

MINUTES Meeting April 13 2006, AGM Held at The Devereux Room, Green Dragon, Hereford

Attended by 15, Cllr Brian Wilcox, Cabinet Member for Transport, Herefordshire Council and Richard Ball, Head of Transport, Herefordshire Council attended. Prior to the meeting we had sent a list of concerns to both speakers. Cllr Wilcox addressed these points and then questions were asked from the members.

The Council have introduced free bus travel for over 60s across the county. They have improved the station forecourt of Leominster 1.5 years ago. They have commissioned a study for providing disabled access at Ledbury, Leominster and Hereford, though the funding has not been secured. The Council has a target of 5% p.a. increase by Council staff of public transport. Cllr Wilcox had written letters recently to FGW complaining about the lack of a later last train from Paddington to Hereford and to Central regarding the cancellations and train turnarounds at Ledbury and crowded conditions. He received more or less standard letters in return though Central said they would endeavour to improve the situation. The Council plan to make a bus train interchange with the Edgar Street Grid. Central train use has increased 10% over the past two years, compared with 3% nationally, though this is nothing to do with the Council. The Local Transport Plan has recently been published

We raised the issue of the slower London train, the journey speed has decreased over the last 20 years meaning Hereford passengers have to get to the station for 6.30 a.m. departure compared to 7.10 six years ago. Stronger representation from the Council should have been produced to stress with FGW how important this link is.

We felt the Council should have a stronger commitment to council staff using trains, and to promoting rail and bus in literature produced advertising events in county. We discussed the poor Station approach at Hereford, the Council response was wait till the Edgar Street Grid, but we felt this was not good enough. The Council are being consulted on the Central franchise and asked for our concerns.

We thanked Cllr Wilcox and Richard Ball for their time in speaking to us in the evening just before a Bank Holiday. Meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Other Matters:

- LTP Consultation, we have responded, rather late and it is on the web site.
- The Central Franchise, we have responded – letter on the web site.
- Owen Morgan has sent a rather worrying paper through from Parliament on Rural railways and community rail lines, set out in the new Railways Act (2005). We hope to respond if time permits.
- Newsletter is out, we have distributed about 500 and hope to distribute the remaining ones over the next couple of weeks.
- Central emailed through June timetable, they are splitting Nottingham train so should reduce delays, there are more trains, later trains and better connexions, - apparently, we will see ...
- We have asked Orphans to quote us on the new leaflet.

Next Meeting: May 11th 2006, The Lounge, Green Dragon, Hereford.