

# Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group AGM

13th March 2013, 7:30pm

Meldreth Manor School

## Minutes

### Attending

Susan van de Ven, R. J. Eggleton, Janet Cottenden, Peter Wakefield, Robert Stripe, Sue Hanson, Linda Pearman, Denise Pearman, Philip Shaw, Andy Hart (FCC), Karen Gregson (FCC), Malcolm Howe, Roger Gale, Christopher Stead, Paul Hollinghurst, Rebecca Willers (Shepreth Wildlife Park)

### Apologies

Ian Stuart, Beatrice Fisher, Andy Bottom (Network Rail), Matt Mildinhall (British Transport Police), Christine Adams, Brian Farmer, David Grech, John Page

### Election

The following officials were unanimously re-elected.

Secretary: Brian Farmer

Membership Secretary: Sue Hanson

Treasurer: Beatrice Fisher

Chairman: Susan van de Ven

Auditor: Bruce Huett

Robert Stripe said that due to the small financial turnover, the term "Independent Examiner" should be used instead of "Auditor"

The group needs a note taker for meetings.

### Minutes

Minutes of 2012 AGM agreed

Minutes of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2012 RUG meeting agreed

### Annual Report

Annual report presented by Susan (published separately).

Short discussion about cycles on trains. Ian Stuart has reported that enforcement on the 08:06 Royston to Cambridge is now good with Royston actively enforcing this, and the small number of residual cycles appearing to originate at Letchworth. However, he has seen increasing problems with the services either side of this, and some services back from Cambridge in the evening. Agreed with FCC that a publicity exercise is required at the start of every school year.

### Membership Resolution

A resolution was proposed that "Membership is based on voluntary contributions" rather than the current £4 per year. Paul Hollinghurst thought that leaving it voluntary may still lead to an excess of money being donated. It may also be difficult determine membership status if it is free, and it is

important that a RUG can show support through membership. A compromise of “Membership reduced to £1 per annum” was proposed and accepted.

## British Transport Police

PTSOs are regularly travelling on the trains

Matt Mildinhall, based at Cambridge, is taking a particular interest in the village stations, with a specific interest of “Risk Taking”. He has noted people walking off the end of the platform and down the track to the path at Meldreth, and crossing the wooden crossing planks, and walking round the crossing barriers at Foxton. Both are dangerous and action is being taken.

Susan has been publicising railway dangers through the local parish councils and schools.

There is a new BTP Text (SMS) service for reporting incidents. Action: Paul; add this to the website

Question about trespassing at Meldreth by Chris Stead on behalf of Melbourn Parish Council was not answered by Network Rail. Action: Susan will ask the question again

## Station Updates

Gardens – Radio Cambridgeshire were looking for a garden makeover area to plant with poppies to remember the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WW I. The land next to the Cambridge bound platform at Shepreth is to be planted.

FCC have sorted the following issues: sponsors poster missing, Cambridge station poster replaced, tub brackets replaced.

Timetables have been distributed to most properties in Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton and Melbourn. Karen Gregson said 4000 timetables should be available from mid-April. Action: Karen Gregson will confirm the precise date.

Website – Paul will continue looking after this. However, if anyone needs frequent access, or wants to take over looking after the website, then they can be trained and given access.

Rebecca from Shepreth Wildlife Park is working twice a year with Barrington Primary School on the station garden at Shepreth.

## Network Rail Updates

There is concern to make sure that in discussion of the Foxton Crossing Feasibility Study, the underpass option is fully considered. Susan always makes sure wording which mentions the study is considering a bridge is corrected to bridge and underpass.

Philip Shaw mentioned a preference for an underpass or a bypass taking traffic away from the crossing and villages. However, The Rail User Group campaigns primarily on the issue of pedestrian safety at the crossing. Roads and bypasses are the remit of the county council. Susan can put anyone in touch with the appropriate people and public meetings for road and bypass issues.

Brian Farmer has been working with Network Rail about Angle Lane. Network Rail have already filled potholes and have agreed to repair the lane.

## Community Rail Partnership

This has been delayed after a meeting was postponed due to illness. Susan continues to investigate the idea.

## Accessibility

Janet Cottenden spoke from the view of a parent with young children travelling from Meldreth. She is working with children's groups in the area to identify the level of support for good access.

A ramp to the London Bound platform was discussed. There are land issues which are beyond Network Rail's control including the path across the field which would make providing access via a ramp difficult. It was also clear from the discussion that a ramp on its own would provide a poor solution, which may border on useless for many users requiring step free access due to the long walk which would still be required. Lifts to the footbridge would probably be necessary.

There is currently dispensation to wheelchair users to travel via Royston where there is a lift. However this makes the journey very slow. Andy Hart (FCC) said he thought this could be extended to people with children / pushchairs if this was thought to be useful.

A level crossing on the line at Meldreth would not be acceptable to Network Rail, which is trying to remove as many as possible for safety reasons. An underpass was mentioned but would almost certainly be prohibitively expensive.

FCC are continuing to look at the "Access to All" to fund accessibility improvements. Completely new lifts are being provided at St Neot's, Letchworth and Hitchin, and an upgrade is providing a passenger lift at Stevenage.

Peter Wakefield reported that a footbridge had been upgraded with lifts at Waltham Cross for a cost of approximately £600k.

There is a Railfuture meeting in Colchester on Saturday June 15<sup>th</sup> where there is an attendee with a specialist knowledge and interest in accessibility. Action: Peter W will attend the meeting and report back.

Action: Paul will add a new section to the website for the accessibility campaign, including the document describing accessibility issues and passenger numbers to stations on the line.

## Future meetings

Susan listed dates of future meetings: June 12, September 18, December 11, March 12 (2014) AGM.

MSFRUG have been invited to the "Future Transport in South Cambridgeshire" workshop, 19.15 – 21.30 pm, Tuesday, 26th March in Coton Village Hall. Susan is presenting a section on Rail.

## FCC Report

Karen Gregson presented a report of recent station actions.

Every light has been replaced at the local stations – they are brighter than the existing ones.

Many station benches are being replaced.

A revenue protection officer was assaulted at Meldreth station recently. The culprit was identified and apprehended.

Free text alerts are available from FCC giving information about delays.

There were serious delays on 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> December following overhead line problems.

Paul Hollinghurst mentioned that there was still poor information about travel from the village stations during severe service disruption, despite these stations often being disrupted differently to the rest of the line due to short platforms. There is often no mention in the text describing the amended service on the FCC and National Rail Website, and the station indicators can sometime continue to show trains running on time when the majority have been cancelled. Karen said the systems were being updated continually at the moment, and would update the RUG with more information about this. The RUG will report back on problems it observes.