

North Devon Conservatives

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NORTH DEVON CAMPAIGNER and prospective Conservative Member of Parliament, Philip Milton, was very pleased to meet with Stephen Hammond MP, Shadow Transport Minister last Friday to hear the latest on plans for our local and connecting Rail services.

They were joined by a team from First Great Western including Managing Director Mark Hopwood, West of England Business Manager Julian Crow and Director of Communications Sue Evans.

Philip was able to press the concerns of North Devon residents in relation to rail services generally, their quality and regularity and also connectivity with local public transport, both for convenience but also to encourage as much use of public transport for environmental reasons as possible.

Philip commended the latest published customer satisfaction report which reflected a dramatic improvement and also the fact that the Barnstaple to Exeter line now has the most regular service since it was first created. In fact, the Barnstaple line has seen a 94% increase in passenger journeys since 2001, a total of 387015 last year.

He was keen too to support FGW in lobbying the Shadow Transport Minister in relation to the extra Paddington to Paignton service which will provide more options to North Devonians in terms of connections to and from London at Exeter. FGW gave a formal proposal to the Department for Transport in late Autumn last year for the inclusion of this train in the December 2010 timetable and there has been strong interest and support across the West Country. Philip said “and I hope that Tiverton Parkway could be included as a stop on this service, to ensure that commuters from North Devon who use that facility have more choice than at present.”

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