

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group

12th June 2013, 7:30pm

Foxton Village Hall

Minutes

Attending

Susan van de Ven, Peter Wakefield, Sue Hanson, Andy Hart (FCC), Matt Mildinhall (British Transport Police), Paul Hollinghurst, Jane Eggleton, Jim Eggleton, Sue Hanson, Peter Sutton, Rachael MacIntyre, Geoff Barnes, Trina Lodge, Bob Tulloch, Malcolm Howe, David Atkins

Apologies

Beatrice Fisher, Robert Stripe, Janet Cottenden, Andy Bottom (Network Rail)

Minutes

Minutes of the March 13 AGM meeting were approved.

British Transport Police

Matt Mildinhall presented the work of the British Transport Police (BTP). He is based in Cambridge, which covers the area from Kings Lynn to Letchworth with 26 main locations; stations, depots and yards. He explained that misuse of Foxton Crossing by road users is treated particularly seriously, with penalties being on the whole being more severe than at other crossings (e.g. the heavy fine for the Sewage Tanker which damaged the barriers).

Presentations on rail safety to schools were mainly done by Network Rail sending presentation materials for teachers to present.

Foxton Crossing is filmed continuously for use in prosecutions. There was some discussion about whether visible signage making this clear may reduce misuse. Matt Mildinhall said that in general he favoured drawing attention to this, although was not sure it would help in this specific case.

There was no overall trend in crossing misuse; it appeared to fluctuate around a relatively constant long term level.

On trains, personal safety was general improving although there had been an increased number of grab and run incidents with laptops being taken from passengers.

Non-emergency incidents can be reported to the BTP by text on 61016, and by phone on 0800 40 50 40, or in an emergency using 999.

Network Rail Feasibility Study

The following "Foxton Level Crossing Feasibility Study synopsis – from Foxton Parish Council" was presented at the June 3 meeting in the Chairman's Infrastructure Report.

"On Friday 10th May Susan and I attended a meeting at Shire Hall for an advanced look at the Foxton Level Crossing feasibility study network rail have commissioned. The study comes to the conclusion that the option of doing nothing should not be considered particularly in light of the overriding safety concerns. Thus the considered options are to bypass the level crossing to the North, South or on a

direct line of the A10. A bypass to the South and on a direct line were rejected on grounds of effect on housing and infrastructure so the preferred options would be a bypass to the North. Three possible routes are given and the options for the road to go over or under the railway were discussed in relation to effect on the railway, land owners and cost. The cost of having the road go over the railway is significantly less and is less disruptive to the railway so this is Network Rail's preferred option. A pedestrian/cycle bridge/subway would be provided at the Station along with car parking. Equestrian crossing would be accommodated at the bypass. The existing A10 would become a cu de sac from the North and exiting Station Road would be by a left turn only. It is of course early days and implementation will naturally depend on funding which could come from government/ Network Rail or the County Council or a combination of the two. It is true to say though that the mere fact Network Rail have commissioned this study shows how serious they are in dealing with the level crossing."

In summary doing nothing at the crossing was not seen as acceptable. The Northern bypass route was preferred as the Southern route would cross people's homes. A bridge was preferred due to cost. There was an equestrian right of way across the crossing which would need to be accommodated. There would be a car park at the station, and a bridge/underpass for pedestrians and cyclists. The full report will be published shortly followed by a substantial consultation period.

Gardens

Land next to Shepreth station has been planted with poppies and a wildflower mix. On June 29th BBC Radio will broadcast from there. Gardening continues on a regular basis at the stations, including the vegetable garden at Meldreth.

Station Update

Action MSF RUG: Posters need to be emailed to FCC.

Action: Andy Hart will check to see if it would be possible to provide a shelter on the Cambridge bound platform at Meldreth as there is no shelter when the booking office is closed.

There was some discussion about engineering work. There is typically a line closure after 22:15 on weekday evenings every 6th week. Recently this has related to the new flyover at Hitchin. It was pointed out that passengers having their journeys disrupted by engineering would appreciate some idea of what work is being done, in the same way as major incidents are listed on the punctuality posters.

Action: Andy Hart will check to see if brief set of engineering work highlights could be added to the engineering work posters, replacing the generic phrase 'planned engineering work' which is used at the moment.

Accessibility

The work on this RUG campaign will restart in a couple of months when Janet Cottenden is able to do this. The RUG request to the Parish Council to move the gate which is blocking the path for pushchairs and wheelchairs from Meldreth to the station is reported to have been turned down.

A10 Cycle Campaign

A bid is being submitted by the A10 Cycle Campaign to improve the cycle facilities and access to Foxtan station.

Community Rail Partnership

The Draft Community Rail Partnership Agreement is given below. This will be FCC's first Community Rail Partnership.

Community Rail Partnership agreement between First Capital Connect, Meldreth, Shepreth, and Foxton Rail User Group, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, and Parish Councils

- *To recognise, maintain, and develop the community engagement programme, which aims to promote the local rail and the surrounding environment at Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Stations*
- *To involve in our efforts other community groups with whom we share common ground*
- *To recognise the key role of rail to the local community and to promote it as a sustainable mode of transport*
- *Improve and enhance the station environments and promote green projects*
- *To support the initiatives developed jointly with First Capital Connect and Cambridgeshire County Council in integrated travel plans*
- *Recognise and promote the importance of local business in the community*
- *Work with local schools and young people in caring for our station environments*
- *Work together to generate funding for all associated projects*
- *Encourage open communication with all groups involved*

Franchise Renewal

In the original plan the new franchise should already have been announced, but following the serious problems identified with the West Coast Franchise renewal the whole programme has been delayed. FCC has been renewed for 2 years as a management contract, which will last until September 2014.

Date of next meetings

September 18th 2013 (Shepreth Village Hall)

December 11th 2013 (Meldreth Manor School)