

## Rail campaigners facing long wait

Jan 30 2009 by Caroline Boxer, [Strathearn Herald](#)

THE group behind the campaign to reopen Blackford railway station have been told that they are on the right track, by Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson.

However, COBRA (Campaign to Open Blackford Railway Station Again) members were also warned that they could face a long wait to receive funding from the Scottish Government to allow their dream to come to fruition.

Mr Stevenson was a guest at the group's annual general meeting and he explained to the packed Highland Spring board room that plans for railways were already in place for the next five years, and Blackford is not among them.

He stated that the Scottish Government were about to start looking at the 2015 to 2020 period and that COBRA should push for their ideas to be heard within that. However, a report by TACTRAN into the viability of the re-opening of the station would be considered first.

Mr Stevenson said he believed that the project was predominantly of local interest rather than national interest and that it was important that TACTRAN were involved.

He stated: "What needs to be looked at is how many passengers are going to use this station and how many will stop using Gleneagles as a result.

"This could have a negative impact on Gleneagles and could affect the decision making.

"The STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) process can also find out if you have a transport problem and what the answer to that could be."

COBRA's main objective is to campaign for the re-opening of the Railway station in the village to serve the communities of Strathallan and Strathearn by forging better links to many towns on the main line.

They also believe that the re-opening of the station could also ease pressure off Dunblane, where car parking congestion is a major problem.

In his introductory speech Neil Gaunt, COBRA chairman explained to the meeting that Scotrail had estimated that the cost to reopen the station would be around £1.75 million. However Mr Stevenson believed that this figure would be closer to £3 million.

One ray of light for the campaign group may be the Ryder Cup to be played at Gleneagles in 2014 which will bring thousands of people to the area.