

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton rail User Group

Minutes of meeting 4th October at Elin Way Community Room, Meldreth.

Attending

Susan van de Ven (chair), Hilary Marsh, Beatrice Fisher, Robert Stripe (Fenline User Association), Marc Edwards & Karen Gregson (GTR/GN)), Liam Farrell & Mary Afonja (Network Rail) Matthew Crawford from Shepreth Parish Council, Geoff Barnes, Peter Sutton from Foxton Parish Council, Richard Goddin from Meldreth Parish Council, Sue Hanson, Malcolm Howe, Michael Young, David Reed, Maeta Mackenzie, Rosemary Childerley, Ann Barnes, Richard Tremaine, Denise & Linda Pearmain, Malcolm Howe, Vivienne Brown, Nigel Strudwick from Whaddon Parish Council.

Welcome and Apologies:

Susan welcomed the representatives from GTR and NR, and the Parish Council reps. Apologies were received from Phillippa Hart and Peter Wakefield.

We approved the minutes of the previous meeting, and there were no matters arising.

Susan briefly mentioned Rural Travel Hubs and Station Travel Planning which are aiming to address the issues surrounding the difficulties of public transport servicing rural railway stations.

Train service issues:

The new 8-car trains will be tested from 2nd week November, and then be introduced gradually over the following weeks. There will be audible announcements and visible electronic signage in each carriage to forewarn passengers of which carriages will be accessible at each station (ie whether their carriage doors will be by a platform and therefore will open for getting off.) If passengers get it wrong and consequently overshoot their stop, they can get off at the next station and not be penalised, at least for the first few months. Railway staff will use their discretion.

There is still no seating on platform 8 in Cambridge, and the steps are still dirty. Karen (GTR) explained that Cambridge stations are part of a different rail franchise, but she would pass on our concerns to them.

Otherwise there were no complaints, and we thanked Mark & Karen for their work.

Station Issues:

Karen said that GTR engineers would install gutters to platform shelters so that we could catch rainwater in butts to water the tubs. The engineers would need the butts supplied before they started the work.

New planter tubs will be supplied and fitted to all stations this week. There will be a Baked Beans and Cake party at Shepreth station on 28th October, 2pm, to celebrate.

Shepreth

There is still too much on-street parking by rail passengers. We asked NR to make sure that the unofficial car park would be usable by passengers when the construction projects had finished. The station platform lengthening project will finish in November. The carpark should be available to drivers from then til the next project in January.

There will be four full barriers installed at the level crossing by the station, with CCTV. The work will start in January. The crossing will be completely closed to traffic for 10 days at some point in the project. We expressed concern that a total closure was not practical because of the

lack of alternative access to Shepreth for residents from the Barrington side, and Mary noted that this needed further discussion. The trains will run as normal during this period, except on two weekends when there would be no service. The work should be completed by April-May. The other level crossing in Shepreth will stay as it is. Matthew asked if the barriers would stay down when the Cambridge-bound train was at the platform. Nobody knew the answer. Matthew asked if a de-fibrillator could be supplied and installed at the station. Mark explained that they needed a mains power supply so they could be kept warm in winter, so this wouldn't be easy, but he would investigate. The phone box is due to be removed by BT. New covered and CCTV monitored cycle parking will be installed beside the existing facilities.

Foxton

We are happy to say that the pedestrian crossing gates are working perfectly!
Liam said that platform extension work is almost finished, it's just electrical work to complete.

Meldreth

The new ticket officer Bernie Pearsons is doing a great job.
Pedestrian level crossing closure on Fieldgate path: Cambridgeshire County Council is objecting to the proposed closure and they and local councillors are making a huge effort to fight to keep it open. The public inquiry begins in late November.
Shelter on Cambridge-bound platform: Michael Young and Susan have met with Andrew to discuss the options, and some progress has been made.
Go-Cold site: SCDC can't afford to buy the site for use as a station car park. Richard Goddin said that Meldreth Parish Council was concerned about any development which resulted in more traffic trying to exit from the station access road, as visibility is so poor at that junction.
Steps over the railway line: Rosemary said that they needed lines at the edge of each step as they're very hard to see. Mark explained that the lines are painted in spring, but get eroded by winter salt, however he would speak to his team about it.
A new covered cycle park with CCTV will be built on the grass and garden area outside the Spice Hut.
A walking stick holder has been supplied by the ticket hatch.
Greetings were sent to David Piggott from a French student from his past.
The seat reservation system has been fixed.
Sue Hanson was thanked for decorating the Christmas tree at the Church tree festival for the past 5 years. We asked for another volunteer, but nobody did, however Ann Barnes offered a potted tree.
The Duke of Edinburgh volunteers have done a great job watering the tubs over the summer.

Other issues:

A Royston & District Community Transport minibus has been arranged to take 6th form pupils from Bassingbourn and Whaddon to and from the station every weekday, at a cost of £3.55 per day return, based on a full bus. Unfortunately only 4 students are actually using it, so it will cease at the end of the autumn term. Sue Hanson suggested that it should also be offered to students going to CRC, who can catch a bus from Melbourn every day.

Susan mentioned the Community Rail Partnership and a Community Interest Group for transport and access.

Meeting closed at 9 pm.

Next meeting TBC.