

Minutes of Rail for Herefordshire meeting held:
Thursday March 13th 2007 Devereux Room, Green Dragon 7.30pm

Present: Becky Roseff, Alan Alderman, Margaret Alderman, Max Houghton, Michael Sullivan, Therasa Houghton, Matthew Jones, Martin O' Connor, Paul White

Apologies: Gerald Dawe, Janet Shott, Nick Jones, Gillian Bate, Chris Shott, David Plowman, Richard Birt

Becky reported on:

Kinnersley part of the **Presteigne-Eardisley line** was being bulldozed by the farmer/owner. She contacted all the agencies (Natural England, Defra, Environment Agency, Herefordshire Council), the E.A. did take it seriously and sent a letter due to water contamination. She also phoned the landowner to express the concerns of the group. He said he wasn't damaging the line (but previous experience suggests he was).

There was a **West Midlands' Transport Challenge Conference** on 10th March 2008, that Becky attended on behalf of Friends of the Earth West Midlands. Confronted with 96 men in black suits and 4 women, sat round tables, to discuss the 'nine priorities for transport' dreamt up by Herefordshire Cllr Roger Phillips, Chair of Regional Transport Partnership, Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive of West Midlands Regional Assembly and John Edwards Chief Executive of Advantage West Midlands (now retired) (did anyone hear that File on Four programme this week about development agencies in England, their expenses and non accountability). The nine priorities did include some rail, continuing the Southampton-West Mids-to the NE railway line wide gauge for larger freight containers, and a somewhat ill defined 'increase the rail capacity of lines into and out of Bham New Street'. Also AWM is funding the Bham New Street expansion. Second in priority though was the expansion of Bham airport, then Junction 2 improvements on the Mways around Bham. AWM has apparently already committed funding for these, despite that we were meant to be discussing their suitability at this event. All in all a depressing event, and typical of this Government's schizophrenic message. The stated aims were to reduce carbon, the ways of doing this were to increase road and air capacity – no-one seemed to have any problem with the contradiction at all, and they (drove) home happy with their day's work ('we must all speak from the same hymn sheet' Cllr Phillips).

Important to come out of this meeting is the announcement, long suspected, that **Hereford is to be a development centre for housing**, up to 20,000 are suspected. We need to start promoting NOW the levy that each house will bring should be spent on twin tracking the Hereford-Ledbury line and/or re-opening a line for development, like the Kington-Leominster line (see www.KingtonRailway.org.uk). Otherwise the money will simply be used to build a bypass and the trains will be worse than ever. The poster at Hereford Station can be used to propose this idea. If anyone would like to help with it please get in touch.

The **Hay Festival** is now laying on extra buses from Hereford to the Festival, there will be six a day, the first leaving at 8.00 a.m. to arrive at the Festival site by 8.45

a.m., the last leaving at 21.45 to arrive at Hereford station 22.30 in time for the last returning train to Worcester. So all members please make sure they use it and tell everyone you know.

Michael report on the **Cotswold Line Promotion Group** meeting that four of us attended the day before. They have been meeting for 30 years in club rooms beside Evesham Station, we were treated to drinks, cheese and salad rolls and coffee and made very welcome. The CLPG have a membership of 1600 + and charter trains for days outings and coaches to visits to Heritage Rail, and make a profit on them. They invited one of us to be a Committee Member.

Max circulated a **new leaflet design**. We need to decide where for sure to hold the meetings. The Devereux Room is OK, but the Green Dragon forgets about us, is very unreliable had run out of beer and is more expensive than All Saints. On the other hand, you can (normally) buy a drink there and I think the acoustics are better than All Saints.

Gillian asked for more copy for the **newsletter**, and photogs, and comments on the current issue

Next Meetings; April 10, May 8, Jun 12, July 10, Devereux Room, Green Dragon

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