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UPDATE NUMBER 38

WINTER 2007 - 2008

AN INVITATION FROM EDEN

Soon after Update 37 was published, Kevin Douglas - the new Chief Executive of Eden District Council - contacted Cedric Martindale, Director of CKP Railways plc, with an invitation to discuss the relationship between the two organisations.

Over the next few weeks, a number of telephone conversations and other correspondence followed. A considerable amount of information about the Railway Project and issues relating to the Council was supplied to Mr. Douglas.

On December 17th, Kevin Douglas and Cedric Martindale met in the Town Hall at Penrith.

A constructive discussion ensued, during which the aims and aspirations of both organisations were discussed, and some of the history was aired.

- The development of the Railway Project was explained – the work required to obtain a Transport and Works Order (much of which has already been undertaken), the likely sources of funding for construction, and the costs, benefits and economics of operating trains on the line.
- CKP Railways plc has not asked Eden District Council (or any of the other Local Authorities) to commit to major funding of the project, but rather to implement policies which already exist to enable such a project to proceed with the minimum of bureaucracy.
- Eden District Council (and other Local Authorities) are not well equipped to even attempt to manage such projects, but can benefit significantly from their implementation.
- Railways are significant to Eden, especially with the current changes to train services on the West Coast Main Line. Enhancing Penrith's role on the UK rail network and providing east – west as well as north – south services need to be considered seriously.
- The ideal “partnership” is created when the Local Authorities work to “enable” a Project, and the specialists simply get on with the job.
- Politicians deal with the politics, Engineers and Operators build and run the Railway.

Mr. Douglas had been in touch with many local organisations, other Local Authorities and the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) to gather opinions and information on policy, projects and relationships which could influence Eden District Council's future direction.

The Council has not formally debated the Keswick to Penrith Railway and so has not come to a view on its support for the proposal, even though the subject has cropped up many times – mostly in relation to planning issues. Decisions relating to the Railway had therefore been uncoordinated.

In the near future Mr. Douglas hopes to focus attention on the vitality of Penrith, the future of tourism, and other factors important to the future economic development of the District as a whole.

The Railway Project clearly could have an impact on, and be affected by, decisions in these areas.

To date there has not been a clear view of where and how the Railway Project should be considered. This will be rectified, with discussions about the Council's formal position in due course.

Find the Business Case report and much more information on our NEW website:

www.keswickrailway.com

LAKES TO ALPS BY TRAIN ?

With the recent opening of St. Pancras International station in London, Virgin trains (and other Operators) began marketing through tickets between various regions of the UK and France via the Channel Tunnel.

With a little more cooperation in the future it would be possible to link destinations in the Lake District and the Alps – parts of the Keswick to Penrith line were previously described as “Alpine”.

THE NORTHERN WAY ?

In September the “Northern Way” – a coalition of the three Regional Development Agencies in the north of England put forward a vision of fast Trans-Pennine rail services to complement the routes radiating from London, which have long been more favoured for development.

One of the aims of the CKP Railways plc scheme for the Keswick to Penrith line has been to encourage the development of through rail services right across the north of Britain, focused on the Northern Lakes – connecting this popular area with the regions that the majority of its visitors come from. Those regions also provide air and sea links for international travellers in the North doing business elsewhere.

Outsiders may not realise that many knowledge-based businesses operate from the Lake District because their owners choose to live there – and travel extensively to maintain business contacts right around the world.

KEEPING AN EYE ON FLUSCO !

Vigilance pays off – a planning application for a warehouse on the North Lakes Industrial Park at Flusco appeared on the Eden District Council list for the week ending 29th November 2007.

Checking the documents published on their website for application number 07/0991 showed that the proposed location did not in fact threaten the railway trackbed.

A notice was put on the Railway project website immediately as there are many people watching developments in the area for any potential impact on the Railway reinstatement.

CONSIDERATE DEVELOPMENT AT COCKLAKES

In the week ending 7th September 2007, an application was registered with the Lake District National Park Authority for an agricultural building adjacent to the railway trackbed at Cocklakes (west of Penruddock and south of the A66). The application number is 7/2007/3113.

This is an amended version of an earlier application which CKP Railways plc had commented on.

The applicants gave a written commitment this time that “The required minimum width of the former railway route will be retained”.

Unfortunately, the “minimum width” had not been defined by either party, creating the possibility of an embarrassing (but avoidable) conflict later. CKP Railways plc has therefore contacted the Authority and the Applicant with details of the standards which define this minimum dimension.

**The lists of planning applications of all the Local Authorities are updated weekly.
Links to these lists are available directly from our website.**

KESWICK HAS A TRAFFIC PROBLEM !

Various articles and letters have appeared in the Keswick Reminder and the Cumberland and Westmorland Herald newspapers recently, suggesting how road traffic flows in and around Keswick could be eased. Suggestions for ways of increasing or re-distributing car parking are often provided.

