

# The Case For Pokesdown Station - Making The Station Accessible

## Introduction

This paper will show SWT and Network Rail have been incorrect to exclude Pokesdown from accessing funding, footfall is under reported, and payback could realistically happen within 5 years. The arguments on access for the disabled are well documented and this outlines economic factors.

## Background

Pokesdown Station is one of only two stations in the Borough of Bournemouth serving a population of almost 200,000. It is on the mainline with Southampton and Waterloo east and Bournemouth and Weymouth west. Pokesdown Station is situated in a deep cutting and is only accessible via steep steps. Two lift shafts exist but were last used approximately 30 years ago.

## Purpose

This brief document will show the key facts, key arguments as well as the key case for making Pokesdown accessible to everyone. Where possible we have put together evidence using publicly available data. Unfortunately Network Rail have not always been forthcoming with help so it has not been possible to provide as much detail in some areas.

## What Are The Key Issues And Arguments?

- Similar sized stations across the nation have received funding for example:
  - Llanduf in Wales is presently undergoing work.<sup>1</sup>
  - Henley-In-Arden has just had two lifts installed despite only having 123,000 passengers per year.
  - Machynlleth is having two lifts installed (just 130,000 passengers per year use this station)
  - Ystard Mynach two lifts and new bridge access (312k passengers).
  - Bearsted Station new lifts (396k passengers per year)<sup>2</sup>
- Pokesdown is in the middle third of station footfall despite inaccurate passenger counting measures. (not the bottom third as claimed by SWT) 111 out of 177 stations<sup>3</sup>.
- Footfall is under reported by up to 50%<sup>4</sup> as compared with major stations in London.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-26671806>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/improvements/access-for-all/stations>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>

<sup>4</sup> <http://pokesdowncommunityforum.btck.co.uk/CampaigntoMakePokesdownStationAccessible/AResponseToTheEchoandSWTPR>

- Without ticket barriers (and the fact passengers often encouraged to buy 'Bournemouth' tickets even though they use Pokesdown), overall usage is probably nearer 450,000 putting it in the bracket of London Stations receiving Access For All funding - Virginia Water has just 'won' funding despite being only marginally busier.<sup>5</sup>
- Many stations have some accessibility, unusually Pokesdown is completely cut off. For example Llanduf Station which is presently undergoing Access For All Work was always accessible on one side.<sup>6</sup>
- There's significant opportunity for increase passengers as shown below.
- Costs to make the station accessible vary widely. Unfortunately Network Rail have not been willing to allow access for a formal 2nd quote, however costs vary from £500,000 to £1.5m.

## **What Business Case is There?**

### **Higher footfall**

There is compelling evidence that passenger numbers will increase. Based on the list of stations that have already received funding, stations have seen increases of 15-20%<sup>7</sup>. In the same period we have compared Pokesdown's passenger numbers. These have largely remained static.

### **Extra Revenue**

Even based on SWT disputed footfall figures we would expect to see 66,000 extra journeys from Pokesdown with a 20% passenger increase. The average ticket price for a single journey on the network is £5.17<sup>8</sup>. This would equate to £341,220 revenue generated per year. At the moment disabled, tourists, families with buggies etc have to use other alternatives or not at all, so there is no reason not to believe that over £300,000 per year is achievable.

### **Wider Economic Benefit**

As Bournemouth's second station the arguments from a disability perspective are almost overtaken when considering the boost for tourism in the local area. Pokesdown serves Southbourne and Boscombe, both key tourist destinations. At present Pokesdown cannot realistically be used by anyone carrying heavy luggage or buggies.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.southwesttrains.co.uk/government-accessibility.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Llandaf\\_railway\\_station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Llandaf_railway_station)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/improvements/access-for-all/stations>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.stagecoach.com/media/insight-features/the-facts-about-rail-fares.aspx>

## **Tourism**

“Greater use of Pokesdown station is key to the future tourism growth and economic prosperity of the area. There are plans to increase the investment in the seafront at both Boscombe and Southbourne as part of the new Seafront strategy. This will only have maximum benefit if the transport and access links are also fitting for this World Class Resort.” Mark Smith, Head of Tourism, Bournemouth Borough Council

Bournemouth Tourism believe Pokesdown is a vital station to unlock the tourism regeneration for the East of Bournemouth.

