



**The Melton
Constable Trust**

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October 2016 Update

THE NEXT PUSH - HELP RAISE £6,000 FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF LAND PURCHASE

MEANWHILE, THE FIRST PIECE OF TRACK IS TO BE LAID!

In the last Update we reported on the successful purchase of the track bed and bridges at Pudding Norton, Fakenham, which will provide the northern part of the extension from the Mid Norfolk Railway's Wymondham - Dereham route on to Fakenham. MNR is itself rapidly extending its track beyond Dereham northwards towards North Elmham and recently ran a loco-hauled inspection train to within 150 yards of Worthing level crossing.

This time, we are able to demonstrate physical progress on the ground at Holt. The aim there is to construct an initial embankment over the track bed which we already own beyond the North Norfolk Railway's present terminus, so that track can be laid as a demonstration of our aims and progress and to display an item of rolling stock.

We are grateful to the North Norfolk Railway which has agreed to provide the track and the piece of rolling stock.

As previously reported we are in the process of purchasing a second, longer, section of track bed extending our existing section towards Holt. Two of the four stage payments on this purchase have been made and we now need to be ready to make the third payment of £15,000 at the end of the year. Fundraising has made considerable progress and only some £6,000 is needed to complete this sum.

Standing order donations help enormously by providing a steady flow of income while one-off donations will help to build up the £6,000 shortfall in the limited time available.

The attached form covers both ways of supporting the project. If you are a taxpayer, signing the Gift Aid section allows us to claim an additional 25% from the government.

Leaflets detailing our aims and our Track Bed Fighting Fund are available. If you can help in obtaining publicity or attracting new supporters and donors, please do let us know so that we can let you have a supply of leaflets. If you have any questions about current plans, please contact us at the email or postal address above.

SO WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING AT HOLT?

Here is a report from the team of volunteers involved:



What a difference a year makes !

An exaggeration perhaps but these photographs give an indication of where we were this time last year and where we are now.

We have cleared that part of the route called The Belt which is in our ownership, succeeded in gaining planning consent to construct a short embankment and lay down a section of track. Final alignment will depend on an agreement with the authorities on how best to cross the road but we think that it is important to demonstrate that we are in business. Working with a local contractor, 500 tonnes of spoil have been deposited and shaped into the embankment in accordance with the agreed plan. A period of consolidation will now have to take place before we move onto laying the track. A number of trees overhang the site in various places and we have taken up an offer from the Army's Bomb Disposal Squad to deal with these as a training exercise.

All of this work, including the planning application and construction of a gate to protect the site, is costing only £300 because of the sponsored assistance obtained.

This part of Holt is under considerable development pressure as Holt itself has turned into a boom town on so many fronts but the railway route into and through Holt is protected by the North Norfolk District Council's Local Development Plan, a measure we negotiated some years ago. This is helping to ensure that a new roundabout on the by-pass being developed to access a large housing development to the south leaves sufficient room for the railway to pass through on the northern side of the by pass. We have made strenuous efforts to make sure that the authorities keep this need in mind.

We are of course keen to move on to the next section of the route we are purchasing, so that there will be more obvious progress on the ground, but first we must raise the outstanding sum of £6000 by the end of the year.

We hope that you will agree with us that with new housing developments springing up on both sides of our route it is important to show that it is our intention to build the railway in and through Holt in order to reconnect the town to the national network and give a further boost to the local economy.

FAKENHAM LATEST NEWS

Following the encouraging civil engineer's report on the condition of the two substantial bridges on our section of track bed at Pudding Norton (see Bob Wright's report sent with the last Update), we are obtaining firm quotations from companies able to undertake the limited remedial work necessary to arrest deterioration. We are now considering applications to grant giving bodies for funding for this work and for a related project to inform the public about the railway's history and public transport potential, including educational activities with local schools and a range of initiatives to involve the community with the railway. Initial grants have been received from the Ernest Cook Trust (£2,500) and Fakenham Town Council (£300)

Staff of Fakenham Academy have committed themselves to a partnership with us and Fakenham Area Conservation Team continues to help with keeping access to the track bed clear.

Our long-term partnership with the Mid Norfolk Railway is working very well. MNR is supporting our initiatives at Pudding Norton whole heartedly.

Our Project Officer in the area, Paul Young, provides active liaison with local groups and organisations in a way which was not previously possible.

Meanwhile, we have opened discussions with owners of further sections of the track bed southwards towards the Mid Norfolk Railway rail head. There are plenty of issues to be overcome. Such negotiations are always delicate and steady but they are underway.

COMPANY SECRETARY AND FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR NEEDED

Throughout the existence of the Melton Constable Trust and its partner company, the Holt, Melton Constable & Fakenham Railway Ltd., Adrian Loynes has filled the role of Company Secretary, kept the accounts, handled payments, handled the receipt of donations and other income, maintained the list of supporters and printed and distributed our occasional Updates. As with all us who are involved, Adrian has worked throughout as an unpaid volunteer.

It would have been very difficult for us to manage without Adrian's skills and ability to organise. It is through his efforts in this central role that everything has been kept in proper order with complete competence. The Trustees are very grateful to him indeed. This is our opportunity to thank him, on behalf of all of our supporters, for everything he has done.

Because of other demands, it now seems likely that Adrian will have to give up his role. We are, therefore, seeking some-one to take over at least some of the work that he has done. The organisation's affairs are not hugely complex but they do need someone who

understands accounts and company returns. As before, it will be an unpaid voluntary job. It is, however, a vital one. It does not really matter where the person concerned is located.

If you feel that you may be able to fill this role, please get in touch with the Trustees. Contact details are above. We shall be very pleased to discuss it with you.

**Dealing With Donations, Maintaining Supporters' Records and Update Printing/
Distribution**

Adrian has previously handled these functions as well as being Company Secretary and Financial Administrator. There is no reason, however, why they should not be looked after by a separate person or persons. They offer relatively straightforward and occasional tasks. One aspect involves receiving, acknowledging, banking and recording donations and keeping records of supporters' contact details. The other involves laying out and printing Updates, the text of which is written by the Trustees, and distributing them to supporters. The majority go out by email and the remainder by post.

Again, the location of the person or people handling these jobs is unimportant.

If you can help with one or both of these tasks, on a voluntary basis, we shall be very pleased indeed to hear from you.

Our good wishes and thanks for your support.

Trevor Bailey, David Bill, Derek Haynes, John Hull
Trustees, The Melton Constable Trust