Recognition of the late Brian Stewart

Background

Brian Stewart, founder of Stewarts of Mortimer, established the "Mortimer Link" minibus service connecting the village with Mortimer Station. It operated from 2004 until 2013.

Mrs Stewart, his widow, has confirmed that while the service was operated by Stewarts it was fully funded by the business. When operation later passed to another operator, West Berkshire Council and the parish council contributed funding.

In 2013, the parish council formally thanked Stewarts for its **"eight years of support"**, recording that the service **"would have been unsustainable without this."**

The service was used by commuters and other residents, and no equivalent replacement has been established in the 13 years since it ended.

Mrs Stewart also recalls being told by the then parish council chairman, many years before Brian's death, that some form of parish recognition or commemoration was intended. This motion does not seek to re-visit that point, but instead to consider and vote on whether Mr Stewart's contribution merits recognition now and whether the proposal below is appropriate.

Proposed recognition

Following discussions with Great Western Railway, GWR has agreed in principle to:

1. a brass memorial plaque on the existing bench on the Basingstoke platform; and
2. an A4 framed display inside the booking office containing a photograph of Brian and a short account of his contribution.

Mrs Stewart supports the proposal, has supplied a photograph and has agreed the proposed wording.

GWR prefers the work to be carried out by its preferred supplier, Rydon Signs, which has quoted **£368.50 plus VAT** to supply and install both items and liaise directly with GWR over installation.

Using another supplier would require further GWR approval and potentially cause delay. GWR is also shortly to move into public ownership.

Motion

That the parish council:

1. agrees that the contribution made by the late Brian Stewart to Mortimer, particularly through founding, funding and operating the Mortimer Link service, merits formal recognition;

2. agrees that this recognition should take the form of:
    - a memorial plaque on the existing Basingstoke platform bench at Mortimer Station; and
    - a framed commemorative display inside the station booking office;
3. agrees to meet the full cost of supply and installation, authorising expenditure of up to **£400 excluding VAT**; and
4. asks GWR's preferred supplier, Rydon Signs, to invoice the parish council directly, allowing VAT to be dealt with through the council's normal accounting arrangements.

Cllr Nick Carter 2 Nov 2026