

Minutes of Rail for Herefordshire meeting held:
Thursday March 12th 2009 at 7.30pm at All Saints Church, Hereford

Present: Gerald Dawe (Chair), Theresa Houghton, Mike Ledley, Michael Sullivan, John Thorne, Paul White, Becky Roseff (Secretary), Chris Smith, Rachel Allen, John Allen, Susan Warren, Rob Hattersley, Sue Morgan, Nancy Morgan, John Faulkner, Richard Branczic (Treasurer), Nick Jones
Apologies: Janet Shott, Chris Shott, Bryan Holmes

Gerald reported on the **Quality Rail Partnership**, the second meeting of which was held January 30 2009. Representatives from the three TOCs, Network Rail and heads of planning, transport, public transport officer and Cabinet Member for Environment from the Council attended. The meeting was spent discussing what the QRP should be, representation, and reporting. At the end it was still not clear whether we had set up a QRP. There was only 10 minutes to discuss the long list of improvements, - small, medium and large – that we had drawn up. The next meeting is scheduled for June, at which two representatives from RfH can attend. The minutes have not yet been circulated.

Rob commented that until we have a rail officer in post (one of our aims on the list), the QRP will not progress. Herefordshire doesn't have a Rail Strategy, Cycling Strategy or Pedestrian Strategy and yet it is proposing building an Outer Distributor Road at the cost of £130 million.

Theresa reminded us that the consultation for the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework (LDF) closes on March 23 2009. The LDF is the plan for Herefordshire 2011 to 2026. The consultation is our chance to object to inappropriate development and to suggest improvements. The document as it stands is likely to contain reference to the Outer Distributor Road and not to twin tracking of the railway. It will have the Edgar Street Grid and link road in it. We need to voice our concerns about these now, so they can be taken through to the Inquiry. The document can be found at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ldf. Please do make comments.

John T reported on the response from the letter he sent to Public Transport Officer, Jim Davies, regarding consultation on buses. He was told there was no formal passenger consultation group, and directed to the national Bus Users Group forum. Nancy Morgan who lives at Bircher Common, raised the issue of no evening buses. We talked about how we could include bus travel in our group and how transport user groups should all work towards a united **Campaign for Better Transport in Herefordshire**, with website and transport plan; that local people and politicians could sign up to. Gerald commented that we could take the plan from the locally based transport expert Paige Mitchell and work around that. We all looked to Rob for signs that he would take forward the website (watch this space ...).

Michael reported on the **closure of the London line** July 18th to Sept 1st to allow the twin tracking work to proceed. This is the first phase. The embankment has to be built up in the initial stage. The two morning and evening through trains to London will run as usual, but will be diverted at Worcester via Cheltenham. People wanting to travel outside these times from Hereford can go via Newport at no extra cost.

We discussed the **newsletter and leaflet**. Now we no longer have lottery funding we have to re-think the format. We felt a news sheet on different topics, - the station, bus links, Edgar Street Grid, the Outer Distributor Road, the Quality Rail Partnership, the Campaign for Better Transport in Herefordshire, could be drawn up and distributed from the group, with a form for joining at the bottom. This would be affordable and achievable.

Announcements:

On **Friday March 27 2009** there is a day at the Courtyard with several speakers, based around the 11.00 a.m. showing of the film *The Age of Stupid*, - that is our age, that failed to make the decisions necessary to switch to a low carbon economy, leaving the generation 60 years hence to struggle with run away climate change, and lacking the skills and knowledge to cope with a very different world than the one today. There will be a range of stalls in the foyer. RailfH have booked one and are looking for volunteers to be on the stall between 10.00 to 5.00. We will put all our newsletters out, poster, and just speak to people. A chance to get some new members.

The West Midlands branch of Rail Future is holding its AGM with speaker John Parry of the **Parry People Mover**, 2.00 p.m. **Saturday April 4th**, United Reformed Church, 3 minutes walk from the Station, Sutton Coldfield. The PPM could possibly be a solution for some of Herefordshire's transport bottlenecks. It works best on short, busy stretches.

Centro is chairing a discussion on the Regional Rail Strategy on **March 21st 2009** 9.30 to 12.30 Carrs Lane Centre, Birmingham (between New Street and Moor Street). For more information contact Alan Bevan 0121 745 6001

Next meeting, April 9th 2009 **Lounge Green Dragon**, 7.30 p.m. (All Saints Church is closed for Maundy Thursday). The following meetings will be in All Saints as usual, though they will be in the main part of the church as building works are taking place throughout the summer.

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