

## **Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership,**

**3 June 2014, 3:15, Shepreth Wildlife Park**

1. Apologies: Jonathan Holdcroft (FCC), Sallie Bates (Network Rail)
2. Present: Clare Gibbons (SCDC), Sarah Hatcher (CCC), Philippa Hart (SCDC Cllr), Susan van de Ven (CCC Cllr and MSF RUG), Janet Cottenden (MSF RUG). Briefly: Rebecca Willers (Shepreth Wildlife Park)
3. It was agreed that it was unfortunate that both NR and FCC had been unable to attend the meeting given important items on the agenda and the need for the CRP to function with all its partners at the table. Jonathan Holdcroft hopes to attend the Rail User Group meeting on 17 June to provide an update on franchise transition.
1. Disabled Access campaign: We should seek a meeting with the Dept for Transport (DfT), asking for support from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACORP) and Cambs County Council (CCC). Susan had been to see NR and FCC in London and the advice was to get the aspirations for better disabled access at Meldreth onto the DfT radar, particularly the 'Railways for All' funding. **Action: Susan van de Ven/Janet Cottenden to contact ACORP**
2. Shepreth Station changes: At the previous CRP meeting, NR had advised that the creation of a path around the back of the station building, in conjunction with fencing off the platform path leading down to the level crossing from the ticket machine, would be done imminently. This had been long anticipated in conjunction with concerns about level crossing safety and the vulnerable passage from the platform to the tracks with the half-barrier system. However, what was not conveyed to the CRP was that a large area adjacent to the path diversion, currently covered with plant life, would be tarmacked, with all trees, bushes, bulbs and greenery removed. There was much concern about this irrevocable loss, the lack of warning and information, and indeed the need for the extensive new tarmacking. SvdV had on her understanding of what was to happen supported NR by explaining to Shepreth village and the local press the need for the path round the building on safety grounds – but was then put in a position of having to explain wider unanticipated changes. A further concern is that the remaining structure on the newly tarmacked area appears to be dangerous: there is a wide open access to the interior which is stuffed with rubbish, and the structure itself appears unsafe and of unknown purpose. This needs urgently to be cleared. The CRP felt it was a great shame that funding had been spent on unnecessary tarmacking when it could have been spent on a much needed ramp to help those with push chairs and wheelchairs to get to the platform and ticket machine. There is now no disabled access for passengers wishing to purchase a ticket for travel from either platform. While everyone agreed that safety concerns around the level crossing were rightly addressed, we never expected more than a path round the building. All in all the project was felt to have been poorly handled. **Action: Response needed from Sallie Bates, NR.**
3. Gardening: A modest donation to be requested from FCC, to help cover the cost of plants at Shepreth and Meldreth. Foxton station receives a grant every year from the Foxton Gardens Association, but Meldreth and Shepreth rely on donations and need some extra funds to cover costs. **Action: Philippa Hart/Susan van de Ven**
4. Travel for Work: Shepreth Wildlife Park is signed up. Concerns about various limitations including accommodating varieties of travel needs by volunteers. Agreed it would be useful to invite Govia, the new Train Operating Company starting September 19, to meet the CRP to tackle this and other live issues and get them up to speed well ahead of their official start date – issues raised included Plus Bus on TVMs (Ticket Vending Machines), station investment and County Council Transport Strategy identification of access improvements at all our stations, etc.

**Action: SvdV to write to Govia with invitation to meet, at Shepreth Wildlife Park, before school holidays.**

5. Wider general discussion: Marrying up rural transport and integrated transport issues with the work of the rail campaign. Clare Gibbons will attend the Meldreth Community Transport Coffee morning on June 20<sup>th</sup>.
6. Meeting finished at 5PM.