

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group: Annual Report 2015

Our new Train Operating Company (TOC) is Govia Thameslink Railway, also known locally as Great Northern. The arrangement is a 'contract management' with the Dept for Transport, whereby the DfT pays the TOC a fee to run the service and collects all revenue. We have enjoyed a smooth transition due largely to the good fortune of having David Piggott, Andy Hart and Karen Gregson with us still, in new uniforms.

The Dept for Transport has affirmed that our 50% 16-18 Cambridgeshire student discount is revenue generating, and on this basis it remains in place until 2016 when the approval process will need to be repeated. Arrangements for free parking at Shepreth and £1.50 at Meldreth remain in place.

A platform waiting shelter will be installed on Meldreth's Cambridge-bound platform, and an additional shelter will be installed at Foxton's Cambridge-bound platform. Timing as yet unknown.

An early expectation of half-hourly off-peak trains with Thameslink's roll-out now looks in doubt.

Network Rail has announced the intention of upgrading Shepreth Station's half-barrier level crossing gate to a full barrier system in 2017/18. Network Rail says it is open-minded about the Meldreth Road crossing where there are no problems with the half-barrier, and where a full barrier system could introduce risk taking. A public consultation will be undertaken by Network Rail.

Network Rail has published a feasibility study on the potential closure of the Foxton Level Crossing, and a Project Board was formed and met once in the summer of 2014. However since then, Network Rail has been uncommunicative. The project, together with transport interchange arrangements for Foxton Station, has been included in the list of schemes for the Greater Cambridge City Deal, though funding falls with Network Rail and it must engage in order to progress the project.

Meldreth Station disabled access: It is disappointing that no progress can be reported.

Station cycle parking: Larry Heyman for GTR has met with Meldreth and Shepreth councillors to look at possibility of new cycle parking. Shepreth Station has a loan cycle rack from Cambridgeshire County Council, in the shape of a car, to encourage multi-modal sustainable transport.

Shepreth Station safety: The London-bound ramp was fenced off to prevent people from exiting at the level crossing end, though this means the station is now no longer step-free. Network Rail will install a ramp over the steps to the station car park plan by 'spring 2015.' For unknown reasons, NR also added to the tarmacked area of the car park, which can't be re-lined until the new ramp is in.

MSFRUG is in communication with Sixth Forms about encouraging sustainable transport.

As arranged via our Community Rail Partnership, GTR will provide funds for Meldreth and Shepreth Station Gardens, to be drawn down as needed via ordering at Phillimore Melbourn.

The Shepreth Centenary Poppy Garden was inadvertently trimmed and herbicided by a Network Rail contractor in August 2014, but is now in the process of being replanted by Network Rail.

The Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership is working well, as a means of maintaining discussion with the rail industry and local authorities on new ideas, and sorting out problems, and contributing to the new Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Transport Strategy.