

# Trackbed Trails

The newsletter for Exmoor Associates Ltd

Issue 18, Winter 2017/8

## Report of the Shareholders Meeting held on September 30<sup>th</sup>

After a brief interlude for tea, coffee and biscuits Mike Buse opened the meeting, asking Tony Brown to say a brief word on the accounts which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Tony stated that there had been few changes from the previous year's accounts as there had been no purchases or significant changes in income.

Mike then opened a discussion on the proposed sale of trackbed in the northern sector to the L&B Community Interest Company. Tony then gave the background to this as a number of members would not be aware of the previous discussions.

Last year members were circulated at the request of the L&B after our meeting to ascertain if any shareholders were prepared to swap EA shares for CIC shares to facilitate the CIC acquisition of the northern trackbed. A number of shareholders responded positively but the idea was then set aside in preference of a lease arrangement. This progressed as far as a draft lease but we were then asked to reconsider a part cash part share exchange as the L&B were now in a better financial position due to some very generous donations. We therefore asked those who had previously responded if they were prepared to donate some shares to the CIC. (EA does not hold any shares in the CIC therefore could not directly offer a share exchange, but Ian Cowling, on behalf of the CIC had written to the shareholders involved saying that the CIC would exchange donated shares for CIC shares.) Tony confirmed that the response had been more than sufficient for the proposed trackbed exchange to take place.

Ian Cowling was then invited to address the meeting to explain how the issue of CIC shares would work and carried on to give a general progress report of the progress of planning and other issues concerning the future development of the L&B.

Andy Hearn and Chris Lane then gave the meeting an update on progress that the volunteers have been making at Snapper. The garage workshop now has an electricity supply and it is hoped that a mains water supply can be installed soon. Plans are going ahead to extend the rear of the garage workshop with Dave and Tony Ely in Essex



Drainage works at Snapper

prefabricating the timber structure. Work continues on the trackbed drainage as flooding from the road had been making the existing problem much worse. Also in progress is work to improve the path from the road to the Halt and to construct a new path from the garage workshop down to the station. Andy expressed the volunteers' gratitude to shareholder and local resident Chris Jones for the donation of a ride on lawnmower which has proved invaluable as a prime mover tractor.

In response to questions from the floor regarding laying some cosmetic track at Snapper it was stated that the intention was still to do this but

getting the drainage resolved was the immediate priority. Chris Dadson, who is responsible for updating the EA website, asked if everyone could keep him updated with photographs ([cdadson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cdadson@hotmail.co.uk) or 0208 3934706) Mike Selby reminded the meeting that he has items of EA polo shirts and fleeces available, for those not at the meeting contact Mike ([mjselby14@gmail.com](mailto:mjselby14@gmail.com) or 01737 358120) for details.

Barry Marshall and Chris Lane have attended some model railway shows to promote Exmoor Associates. Chris commented that it was amazing how little some locals knew of the railway that used to connect Barnstaple to Lynton.

John Edmonds spoke briefly about progress at Chelfham and invited all present to call in to view progress being made by the volunteers there.



Snapper Path Improvements

Mike Buse updated the meeting with news of his endeavours to secure additional trackbed. Talks are continuing with the new owners of Budds Wood and the owner of the lower section of Chumhill. Mike then closed the main meeting allowing informal discussions between all attendees before lunch, provided by Jackie and Tony Williams whose efforts were again much appreciated.

To purchase clothing (Mike Selby) or platform tickets (Chris Dackson) see the contact details in the text on the front page



## How Things Have Changed : Mike Buse Reflects

Thinking back to 2003 when a small section of trackbed was for sale along with other land at Collard Bridge, with the chance to purchase it at auction, a very small group pledged money to secure it. The money came in very quickly, so we then set up a brand new company and went to the auction and purchased it.

We realised that very little money would be available to purchase distant pieces of trackbed whilst building the railway at Woody Bay and a stand alone company would be needed to make this happen, hence Exmoor Associates was born.

Several people commented how they thought we were mad, wasting money on an impossible vision and that everyone should put their money into the railway at Woody Bay. We were then the main people involved in building the railway at Woody Bay and found this disheartening; despite that we carried on knowing in our hearts as this was the right thing to do.

Following a request from the L&B Trust a few years later it was agreed that Exmoor Associates should seek all trackbed purchases from Barnstaple to Wistlandpound reservoir and the L&B all land purchases from Wistlandpound to Lynton.

We now move onto 2017 and with ten sections of trackbed purchased by Exmoor Associates the two in the north are being transferred to the railway.

Exmoor Associates can only offer a dream that one day, no time scale, the railway will run from Barnstaple to Lynton. We will do everything in our power to help the railway achieve that aim, we are not in competition with them, just hopefully making their job that much easier in the long run.

So far we have never paid any interest, never had a costly loan and not a penny has been paid to the Directors in expenses. We do try where possible to use every penny of the money paid for shares to purchase trackbed, although in saying that we have recently purchased a large treated timber workshop 18' by 12' including car parking. This has easy access to Snapper Halt also linking up with the original access path down to the station. This land was never part of the railway but with permission we have been using the lay-by since purchasing Snapper and we realise what a vital piece of ground this is. This was purchased for £7.5k from general funds. Whilst it is marvellous for the volunteers using the site at the moment it will really come into its own when the railway is being built with valuable access to the trackbed, electricity has been put on along soon with mains water, both by a very kind donation.

The present looks incredible bright with many things happening at Woody Bay and beyond, and we feel the future expansion of the railway can be made so much easier the more Exmoor Associates can achieve.

Your support is, and always will be, very greatly received and appreciated.

## Share Certificates

As we now hold the share register electronically and update Companies House on-line we have stopped the routine issue of paper share certificates.

If you would like written confirmation of your shareholding or would prefer a paper version just let Tony know.

### WANT TO GET IN TOUCH?

Tony Brown (secretary) 01822 481572 or email [enquiries@exmoor-associates.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@exmoor-associates.co.uk)  
Mike Buse 01206 734030, Mike Selby 01737 358120, Nik Barrie 01227 477038,  
David Cameron 01277 353272.