

Havant Civic Society Signal Box meeting

Friday 18th May 2018.

Present:

Bob, Christopher, Ann , Peter , Vernon , Martin Taylor, Ian Brown

Penny Munday attended for part of the meeting.

Apologies:

Ray Cobbett, Anna

1. Ann repeated the information she presented at the Civic Society meeting.

The Saxby and Farmer signal box was built in 1890 and extended 1938. It is considered to be an interesting example and was listed as a Grade 11 in 1998.

The box was in good order when it was vacated in 2012 but is now clad in ivy and vegetation and some windows are broken.

It is large signal box with a brick base and very interesting inside. Ann visited the box with the Havant and Bedhampton Community Board just after it closed. Network Rail at that time spoke about moving the box to Hayling Island or a group taking it over. This did not progress at the time as the Board had other projects.

The box was in good order before it closed but is now covered in vegetation and some windows are broken.

The main issues appear to be the nearness of the running rail and it seems this issue always comes up when a group show an interest in restoration of a signal box.

Many signal boxes have been taken over and opened to the public. Some have been moved and not always with success.

Ann has contacted Network Rail from time to time to keep the ivy off the roof.

She has also contacted them recently about the possibility of the Civic Society restoring the box but has not received a reply.

Ann is to follow up on this with the new Network Rail contact and also attach photos. Also to make contact with English Heritage about the state of the listed

building and to copy the letter to HBC and ask what action they are taking.

Action Ann

2 Martin will contact the Network Rail Property Disposal Division. **Action**

Martin

3. There is scope for a project following on the success of the Gazebo Garden.

This could be getting the outside back in order and then going further and restoring the signal box with view to opening it to the public. There are a number of grant making trusts that might fund a project and there might be a possibility of Community Infrastructure Levy once the Wessex site is developed nearby.

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Linked to the restoration there could be scope for bike hire near the box making use of the Shipright's Way to Hayling Island. Much of the track is off road and safe for children. There is a lot of scope as the Hayling ferry links to Southsea.

This could also link with other heritage projects such as the Gazebo Garden and the Spring.

Bob will draw up a business plan based on this discussion.

Action Bob

4. Vernon had circulated a link to the Railway Heritage Trust.

5. The two ward councillors who were at the Civic Society meeting both said that they would support the project.

6. Bob has contact with a former signalman who is a neighbour and feels that there is a wealth of oral history to collect particularly as the Havant signal box was used for training. A project could be started in conjunction with the Spring. Penny Munday may be able to help.

To make contact with the Spring.

Action

Peter.

To set up a meeting at Bob's house with the signalman and also Mark Johnson another signalman who served as a councillor at HBC.

Action Ann.

7. Ian suggested contacting any local groups of rail enthusiasts such as the Watercress Line volunteers.

To be explored further at the next meeting.

8. Ann invited the Conservation Officer to this meeting but the offer was declined by David Hayward his manager who said he would attend at a later stage. The officer has only one day a week working in Havant.

9. There was enthusiasm in the group to take the project forward and seek information. Main actions at this stage are the Business Plan and contact with Network Rail and the oral history.

10. Date of next meeting Friday June 15th , 10.00am, at Ann's home.