

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group

15 June 2016, 7:30PM

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Helen Warnock (Network Rail), Karen Gregson (GTR), Robert Stripe (Fenline Users Association), Peter Wakefield (Railfuture), Ian Driver (A10 Corridor Cycling Campaign), Ron McCreery (Foxton Parish Council), Alan Land (Meldreth Parish Council), Susan van de Ven, Sue Hanson, Jim and Jane Eggleton, Julie Draper, Mark Wyatt, Sarah Westbrooke, Mark Howard, Geoff Barnes, Jose Hales (Melbourn District Councillor), John Clarke, Richard Handford, Philip Shaw, Marianne Bruggemann, Rosemary Childerley, Malcolm Howe.

Apologies: Paul Hollinghurst, Christine Adams

Minutes of previous meeting: Actions still pending – NR medium term feasibility study not yet circulated

Foxton Level Crossing short, medium and long-term plans: It was not possible to discuss this item because Helen Warnock was not able to stay for the whole meeting, but Ron McCreery and Susan van de Ven would be meeting Helen on Monday 20 June, together with Heidi Allen MP and Cambs County Council, to discuss.

Network Rail Proposed Level Crossing closures, Meldreth and Foxton: Anglia has the highest concentration of level crossings in the country and Network Rail is looking to close as many as possible, on safety grounds. Where a crossing is proposed for closure, alternative safe routes should be provided – so some mitigations could be expected. Objections to the proposal to close the Barrington Rd pedestrian crossing were strenuous and voiced by many people round the room. Users of the new pedestrian/cycleway would be forced to cross the A10 twice, shifting risk from the crossing to the highway twice over. People were asked to please express their views in writing, by emailing railusergroup@gmail.com and these responses will be forwarded directly to helen.warnock@networkrail.co.uk. For reference RUG members are also asked to view and respond to this website: xxx

With limited time we were not able to discuss Meldreth, though the central point of concern touched upon was that the alternative route over the Station Rd vehicle bridge does not have a safe, continuous footway – rather, pedestrians are forced to cross the road.

Peter Wakefield reminded the group that level crossings are very dangerous places and that collisions with trains put at risk the lives of many passengers. Network Rail will doubtless have to make some unpopular decisions.

Stations – general issues:

1. Foxton – vandalism in the waiting room has been increasingly problematic, with the door to the kitchen area smashed in. It was noted that the RUG does not have access to the locks, which it needs to access water supply. The Youth Club art work project is hoped to be installed soon and experience elsewhere suggests that this could have a deterrent effect. ACTION: KAREN TO REMIND ANDY TO GET ARTWORK UP.
2. Meldreth –ticket office staffing update: It is expected that a permanent member of staff will start not before September. Meanwhile, compliments paid to Andrea Hudson who is doing a great job looking after the station, and has been helping to water the platform

tubs. There have been times when the booking office has not been staffed due to short-staffing problems. GTR doing their best.

3. Shepreth – arranging access to station building for possible business interest. Susan reported that it has been difficult to arrange access. Karen reported that building is very dilapidated and in fact unsafe. Unclear what future holds. ACTION: KAREN TO REPORT TO SUSAN.
4. Station gardening updates: New watering systems in place, Shepreth and Meldreth – thanks to those who have helped install the double water butt systems at both stations. Richard Handford asked Karen if a simple sloped sheet could be erected on the Cambridge platform shelter to feed a water butt. Karen: Please don't do any work on the platform without permission. ACTION: KAREN TO CONTACT RICHARD.

Duke of Edinburgh and Scouts volunteers watering at all three stations with parental supervision.

More volunteers needed, Foxton – action needed. Tubs being watered only one night per week, not viable without more help. It would be a shame to lose the tubs, which were only replanted last week, thanks to the Foxton Gardens Association for covering costs of plants.

Train service issues:

Meldreth Station Car Park ticket machine fault resulting in £120 fine for passengers who had acted in good faith and made every effort to purchase a parking ticket. People involved had not yet heard back from Park Indigo. ACTION: Karen to chase

Lobbying for half-hourly off-peak service: Peter Wakefield announced that the GTR Stakeholder meeting in London earlier in the day had included the very good news that with the roll-out of the Thameslink Service in 2018, all three of our stations will receive a half-hourly off-peak service. There will be no more 4-car trains; all trains will be 8-car and will be able to accommodate 1470 passengers. All Cambridge-bound platforms will be lengthened. London platforms will require selective door opening on the front half of the train. Trains will terminate at Cambridge Station not Cambridge North, as we had hoped, but there will be good onward connections to Cambridge North. A formal consultation will commence in July, for three months, and it will be important for the RUG to engage and emphasize support.

Community Rail Partnership update – We will get more out of the Dept for Transport if our RUG sits under the umbrella of a CRP, and this is being upgraded with all the necessary structures. It could be possible to hire someone to help with admin work for our growing rail campaign.

Station audits – comprehensive audits of all three station were undertaken in April and May, initiated by Peter Wakefield and supported by Railfuture, GTR, AstraZeneca, Cambs County Council and South Cambs District Council. These will be circulated to the RUG and parish councils as soon as they are ready. They provide a picture of the station environments including access issues and overall user-friendliness, helping to set out the ways in which each station will need to improve to meet the demands of an ever-growing footfall, especially with the advent of 8-car trains and doubling of service times off-peak.

Station partnership agreements in progress and Karen is providing the risk assessments.

Unsuccessful bid: Heritage and Tourism Grant did not come through for path upgrade connecting Meldreth and Melbourn, but it was useful to compile the application. Our

September meeting will focus on how we can progress this project, and both parish councils have been invited.

Melbourn Community Edible Gardening scheme is going very well – this project taking place on the grounds of Melbourn Primary School is being funded by a grant accessed by our Community Rail Partnership.

Date of next meeting: 20 September, 9 December, 14 March

Meeting closed 9PM.