

Minutes of Portishead Railway Group AGM (PRG 173)

Tuesday 24th February 2026 at the Folk Hall, Portishead.

Welcome and introductions. Chairman Alan Matthews welcomed 42 members to the AGM. He also welcomed Natalie Gale-Sides (NSC) Project Manager, Steve Penaluna (NSC) and Tom Belletty (WECA), who would be providing an update on the project later.

Apologies: Apologies were received from 8 members including our MP.

Minutes of the 2024 AGM. The minutes of 2024 AGM were approved by the committee in 2025 and sent to members on 01/10/2025.

Approval of the 2025 accounts

Copies of the accounts were circulated prior to the meeting. The bank balance has remained stable at £2,912.92. A generous donation was received from Rodney Drew at last year's AGM. This is included in this year's accounts.

It was proposed by Bob Wring and Seconded by Terry Lester that the accounts for 2025 be accepted. The membership agreed by a unanimous show of hands.

It was agreed that the Independent Examiner, Bob Brimley, should continue. This was proposed by Wendy Thorne and seconded by Colin Howells, the membership agreed by a unanimous show of hands. Thanks were given to Bob Brimley for his time in examining the records.

Communications Report including Facebook, Twitter and our Website.

Peter Maliphant is providing regular communications via our Website, Possett Pages and the Daily Pill. Peter produced a summary of PRG Facebook activity. Thanks to Paul Gregory our website is now 21 years old.

Paul Gregory is continuing with the on-going work to keep the website up to date and to ensure that the layout is mobile friendly.

Membership

The membership has remained stable, although we still receive the occasional new member. We now have 389 family units, with all but 6 contacted by email news mailings. Membership is now free.

Appointment of the committee

All committee members present have offered to stand for reappointment. Bob Brimley proposed and Dave Lloyd seconded that all the committee be reappointed. The membership agreed by a unanimous show of hands. The meeting welcomed the addition to the committee of Adam Stead who has joined since the last AGM

Amendments to the Constitution.

Several amendments were proposed to our constitution. Wendy Thorne explained these changes to the members and they were unanimously accepted. The updated constitution was then signed by all committee members.

Chairman's report

Alan Matthews thanked all the members who have supported the project over many years. Since the DCO was agreed there have been many issues which needed to be resolved. A change of government initially caused concern but thanks to our MP and a Public Petition with over 5,400 signatures and financial support from DfT, WECA, North Somerset Council and Network Rail the project is now moving forward, with trains expected to be running in 2028. After a short break Alan invited Project Manager Natalie Gale-Sides to update the members on the progress and future work of the project.

Project Manager.

In September financial agreements were reached.

Vegetation clearing has continued.

Morgan Sindall are responsible for realigning Quays Avenue. There have been severe traffic problems while cable and pipes have been re-routed. The contractor has learnt the lessons and it is hoped they will not occur again. All pre-application reviews now go through Natalie before any road closures take place.

There will be 161 car park spaces in Portishead and 58 in Pill. Several roads around the station will be subject to yellow lines to ease congestion.

There will be drop-in sessions for local residents to ask questions about the project. They will be on 26th March at Somerset Hall and on 31st March at Pill.

Much time has been spent on Ecology, on preparation and obtaining licences to move about 400 reptiles, badgers, newts, and bats. Also dormice in Leigh Woods.

Clearing the vegetation from the disused railway line is now completed.

Around the freight line 52 white beam trees need to be replaced, 341 have been cultivated at Paignton Zoo and Bristol Botanical Gardens and will be planted.

All target requirements for the DCO have now been completed.

Several areas by Sheepway are now construction sites, including a bell mouthed compound entrance on the Portbury Hundreds.

Wendy Thorne asked why the number of car parking spaces had been reduced when the town's population was due to increase with potentially another 3000+ homes – what has changed in the modelling?

Answer. The reduction was not due re-modelling but rather to “cost reductions”

Response to other questions

- A. The “Spade in the Ground” ceremony has still to be confirmed.
- A. The train service schedule has still to be confirmed.
- A. The design of the stations has now been set.
- A. There is a joint delivery team with DfT the Lead Sponsor.
- A. The length of the platform will be for a 5 carriage train.
- A. Hopefully the Portishead line will eventually link with the Henbury line.
- A. There will be an entrance to one of the compounds off the A369

A. The freight line will be upgraded. The freight line will close for 4 weeks to allow the upgrade to take place.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.