



Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust – Press Statement



5 November 2020.

It has been an interesting year for the S&D Railway Trust. The Chairman and Board of Directors have worked hard, ably supported by volunteers at Washford and, elsewhere, to continue the work of the Trust through incredibly difficult circumstances. We soon came to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the situation which prevailed at the time regarding the West Somerset Railway, this was an opportunity to review the Trust's standing in the heritage sector and what the priorities should be.

It was decided that a physical move of at least some of the artefacts away from Washford where access has always been difficult, is desirable. It must also be said that, over the considerable period in which I have been involved with the Trust, this thought has cropped up time and time again, including at AGMs. Up until now we have not displayed the courage to carry this out. It is, therefore, that our joint venture with the Watercress Line is an exciting prospect.

'The Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust (S&DRT), Mid Hants Railway Preservation Society (MHRPS) and the Mid Hants Railway Ltd (MHR) are pleased to announce that they are in detailed discussions regarding the relocation of rolling stock and artefacts belonging to the S&DRT from Washford on the West Somerset Railway to the Watercress Line in Hampshire.'

The Watercress Line is, and the S&DJR was, a steeply graded, single track main line both of which had operational links to the London and South Western Railway. As a result, an S&DRT presence at the Watercress Line would be appropriate to the history of both the S&D and the original Mid-Hants Railway.

The S&DRT, MHRPS and MHR Ltd are discussing arrangements for each element of the move, with an objective, if agreed by all parties, to complete the transportation of rolling stock and artefacts by the end of February 2021.'

The two Boards of the Watercress Line are also taking a bold step but they also see the benefits which both they, and the S&DRT, can reap in the future.

Ian Young,
Chairman, S&DRT Ltd.