

CARHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

www.carhamptonpc.org.uk

Robin White
WSRA Trustee
West Somerset Railway Joint Fundraising Group
Station House
Stogumber
TAUNTON
TA4 3TR

Clerk to the Parish Council:
Alan Hemsley
2 Hilary Close
Carhampton
MINEHEAD
TA24 6PQ

e-mail: carhamptonpc@gmail.com
Tel. 01643 822006

Dear Mr White

10 August 2020

Application for DCMS Grant Funding

I write on behalf of the Members of Carhampton Parish Council each of whom has received a copy of your letter of 7 August 2020. Although the Parish Council has not been able to meet since your letter arrived, I have consulted all Members and they have agreed the text of this response.

The West Somerset Heritage Railway passes through the hamlet of Blue Anchor which is part of the Carhampton Parish and, as such, is an integral part of life of the whole Parish.

The station at Blue Anchor with its passing loop, is an important source of tourist trade to the hamlet and seafront businesses. Without the trains there would be nothing, other than the sand at low tide, for young children to come to the area. As it is the children and their parents have the best of both worlds with a sandy beach and an opportunity to travel back in time. The Railway's events throughout the season draw a large number of steam train enthusiasts to Blue Anchor which provides a significant financial boost to the whole area.

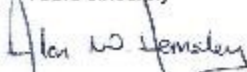
Local residents have missed the sounds that both the steam and diesel trains provide during the daytime since the lockdown. The sight and sounds of the railway have been part of life in this Parish for many years now and its disappearance over recent months has shown how much it is loved.

This Parish, along with its neighbours, is located in a very rural part of Somerset with poor road connections to both Bridgwater and the county town of Taunton. There are very few cultural activities to visit when tourists come to Minehead and the surrounding area; the West Somerset Railway is the closest; others include Dunster Castle and the Watchet museums, all of which are accessible from the West Somerset Railway. Although the town of Minehead has a significant number of bed and breakfast establishments, the main host for tourists is Butlins which can hold several thousand people. Without the railway, these tourists will have little incentive to come to the area which will have a significant and detrimental effect on what little prosperity the area currently enjoys.

If the West Somerset Heritage Railway were not to reopen, railway enthusiasts would bypass Minehead and West Somerset when travelling to the Barnstaple to Lynton and Lynmouth narrow gauge railway or to Lynton/Lynmouth for the cliff railway.

On behalf of Carhampton Parish Council, I wish you every success in your funding application to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Yours sincerely



Alan W Hemsley,
Clerk to the Parish Council