

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group

Minutes of meeting 13th June 2017, 7:30PM, at Foxton Village Hall

Attending

Susan van de Ven (chair), Hilary Marsh, Beatrice Fisher, Robert Stripe (Fen Line Users Association) Peter Wakefield, Marc Edwards (GTR/GN)), Matthew Campbell-Crawford from Shepreth Parish Council, Mark Howard, Richard Goddin from Meldreth Parish Council, Sue Hanson, Malcolm Howe, Jim & Jane Eggleton, Michael Young, Greg Dash, Geoff Barnes, Philip & Margaret Shaw, Christine & Dave Reed, Ron McCreery from Foxton Parish Council, Maeta Mackenzie, Eleanor Fitzgerald, Rosemary Childerley, Ann Barnes.

Welcome and Apologies:

Susan welcomed Phillippa Hart who is our new Vice-chairman.

Apologies were received from Karen Gregson (GTR/GN) and Network Rail.

We approved the minutes of the previous meeting, and also the December meeting.

Matters arising:

The pick-up point for the rail replacement service for Meldreth station is now in the car park, not on the roadside.

We had asked the Network Rail representatives for the money saved from not extending the Meldreth platforms to be re-invested in the station, but have had no reply. We have written to Network Rail expressing our concern that Meldreth will be the only station between London and Cambridge to have selective door opening.

The fight to prevent the closing of the pedestrian crossing near Fieldgate has been taken to the Secretary of State, who may order a public inquiry.

Train service issues:

The new Cambridge North station is now open, and the ticket price is the same to both Cambridge stations. C North is very convenient for Cambridge Regional College, especially if you have a bike to cover the 1 mile distance. It should be publicised to students who may currently be using cars or buses.

The trains on our line now stop at platforms 7 & 8 at Cambridge Station, which has very little seating. A complaint was received about the steps being dirty and therefore dangerous. Action: Mark to speak to Karen Gregson, and Peter to speak to Paul.

A minibus shuttle service will likely be provided by Royston Community Transport from Bassingbourn and Whaddon to Meldreth Station to connect with the 7.45 or 8.15 train which will help for sixth-formers get to college.

We need more public transport links to the railway stations.

Passengers who are unable to use the steps at Meldreth can use a taxi, booked through and paid for by the railways, to take them to or from Royston or Shepreth stations. Susan suggested to Jane Eggleton that she could test the system on a day out to Cambridge

Station Issues:

Meldreth

A full-time ticket office person has been appointed: Bernie Pearsons. Susan suggested we have a welcome party for him. We thanked Andrea for her work at the station ticket office.

There will be platform staff on duty every night-time, despatching trains, because the train drivers don't have a complete view of the platform via cameras like they do at other stations. The ticket machine only takes cards as cash gets stolen by vandals.

The ticket machine can't issue off-peak travel cards, or tickets for journeys starting at other stations.

Marc Edwards apologised for these problems and said it was taking time to fix the machine.

Susan van de Ven reminded the meeting that we'd been advised by GTR that passengers who can't purchase necessary tickets from the machine can do so at their destination.

The seat reservation system isn't working: this is Vodafone's job to fix.

Maeta asked again for a spring clip to hold a walking stick to be provided by the ticket serving hatch.

Phillippa Hart announced that the Go-Cold site adjacent to the station had submitted a planning application for 27 houses. We discussed the issues which affected the station, and concluded that it shouldn't impact on the parking spaces issue. Sue Hanson offered to do another survey of the car park. Richard Goddin said that the parish council's greater concern was access onto Station Road/High Street.

Michael Young introduced himself and offered a proposal of a lightweight greenhouse-style shelter for the Cambridge-bound platform, which he had seen on Suffolk rural lines. He suggested that they would be narrow and lightweight enough to fit onto the existing platform, unlike standard shelters. As a retired railway engineer, he offered to be technical advisor to Network Rail to get the job done.

Shepreth

Commuters are not using the carpark at the village hall, but instead are parking on the street. Network Rail will leave their working site in a good condition for car parking when they have finished extending the platform.

The Cambridge-bound platform needs a sign indicating the pedestrian exit onto the road, as people are walking to the end of the platform then accessing the road illegally.

Shepreth and Foxton won an award for their gardens. Susan to follow-up the offer of a water tap for the London-bound platform, as it's a very long way to walk round from the water butts.

Foxton

There is still concern about the noise levels from Cemex.

The promised new/relocated cycle park has not been provided.

The pedestrian gates are working well.

Other issues:

Ann Barnes asked if Harston Station could be re-opened to cope with the increased passenger demand. Peter answered that it would put extra load on the timetable, which already has a lot of trains and stops. It is expected that a new station at Addenbrookes will be built sometime in the future, and possibly the Oxford and Bedford to Cambridge line will be built at some point, which will increase the number of lines running into Cambridge and make the reopening of Harston Station more challenging.

The tubs at all 3 stations will be replaced in the autumn when the platform extensions are completed, and we should plan a special event to celebrate this occasion.

Susan thanked all gardening teams for doing their summer replanting while she was busy with elections. We could use more Duke of Edinburgh volunteers to help with watering the tubs.

Please send names to Susan.

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Next meeting TBC.