July. (nb: Also Launch of the film Iron and Steam at Hopetown).