Minutes of the Corsham Railway Station Town Team meeting held on 5 December 2025 at Digital Mansion Corsham

Present

Councillor S Abbott (Corsham Town Council)
Councillor H Belcher OBE (Corsham Town Council and Wiltshire Council)
Councillor A Brown (Chair, Corsham Railway Station Town Team and Corsham Town Council)
P Bradley (TransWilts)
D Bullock (Interim Director for Highways, Wiltshire Council)
K Corps (Wiltshire Council)
A Cudlipp (Resident and Volunteer)
S Gibson MP
Councillor R Hopkinson (Corsham Town Council and Wiltshire Council)
C Johnson (Resident and Corsham Civic Society Rep)
D Phillips (TransWilts)
C Skellett OBE (YTL Group)
Councillor M Smith (Wiltshire Council)
Councillor G Ward (Corsham Town Council)
J Westbrook (Senior Communications Officer for S Gibson MP)

In attendance

Mrs K Gilby (Head of Finance and Administration, Corsham Town Council)
D Martin (Chief Executive, Corsham Town Council)

In attendance online

S Lymn (Strategic Specialist, Wiltshire Council)

TT 136 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Colonel Alastair Taylor (Station Commander, MOD Corsham).

TT 137 Welcome and Introductions

Councillor A Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting. Those present introduced themselves.

TT 138 Minutes of the Corsham Railway Station Town Team Meeting held on 5 September 2025 and Notes of the Sub-group Meeting held on 30 September 2025

The Minutes and Notes were approved as a true record.

TT 139 Matters Arising from the above Minutes

TT 129 – The Terms of Reference for the Group had been amended in line with the previous Minutes.
TT 131 – S Gibson MP reported that the SOBC was being assessed.
S Gibson MP had also met with D Phillips.
S Gibson MP was still seeking a meeting with the Vice Chancellor of Bath University.

S Gibson MP had a meeting scheduled with Mark Hopwood of Great Western Railway some weeks previously, but the meeting was being rescheduled for January 2026.
S Lymn had provided a copy of the letter regarding the Bristol-Oxford Service to Corsham Town Council who had subsequently sent a letter of support for the extension of the Bristol-Oxford Service.
TT 132 – D Martin had shared his questions with Wiltshire Council Officers.
TT 133 – The meeting with Councillor M Smith had taken place on 30 September 2025.

TT 140 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Team (as amended) were considered.

Agreed

That the Terms of Reference be approved.

TT 141 Securing New Rail Stations

C Skellett OBE shared his experiences of securing a new railway station in Bristol and his involvement in Swindon. He felt that to secure a new station in Corsham it was important to stress its alignment with current government priorities. If possible, it should be demonstrated that a new station could unlock development sites, especially sites in public ownership. In Swindon there had been 100 acres of housing and business development.

It would be useful to produce a single page case. In Corsham some of the land for the site was owned by Wiltshire Council, some by Network Rail and some was in private ownership. Land had been safeguarded in both the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Corsham Neighbourhood Plan. There was a Site of Special Scientific Interest near the proposed station site. It was felt that there was not a lot of potential for additional housing and that there would be a limit to the amount of housing that Corsham residents would accept to secure a railway station.

Corsham is a net importer of jobs, and it was queried whether it would be effective to demonstrate indirect growth. A new station could unlock sites which had already been identified.

The situation with Wiltshire Council's emerging Local Plan was discussed. The Local Plan Examination had been delayed. Once approved, Wiltshire Council would have to start work on the subsequent Local Plan to address the considerable uplift in housing numbers.

It was felt that a strong argument for a new station could be made on transport grounds as it could ease congestion on the A4 and traffic into both Chippenham and Bath. The only available government funding streams were around the economy and housing.

There was a documented lack of employment land in Corsham, and many existing businesses would like to expand. A new station could provide direct links to university towns and would assist with the provision of skilled workers gaining access to existing opportunities in the town. MOD Corsham had

expansion plans which could only happen if there was a local railway station. It was felt that written commitments from businesses would be useful. There may be opportunities to work with Homes England.

There was a need to move swiftly to move the case for a new station in Corsham forward. A government spending review was planned for 2028, and it was important to have a positive case for the station on Lord Hendy's (Minister of State, DfT) desk before then.

TT 142 Strategic Outline Business Case Submission Update

S Gibson MP reported that she had met with Lord Hendy. He was initially unaware of the existing Strategic Outline Business Case for a new railway station at Corsham. S Gibson MP had sent him a copy, which would be assessed to ascertain if it needed to be updated. Great British Railways was being formed and this meant that there was some uncertainty on how things would move forward. She expressed reservations about Great British Railways centralisation potentially neglecting rural services. There was a critical need for improved transport infrastructure in these areas to support education, skills and employment. S Gibson MP stressed to Lord Hendy that there was a compelling economic case for Corsham Station. Lord Hendy had reported that GBR was planning to appoint route-specific managers and that each region would be devolved on a route and company rail level. Those running the areas would be expected to meet their area MPs within the first six months. S Gibson MP felt that there was very little time to get stakeholders on board. She would like to go back to Lord Hendy in spring 2026.

Councillor H Belcher was actively seeking meetings with Strategic Planners at Wiltshire Council to discuss Corsham Station.

A meeting between S Gibson MP and the Ministry of Defence had been scheduled for 4 December but the MOD had cancelled. Following a meeting with the MOD, S Gibson MP would work to get other ministers on side.

It seemed that the only schemes being progressed through the, now defunct, Restoring Your Railways scheme were those where planning permission was already in place. The government was focussed on housing and economic growth.

TT 143 Bath and Wiltshire Metro Proposal

D Martin reported that he had attended a further meeting regarding the Bath and Wiltshire Metro proposal. It was an ambitious, long-term project but there was a concern that Corsham could become a park and ride for Bath. This would not be desirable if it resulted in congestion and other traffic and environmental problems locally. However, there could be opportunities if Corsham Station was selected as a pilot or was very early in the overall scheme.

The project was looking for stakeholders to fund the next part of the study. It was suggested that the Town Council and Town Team adopt a cautious approach and keep a watching brief for potential opportunities, risks and threats. A further meeting was planned in December which may result in additional information on progress.

TT 144 Next Steps

ACTION: S Gibson MP and Councillor H Belcher to meet and engage with potential business groups.

ACTION: S Gibson MP to meet with the University of Bath.

ACTION: S Gibson MP to meet with the MOD and report back to the Town Team. Councillor H Belcher would also like to speak with MOD Corsham.

ACTION: Councillor H Belcher to discuss the potential benefits of a new station with the Business Team at Wiltshire Council. Councillor H Belcher would also speak with the Head of Planning at Wiltshire Council.

ACTION: S Gibson MP and Councillor H Belcher would discuss who would be best placed to author the one-page pitch.

Once finalised the pitch would be a joint submission from Wiltshire Council countersigned by Corsham Town Council as promoters.

ACTION: S Gibson MP to keep pushing for feedback on the SOBC.

ACTION: D Bullock to speak to Spatial Planning at Wiltshire Council regarding the SSSI.

ACTION: Corsham Town Council to review the draft Corsham Neighbourhood Plan regarding its position on employment land.

D Bullock would continue to look for any funding opportunities.

It may be useful to seek letters of support from the wider area including BANES and WECA.

TT 145 Any Other Business – There was none.

TT 146 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held in February 2026 – date and time TBC.