

Public Statements and Question – Overview and Scrutiny Board – Monday 8th July 2019

Statement from Pamela Ruthvan BEM – Pokesdown Resident

Those most at risk are parents on their own with a baby in a pram and toddler needing help to climb the steps.

Leaving a toddler on the platform while taking buggy and baby to the top isn't an option, neither is taking toddler to the top, leaving pram and baby at the bottom.

Lone parents need a Stationmaster to help or risk taking a chance.

Commuters struggling with bikes, luggage, walking sticks is painful to watch.

It's essential for the local economy there is access for all, not only for the fit and healthy competing in an endurance test.

Statement from Lynne and Rod McCarty – Pokesdown Residents

Appalled and fearful over no lifts reinstatement yet.....

- Effectively by ignoring Pokesdown's heartfelt campaign. It's a main railway entry to BCP; with its "coast with the most", premier league football, congestion relief objectives.
- Suspicious of a get-out Franchise clause, legal maybe, but certainly not moral, humane or acceptable, especially given today's expectations and values of access for all and anti- disability discrimination.
- Countless people cannot access the platforms due to all manner of physical and mental impairments/sensory losses, needing wheelchairs, aids, trolleys, heavy luggage, kids buggies etc.

Please Honour the Promise for Pokesdown.

Statement from Janette Skinner – Pokesdown Resident

If anyone disabled wants to take the train and lives in Pokesdown, a taxi should be provided by Pokesdown station to take them to Bournemouth. I have failed before because Pokesdown is not always manned and the taxi has to be ordered 24hours in advance for Bournemouth. This stops spontaneous or emergency travel from Pokesdown and often there is no worker there, they don't know the system and I've been refused a taxi on occasion. If people knew about this system and tried it, it might highlight the problem. Hopefully this will be treated seriously.

Statement from Jonathan Waddington-Jones - Chief Executive, Access Dorset and DOTS Disability C.I.C.

During 2014 -15 Access Dorset members living in Bournemouth campaigned for better access at Pokesdown Station. We made a film to highlight our frustrations.

This is a civil liberties issue. How can it be right that, in our modern and progressive conurbation, so many are excluded from using their local station?

We were delighted to learn that the new operator would be required by the Department for Transport to install lifts before the end of 2019.

We are dismayed at the lack of progress. We feel cheated and we believe Bournemouth has been cheated. When will this promise be delivered?

Statement from Ben Smith – Southbourne Resident

We've waited 5 years after starting this campaign to see access to our local station that serves almost half of Bournemouth. This is not a small backwater station. This is about basic rights, inclusivity as well as reducing environmental impact. It shouldn't be about economics but here are a few facts:

From First Group website 2019 "operating profit ahead of our expectations at £332.9m"

"revenue +5.7%"

"UK rail franchise portfolio has generated £330.9m profits in 5 years"

On the same website the last mention of accessibility to trains was 9 months ago.

Please don't say this is about lack of money to hit the deadline.

Statement from Julia Brazier – Pokesdown Resident

I would like to protest in the strongest possible terms about the lack of activity by South Western Railway regarding the provision of lifts at Pokesdown Station.

Having used the Station last week with my 82 year old mother, the 42 steep steps proved a considerable challenge for both of us.

When SWR won the franchise, they agreed IN LAW that they would provide lifts by the end of 2019, thus ensuring unfettered access to Pokesdown Station for ALL users, regardless of age or ability. This is a RIGHT for all.

I consider SWR to be in breach of contract and would ask the council to pursue SWR with the utmost vigour and see that the community receives the access to transport that it deserves.

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Question received from Ben Smith – Southbourne Resident

'If' the deadline of 31st Dec 2019 to make Pokesdown Station accessible is not met, does this mean South Western Railways have not met the conditions of winning the franchise and face the relevant sanctions, or is the franchise system fit for purpose with regards to accessibility?