

Minutes of Rail for Herefordshire meeting held:
Thursday November 8th 2007 Devereux Room, Green Dragon 7.30pm

Present: Mike Sullivan, Janet Shott, Gillian Bate, John Fancourt, Becky Roseff, Chris Shott, Gerald Dawe, Naomi Bell, Susan Warren, Margaret Alderman, Teresa Howton, Alan Alderman

Apologies: David Plowman, Derek Doward, Nick Jones, Paul, Hazel Speight, Lawrence Banks, Bob Widdowson

Agenda: Arriva connexions, Go-Via.

Jim Davies, Public Transport Officer, Herefordshire Council, spoke to the group. He told us:

- Jim has been in post about 20 years. For much of this time his ambition was to retain the public transport that was there, but in the last five years there has been a shift. Public transport is now seen as something with a future. Time constraints means he deals mostly with buses, not trains.
- He acknowledged the **need for a Rail Office** for the Council. All surrounding Councils have one and obviously with a dedicated officer, more would be achieved. Currently the Council are looking for redundancies, so the climate is not good, he has to make a Business Case and find a source of funding. Several people felt money could be re-allocated from some areas in the Council to fund a Rail Officer.
- The Council and Arriva have put aside some money for **station forecourt improvements**. Arriva are applying to Access for All, D of Transport fund to make up the rest. It will include a raised walkway and other improvements. Jim has not seen the plans. Becky will write to Arriva to ask if we can consult. The council offered spare benches to Arriva for the front of the station but were turned down.
- The majority of **buses** in the county are under contract to the Council. They can change the time tables six times a year (!). Bus companies can be difficult to negotiate with, it is often down to individuals and personalities.
- Yeomans have instigated a no dogs and no bikes rule. We felt that it was the customers who should set the rules, Jim replied they were negotiating
- The **Go-via franchise** changes on Sunday. Go-Via is owned by the Go Ahead bus group (running buses in Oxford and Brighton) and Kaolis, running French buses. Go-Via runs trains S and SE out of London. They have a track record of serving small areas and working in partnership with L.A.s, they may be better than central. They are going to retain the current level of service at a minimum, and replace all 150s with 172s.
- Jim was receptive to a **cross transport group** and meeting being set up between Train Companies, Local Authority, Bus Companies and User Groups. Perhaps to meet once a year. If people have items they feel should be discussed at such a meeting, please send them to the secretary (address foot of page)

Other Matters

The connections at Newport and Hereford by Arriva has been addressed by Mike Bagshaw, Commercial Director and Ben Davies, Stakeholder Liaison Manager. They both say they try to hold trains to make connections where ever possible. I have to say this is not my experience, I have twice seen Arriva trains departing as passengers get off FGW trains, in the last month alone. Ben Davies says:

“Taxis or other forms of substitute Transport are dependant on the delay and cause, usually the TOC responsible for the delay or cancellation and no service within a certain timescale instigates a substitute service.”

This is not very helpful when you are left on an unmanned station, or with station staff unwilling (understandably) to take responsibility to order taxis. Becky will write again to clarify.

NEXT MEETING: December 13th 2007; 7.30-8.30 p.m. Devereux Room Green Dragon. **We will talk about the Kington Leominster line and plan the AGM.**

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