

Minutes of Rail for Herefordshire meeting held:
Thursday June 12th 2008 at 7.30pm at All Saints Church, Hereford

Talk by Charles Pickles, Project Engineer, Edgar Street Grid (ESG)

Present, about 22 people

Charles began by explaining his background, which was an engineer, working in the army, retiring from the army and returning to his home town, and pleased to be doing something for the town.

ESG has been brought forward by AWM and Herefordshire Council, the concept was adopted in the Unitary Development Plan that was accepted March 2007.

There has been a long public consultation that has only just ended. There is a re-launch of the plans on July 8th at the Courtyard.

Charles concentrated on Station issues. A broad cycle route to the station is planned, with high quality public space outside the station, that will extend through to the canal basin. The design is built on predicted traffic growth to 2019, the aim is to move the traffic further north. Traffic will still be able to use the current road layout, but it will be very slow, lights and speed limits will encourage people to use the new road that will run in front of the station, north of the current ring road and out onto the A49. This new road is not a dual carriageway. Its plan start date is late 2010

Provision has been made for a transport hub outside the station. Priority will be to non motorists with rights of way.

There were a lot of questions, most asking how and why the project was happening in the first place. We still objected to a road in front of the station which we feel will exclude the station from the town, in spite of the welcome improvements to the station, it will still have a big barrier in front of it. Out of the questions came:

ESG is a £900m project. The railway improvements have no funding but the aim is that the money will come from developer contributions. Stanhope is the chosen contractor.

On July 12th 2008 Charles is meeting with Network Rail and arriva.

Next Meetings; July 10, All Saints. No meeting August, following meetings, dates for your diary – both events in All Saints Church:

Sept 11 Gary Draisey, Network Rail, Rail Re-openings in Wales

Oct 9: Christian Wolmar; internationally renowned rail journalist and author. "WERE THE RAILWAYS EVER PRIVATISED? The inside story of the scandal of rail privatisation".