

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership Annual General Meeting (Virtual)

Date: 29 November 2022

Present:

- Susan van de Ven (SvdV) CRP Chair and CCC Cllr for Melbourn and Bassingbourn
- Sarah Grove (SG) CRP Project Officer
- Tim Sparrow (TS)- Community Rail Network
- Paul Webster (PWe) Community Rail Network
- Peter Wakefield (PWa) Railfuture
- Sarah Hatcher (SH) CCC (officer)
- Jay Clark (JC) SCDC (officer)
- Andrew Chillingsworth (AC)
- GTR Marian Marley (MM) Network Rail
- Stephen Pritchard (SP) TTP
- Caroline Ilott (CI) Foxton PC
- Roger James (RJ) Meldreth Parish Council

Item 1 Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies received from:

- Matt Humphries (Science Park)
- Peter MacDonald (SCDC)
- Jose Hales (SCDC)
- Sally-Ann Hart (SCDC)
- Edward Leigh (North Herts District Council)
- Bhavik Palmer (Network Rail)
- Nick Downer (Shepreth Parish Council)
- Whaddon Parish Council

Item 2 Election of officers: Chair, Vice Chair

Two positions were available for consideration, Chair and Vice Chair. PWA put forward the following nominations, which were unanimously agreed:

- Chair: Susan van de Ven
- Vice Chair: Peter McDonald
- Secretary: Sarah Hatcher
- Treasurer: (CIC treasurer)

Item 3 Annual Report

Full discussion around report took place at July 2022 meeting. Today about headlines: SG summarised the Annual Report, which is structured around the pillars of the DfT Community Rail strategy

Providing a voice for the community

Main focus around responding to any major consultations, infrastructure and access to the stations by foot and cycling

- East West Rail.
- Foxton Travel Hub.
- Melbourn Greenway as part of non-motorised user group. Incorporates spurs off the A10 that go off to the railway stations

Promoting health and sustainable travel

- During pandemic, liaised very closely with GTR around messaging - safety, reassuring people, virus and around timetabling. There was a need to become more agile as things changed very quickly. Good route into GTR and CRP can help disseminate info out.
- 'Try a Train' trips are happening again. Recent trip to Shepreth Wildlife Park - Free to Feed campaign. Another coming up 10 December with Red Balloon charity for children not currently in school. Plan to go down to London and look at Christmas tree at St Pancras.

Bringing communities together, supporting diversity and inclusion

- Major thrust is on station gardening, really good support with tubs at Foxton and Shepreth. At Meldreth, garden has been reinstated by Melbourn veg club. Session couple of weeks ago, got new plants in the ground. Looking great now. Just behind new bike rack.

Supporting Social and Economic Development

- Countryside, Capital & Coast - all Thameslink CRPs got together to work together. Been able to promote things up and down length of Thameslink line
- Promotion around our part of line, 'Enjoy the Great Outdoors' promotion
- Recently asked to provide material to company working with SWP, been impressed with quality of materials produced

Strengthening the Partnership

- Continuing to work with partners at Melbourn Practical Solutions team, CCC, GCP on greenways, Melbourn timebank, Wellbeing Walks
- Holy Trinity Church in Meldreth is holding their Christmas Tree Festival – we will contribute a tree.

Financial section

- As part of accreditation process there is a need to submit a detailed financial report. This has been done, alongside help from SCDC Comms Team to put out a press release.

Thanks

- Need to thank funders, Melbourn, Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton Parish Councils who continue to support us, SCDC for hosting and GTR. Grateful to TTP for support during pandemic and encouraging people to use the train as large local employer. PWe for support for accreditation process. Volunteers, mark of good community rail when you are doing work at the stations all year round to make them attractive and make them feel safe. Thanks to GTR for

continuing with 50% discount for 16-17 year olds unique in country and supporting half hourly service.

Other

- PWA - expect go ahead for Cambridge South station to be announced in next couple of weeks.
- Compliments to SG on annual report. Would be good to have some printed copies in community buildings - JC to organise

Item 4 Current and planned work for the current year

Expanding network of CRPs locally

- In January 2023 will be talking to MARPA about possibly having a CRP on route towards Ely, New market and Ipswich. Another way of strengthening the community of CRPs.
- PWe - conversation with Greater Anglia at recent conference about the Ipswich-Cam line and really keen to see developed into CRP. Once into Cambridge would need to explore how this CRP fits in around the wider Cambridge area. GA would put core funding towards it, link things through onto CRP. Plenty of scope for expansion.
- Shelford, Sawston Whittlesford RUG has fallen into abeyance and anxious to reinvigorate. Works at stations, community development work really important. Need to promote community work that is so engaging and supportive to overall effort.

