

## **Minutes, Rail for Herefordshire AGM**

Feb 11 2010: All Saints Church, Broad Street Hereford

22 members and 6 non-members attended. There were 3 apologies for absence.

The Minutes of the 2009 AGM were proposed, seconded and accepted.

- **The Membership Secretary**, Janet Shott, reported that there are 150 paid up members. There are still 35 members from last year who have not paid for this year. It was suggested, without any dissent, that out of fairness to those who do pay, members who do not pay after several reminders would be removed from the membership list. A standard order method of payment has been set up and has been adopted by a number of members.
- **The Chairman**, Gerald Dawe, outlined some of the achievements, including the new footpath outside the station – a recognition that passengers may wish to get to and from the station on foot. He highlighted the threat of the proposed link road in front of the station. He thanked the committee members for their contributions, and all those who supported RfH by attending meetings and/or by simply being a member.
- **The Secretary**, Rebecca Roseff, distributed the following report before the meeting:

The main event of 2009 is that the Quality Rail Partnership (QRP) did not happen. The Council pulled out. I think the reasons are the Council felt they would be a hostage to fortune, Steve Banaghan of London Midland left, the TOCs will not come to what they perceive will be just a talking shop. The Committee hope to establish good links with the TOCs in 2010 as compensation.

The Bus Group representative met with the national Bus Users group and has attended consultations. During the year there was a consultation on what buses to cut as the bus subsidy from the Council was going to be reduced. The secretary wrote a long letter in response, on possible options for buses. Gerald lobbied for no cuts as did RailFH. In the event the threat went away (for now).

Gerald and Becky went to the Regional Rail Strategy meeting on March 21 2009 in Birmingham and followed it up with a letter to the Route Utilisation Strategy Director, who responded. I believe our letter resulted in putting Hereford on the map, with Electrification flagged up and the route marked down as congested (i.e. needing structural change).

### **Speakers**

February, Andy Lawton gave a slide show and talk on the Talyllyn railway in Snowdonia (one to visit), May Professor Lumsdon on Slow Travel and the opportunities for Herefordshire, how bus and train travel are so important for the region. Andrew Smith from the Malvern Industrial Archaeology Society spoke on the origins of railways in the Herefordshire region, December, Matthew Engel gave a talk on the loved (sort of) but idiosyncratic on British railway system.

## Consultations

- Edgar Street to Commercial Road Link Road. Rail for Herefordshire sent in an objection to this beginning of February 2010. Our main objection is that it will further cut the station off from the town. Other objections are that it is not needed, it will demolish functioning buildings and businesses, it is premature, coming before the consultation on the LDF and Hereford Plan.
- We responded to the **Local Development Framework (LDF)**. *Our detailed submission has not yet been sent*. The deadline is March 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Gerald is FGW customer champion. He has attended meetings and asks questions and receives feedback on various FGW issues.

## Developments/Successes

- April, finally some improvements to the station forecourt were made, with better bus stop, cycle parking and a walkway.
- May bus service to the Hay Festival, partly due to our lobbying continued in 2009.
- December we had a cheese and wine party in All Saints with Matthew Engel a speaker, that was very well received.
- Very good new leaflet produced, now needs to be distributed
- RailFH formally supported the [www.BetterTransportForHereford.org.uk](http://www.BetterTransportForHereford.org.uk) website which provides a planned alternative to the bypass through Breinton or across the Lugg Meadows scenario.
- Hereford Times on the 24.9.2009 carried a major article on rail with the need for twin tracking strongly featured.
- The new timetable has brought an extra Hereford-Worcester evening train (around 8.30), filling a long gap in the evening service.

Rob's blog site on Herefordshire railways continues, link through from our website.

- **The Treasurer**, Richard Branczic, distributed his report before the meeting and, after thanking his predecessor, David Plowman, for his help, summarised the accounts: total assets are currently £685, and net assets (after deducting current liabilities) £491.
- **The Bus representative**, John Thorne, presented his report, which follows:

Although Rail for Herefordshire, as its title implies, is concerned with improving rail services in the county, the association also takes an interest in that other very important form of transport, namely Bus services. Rail and road transport ought to be coordinated. I look after this side of things for the organisation. I am also a member of the National Bus Users Association. My brief report may be divided into three parts:

1. At the beginning of the year great concern was expressed that bus subsidies would be reduced by the council, which would result in severe cuts in bus services. Fortunately this did not happen.
2. A bus Fair was arranged by the NBUA, providing an opportunity for the general public to make representations to the bus companies. A bus was parked in High Town, Hereford, and all the main bus companies were represented.

3. A new edition of the excellent time table book detailing local services (and local train timetables) will be on sale at the end of this month. Recommended at 50 pence (probable price). There are many changes from the current timetable.

One in six adults in Herefordshire do not own a car and these people are totally dependent on bus services. Rural bus services (mostly subsidised), even if some of them are not very well used, are absolutely vital to these people.

- The following **officers** were voted in:

Chair: Gerald Dawe

Vice-chair and membership secretary: Janet Shott

Treasurer: Richard Branczic

General Secretary: Becky Roseff

Meetings and Minutes Secretary: Michael Ledlie

Committee Members: Michael Sullivan and Susan Warren

- Janet reminded members over 60 that a Senior Railcard could be bought from Herefordshire Council offices in Widemarsh Street at a discounted price; members over 55 were reminded that Arriva Trains are now again running their Club 55 scheme, whereby a return ticket to anywhere on the Arriva network costs £15 (£13 if you have a Senior Railcard), for travel up to March 19. (A few trains, mainly to Cardiff, are excluded from the scheme. See Arriva website for details.)
- **Presentation by Dr Ian East: A comparison of Local Transport Options**

After the AGM, Ian East, Chair of the Oxford Bicester Rail Action Group, and author of 'The Cost of the Car', to be published later this year, gave a wide ranging talk, illustrated by extensive numerical data. Among the points he raised were:

- The issues of where people live and transport are inseparable – for example many modern cities make car use almost obligatory, so that those without a car in effect suffer from a new kind of disability in addition to social isolation.
- For local transportation, a bike or LEV (light electric vehicle, e.g. electric bike), although slower than a car, is vastly cheaper both in terms of running costs and cost of provision than a car and has a considerably higher capacity (travellers per hour per unit width of road/path) than a car. Light rail (e.g. tram) has a much higher capacity still. Currently, however, a bike or LEV has a much higher death rate per passenger km than any alternative means of transport.
- Four major concerns regarding future transport policy are
  1. Congestion (even now hugely expensive in terms of lost production, etc.)
  2. Energy security (fossil fuel supplies are insecure and unsustainable)

3. Climate change (the UK is committed to reducing carbon emissions)
  4. Health and safety (e.g. deaths and injuries on roads, air pollution, obesity).
- Road congestion can never be permanently relieved because any extra capacity will lead to extra use for a variety of reasons.

The detailed data, and much more, will be available in the book 'The Cost of the Car'. See the website <http://costofthecar.info/> for details.

**Rail for Herefordshire** meetings for the rest of the year will be on the second Thursday of every month except August (in All Saints Church at 7.30 pm), i.e.

March 11,

April 8 Ben Davies, Regional Manager and Michael Vaughan, Head of Franchise and Stakeholder Management, Arriva Trains Wales,

May 13,

June 10,

July 8,

Aug: NO MEETING,

Sept 9,

Oct 14,

Nov 11,

Dec 9

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