What is telling about these is that they all show the road system in Keswick is barely able to cope, even at non-peak times. The slightest disruption brings many parts of the town to a complete stand.

For Keswick to flourish, road traffic pressure needs to be eased, and a non-road system of access made available for large numbers of people travelling in all directions. This will allow tourism-based and other businesses to operate efficiently at all times including peaks, and avoid the sad situation which every year occurs more frequently – whereby visitors can not even get into the town, turn away – and never come back.

From time to time we hear comments that “the A66 is not full, so there is no need for a railway”. The A66 does in fact come to a stand at peak times, and Junction 40 on the M6 is close to gridlock at times, even after a hugely expensive recent rebuild. Some organisations prefer not to mention this issue in case it puts off visitors. Unfortunately that already happens – and needs to be tackled.

Keswick and the surrounding area are full and overflowing with cars far more often than the A66. Many of those cars are parked for the duration of a holiday, and could have been left at home in other parts of the country – many drivers and hotel / guest house owners repeatedly tell us that people want to come without their cars, but have little real choice at present.

Many would willingly use a train to get from and to home, then use buses, boats and taxis to get around during their stay – increasing the viability of all local public transport.

CASH FOR TRANSPORT IN CUMBRIA

A report on Teletext that £60 Million to £ 80 Million was being made available for public transport in Cumbria brought a flurry of comments from the Railway Project’s supporters, hopeful that there would be some spare funds.

Unfortunately this seems highly unlikely as the County’s transport priorities are laid out many years in advance, in the Local Transport Plan, and funding never seems to be sufficient.

Cumbria County Council wanted to promote capacity increases on the Windermere branch, but apparently found it impossible to get a workable agreement with all the relevant organisations in the rail industry a few years ago. They do get involved in rail schemes, but on a much smaller scale.

Cumbria County Council still prefers to support the X4/X5 (Penrith to Workington) and other local bus services rather than push for the reinstatement of the Keswick to Penrith Railway.

This should not be seen as a competition – having more visitors arrive in the area by train would boost usage of bus services, not threaten them.

The County Council’s policy is heavily influenced by their “pre-feasibility study” in 1996-97 which validated the construction cost and scope estimates, but ran out of time and money before completing studies to identify the likely passenger numbers for the line.

A partial answer was presented as the full answer and, of course, was not enough.

The study released by the NWDA in summer 2007 was more comprehensive and shows much more realistic and healthy traffic potential. Hopefully the County Council and others will now re-evaluate their positions and take a more positive view of the Railway Project.

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But please, please, tell us if you change your e-mail address !!

Cheques payable to "Iceni Enterprises Ltd.", send to the address below.

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Next Updates planned for April and August- plus e-mail or website alerts for hot news.

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WHAT TO BUY TO SUPPORT THE RAILWAY PROJECT

25% of the price of each item goes directly to the Keswick to Penrith Railway Project.

The BBC found that only 8% of the price of charity Christmas Cards goes to the named causes.

1. The report "Return to Keswick - the case for a New Railway" is available at £20 per copy direct from us (post free), or order through bookshops by quoting ISBN 9781-902543-02-4.
2. "Trains to Keswick" is a professionally produced video featuring people along the line. It was filmed in the last few months before closure in 1972. Buy from us at £12.99 per copy. This is not yet available on DVD - but we are working on this.....
3. Fine Art prints and greetings cards featuring a stunning winter view of the steam hauled "Lakes Express" near Bassenthwaite Lake station, painted by Eric Bottomley of the Guild of Railway Artists. Prints (24" x 16") are £18 each, cards (6" x 8") with envelopes - £1.40 each.

N.B. All the prices above are post free from us to addresses in the UK, but please add £2.50 per order for posting to addresses outside the UK (Posting packages to overseas destinations is not cheap !).

Cheques payable to Iceni Enterprises Ltd for any of the items above, please.

Order forms are distributed with printed Updates and can be downloaded from the website.

TRAVEL BY TRAIN – HELP RE-OPEN THE KESWICK RAILWAY !

Phone and book your rail tickets through "Chester-le-Track" for any journey on the National Network, including Railovers, and with discounts for Railcard holders.

Phone Chester-le-Track on 0191-387-1387, quote "CKP Offer" and they will pay

3% of the total sale as commission to CKP Railways plc.

The total sale must be at least £25, paid for by credit card.

BUY BONDS – INVEST IN THE RAILWAY PROJECT !

CKP Railways plc Bonds, in multiples of £100, pay interest at 4% per annum gross.

Over £330,000 raised and invested so far in design and development.

These funds are used only for the Railway reconstruction project.

No un-necessary overheads !

Bonds have been sold to organisations and individual holders.

Can be bought for children, grandchildren, friends or relatives.

Fully coloured and signed Certificates are issued - designed to appeal to collectors.

Please write or e-mail for a free copy of the Prospectus.

Cedric A. Martindale. BSc.Hons, AUS, CEng., MIMechE, CMILT. - Director

No. 38, December 2007

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