

Meldreth Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership Steering Group

26 March 2024, 2-4PM

Shepreth Wildlife Park

Present:

Sarah Grove, Susan van de Ven, Andrew Chillingsworth, Paul Webster, Peter Sutton, Peter Wakefield, Martin Seiffert, Kate, Rebecca Willers, Terry, Roger James, Jason Clarke

Apologies

Sarah Hatcher, Katie Ixer, Amanda Silvester, Steph Trayhurn, Patrick Ladbury, Tracy Jarvis

1. Welcome and apologies

Susan opened the meeting and thanked Shepreth Wildlife Park for hosting us.

1. Annual Report presented by SG

- PW: Need to do more publicity on Cambridge South, which will open this year and be served by MSF with direct service.

Action: all agreed a meeting to update the community would be a good idea.

Suggestion to invite Alan Neville, Greater Anglia.

- RJ – Finances look very healthy – are PC contributions needed?

Partnership funding critical to model. TOC and PC funding has not risen over the years. SCDC helping with small cost rises for Project Officer funding. Any projects are funded by specific project funding that the CRP applies for.

2. Line Action Plan

- Special attention to Duxford – Wimpole bus project proposal.

Eco friendly bus covering tourist sites of Imperial War Museum, Shepreth Wildlife Park, Wimpole Hall. Connects stations and tourist attractions. Destination Management Organization Cambridge would like to encourage people to visit places outside of Cambridge via train. This would benefit local economies.

Tourism bus would facilitate visiting more than one attraction in a day. Feasibility study needed.

PW: IWM on its own a huge draw.

RW: East Anglian zoos association. Great Days Out of Cambridge – wildlife or art trails.

RJ: Why not start a bus project from Royston? There is no CRP in North Herts.

RJ: Is there anything like a national bus day where you can trial launch?

PW: Most people visit based on one-off tourism.

PWbstr: Are you going to go ahead and do this?

SG: Needs a feasibility study. DMO Cambridge critical.

SG: Two quotes, £8/£9K

- Signage at Shepreth Car Park – ‘please use Shepreth Village Car Park’. SG helping to facilitate this via GTR.
 - All Saints Garden Barrington development – creating footpath to Foxton Station. Hoping for summer 2025 opening. Opportunity to leaflet drop and raise awareness of train services.
 - Platforms for Change programme: Scouts badge. Until the Melbourn cubs come forward, working with Letchworth. Setting dates for station visits.
 - Melbourn Mental Health Art Project: Together with Melbourn Practical Solutions Group and Melbourn Timebank, working with MVC Years 10 and 11. Mindful artwork inspired by the Wonderpass project.
 - Social and economic development: Thatched cottages trail – Meldreth.
 - Expanding the CRP: good discussion. Will take discussion further.
3. Updates from partners:

GTR:

- Children’s poetry competition – where kids love to visit on the network
- Congrats on shortlisting for Wonderpass
- Next Community Rail Conference
 - Station adopters’ handbook

Shepreth Wildlife Park: Due to WP discount via rail, able to track rail users: same levels as before - 10%. Struggling with car parking. Would like to help with tourist bus. SWP would struggle without train service. Scout badges – can help with badges. Could collaborate with CRP.

Meldreth: Thing that’s made the difference this year is the Wonderpass. Tried to turn it from something vandalised to something had a link to people.

GTR: asked if ASB issues had been reported on the trains or stations? None we are aware of.

Pwebst: Platforms for change: really encouraging. 90 scouts groups around the country. Survey about value and impact of community rail. A lot has changed around lifestyle since Covid. Railway 200 – next year is the 200th anniversary of the start of the railway in the UK. Community Rail awards 2025 will have something to do with anniversary. Key message – railways all about communities. Community Rail Week 20-26 May. A lot of work with Corporate Partners – lots of volunteer teams available from business community. Funding: when DfT tell us 1 April what next year’s funding will be, grants will be clear.

PW: Railfuture leaflets. Update on regional rail potential alongside jobs and housing development, including Michael Gove’s Cambridge 2040.

Martin Network Rail: Cambridge South and Cambridge Resignalling:

- Cambridge South: All platforms done. Two new station buildings either side of track in progress. 2025 delivery.
- Foxton Level Crossing end of 2024: will be informing residents very shortly. Because of large amount of traffic, entire slab on which rail sits will need to be replaced, over xmas/new year.

SvdV: We will be amalgamating the Rail User Group and the CRP to sit under the CRP heading. Upcoming AGMs will make the necessary adjustments.

Meeting closed 4PM.