

## **Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group**

**Minutes of meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 7:30PM, at Melbourn Village College**

### **Attending**

Susan van de Ven (chair) Hilary Marsh, Jose Hales, Maeta Mackenzie, Beatrice Fisher, Sarah Westbrooke, John Clarke, Mark Wyatt, Sue Hanson, Robert Stripe, Paul Hollinghurst, Ron McCreery, Julie Draper, Tim & Jane Eggleton, Michael Young, Eleanor Fitzgerald, Michael Prior-Jones, Nick and Debbie Troy, Peter Wakefield, Geoff Barnes, Karen Gregson (Representing Govia Thameslink Railway [GTR])

### **Apologies**

Malcolm Howe, Andy Hart, Christine Adams, Rebecca Willers, Philippa Hart, Robin Tunnah, Matt Mildenhall

### **Network Rail Proposed Pedestrian Level Crossing closures, Meldreth and Foxton**

Network Rail are proposing to close over 100 'minor' crossings in Anglia, ostensibly for safety reasons. There will be more trains using the line in the near future.

Mike P-J explained that the 'Barrington Road' crossing gate at Foxton Level Crossing is officially on a minor road, meaning the now defunct bit of Barrington Road. Administratively, the overall level crossing environment encompasses two separate crossings - Foxton Level Crossing over the A10, and Barrington Road which happens to sit adjacent to the A10. The minor crossing status is why N.R. is suggesting closing it. Susan said that there may be other motives too: the pedestrian gates rely on the adjacent signal box to function properly, and this box may one day be removed.

Susan detailed the hazards the Foxton proposal would cause: pedestrians and cyclists having to cross the A10 to use the pedestrian gate on the other side of the road, and then cross back again. She handed out official forms upon which we could register our objections. She also had forms for the Meldreth footpath crossing, designated CO4. She said that if our protests failed to halt the plans, we have one more step: to involve the Secretary of State.

### **Meldreth Station Access**

Disappointment was expressed that Meldreth Parish Council was not represented at the meeting, given that the date and agenda item had been advertised well in advance. Because Melbourn Parish Council was currently not functioning, pending a by-election to replace eight councillors who had resigned, there were no Melbourn Parish Councillors present either. Jose Hales was welcomed to the meeting as a Melbourn District Council representative.

Susan thanked Peter Wakefield (Railfuture) for the excellent station audits.

As the rail service expands with more and longer trains there will be greater need for improved access for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

#### Access from the Melbourn footpath side:

Melbourn Parish Council have secured a Section 106 contribution from the New Road housing development to upgrade the footpath across the fields. It is vital that GTR advance efforts to build a ramp down to it. Mike P-J asked for proper cycle parking when the ramp is built.

Jane Eggleton pointed out that pedestrian access over the line was still not being addressed, and the footpath across the fields was a very long way round for Meldreth residents arriving at, or leaving from the London-bound platform.

#### Access from Meldreth High Street:

With unanimous support from the meeting, Susan will once again ask Meldreth Parish Council to meet to discuss re-siting the kissing gate onto the High Street.

If the cycle parking was relocated to the largely disused school garden raised bed area, then space in the car park would be freed up for a minibus turning area.

There is urgent need for more car parking space. An attempt to buy land from the disused Go-Cold site for this purpose had been unsuccessful. There was discussion about fields off Station Road being purchased and used. Mike said that City Deal were looking at options. Susan said that if the government's Devolution plan goes through, there will be some new options for bus franchising. Shuttle buses from the villages and the Science Park could take pressure off car parking spaces. Jose Hales said we need to identify the needs.

#### **Station updates**

Karen (GTR) said that there would be longer platforms at all three stations but only on the northbound side to accommodate the longer trains. The southbound trains would use the selective door opening method, which only open where there is a platform.

#### Meldreth:

New upgraded ticket machines have been installed by a contractor, but there have been problems and station staff have not been trained adequately. GTR have been battling to get this sorted.

The current Cambridge-bound platform is not structurally suitable to take a shelter. Sarah Westbrooke suggested that when the platform extension is built it could be made to be suitable for a shelter. Karen said that was an issue for Network Rail, not GTR.

Andrew Sidgwick from GTR had suggested using the ticket office waiting room during unstaffed times. Karen said there were security and fire risks from vandals.

Susan thanked Sue Hanson for offering to do the Christmas tree for the church festival. Sue said this would be the last year she could do so and would appreciate assistance. Eleanor Fitzgerald offered to help this year.

#### Shepreth:

The free car park is being used by office staff from the alarm company nearby. Susan said two local parties had come forward interested in using the station building. Karen said it was structurally unsafe but as it belonged to Network Rail, GTR couldn't help any further.

#### **Train service issues**

The new Thameslink service from 2018 will include two stopping trains per hour throughout the day. These will go via all the usual stations, then on to London Bridge and terminate at Maidstone. A consultation is underway and the Rail User Group should respond to express its support.

#### **Community Rail Partnership**

We are looking to create a paid post to help run the increasingly active rail campaign, through the Community Rail Partnership. Meldreth Parish Council have kindly pledged £700 towards this and the other stations adjacent to the line will also be approached. Jose Hales said that Melbourn Parish Council had Lightsource funds which needed to be spent before they vanished in a puff of blue smoke. Somebody needs to fill in a form pdq. Susan to action at the forthcoming Melbourn PC meeting.

### **Other business**

The Edible Gardening project at Melbourn Primary school has started well, and a new polytunnel has been built. The children have enjoyed growing and harvesting the produce, but some are still reluctant to eat it.

Susan thanked Karen (GTR) for attending the meetings and putting up with all the flak.

### **Date of next meeting**

December 14 at Elin Way Community Centre, Meldreth.  
Please come along, if only for the mince pies!

**Meeting closed at 9PM.**