

Good Afternoon, My name is Chris Warren,

I am the leader of the INDEPENDENT Saltford Station Campaign. I hope you have read or will read the briefing paper that was emailed to you all last week explaining the latest situation with the progress of this project.

Back in May, a unanimous democratic mandate was given to the re opening of the station, at Parliamentary level, local authority level, and at Parish Council level all candidates were elected on a pro station ticket. Indeed, all 11 Saltford Parish Councillors were voted in on a pro station stance by a wide margin over those who opposed it.

Bath Spa University is keen to see the station operational as it will greatly assist with their acute parking problems at their Newton Park Campus.

The campaign envisages the station as a local transport hub, where public buses including a local mini bus serving Bath Spa and surrounding villages can call, a taxi rank can be included as well as a river link. Add to this cycling provision as well as the existing comprehensive network of footpaths that serve the site, Saltford station can really help in achieving the modal shift from car dependency.

You will have been at the 6 hour full council meeting last Thursday evening where the Bathampton Park and Ride was discussed. It is clear B&NES urgently needs solutions to it's chronic transport problems, what with Bath having a new Enterprise Zone and the riverside development nearing completion. Good transport links go hand in hand with economic growth. It is clear that, without alternatives to the private car, Bath is close to becoming stifled by traffic and it's detrimental effect on air quality leading to public health issues.

The Station Campaign has demonstrated strong public support for it's cause. The site is on a previously developed site which is not in the greenbelt. This could be an easy success for the council with the station part of MetroWest giving half-hourly cross-regional services. This is a west of Bath Park and Ride that has dropped into the laps of the council.

There is a clear and proven pattern of where new rail investment goes in, the local economy flourishes. Saltford Business Network supports the re-opening of Saltford Station.

We are at a crucial stage as timetabling work is being carried out now with input from The West of England Partnership Local Transport Body and GWR, the train operator. We need a 'Clear Ahead' signal from this B&NES administration as the official promoter of the station asap in order for this council to fully engage with Network Rail and take the project through to the GRIP 4 stage of project development where it will be "shovel ready" should capital funding materialise sooner than expected.

Finally, last weekend, I was delighted to receive from Railfuture on behalf of the campaign a national award recognising all our efforts so far. Railfuture is a national lobbying group that has been at the forefront of railway development. Indeed we were rubbing shoulders with representatives of The Campaign for Borders Rail, who after many years of diligent work, finally saw the northern section of the 'Waverley Route' reopen giving the people of the Scottish Borders rail access into Edinburgh. Rail industry leaders were also present as were councillors and officers from JTEC.

The judges commented that 'the Saltford Station campaign shows a sound knowledge of the rail industry and grasp of technical detail, good engagement with stakeholders, cross party support, a strong environmental message and a good chance of success....'

Your scrutiny role on this project is crucial. Thank you

