

# TOWN SPLIT OVER PLAN FOR THAT NEW RAIL STATION

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**The prospect of a new railway station at Purewell to serve present and future residents there and at Burton met with approval from Christchurch Citizens' Association this week. But local residents maintain a better bus service would be preferable.**

The hint of a new station came in British Rail's response to the structure plan proposals, when Southern Region said it was a possibility if a rail-based strategy is adopted.

It was taken up at Monday's meeting of the residents' association by Mr. Charlie Hall, who felt the big housing development destined for Hoburne warranted a halt in the area.

He suggested Staple Cross as a suitable site, accessible for people in all the areas around. And fairly high density housing development is mooted for Purewell in the structure plan, which mentions an extra 540 homes.

The association voted for the committee to go further into the possibility.

But opinion elsewhere was distinctly cool, both organisations and individuals pointing to the need for better services before an additional station.

Chairman of Burton parish council, Mr. Geoffrey Staynings, said an improved bus service would serve the community better.

"I can think of better ways of spending money than on a station," he added.

Coun. Michael Hodges agreed there was no need for a station. There was at the moment no demand, and the suggested site was too near to the central station, he said.

A new station would need car parking and a bus service — hardly feasible until there was a large development.

An improved bus service was the prime requirement considered Coun. Kevin Bishop. He doubted if many people would use a local halt.

Somerford Association secretary Mrs. Marjorie Gates thought the idea a non-starter. Most people were on a bus route to Christchurch or Hinton stations, she said. A better bus service would be more sensible.

Transport 2000 also spurned the new station. Improve rail and bus services first, said a spokesman.

British Rail's comment to the Times was that a new station must be a commercial proposition. And — the final damper — they would only be prepared to consider opening a halt if the council would foot the bill