

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group
14 March 2012 Annual General Meeting

Annual Report

1. Website

- Peter Simmonett and the Melbourn Village website continue to host us at no charge. Paul Hollinghurst who has recently taken charge of keeping the site live with comprehensive information about the MSF RUG and its campaign and activities

2. Parking charges

- As of January 1st, First Capital Connect have lowered the parking charges at Meldreth by 50%, to £1.50 per day, and eliminated parking charges at Shepreth altogether. Shepreth car park is now used for parking again. This positive action is appreciated.

3. Parking around stations

- Meldreth and Foxton Parish Councils have officially approved plans for double yellow lines in High Street near Meldreth Station and Station Road near Foxton Station, respectively, on traffic safety grounds, though action remains due to the county council's extraordinarily slow bureaucracy. The matter was to have been discussed at the March 6th cabinet meeting and has now been postponed to April.
- Reduction/elimination of parking charges at Meldreth and Shepreth may provide some relief to Station Road, Foxton.

4. Cycle parking

- There has been no improvement in cycle parking at Foxton or Meldreth Stations, where it is needed. At Foxton, the county council has been approached about providing extra cycle parking on land it owns near the station. At Meldreth, improvements are needed on the Melbourn side.

5. Cycles on trains policy

- FCC responded positively to concerns that new restrictions introduced last May were more onerous than necessary and a full sized cycle ban exists on one train only (8:10 Meldreth to Cambridge, including Shepreth and Foxton).
- RUG members have been concerned that that ban was not being enforced, and FCC have taken action.

6. Disabled ramp, Meldreth southbound platform

- This project has reached a standstill. FCC say that private land ownership makes the matter challenging to resolve. Access to and from the southbound platform remains difficult or impossible to those who are mobility impaired.

7. Ticket machine screen visibility

- Ticket machine screens at all three stations have been replaced and work very well.

8. Permit to Travel Machine, Meldreth

- FCC have offered to move Meldreth's Permit to Travel Machine to the London-bound platform, in order to accommodate passengers arriving on foot from Melbourn who find it difficult to cross over the pedestrian bridge to purchase their tickets. Time frame for this unclear.

9. Post-16 student fares

- We continue to benefit from FCC's 'Cambridge Schools' scheme which offers a 50% discount off the adult fare for all 16-19 year olds travelling to Cambridge for education.
- This has saved students £130-£200 annually and has saved Cambridgeshire County Council over £100 per student not seeking a County-subsidized bus pass.
- These young people will develop a familiarity with rail travel which hopefully will reinforce the likelihood of adopting the habit of using sustainable transport.

10. ASB incidents at stations

- British Transport Police have been asked for annual statistics. Very few ASB problems have occurred in association with the platform gardens – a bit of disturbance to one or two tubs only, and this quickly tidied up.

11. Football count Meldreth Station

- Peter Wakefield organized a football count at Meldreth Station on November 11 and was supported by a number of our group, and by Railfuture. It is good to have an up-to-date picture and the result helped us to decide to keep the ticket vending machine on the Cambridge-bound platform at Meldreth, and prompted FCC to offer to move the permit to travel machine to the London-bound platform.

12. Communication with rail industry

- We enjoy excellent communication with First Capital Connect, National Express, Fen Line Users Association and Railfuture, all of whom have regularly attended our meetings and supported the station birthday party on July 9th; also with Passenger Focus who have continued to meet us for local concerns in spite of cutbacks.
- National Rail's station information posters are good start but incomplete information – would anyone like to follow this up?
- Network Rail: we are hopeful that encouraging words on Foxton level crossing safety will translate into action, after a nearly two year wait.
- Rail East and Railwatch have published articles about some of our work.

13. Mechanical failure of pedestrian gates, Foxton Station

From last year's AGM report:

