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MINUTES Meeting March 9 2006, AGM Held at The Lounge, Green Dragon, Broad Street, Hereford

Attended by 15, we had a brief round up of the news, events and elections of officers (same as last time), before our speaker Jane Lewis Head of Tourism Herefordshire Council spoke to us.

We went through the new leaflet and newsletter. We then discussed the Cotswold and Malverns Transport Partnership meeting held at Moreton in Marsh on 7/3/06 attended by RR (secretary). The aim of the CMTP is to maintain the service we currently have and to have an hourly Worcester-London service. About 20 people attended the bi-annual meeting of council transport representatives, TOCs, and rail groups. Large groups are not conducive to ideas and it was suggested that the CMTP divides into smaller groups to create policy documents. We discussed the new FGW timetable. Others were concerned at moving the 6.52 Hereford-Paddington earlier to 6.30 while lengthening the overall time of the journey. FGW timetable planner said he would see what could be done. We discussed a shopping list of structural improvements. I put forward Hereford-Ledbury - everyone thought it was impossible. The next meeting is Sept 1 2006.

Jane Lewis told us her role is to promote Hereford as a tourist destination however they arrive. People come to Hereford primarily to enjoy the countryside, the walking festival (June 17-25) is very successful and a Slow Food festival is planned this year to be located at the racecourse with mini bus connections. Tourism is the most important industry in Herefordshire taking £272m p.a. and employing 8000 people. They have done several public transport initiatives, advertising the county at all the main stations (except Hereford). National Express tickets are sold at Tourist Information Centres. Recent government directives have asked tourist departments to create Destination Management Partnerships, a working public/private committee to deliver 'an excellent experience'. She hopes that public transport will be represented on the committee. She told us about the Beacons Bus initiative, a Sunday service of buses radiating out from Brecon. She also mentioned that a drop off point for coaches into Broad Street is being negotiated so that Widemarsh Street can remain closed to traffic but coaches will still have access.

Our **Next meeting** is April 13, Cllr Wilcox Cabinet Member for Transport and Richard Ball, Head of Transport, Hrfds Council. As these are the two most important people with regards to transport in Herefordshire we may hold the meeting in a room in the Green Dragon rather than in the Lounge as usual, so watch out for signs.

Please bring your questions to ask Cllr Wilcox. Things they may be able to achieve are: **Better access** at Hereford Station for cyclists and pedestrians, better signing into town, a transport interchange with a waiting room for buses and real time information for passengers on buses. **Employ a rail officer** to help Jim Davies the Public Transport Officer to look at infrastructure improvements joining with other counties to put together proposals via FGW and the £500m for improvements, rail promotions, timetable consultations, school packages, bikes on trains, **bikes on buses**.