

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group Annual Report 2017

The old Meldreth Station goods shed was torn down without notice, and a block of flats is now going up under retrospective planning permission. It was regretful that good strategic planning had not been in place, with some handle on anticipating the station needs as footfall increases year on year.

Railfuture initiated comprehensive audits of all three stations, supported by GTR and Cambs CC. These spawned the idea of a station travel planning exercise, apparently supported by Greater Cambridge City Deal, though that is now less clear. Will GTR be able to progress station travel planning through other means?

Despite interest in taking over the Shepreth Station building, the premises are now apparently derelict and inspection is not possible. It is disappointing that opportunities to bring the building back to life are seemingly non-existent, even with ACORP's help. Communication with Network Rail on this issue has been challenging.

It has been confirmed that from 2018, our stations will benefit from a half-hourly off-peak service, with eight-car trains. Platform lengthening work is therefore necessary and is now taking place at all three stations, on the Cambridge-bound platform only. This has provided the welcome opportunity for improved communication with Network Rail.

New cycle racks were installed at Shepreth Station by GTR, when Cambridgeshire County Council announced that they would need to retrieve their 'cycle hoop'.

Meldreth Station still awaits a shelter on the Cambridge platform and improved cycle parking. It is not clear if GTR has a plan for advancing these.

A planning application for 199 homes off New Road Melbourn was granted permission at appeal, and the Section 106 agreement contains the full cost of an upgraded footpath connecting Meldreth Station with Melbourn, through the field.

Network Rail began consulting on closures of 'minor rural level crossings', including the Barrington Rd pedestrian gate at Foxton Level Crossing and the foot crossing south of the Meldreth Station Road vehicle bridge. Working with local residents and parish councils, Cambridgeshire CC did not support these proposals. The Barrington Rd gate proposal has been withdrawn by Network Rail.

Discussions have restarted on solving overall problems at Foxton Level Crossing.

Frequent random closures of the Meldreth booking office, without warning and often coinciding with ticket machine failure, has eroded customer confidence. Upon David Piggott's retirement in 2015, GTR indicated that a new permanent staff member was being recruited, but this was not the case. Reliance on temporary staff cover is clearly an inadequate arrangement. GTR now confirm that a permanent post has been advertised. Ticket machine problems continue.

With support from Sussex Community Rail Partnership, GTR, South Cambs DC, Cambs CC and the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, work has taken place to upgrade the MSF Community Rail Partnership to a stand-alone organization, supported by a Community Interest Company. Funds have been raised to support a part-time paid post to serve the CRP and SCDC is helping to facilitate.