- *Network Rail has now responded very positively.*
- *New gates are to be installed imminently and a new safety action plan is now in place in the event of future gate failure.*
- *Further safety measures are being considered by NWR and County Highways cooperation will be needed.*
- We are now at exactly the same point as last year. While 'new' gates were installed in June 2011, they lacked essential components in the magnetic locking system, and there have been numerous incidents involving pedestrian caught inside the level crossing, including children. This is completely intolerable. A great deal of effort has gone into liaison with Network Rail and it is unfortunate that we have had to rely ultimately on a media campaign to achieve attention. We are hopeful now that the Network Rail Anglia Route Manager's promise on a BBC Radio Cambridgeshire interview that the gates will be repaired/dealt with/sorted/upgraded/fixed immediately will be realized. 'Immediately' involves a 6-8 week wait, from February 16th. I've been in continual contact with NR since then and have sent them a 56-page log of safety-related events which have occurred since August 2010.
- Network Rail were invited to this AGM, as they were invited to last year's AGM, but have declined to attend.
- Hattie McFadzean and Florence Clark have helped in their willingness to publicize an incident in which they were caught inside the level crossing due to gate failure,

which prompted the media coverage. Tina Hughes, whose daughter Olivia was killed at the Elsenham level crossing in December 2005, offered immediate support for our campaign to improve safety at Foxton level crossing. Hattie and Florence have agreed to join our RUG and will help to liaise with other young people who use Foxton LC on a regular basis.

- We will have to see to what extent safety improves if/when the gates are upgraded/sorted. As a county councillor I have been pressing for a pedestrian bridge as the only comprehensive solution to a variety of safety-related scenarios.

14. Station Adoption and Community Rail Partnership

- Neither station adoption nor CRP have been formalized and this depends now on First Capital Connect's initiative, but MSF RUG remains open to it and has the support of Cambridgeshire County Council which has listed the CRP in its Local Transport Plan.
- With the firm establishment of the Railway Gardens across all three stations, and the community involvement that underpins this, it would seem that the foundation for station adoption and/or a CRP is in place. Spring/summer garden working party dates will be circulated shortly. Melbourn Village College students are proposing another litter pick at Meldreth Station.
- FCC has written to thank all of our regular station garden volunteers and has provided high quality wormeries for local schools.

15. Support of parish councils and local groups

- Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton and Melbourn Parish Councils for covering the cost of room hire for one meeting per year in each village. We feel it is important to bring the meeting to each of the villages who enjoy direct access to rail service.
- Meldreth Manor School has provided free premises for two meetings this year.
- A great number of local clubs, businesses and residents have supported our Station Gardens project and posters listing them all (hope we haven't missed anyone – please let me know if so) are on permanent display at all three stations

Membership Report

A membership application and information leaflet for the MSF RUG is now on our website and at Meldreth Station Booking Office.

As agreed at December 2011 MSF RUG meeting, subs are:
£4 per adult, £5 per family, £2 concessions (pensioners, students)

Treasurer's Report

As of February the MSF RUG has an account at Cambridge Building Society in Melbourn into which membership joining fees can be deposited. Beatrice Fisher (RUG member), Sue Hanson (RUG Treasurer) and Susan van de Ven (Chairman) are signatories on the account.

The account has £100 exactly, an accumulation of membership fees since inauguration of RUG in February 2010.

There are no expenses to date.

December 2011 Must Haves and Aspirations, to be updated March 14th, 2012

<p>Action points to agree (A), including “must-haves” (MH) and “aspirations” (ASP)</p>		
A	Shepreth Wildlife Park to maintain a list of those using Shepreth Station.	RW
MH	Free parking in the station car parks	
MH	Clear and accessible information about fares. Better communication with all schools and colleges. MH: Improvements to new National Rail local information posters at all three stations MH: New gates at both pedestrian crossings at Foxton MH: Improved monitoring and enforcement of level crossing abuses at Foxton	
MH	Disabled access ramp on southbound platform on Meldreth.	
MH	Better provision for bikes on trains and more cycle racks at all three stations	
MH	Maintain the 50% Student Connect discount	
ASP	Use Young Person’s Railcard in non-commuting direction before 10.00	
ASP	Take steps toward Station Adoption at all three stations	
ASP	Consider prospects of a Community Rail Partnership encompassing the three stations	
ASP	Improvements on timetables	
<p>Action points achieved so far</p>		
A	Letter to Meldreth Parish Council expressing concerns about dangerous traffic	Done
A	Letter to Shepreth Parish Council expressing concerns about a valuable village amenity being empty because of high car park charges	Done
A	Post minutes on Parish Council notice boards	Done
A	Request the Neighbourhood Police Panel to keep an eye out for illegal parking in the area between the Station entrance at Meldreth and the first chicane in High Street.	Done
A	Create a link from village websites to new RUG website.	Done
A	Delay repay scheme on FCC website. Members to publicise more through posters in the villages and parish magazines.	Done
A	Cycle racks at Foxton Station	Done