

IAN LIDDELL-GRAINGER, M.P.



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA**

12th August, 2020

Dear Jon,

DCMS Application

Further to our recent discussions, I am writing in support of the application that the West Somerset Railway is making to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport for support from the assistance package for the heritage sector.

Within my constituency, the West Somerset Railway is a jewel in the crown of the tourism and hospitality sectors, and many visitors choose to visit West Somerset because of the railway. After the railway has drawn them to our area, its visitors often stay to use local accommodation and hospitality including our cafes, restaurants and pubs and chose to extend their stay to visit other attractions in the area such as Dunster Castle, the Quantocks and Exmoor.

Perhaps less well known is that in addition to being a significant local employer, it also provides worthwhile and useful opportunities for volunteering in an area with a large elderly population for whom time spent on the railway enriches their lives and encourages social contact and regular exercise.

The railway is also important to the local economy through its purchase of supplies and in providing opportunities for skills training and apprenticeships, particularly for engineering in an area where such opportunities are few and far between.

The railway is widely renowned as the longest steam railway in the country and so attracts a wide range of visitors from elsewhere in the UK as well as from overseas. Without it, the area of West Somerset would be considerably impoverished economically and culturally.

I am very happy to support and endorse this application and hope that it will be successful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I L G'.

Ian Liddell-Grainger, M.P.

Mr. Jon Jones-Pratt,
Chairman, West Somerset Railway plc,
The Railway Station
Minehead
Somerset
TA24 5BG