

MINUTES Meeting Dec 14th 2006, Held at The Lounge, Green Dragon, Hereford

**Present:** Gillian Bate, Richard Birt, Gerald Dawe, John Fanshaw, Nick Jones, Janet Shott, Chris Shott, Paul, Michael Sullivan. **Apologies:** Rebecca Roseff.

**1. Track Redoubling and Station Access:**

(1) The Hereford Times (HT) (14.12.06) had reported that Herefordshire Council (HC) had missed out on funding for improving access for disabled people at Leominster Station. There had been a £100 m 'Railways for All' national fund which the Council had not taken advantage of. Bill Wiggin MP had been critical. There has been a 20 year campaign to get access installed, with nil result. Similar problem at Hereford.

(2) Lord Sebastian Coe had visited the Royal College for the Blind (RCB) and 'Raising Our Game' a consortium working to deliver opportunities arising from the 2012 Olympic games (Hereford is one of the contenders to run the paralympics). RCB is undertaking a £20 m development which it hopes will enable it to position itself as a centre for disabled Olympic athletes. Coe said: "In a country the size of the UK, it is possible to get to London from most conurbations within about two hours and **we shall be working with transport providers**". (My emphasis.) (Reported in HT 14.12.06)

(3) Gerald Dawe had written to Ian McAllister, Chair of Network Rail (27.11.06) regarding the need for track redoubling, and the fact that NR had spare funds available. This met with a negative response. Our previous letters requesting track redoubling go back many years.

(4) Nick Jones noted that c. 20 old benches had gone from High Town. Where were they now? At the station?

**Action needed:** (1) It was agreed that we should draft a letter to Lord Coe, copying to Ian McAllister, RCB, and Cllr. Wilcox, stating that athletes would be delayed (due to single track), and would have problems accessing Hereford from the station. In line with London Olympics intending to be completely 'sustainable' rail matters urgently needed addressing. Janet agreed to draft in Jan 2007. (N.B. A letter was sent October 2005, to Paul Keetch MP, re: Olympics.)

(2) Nick to draft letter to Cllr. Wilcox re: benches transferred to station, or not?

**2. Newsletter:** Gerald Dawe reviewed content of Newsletter and thanked Gillian Bate and Janet Shott for their help. Next year's schedule was agreed as publishing dates of: April and October 2007.

**3. Crowding and Investment in Longer / More Trains:** Gerald Dawe said that the Department for Transport (DfT) does not allow for train operators to either increase the length of the trains or to run extra trains as part of their franchises but this might be sophistry on the part of the TOCs. Action: Agreed that Janet to write to DfT (Douglas Alexander) in Jan 2007 to clarify the position.

**4. AGM:** This will be held at All Saints Church in February 2007. Andrew Davies Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks, National Assembly for Wales had responded very positively, and it was agreed that we should ask him to allocate one of his staff to brief the group at the AGM, on recent innovations in railways the other side of the border. Action: Rebecca to respond.

**5. Flyers and Budget:** These have now been printed. Members of the group agreed to distribute it to various people. The flyer had cost £275 and the newsletter would cost c. £1000. Our budget stood at around £1,900, and minus these printing costs it would be c. £600. It was therefore agreed that another bid would be needed to Awards for All. **Action:** Gerald and Becky to submit new Awards for All application ASAP.

**6. Artist:** Janet had come across superb postcards of paintings by Mr Bottomley, of e.g. Leominster Station in the 1960s. Everyone agreed they looked superb. Action: Janet to approach Mr Bottomley to see if he would be agreeable to having them published occasionally in the newsletter, at less than postcard size.

**Next Meeting:** Jan 11 2007, The Lounge, Green Dragon, Hereford. AGM Possibly in February 8th 2007

