

Cast Iron rail plan gets solid support

Response is 100% in favour of rail option from Cambridge to St Ives

CAST.IRON – the Cambridge and St Ives Railway Organisation – has received total support from the public in response to press and radio publicity just a few days ago.

“Thanks to the power of the internet, we have very quickly been able to gauge peoples’ attitudes to the rail option”, said CAST.IRON director Tim Phillips, “but it was hardly difficult. Not one person has given a negative response and only three have suggested rail-based schemes that differ in any significant way from the initial proposals”.

Now Tim wants to concentrate on potential supporters who do not have access to the Internet. “If we ignore up to half of the population, we will be just as guilty as those traffic planners who always seem to assume that everyone has access to a car”, he said.

In just three days, more than fifty people – many of them representing their families as well – have offered support ranging from manual labour, administrative work, purchase of shares, outright gifts, professional knowledge, website management or simply the encouragement to forge ahead with the plan.

Tim thinks part of the reason that this support is only just coming to light is that most people were unaware that the line is still officially open.

“The line from Chesterton Junction [on the Cambridge main line] to Fen Drayton quarry pits retains its running rights to this day. Although a fence has been put up across the tracks at Milton Road, it is only a temporary structure. The line needs inspection and may require some fettling but in principle, trains could run as far as the last available station (Swavesey) right now”, says Tim. “Further on, the track bed is still available as far as the St Ives by-pass and track could be re-laid over the last couple of miles very quickly”.

Although the ultimate aim of the scheme is to reconnect Cambridge and Huntingdon using electric trains, the CAST.IRON proposals are for a community railway. It would be paid for, run and used by local people and businesses.

Tim has no doubts about the viability of the scheme. “It is perfectly achievable in a very short time and at modest cost. First estimates would indicate that trains could be running between Swavesey and Cambridge Regional College for less than £1Million in less than a year. Given the number of businesses that will benefit from the service, it should not be too difficult to raise that sort of money and with goodwill and cooperation, we could even be running Santa Specials this year!”

Now CAST.IRON wants to hear from businesses who would benefit from the reintroduction of a train service to the line and from individuals who are not on the Internet. Solid offers of financial and practical support, as well enquiries and comments on the scheme in general, should be addressed to:

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