

Freshford Running In Board.

Freshford Station.



Photo NJS.

FOR RESOLUTION:

Should the Parish Council agree to replace the FRESHFORD enamel sign on the far platform (installed 2013) with a replica sign?

Comment.

GWR has offered to fund the cost of the replica sign. This is a generous offer and comes on the back of their carrying out the further restoration of the other Freshford sign and old GWR Bench both of which remain sited at the Station and both of which are now in excellent condition.

The case for replacing the enamel sign with a replica sign is persuasive.

In 2016 the PC resolved to retain the enamel sign on display at the Station while accepting that the condition of the sign would continue to deteriorate. It was then thought that the deterioration would be relatively slight and could be managed by further restoration work being undertaken from time to time and as necessary.

However the sign is in an exposed position and has also suffered from some apparent vandalism - it seems as if if stones have been thrown at it from the near platform resulting in further chipping of the enamel.

Further restoration work on the sign is likely be costly (probably well over £1000) and can do no more than slow down the rate of deterioration not prevent it. The fact is that the sign was stored outside in a junk yard in Bristol for some 50 years before being found and restored has inevitably meant that its preservation would always be problematic and continuous.

Recommendation

With GWR's generous offer on the table to fund a replica sign, now is the time for the PC to review its decision in 2016. Mindful of all these circumstances my feeling is that the balance is now tipped in favour of the sign being replaced with a replica sign. A replica sign would likely be seen by the casual observer as identical to the original.

If the recommendation is accepted the question arises as to what to do with the original sign? There is a general acceptance that the sign should be preserved for posterity. This would be best achieved by it being displayed in an interior space.

The sign is owned by the PC and the preferred outcome would be, I think, that space be found within the village setting. The Village Hall, the Galleries Shop come readily to mind, possibly the Old Bakery. If this proves not possible to achieve then a ready alternative would be for the sign to be displayed at a local museum such as the Museum of Bath at Work.

Recommendation

That Councillors express a view as to the preferred outcome so that councillors with responsibility pursue the necessary enquiries and then report back to the PC.

NJS
4/9/21