

**TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992**

**THE TRANSPORT AND WORKS (APPLICATIONS AND OBJECTIONS PROCEDURE)  
(ENGLAND AND WALES) RULES 2006**

**THE CHINNOR AND PRINCES RISBOROUGH RAILWAY (CHINNOR BRANCH and RISBOROUGH SIDINGS) ORDER**

**STATEMENT OF AIMS**

**Introduction and background**

The applicant for the Order is the Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway Association Limited ("CPRRA"). CPRRA is a registered charity (Charity No. 1016237) and a company limited by guarantee (Company No.: 2644128) with the charitable aims of preservation, restoration and operation, as a permanent public exhibition and museum for the advancement of technical, historical, and general education and for permanent preservation, display, and demonstration of steam and other railway locomotives, rolling stock equipment, machinery and relics of historical operations and general interest and educational value with particular reference to the former Great Western Railway.

In accordance with Charity Commission Guidance, the CPRRA has a wholly owned subsidiary company, The Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway Company Ltd, ("CPRRL") which operates the Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway and trades on behalf of CPRRA.

CPRRA, in conjunction with CPRRL, is a well-established organisation with proven success, having operated since 1995 a preserved standard gauge heritage railway between its station in Chinnor, in the County of Oxfordshire, and Princes Risborough, in the County of Buckinghamshire. Since 2018, its services have operated into Princes Risborough Station where cross-platform interchange is available with the national rail network.

The branch railway line between the towns of Princes Risborough and Watlington, in Oxfordshire, was closed to passenger services in 1957 but remained in use as a freight line until 1961, after which the section from Chinnor to Watlington was closed completely and the track lifted. The section from Chinnor to Princes Risborough ("the Line") was retained to serve the cement works and wood yard in Chinnor village. The wood yard ceased to use freight by the beginning of 1961 and in the early 1970s the station building at Chinnor was demolished and the platform broken up. In 1989 British Rail declared the hopper wagons used to carry the cement works fuel obsolete. Set against the cost of new wagons and unloading system, and given the effectiveness of having coal delivered by road, the service was declared non-operational, with services suspended from 31<sup>st</sup> December 1989.

Aware of the impending closure of the Line, a local group met during 1989 and the CPRRA was formed. Following preliminary negotiations with British Railways ("BR") regarding the Association purchasing the line, the Association was authorised by licence from BR to do such works as were required to restore the Line for passenger operations, once it had purchased the Line and had obtained the required statutory authorisation. Under the terms of the licence, maintenance of the branch from Chinnor to the junction with the Thame branch near Princes Risborough was given over to the CPRRA from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1990.

The Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway Order (S.I. 1994/1803)("the 1994 Order") provided for the transfer of part of the Line from BR to CPRRA. A new platform was completed with volunteer labour at Chinnor station in May 1994 and, in August, CPRRA purchased the freehold of the branch line from BR pursuant to the 1994 Order. The first public service since 1957 ran on 20 August 1994, with round trips to Wainhill Halt. In April 1995 the passenger carrying line was extended some 2 miles to Horsenden Lane.

A further Transport and Works Order was then obtained (The Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway (Extension) Order (S.I. 1995/2458)) which authorised the transfer from BR to CPRRA of a further 273 metres of the original "Chinnor Line" towards Princes Risborough, together with a section of the adjacent "Thame Line" which had been mothballed since 1991. This extension enabled CPRRA to construct a "run round loop" using part of the Thame Line, known as the Thame Junction, with the intention that it be a temporary terminus for its services, until CPRRA was able to further extend into Princes Risborough station. Passenger services were extended to Thame Junction from March 1996.

This has remained as the terminus for the heritage railway, although occasional train movements have been made over the line to Princes Risborough. During this time CPRRA continued negotiations with BR's successor bodies regarding a means of connecting the heritage offering to main line train services at Princes Risborough.

Following these negotiations and with the agreement of the Office of Rail and Road ("ORR"), in June 2016 CPRRA entered into a "Track Access Agreement" with Network Rail Infrastructure Limited ("Network Rail") which, together with an ORR-agreed "Method of Working", enabled heritage trains to access Princes Risborough on the former "Thame Line". This track runs adjacent to the former "Watlington Line", previously used for trains travelling to Chinnor. This arrangement was intended to be of a temporary nature whilst CPRRA negotiated the terms of a lease for the former "Watlington Line" with Network Rail, thereby providing CPRRA with a line independent from the use of the Network Rail Thame Line. At the time of entering into the lease, it was envisaged by the parties that CPRRA would obtain a Transport and Works Act Order to takeover Network Rail's statutory obligations and powers relating to that Line.

In March 2017 CPRRA completed a 99 year Lease with Network Rail for the Watlington Line and also land at Princes Risborough, including a platform, the South Sidings and Princes Risborough North Signal Box (the Association already owning the equipment contained therein, by purchase from BR in 1991).

With Network Rail's co-operation, it was possible to rebuild the fourth platform at Princes Risborough station and to carry out a substantial refurbishment of the track, and CPRRA commenced passenger operations, under the terms of its Track Access Agreement on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2018, still using the Thame Line.

Use of this section of track requires the co-operation of Network Rail signallers for the area (located at Marylebone) to allow access to and from the platform. This is done by liaison between the signaller and a "Person in Charge" on behalf of Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway ("C&PRR") located at Princes Risborough.

Since 2018, the railway has seen both an increase in those wishing to travel for the heritage experience, and also those using the facility as a community railway connecting Chinnor with Princes Risborough. The C&PRR normally operates on all Sundays between Mothering Sunday and the end of October each year and there is currently no alternative means of public travel available on Sundays. Residents of both Chinnor and Princes Risborough are able to purchase tickets at a discounted price.

#### **Aims of Application Proposals**

Despite the co-operation of Network Rail, the current means by which the heritage trains access Princes Risborough station is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. The access is only available at times convenient to NR and relevant Train Operating Companies. The current Track Access Agreement expires in 2021 and renewal is not certain, nor may it be long term. Changes to Network Rail services may require the use of the Thame line on a more frequent basis, thereby curtailing CPRRA's operations or preventing them altogether. Under the present system there have been several occasions when heritage trains have been either denied access or had access delayed due to the requirement to use the Thame Line for other railway operations. Sometimes trains have been held at Risborough, due to the Thame Line being required for use as a siding. At times of increased workload for the Network Rail Signallers, due to disruption on the national network, dealing with the additional burden of signalling CPRRA's trains is an unwanted distraction.

The Order would provide for the transfer from Network Rail to CPRRA of the statutory rights and liabilities pertaining to the Watlington Line with effect from the date upon which the Order comes into force for the duration of the 99 year lease. It would also provide for powers to operate and use the railway and to transfer the railway undertaking to CPRRA or to a third party with the consent of Network Rail. Finally, the Order would provide for a dispute resolution process in the event of any difference between the railway undertaker and Network Rail relating to the Order's provisions.

The Order would enable the C&PRR's heritage and community trains to continue operations into Princes Risborough, but over its own track and without interference to Network Rail or any Train Operating Companies' operations.

The Order does not authorise the construction of any works or compulsory acquisition of land or interests in land.