Infrastructure Projects

- Will continue to work closely on all infrastructure projects with partners, EWR, GCP Greenways, more to come on Foxton, lots of live work around developing transport infrastructure where we've been actively involved.
- Continuing work on A10 underpass. Have been awarded more funding from Melbourn Parish Council. Teamworking is major function, working with many organisations including CCC, Science Park and the Practical Solutions Group. Everyone is coming together to help with fundraising. First phase will be a

lighting pillar that will come on before and stay on later than lighting outside. In new year will get on with cleaning and painting. Significant work will have been completed by end of March 2023.

- Path has become part of Greenways project which is good as this is being pushed forward. Contractor has been appointed and design work is underway. There was detailed engagement in October. Design work on path either side of underpass now very advanced. GCP meeting early in new year to agree the detail and update funding/costs

Volunteers

- DoE volunteers at stations from spring
- Overdue to establish individual station partnerships with GTR. Formalising work at Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton would lead to additional small but important funding to our village stations. Natural leads would be Parish Councils.

Cycling

- Have planned cycle repair café at Meldreth Station
- Funding from SCDC for Meldreth station and indicated in application we wanted to hold cycle café. Dr Bike at Bruntwood who have volunteered to come along and to do some teaching, learn how to look after your kit, hopefully in spring.

Station Buildings

- In Shepreth, conversation around historic buildings at station. Buildings have been condemned and are deteriorating. There is lots of interest in the station and environment which we want to welcome and engage with. Parish Council and community are interested and want to be involved. Started to engage Railway Heritage Trust. Parish Council keen to see something done. Community Rail Network (CRN) keen to support reopening of station buildings. Awkward because of lease. AC to see if can arrange to look inside

to see extent of work. MM advised Arch Co have day to day management of building rather than NR. Limited in what they can do.

Ridership

- There was a slide in ridership figures to March 2022 although haven't yet got figures showing improvements over summer that we know GTR have seen. There obviously is recovery, but not yet back to pre-pandemic levels and variations across local stations. Foxton held up better, possibly because it gets lot of schools, commuter traffic which has been more constant than Shepreth - Shepreth Wildlife park affected by pandemic. There have also been a lot of local road closures recently including between Foxton and Barrington for a number weeks resulting in people switching to Shepreth so will skew figures.
- Cambridge South Station will improve ridership at stations for employment at Addenbrookes and Long Road.
- At Royston station, installation of lifts improving accessibility making more attractive destination by train. Need to think about accessibility at Meldreth to move it any higher up any lists for accessibility improvement and anything that can be done to leverage anything coming out of EWR or other developments locally such as Cambridge South Station.
- Also, around 15,000 new jobs within 5-10 min walk of Cambridge station, go into workplaces.
- Cambridge Regional College, need to promote being able to change at Cambridge North and Cambridge Central.

Developer contributions

- PWe - aware of work some CRPs have done around developer contributions, eg Hereward are producing a guide to working with developers, also Gloucester CRP. National resource is being produced by CRN in 2023 to bring together good practice.

Item 5 Establish Parish Council liaison members

- Roger James - Meldreth
- Nick Downer - Shepreth
- Caroline Ilott - Foxton (interim) SvdV and SG to attend PC meeting
- Sally-Ann Hart - Melbourn

Will be in touch with Parish Councils to establish individual station partnerships within overall partnership. An admin formality that will bring in additional small amounts of money at each station.

Item 6 Date of next AGM - establishing going forward an AGM for spring

Will return to a spring fixture. Date TBA.

Item 7 AOB

Thanks from GTR, offer to help in any way.

Some dates for diaries:

- Community Rail conference 28 March in Nottingham.
- Community Rail week likely 22-28 May 2023 tbc. CRN have also published a Station Buildings webinar and produced a factsheet setting out top tips to think about when taking on station properties. Both available on CRN website.
- Annual Cambridge Railfuture meeting Sat 3rd December at Signalbox Community Centre near Cambridge station. Will be launching results of national consultation on rail services in East Anglia where some interesting discoveries have been made. Would like to present to anyone who would like to come along, but could also present a special one to CRP.