

Minutes of Rail for Herefordshire meeting held:
Thursday January 8th 2009 at 7.30pm at All Saints Church, Hereford

Present: Janet Shott (vice Chair), Gerald Dawe (Chair), Theresa Houghton, Mike Ledley, Michael Sullivan, Chris Shott, John Thorne, Paul White, Becky Roseff, Roger Lind, Susanna Gruntzel, David Jones, Bryan Holmes, Chris Smith, Bob Clay, Barbara Evans, Rachel, John, Uta Clay
Apologies: Susan Warren, Rob Hattersley, Sue Jones, David Ward

We discussed the coming AGM, officers and potential speakers. We suggested a heritage rail, someone on Rail/Bus interchange planning, CEO Mark Hopwood of FGW, John Goldrich of Ledbury Station, Matthew Engel

Bus Group: We discussed if we were to become the Bus And Rail Group. Most felt there were so many issues around bus that it would be too much (moving bus stops, franchises, changing time tables, can you take dogs on bus, bus passes etc etc), however, we thought we should have a bus spokesperson and John Thorne said he was happy to take on this role. Our standard response to bus lobbying at the moment is that Herefordshire needs a minimum of an hourly service to each of the market towns, and that the bus and trains need to be better co-ordinated.

This led on to discussion on the Edgar Street Grid. Some people felt we should just object to the new road and leave it at that. Others that we should engage with ESG and suggest solutions. We currently think that the bus interchange should be at the station, but there is not the room for it, and the exit onto Commercial Road is too slow. **The design of the new road must not cut off the station or make it even more difficult for pedestrians than it currently is.** At the moment, with the current aim to have a road in front of the station, it seems impossible. Impossible to have a new road, an interchange and easy pedestrian and cyclist access all together. It was noted that there was not room for a road on the north side of the station, and that if there was an interchange at the station, buses must be able to get in and out easily, so some sort of road change would be necessary.

On Jan 29 at 3.00 p.m. and 6.0 p.m. Edgar Street Grid are holding a session on the transport hub at TGS by the Station in Hereford. As many people as possible should go to this meeting, to press for the above. We should ask the awkward questions; are they going to be able to take the Post Office sorting space, what is needed is a constant running bus service to the town, cathedral and back, possibly on electric buses, We also intend to find a planner of Transport Interchanges to come and speak to the group. It is the transport hub that should be planned first, not the road. Who is going to fund this. Have any studies been commissioned on whether a serious expansion of public transport and the road is possible in the given space.

The group then went on to talk about the **Quality Rail Partnership** meeting arranged for January 30th. We hope this next meeting will formally establish a QRP. The meeting felt we must press for the necessary infrastructure improvement, i.e. twin tracking the rail, including re-opening the tunnel at Colwall. In response to our feedback about the minutes from the earlier QRP not reflecting what had happened it was suggested we ask one of the TOCs to produce the minutes. And that at the meeting we should ask the TOCs if they can think of any other project of that scale

they would like to see done Herefordshire end, and get the response minuted. Other items to take to the QRP was inadequacy of two carriages on ATW services, changing Shelwick junction, using Platform 4 more for Bham trains, so people don't have to walk over the bridge.

Members may be interested to know that Matthew Engel has published a book *Eleven Minutes Late: A Train Journey to the Soul of Britain* (Hardcover), personal description of the railways of England and Britishness. Written partly as a response to living and using the trains in Herefordshire(to be published by Macmillan in May)

Next meeting AGM, February 12 2008 All Saints Church, 7.30 p.m. . Election of Officers, Treasury Report and there will be a

Speaker: Andy Lawton, Midland Group Secretary, Talyllyn Heritage Railway

Talyllyn railway is a narrow gauge steam railway of 11.5km in mid Wales, the first to be run by volunteers in Britain. Andy will tell us how it is done. So please come

PO Box 299, Hereford, HR1 2YE e-mail: railfh@aol.com