



Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe Newsletter

17 January 2011

2010 has come and gone and Minister Winde is frustrated that another year has passed us by without major progress being made with regard to the re-establishment of the Choo-Tjoe.

Toward the end of last year, the train came to a complete halt when its licence to transport passengers expired. Since then, it has been lying idle to the dismay of many, including Minister Winde.

On a recent trip to Knysna, he surveyed sections of the line (photos attached), and realised just how much work would need to be done to get the Choo-Tjoe back up and running.

Nevertheless, Minister Winde is determined to see it happen.

Last year, the Provincial Government applied to take over the train and the line it runs on. Although it is a complicated process, this would allow us to put it

out to tender and, ultimately, come up with a solution to save it.

Regrettably, in late October last year, the Minister of Public Enterprises was replaced, slowing the response from National Government.

Today, Minister Winde wrote to the new Public Enterprises Minister, Mr Malusi Gigaba, to request a meeting to discuss the transfer of the Choo-Tjoe to the Western Cape government.

This is a priority issue that needs to be addressed quickly if we are to preserve the train as a heritage icon. The longer it lies idle, the harder it will be to get it back on the tracks. In addition, the Garden Route has gone through a tourist season without one of its major attractions, leaving many hopeful Choo-Tjoers disappointed.

Let's hope 2011 brings results. E-mail us on finmin@pgwc.gov.za.