

Govia Thameslink Railway and Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group meeting

28 September 2018, 2:30PM

Attendees

Larry Heyman	Local Development Manager, Govia Thameslink
Robert McCarthy	Head of Train Planning Govia Thameslink (present for item 1)
Karen Gregson	Group Station Manager Govia Thameslink
Patrick Ladbury	To take over from Larry as Local Development Manager
Susan van de Ven	Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group
Sarah Grove	Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership

Items for discussion

1. Restoration of 2018 timetable and semi-fast services
2. How to support children and young people travelling to school/college when multiple successive cancellations occur
3. Ticket machines on both sides of the platform
4. Blocked carriages for disembarking Meldreth passengers
5. Compensation for season ticket holders against services lost in interim timetables
6. Access for All

1. Restoration of 2018 timetable and semi-fast services

GTR explained how the July 2018 timetable was brought in to improve stability and reliability. They said that these issues were largely resolved, however, the train service is still subject to performance and operational issues.

GTR explained that 8 peak trains had been added back into service in September, of which two were on our service. The plan is that by December all trains from the May timetable weekday service should be back in service. They explained that they were prioritising the peak services, and that staff were monitoring platforms to help understand how best to prioritise restoration of specific services. We explained that our priorities are the 07.51 KGX →CBG (useful school train) and the 17.57 CBG→KGX (home train from Cambridge for commuters).

We explained that in addition to peak services commuters to London from our stations had lost semi-fast services and pointed out that it was not now possible to travel from our stations to London in less than an hour. We asked if at least one semi-fast service could be restored for mornings and afternoons, suggesting that one of the Cambridge to Brighton services could make a stop. GTR agreed to look into this issue.

We explained that the current weekend timetable provided a service which was a downgrade from services before May. GTR explained that their current priorities are weekday peak services and that there would be no plans to change the weekend timetable in December. (This is a key concern which we are following up.)

2. Children and young people travelling to school/college when cancellations occur

We explained that with the recent timetable instability, some children had been left stranded at our stations when trains are unexpectedly cancelled at short notice. GTR explained that they are now

having daily morning control conferences to examine any circumstances that could affect travel. They explained that at that time it is often difficult to procure the services of buses and taxis since many are already in use, but that efforts would be made to provide replacement buses where possible.

We discussed the possibility of posters being displayed at our stations, especially those unmanned, aimed specifically at children and explaining what to do in the event of a cancelled train.

Busway A (operated by Stagecoach) was discussed: this runs close to Foxton station, on to Cambridge Station and as far as Cambridge Regional College and St Ives. We highlighted that it would be beneficial for the Busway to accept GTR tickets in the event of cancellations – this is a principle which has precedence and a discussion to be taken forward by GTR.

3. Ticket machines on both sides of the platform

We explained that travellers at Foxton and Shepreth can miss their trains because of the barriers going down after they have purchased a ticket on one platform for travel on the other, and that travellers from Meldreth had to cross the tracks by bridge to buy a ticket and return across the bridge again to take a train.

GTR explained that they could not justify the provision of additional ticket machines, given the low footfall and risk of vandalism, however, third party funding could be sought to pay for new ticket machines as a useful amenity for the local community.

The use of “Key-Go” was also discussed as a more likely solution. Key-Go pedestals have already been situated on all platforms, but the facility is not currently available for travel into Cambridge. Enabling the system to work depends on coordinating action by Anglia, which manages Cambridge Station. Karen will pursue and keep us updated on when it might be available.

Travellers encountering a non-functioning ticket machine are advised to take a photograph of the machine on their phone, and show it to the ticket collector or barrier staff at their destination. For tickets bought on line to collect at ticket machines, please take a screen shot of the on-line purchase as back-up.

4. Blocked carriages for disembarking Meldreth passengers

Passengers travelling to Meldreth must travel in the front four coaches of their train as the platforms at Meldreth are short and only the doors on the front four coaches will open. This is fine when travelling on the new 700 style trains, because announcements are made, the customer information screen show this information, and there are no internal doors so it is easy to walk up the train to the appropriate carriage. However, sometimes model 387 trains are used on the service. For operational reasons these are comprised of two four car units coupled together, and thus it is not possible to walk between the rear four and front four coaches. GTR have agreed to look into improving the platform information, and platform announcements so that passengers boarding 387 trains will know in advance to be in, or change to, the front four coaches in order to get off at Meldreth.

5. Compensation for season ticket holders against services lost in interim timetables

We explained that commuters are unhappy that they have not been allowed to claim delay/repay compensation against the original May timetable since the end of July. Claims can now only be made against the currently operating interim timetable. GTR explained that delay/repay is funded by the DfT and that the rules for compensation are set by the DfT. GTR asked for an email

requesting a formal response, and to include the situation where people were now driving to Royston for trains, and having to pay additional petrol and parking costs.

6. Access for All

We asked whether, given the small footfall at the station, it would be worth submitting an application under the “Access for All” scheme for improvements to accessibility at Meldreth station. GTR encouraged us to complete the application, and advised us to provide as many letters of support as possible. Network Rail are making £300m available for schemes that improve access, and some smaller schemes will be chosen in addition to larger schemes.