- Tourism brings in £501 million to the Bournemouth area every year supporting over 12,000 FTE jobs.
- There are over 40 hotels in the vicinity, (within 1 mile of Pokesdown)

## **Language Schools**

“Some £200 million p.a. of overseas earnings is attracted by the language schools including international students visiting schools in Boscombe and Pokesdown. The improved access would improve the appeal for both the able bodied and the students with a physical disability since all staying visitors have luggage to get from station to road level.” Mark Smith, Head of Tourism, Bournemouth Borough Council

- Brockenhust College have 570 overseas student journeys to and from Pokesdown every week. This may sound low, but when you consider this is a relatively small overseas college 40 mins travel time away it underlines the opportunity here.

## **AFC Bournemouth**

As the main station serving matchday fans, Pokesdown is increasingly coming under scrutiny. We are in dialogue with the club who have backed our campaign. Unfortunately many away guides highlight the difficulty of using Pokesdown. Attendances have increased by over 70% in less than 2 years<sup>9</sup>, with plans to increase capacity in the pipeline this is likely to be a huge opportunity. It is possible we could see a stadium handling 3 times the number of fans from 2012/13 levels, with significant need to utilise public transport (matchday parking is already fully utilised).

## **Local Economy**

Local business is increasingly reliant on accessible transport links. The figures below show the large potential and increasing frustration of large organisations with the existing situation.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.european-football-statistics.co.uk/attn/archive/eng/aveeng2012.htm>

- The Anglo European College of Chiropractic is a very large international place of study. It also handles 60,000 clinic visits per year. These are mainly from outside the immediate area.
- Sovereign Shopping Centre: A large shopping centre within ½ mile of Pokesdown. Footfall is up to 140,000 per week. “I do find it puzzling that one of the major public transport routes into Boscombe has not yet been adapted to the needs of people with impaired mobility”. Carol Butler, Boscombe Regeneration
- As can be shown by the supporting letters from Bournemouth Chamber of Trade and Boscombe Regeneration, the area is relying on this transport hub. “From an economic point of view the station access is needed to ensure that growing economic business areas such as Southbourne, Boscombe and Pokesdown are supported fully and that growth is not inhibited in any way.” Mandy Payne, Bournemouth Chamber of Trade.

## **Conclusion**

It is apparent there is a need to make Pokesdown accessible compared with similar stations. This is not only based on the disability rights argument, but the economic arguments of funding this infrastructure. There is clear support from a range of local stakeholders that there is an economic benefit.

Based on or projected figures of minimum passenger growth, payback for SWT could happen within a 5 year period.

Ben Smith

Pokesdown Community Forum

Twitter: [@BenSmith40](https://twitter.com/BenSmith40)

## **Supporting Evidence/Letters Bournemouth Tourism**

**From:** Mark Smith <Mark.Smith@Bournemouth.gov.uk>

**Date:** 23 February 2015 12:50:47 GMT

**To:** Councillor Jane Kelly <Jane.Kelly@Bournemouth.gov.uk>

Hi Councillor Kelly,

I believe it is better to keep to the headline points on matters like this since there is not a great deal of detailed information available.

