

Minutes of Rail for Herefordshire meeting held:
Thursday June 11th 2009 at 7.30pm All Saints, Hereford

Present: Gerald Dawe (Chair), Mike Ledley, Paul White, Becky Roseff (Secretary), Rob Hattersley, Janet Shott (Vice Chair), Chris Shott, Derek Doward, David Jones, Richard Birt, Sue Warren, Naomi Bell, Richard Branczic (Treasurer), John Thorne (bus co-ordinator), Nick Jones

Apologies: Maggie Howl, John Fancourt, Michael Sullivan, David Plowman, Bryan Holmes

Janet chaired the meeting.

The Quality Rail Partnership is on June 23rd 2009. The last one was held six months ago, we still have not had minutes from this meeting or an Agenda, and so our list of improvements, has not been circulated. This means in the six months no-one has considered them, and there have no doubt been many lost opportunities.

Rail news was, we now have a bike rack outside the station, finally, and a crossing and new bus bay. BR to write letter to Local Authority and Hereford City Council, congratulating and thanking, but reminding them the job is only half done. The zebra painting has not been finished, the bike rack has not protection against the elements on the sides, benches are needed at the new bus stop, walkers to town are still left wondering which way to go into town (a pavement line was suggested). NB said there is now room for the two bus stops to be amalgamated into one, JT agreed. NJ said to remind them the Three Choirs Festival was in August, many people would be arriving by train.

Janet asked RB is membership subs paying by standing order was possible, RB felt yes it was, would look into it. 80 out of 150 members have renewed, still trickling in.

John T told us he had had a meeting with Nancy Morgan and Phil Tonks of the English Bus Users Group. He had arrived by train and they met him and showed him the bus stations and had a discussion. JT had contacted the Public Transport Officer who told him there is no consultation with the public over buses. He had a letter in the Hereford Times about the bus cuts, due to £80k reduction in subsidy by Herefordshire Council. This threat has now been removed, though JT has heard from owner/bus driver that all the services are threatened with a 5% cut. He has a petition with 150 signatories for a crossing and cycle route at Belmont, on the Abergavenny Road.

Newsletter: Gerald said he would begin this after July 5th and if people could send copy to him. We discussed the difficulty of distribution, the café at the station will no longer take them, nor the libraries at Colwall or Ledbury, apparently Hereford Library still will. Chris said estate agents were good places to distribute them, Gerald said Hereford station ticket office still the best place.

Rob spoke about the possibility of 'morphing' Rail for Herefordshire into BetterTransport4Hereford. Hereford is facing huge changes, 18,000 houses and an Outer Distributor Road at the cost of £130m, half of which, the Council intend, to be met from Government Funding and half from the new houses.

The Council have said they will not take the extra housing without 'infrastructure improvements' which the Government in letters of response have accepted. Infrastructure improvements to the council is a euphemism for an Outer Distributor Road, but it *could* mean, water, sewage, schools, library, bike, rail and bus.

Cllr Wilcox said at the last full council meeting, the road will go where the housing goes, and they are in discussion with developers now. The recently released 'Multi Modal Study' which is actually a 'Uni Modal Study' looks only at a new western road through Breinton or a new eastern road across the Lugg Meadows. Both routes will also go north of the Holmer/Roman road into Shelwick and Lyde. The report states that the new ODR will not reduce traffic in Hereford at all, the level of traffic will remain the same. It will absorb the traffic from the new housing.

BetterTransport4Hereford proposes reducing Hereford's current traffic levels by 10% to 20% by better buses, better trains, better bikes and walking and thereby making things better for car drivers as well. He emphasised that £130 million would have a much bigger impact on congestion if spent on sustainable travel than if it were spent on additional roads in the countryside.

The group had only five minutes to discuss this proposal. Initial feelings were that it was something that it could definitely sign up to, but probably not run. RB said we had to tackle this issue, because at the moment the Council are proposing these huge changes, and there is no opposition. Becky agreed, saying we must think big with public transport improvements or we will be left as usual, begging for bus shelters and getting them after two years, while the Council spend £billions on re-arranging Hereford. Janet felt it was a big thing to consider now, we will discuss next meeting.

Next Meetings: July 9th, August No Meeting, Sept 10th Speaker Matthew Engel
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