

BACKING FOR South Tynedale line extension

PLANS by the 2ft gauge South Tynedale Railway to revive the entire length of the NER Alston branch have been backed by councillors.

The South Tyne Railway Preservation Society says that 100,000 extra visitors would be drawn to the locality each year.

Chairing a meeting of Haltwhistle Town Council on December 1, Coun Alan Sharp said: "This is a great project going forward. It should bring in trade to support our shops, pubs, cafes and other services.

"I was really pleased with the enthusiasm of the society, and I think we should encourage this as much as we can."

The society currently runs a 3.5 mile line from Alston to Lintley Halt, attracting 40,000 visitors per year, and has secured a £4.2million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to extend 1.5 miles to Slaggyford.

However, if various parcels of land can be obtained, it could extend by another eight miles to Haltwhistle by 2022. The original standard gauge branch was closed by BR in 1976.