- Tourism brings in £501 million to the Bournemouth area every year supporting over 12,000 FTE jobs.
- Boscombe and Southbourne on Sea are an important part of the visitor economy and Pokesdown Station is a key access point. Good access to Southbourne Seafront and in particular close access to Fishermans Walk Lift.
- Close access Kings Park and AFC Bournemouth and Athletic Stadium
- The use of public transport is being actively encouraged and the resort is actively promoted as a destination for all.
- Some £200 million p.a. of overseas earnings is attracted by the language schools including international students visiting schools in Boscombe and Pokesdown. The improved access would improve the appeal for both the able bodied and the students with a physical disability since all staying visitors have luggage to get from station to road level.
- The issue of access is arguably more acute in Pokesdown than it is in the main station at Bournemouth, since all visitors leave the train at below street level.
- The reputation of the area as being inclusive and respecting the dignity of all visitors is not being enhanced by the lack of provision for lift access to ground level at Pokesdown.
- The need for improved access is not just for those who have a physical disability or who are elderly and infirm since it is also a significant problem for the many younger families with pushchairs.
- Greater use of Pokesdown station is key to the future tourism growth and economic prosperity of the area. There are plans to increase the investment in the seafront at both Boscombe and Southbourne as part of the new Seafront strategy. This will only have maximum benefit if the transport and access links are also fitting for this World Class Resort.

I hope that some of these points are useful to your submission.

Kind regards,

Mark

Director of Tourism & Corporate Communications



Chamber Patrons



26.02.15



To whom it may concern.



Bournemouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce are fully in support of the Pokesdown Forum campaign to have the lift replaced in Pokesdown Station.

We firmly believe that this access is required to ensure those with disabilities, mobility issues, prams or carrying weighty goods can alight at this station.



From an economic point of view the station access is needed to ensure that growing economic business areas such as Southbourne, Boscombe and Pokesdown are supported fully and that growth is not inhibited in any way.



The very real potential of Bournemouth football club rising through the league table could essentially start to bring in thousands of fans and visitors. This access then becomes an essential need to enable management of such numbers.



We very much need business access and hope that you will view the campaign with gravitas as this station needs to supply an essential access route to a large business populated area of our growing town..



Kind Regards



Mandy Payne

President, Bournemouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce



## **Sovereign Centre**

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Peter Ruscoe** <peter@sovereignshoppingcentre.co.uk>

Date: 23 February 2015 at 17:13

Subject: RE: Pokesdown Station -

To: Councillor Jane Kelly <Jane.Kelly@bournemouth.gov.uk>

Cc: Andy Jones <pokesdown.cf@gmail.com>, Pam <pam.im@virginmedia.com>

Dear Councillor Kelly

I manage the Sovereign Shopping Centre, located in the centre of Boscombe.

Accessing the shops in our centre couldn't be simpler for people with impaired mobility. Everything is all on one level, with straight-through access to the car park, bus station and high street.

Boscombe has a high concentration of people who do find getting about challenging. We welcome a large number of such people to the centre every day and we are absolutely delighted to help them go about their lives as anyone else can in our community.

What does concern me, is that there will be people who, through their own specific circumstances, find it just that bit too difficult to reach the centre of Boscombe. Not having the power to buy the essentials under one's own steam must be incredibly frustrating. Those people are, effectively, trapped where they live and must feel incredibly isolated. I believe we have a duty to not allow these people to be left behind.

I do find it puzzling that one of the major public transport routes into Boscombe has not yet been adapted to the needs of people with impaired mobility. If we want a community that works for everyone who lives within it, the changes that I know are currently under discussion really ought to be put in place as soon as they can.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Ruscoe  
Centre Manager, Sovereign Shopping Centre

**Boscombe Regeneration Partnership**

Dear ,

I work for Boscombe Regeneration Partnership as Boscombe Centre Manager, managing Boscombe Market on the precinct, and working with local businesses to improve the area and increase footfall. A great deal of work is being carried out to improve Boscombe for the benefit of our residents and our visitors.

We are very proud of how accessible Boscombe is with our shops, shopping centres, car parks and bus station all on one level. We work closely with disabled groups and recently carried out a full disability audit as part of our Boscombe Precinct improvement work. There is much work being done at present as part of the Three Towns Travel Scheme to encourage more people to travel on public transport. Improvements to Boscombe Bus Station are currently being carried out, and we are very keen to encourage our local visitors and tourists to use public transport wherever possible.

