

Shepreth, Meldreth and Foxton Rail User Group
(RUG)

Annual General Meeting
March 14 2012
Meldreth Manor School

Minutes

NEWSPAPERMEN EATING CANDY

To my delight the press bench was occupied by three junior journalists. Melbourn Village College pupils Josh Kennedy, 14, Theo Windred, 12, and Jack Greenwood, 11, were taking part in a BBC journalism project and perched with pens, notebooks and phone hacking equipment at the ready. (NB: Mums, dads, teachers, social workers, lawyers, Mr Thompson, Mr Murdoch, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Akers, Lord Justice Leveson, I'm joking!! Don't hit me, sue, make arrests or call them to any press inquiries!! Please!!)

I was actually going to write the minutes in ridiculous tabloidese in honour of our cub reporters...

EXCLUSIVE! NOT ONE BUT TWO COMMUTERS AT RUG MEETING! SHOCKER!

"OUR eyes met across a sea of empty chairs and I knew I'd seen him before," exclaimed petite brunette Elspeth McElbows, 37 but says she's 33. (0642 Foxton changes to 0713 Royston, window seat, carriage 13, says she can't chat because she's studying for OU masters but always holds 'Thinking About Philosophy' text book upside down)

"Then it hit me. I'd seen him on a London train! Two commuters at a RUG meeting! You could have knocked me down with a Metro!"

...but she who must pointed out that making up nonsense may not be the best example to set to children who want to be reporters!

What we actually talked about:

BROKEN SWITCHES BROKEN GATES

Sadly, the meeting was dominated by one subject which isn't a joke; the on-going problems with the faulty pedestrian gates at Foxton crossing. RUG chair Susan van de Ven (SDVD) said the gates were still not working properly and more people had reported getting stuck. Network Rail officials had been invited to the meeting but didn't attend - although First Capital Connect officials plus Joseph Whelan, Head of Passenger Transport from Cambridgeshire County Council were there. SDVD said a month ago Network Rail had talked of the gates being fixed in six weeks; now officials were saying 12 weeks. People are afraid that before too long a set of RUG minutes will contain a note saying someone has been killed. But there have been developments since the meeting, as SDVD explains:

STOP PRESS: I'm pleased to report that since the RUG AGM, Network Rail Route Managing Director Dave Ward has 1) agreed to attend a public meeting in Foxton 2) arranged for a detailed tour of the signalling system from the Foxton signal box 3) reassured me in detailed fashion of progress to correct the faulty gates, which unfortunately will take up to mid-May 4) agreed that he and I should meet with senior county council officers about 'long-term' solutions to Foxton Level Crossing. Also, I have now seen CCTV footage of one of the recent pedestrian incidents; questions remain in my mind but I am greatly encouraged by Network Rail's commitment to developing a close and constructive relationship with us to resolve problems at Foxton, in a similar manner to the relationship which the RUG has built up with First Capital Connect. I would also like to reiterate the commitment of BBC Radio Cambridgeshire to maintain watch on this story; they have been reporting widely on level crossing safety and their accurate and fair reporting has played a big part in getting necessary attention focused on this urgent problem. (SDVD)

AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE

On a similar note of frustration, still no ramp for the elderly and disabled on the Melbourn side of Meldreth station. Expensive, complications with land ownership etc etc. (Lucky we don't have to stage the Olympics in Britain!) But RUG won't give up. SDVD and Meldreth Manor Principal Roger Gale are going to meet to discuss the next plan of attack.

NO NEED TO BE NERVOUS

We 'elected' a new committee (although SDVD says we have to call it a 'coalition' now!) It was an election George would have been proud of. No hustings, no campaigning. In fact I was elected when I didn't even realise I was running for office. (Observers from Syria will be asked to oversee 2013 election!) Seriously, SVDV thanked a number of new, and old, members for stepping forward to help out.

TAKE WHAT YOU NEED

Paul Hollinghurst gave a great presentation on our new website. (To help technophobes like me, he explained it with pen and paper) Check it out at <http://melbourn.org.uk/railusergroup/>. It looks fantastic. Thanks for all your efforts Paul.

WATCH THE PARKIN' METERS

Still problems with street parking in Meldreth despite car park charge cuts. We'll keep pushing First Capital Connect for FREE parking in Meldreth. We won the battle in Shepreth.

DON'T NEED NO TICKET

First Capital Connect officials said a permit to travel machine was going to be fitted on the London-bound platform at Meldreth. This will be a unique arrangement on as permit to travel machines are in fact being discontinued. The hope is that this will make a difference to people arriving at the station on foot from Melbourn but who may find it difficult to get over the bridge to the ticket machine and booking office (for example parents with small children).

(YOU CAN) LAY DOWN YOUR WEARY TUNE (AGAIN SOON)

Weary travellers may have noticed that benches have vanished at Meldreth and Shepreth. First Capital Connect officials said the seats were being repaired and would return. (Hope they were taken away on a train!)

Q: HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET RIDING DONE?

A: TAKE THE BIKE WITH YOU, BOB

Thanks to First Capital Connect for relaxing restrictions on the number of cycles allowed on trains.

DIDN'T SEE YOU AROUND

Oh, and some people apologised for not being at the meeting. Out of kindness, I didn't write down their names but don't worry - SDVD knows where they live! (Actually I did note one name: Morven said she couldn't make it because she was having a Thai curry at that nice place in Harston with *some* friends!)

WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOMEDAY

Meeting dates:

Wednesday 20th June 2012 (Foxton Village Hall)

Tuesday 11th September 2012 (Melbourn - venue to be confirmed)

Wednesday 12th December 2012 (Shepreth Village Hall)

Wednesday 13th March 2013 AGM (Meldreth Manor School)

Please keep an eye out on the website for up-to-date news.

Brian (With a bit of help from Bob)