

MELDRETH AND SHEPRETH and FOXTON RAIL USER GROUP

**Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013,  
at Shepreth Village Hall**

**In attendance**

Susan van de Ven, Andy Hart (FCC), Richard Marchant (FCC), Peter Wakefield (Railfuture), Sue Hanson, Steve Hawkins, Malcolm Howe, Paul Hollinghurst (Railfuture), Mark Howard, John Evans, David Reed, William Bruce, John Clark, Mark Wyott, Geoff Barnes, Lorraine Pucknell, Jim Eggleton., Ann Barnes.

**Apologies**

Karen Gregson (Network Rail), Robert Stripe, Jane Eggleton, Janet Cottenden, Petrina Lodge

**Minutes of the previous meeting.**

These had been circulated in advance of the meeting and were approved.

**Updates**

**Meldreth Station Access Campaign:** Paul reported that the London-bound platform has no step-free access. F.C.C. has indicated willingness to build a ramp, a lift being too expensive. A draft copy to record the situation is being produced. Susan explained that it is a D.D.A. requirement that a ramp has an approved quality of path accessing it, with lighting. She noted that the land which the footpath crosses is owned by Burlton Farms, whose management is aware of all of this.

**Concessionary Bus Passes on trains**

Susan has met with Roy Cooper from F.C.C. who will ask the Department for Transport to allow bus passes to be accepted for half-price rail fares on off-peak trains.

**Weekend fares**

These have been discounted to £3.00 from £4.20 for return trips to Cambridge. However it was noted that the bus fare from the station into the city centre is £3:20. Susan is exploring options for campaigning for a cheap fare into town.

**Foxton Level Crossing Feasibility Study**

Susan outlined the progress to date. A census of travel over the crossing (cars, pedestrians and cyclists) has been done, but only for a period of 30 minutes from 2pm, on one day only – which she suggests needs to be challenged as not giving a true picture. It was agreed that the Rail user Group undertake its own census at some point.

There is a proposal now being developed by Network Rail to create bypass with bridge or underpass connecting the A10 in Foxton near the used car dealership to the Barrington Road sliproad, with a separate underpass or bridge to accommodate the station users and local residents. A County Council officer will give an update at Foxton Parish Council on Oct 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Cycle track improvement:** Susan mentioned briefly that a grant of £300,000 has been allocated by the Department for Transport “Cycling Ambition” programme to upgrade the cycle track between

Foxton and Shepreth. There will be further details at the A10 Corridor Cyclist meeting at Foxton later this month.

**Community Rail Partnership:** There will be a signing of this partnership between Network Rail, the C.C., D.C., F.C.C. and the Rail User Group on 25 October at Meldreth Station at 11.15 AM. Richard agreed to arrange for a cake to be made for the occasion.

### **Station Updates**

1. **Shepreth.** The benches are to be replaced by the middle of October – one on each platform.
2. **Commuting to London.** Problems have been experienced during the last week particularly, with a number of delays on journeys to and from London. Particularly irritating has been the poor communication, with no consistency in the announcements, lack of information and on one occasion the PA system on a train failing. John also queried why the fast train from Kings Cross was unable to overtake the slow train the previous Monday, and spoke of the overcrowding on trains.

In reply Andy said that disruption management training has been instituted, and Richard outlined the two areas of work that F.C.C. is concentrating on – namely performance and information during disruption.

3. **Bikes on trains.** It was noted that on only one train (the 8.06 from Royston to Cambridge) are bicycles not allowed. However there are concerns about the number of bikes on some trains (40 were counted on the 7.39 Royston to Cambridge train recently), and concerns about the safety and comfort of passengers being compromised was raised. It was questioned why the bike lockers at Meldreth station were removed some years ago, and noted that the A10 Corridor Cycling Campaign are campaigning for more bike parking at all rail stations. It was agreed that F.C.C. would undertake a survey of bikes on the 7:39 train from Royston-Cambridge, and report back.

### **Network Rail – Safety Issues**

**Shepreth.** It was noted by Network Rail that Shepreth Wildlife Park is getting good business from people arriving by train. However this leads to concerns about large parties of children crossing the railway line. F.C.C. have undertaken to escort them across if told in advance by the Wildlife Park of large parties coming to the Park. F.C.C. would contact the Wildlife Park to ensure that there have been no lapses of communication on this matter. On a more concerning note, the matter of deliberate risk-taking at Shepreth Level Crossing was raised. Many instances of people trespassing in order to catch a morning train to Cambridge have been witnessed. Network Rail is proposing to block off the ramp that leads down to the gate at the end of the London-bound platform, and to redirect pedestrians to the steps off the platform where a ramp and new path to Station Road would be created. Network Rail will report back after exploring the feasibility of this option.

**Meldreth.** Richard reported that on 10<sup>th</sup> September a woman was seen crossing the line at a point just before the road bridge. The driver stopped the train, and was able to ascertain that she had not been hit – but the driver himself has not returned to work since.

It was reported that the stile on footpath 6 had been broken – but in fact it had already been repaired at the time of this meeting.

**Foxton.** There have been no recent reports about problems with the gates – a pleasing improvement.

### **Thameslink Franchise Consultation**

It is recognised that the franchise is in two halves; it applies to trains as far as Kings Cross for the period up to 2018, and thereafter for trains to continue to South London stations. All trains will consist of 8 or 12 coaches. There are no current plans in the pipeline for platform extensions. The Aspirations wish list need to be with F.C.C.'s Paul Oxley shortly.

### **Other business.**

1. Susan showed the meeting a plaque that had been presented to Shepreth Station by the B.B.C. following the poppy planting sessions at the station. It will be framed and hung in Meldreth station ticket office.
2. There has been an invitation by Network Rail (by way of a competition) to provide photos of stations to go on the information website.
3. County Council Transport Strategy consultation forms were handed out for people to take away and complete.

**Date, time and place of next meeting** - Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>, 7.30 at Meldreth.

The meeting closed at 9pm.