Much work is being put into encouraging tourism to the area, and this forms a significant part of the local economy, together with international language students. We aim to attract day visitors and tourists, who often arrive by public transport, and, in order to access Kings Park, Bournemouth Athletics Stadium and Bournemouth AFC in Boscombe, we need to improve access at 'Pokesdown for Boscombe' rail station, to give all our visitors full access to meet their everyday needs and leisure pursuits. A significant proportion (44.4%) of households are without access to a car, so for those families, public transport is essential in order for them to be able to access everyday essentials.

It is disappointing to note that one of our main transport hubs, Pokesdown Station, which is signposted as 'Pokesdown for Boscombe' is not accessible to those with disabilities, the elderly and infirm and families with pushchairs, with both platforms being below street level, and only accessible by a flight of stairs. In order to give all our visitors the dignity that they deserve when coming to Boscombe we would urge you to provide accessible lifts at 'Pokesdown for Boscombe' rail station/

**With best wishes,**

**Carol Butler**

**Boscombe Centre Manager,**

**Environment & Regeneration Services**

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Mobile: **07718 653 051**

e-mail: **carol.butler@bournemouth.gov.uk**

**[www.by-the-sea.co](http://www.by-the-sea.co)**

**[www.recreateproject.eu/en/](http://www.recreateproject.eu/en/)**

**[www.bournemouth.gov.uk/boscomberegeneration](http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/boscomberegeneration)**

**[www.facebook.com/boscombe](https://www.facebook.com/boscombe)**

**[www.outsetbournemouth.co.uk](http://www.outsetbournemouth.co.uk)**







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Mr Ben Smith  
Pokesdown Community Forum  
Pokesdown,  
Bournemouth

23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2015

Dear Ben,

**Pokesdown station accessibility**

Thank you for your e-mail regarding the initiative to improve Pokesdown Station in order to make it accessible to all.

Whilst I wouldn't like to comment on the business case because I haven't looked into it in any detail, I would say that it does surprise me that SWT cannot commit to this improvement based upon matters of disability discrimination. The Pokesdown community has immediate access to Southbourne and the surrounding beaches something which, presumably, is denied to disabled rail travellers to Pokesdown.

It is not a lucrative area and as the Director of a Chiropractic training institution we treat people at a significantly reduced rate. We see in the region of 60,000 treatment visits per year, most from further afield than the local BH5 postal code, and whilst I don't know how many travel by train, or would travel by train if they were able to access Pokesdown station, I would be very happy to run a patient survey in the event you need me to.

Good luck with what you are trying to achieve and would be inclined to agree that putting lifts in would increase the footfall.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Osborne BSc, PhD DC, FCC(Orth.), FRSH, FHEA  
Clinic Director

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Your Ref: This matter is being dealt with by: Mike Holmes  
Our Ref: Email: [mike.holmes@bournemouth.gov.uk](mailto:mike.holmes@bournemouth.gov.uk) Direct line:

Andy Jones  
Pokesdown Community Forum

Date 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Dear Andy

**Pokesdown Station, Accessibility Improvements**

I am writing this letter to support your campaign to improve accessibility at Pokesdown Station the principles of which compliment many of the transport initiatives being delivered in the town. These improvements will support a number of our aims and objectives, namely to:

- Reduce the impacts of a lack of accessibility which can result in social exclusion restricting access to goods and services and participation in the labour market.
- Encourage walking, cycling or the use of public transport, promoting sustainable transport choices will create a healthier communities, lower healthcare costs and fewer carbon emissions.
- Develop Bournemouth as a cycling destination for tourists, encouraging more visitors to arrive by train to take advantage of recent investment.
- Alleviate congestion and air pollution in the town and district centres which negatively impact on the community and the areas economic vitality and attractiveness for business and customers.

Yours Sincerley

Mike Holmes  
Director, Planning, Transport & Regulation Services