

Present: Richard Birt, Gerald Dawe (Chair) (GD), Rob Hattersley (RH), Brian Holmes, Roger Lind (RL), John Thorne (JT), Paul White (PW)

Apologies: Michael Ledlie (committee member), John Parry, Rebecca Roseff (Secretary), Janet Shott (Vice Chair) Chris Shott, Theresa Houghton

- 1. PO Box:** GD reported that the PO Box was causing problems due to their move from an HR1 to a WR13 address. This would be resolved by changing the PO Box holder to Michael Ledlie who has an HR1 address.
- 2. Bus liaison:** JT reported that there would be a bus 'open day' between First Bus and Herefordshire Council next Wednesday from 10 am until 3 pm.
- 3. Treasurer's Report:** Deferred due to lack of Treasurer.
- 4. Secretary:** GD put on record the Secretary's willingness to resign at the next AGM, and asked for possible candidates to come forward. The work involved not only minute-taking but also web-site updating and involvement in campaigning and responding, e.g. to RUSs, LTP, RSS, and other issues. A vote of thanks to the current Secretary (Rebecca Roseff) was passed.
- 5. Double-tracking:** Rail for Herefordshire's campaign for double-tracking of the railway line had gone that bit further, recently, reported GD. The Hereford Times had recently (24.9.09) carried a major feature on Rail for Herefordshire and Jesse Norman PPC Conservative's involvement in a petition, presented to the Secretary of State for Transport. More significantly, the Hereford Journal (30.9.09) reported on Cllr. Wilcox's (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, Herefordshire Council) new-found commitment to track-redoubling between Hereford and Leominster, and support for Jesse Norman's campaign.
- 6. FGW meeting:** Issues for the next FGW Customer Champion meeting (GD attending, 15th October 2009) were welcome. The FGW meeting at Paddington, is a participative forum of other local rail campaign groups such as Rail for Herefordshire, where matters can be put to senior FGW management. It is facilitated by Lesley Colman and is exactly the sort of initiative which should be put forward by private sector companies. RL asked whether London Midland or Arriva Trains had an equivalent. GD confirmed that sadly this was not the case.
- 7. Open Forum:** JT raised the issue that FGW had cancelled the 16.30 pm through train a week ago, and whilst RL said that this had been due to cancellation of trains between Oxford and Didcot due to engineering work on the line, JT stated that nowhere was this made clear, and the station staff had not known about it. He had had to take the substitute coach instead of the train. GD reported that he hadn't been that impressed with the 'track redoubling' work in the Cotswolds area. All that seemed to have happened was some clearing of the line and possible reconfiguring of the track. RL said that the line had been double-tracked through Chipping Campden tunnel. RL also said that a submission would be needed to FGW re: new timetable (from June 2010, rather than December 2009) putting in Rail for Herefordshire's requirements for London express services –e.g. there were to be some that would not call at every station on the Cotswold line. Which were these to be? RL also said that in the past the 07.10 train got in to Paddington at 09.45, now it was 06.43 getting in at 09.47. However, they now had an obligation to stop at Slough and sometimes Maidenhead. GD confirmed he knew about this 'padding' and was unhappy about it, but thought that Rail for Herefordshire was relatively powerless do anything about it. He could ask FGW whether train times would condense to former times, once the double-tracking had been completed. RH said that the London Midland trains had diminished from 5-car sets to 4-car again resulting in people standing from Droitwich in the morning peak-hour.
- 8. Pontrilas:** It was agreed that reinstatement of Pontrilas station was an issue which RfH could increasingly campaign for. A key person had recently made contact with RfH over this, whilst John Pring was a longstanding and very supportive contact in this area.
- 9. AOB:** Some modest expenses for wine and cheese at the Christmas meeting with Matthew Engel were approved. PW suggested soft drinks should also be provided. Agreed.

Next Meetings: November 12th 2009; December 10th 2009; Matthew Engel talk and Christmas Party