

Marpa

Mid Anglia Rail Passengers' Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 12 March 2011

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

Present: 26 members and friends

The Chair welcomed every-one to the 2011 AGM. He also introduced Alan Trett, Area Manager from National Express East Anglia who would speak later.

Apologies: Trevor Garrod, Ted Henderson, David Smith, Bryan Moss, & Frances Ferneyhough.

2. Talk by Speaker – Alan Trett

Alan started by updating those present that National Express East Anglia (NXEA) were running the present franchise until February 2012. They were in the process of bidding for the short franchise which would run for about 15 months which would then be followed by a longer franchise which would be for about 15 years.

There had been a significant increase in patronage on the line (Ipswich to Cambridge) which had seen the end to end journey numbers increase by about 30% since 2005. Similarly some stations were seeing a surge with the increase in passengers notably at Bury St Edmunds and Needham Market.

The operator was looking at specific events along the line to see what could be done to strengthen the rolling stock and provide more seating on certain services. Newmarket Races was an event that constantly seemed to fall off the radar and consequently there were on occasions significant overcrowding sometimes leading to passengers being left behind. The increasingly popular Bury Fayre is another event that will be monitored closely.

The poor condition of Bury station was well known and NXEA were looking at ways to improve the travelling experience from the station. Budgetary constraints were a real issue however and he was exploring ways to seek third party funding to help. The toilets and waiting room on platform 2 were in a poor condition and this was a high priority although he was also aware that the booking hall needed attention and the

pigeons and rats needed action taking against them.

The opening hours at the booking office in Bury had caused much concern as it appeared to be more often closed than it was open. Long term sick leave had been a major problem although this person had now retired and replacement staff had been advertised which had received a good response.

The new footbridge and lifts at Ipswich would be completed in late spring which would help with passengers having to change trains there to continue their journeys to London etc.

NXEA were looking at the housing developments around Kennet station and to see if there was any developers money to assist at the station.

It was acknowledged that there had been parking problems at Thurston station and Alan would be liaising with the land owners to ensure that the parking area reserved for rail passengers was not used by others.

Alan was going to ask his train planning colleagues why there was still a four hour gap in stopping trains at Dullingham during the afternoon / evening period on services towards Cambridge.

The Station Adopter scheme was likely to be re-launched and NXEA were currently looking at questionnaire responses from adopters. Alan would keep Marpa updated on this point.

3. Questions & Answers

- Kennett Station – there was concern over the lighting at the station and improvements were requested. Alan agreed to re-look at this point although he thought that this was currently proportionate and effective.
- Ticketing – there was general concern that ticketing and the price of tickets was inconsistent and quite frankly very confusing. Alan agreed that there were some anomalies and he agreed to look into the specifics of a couple of journeys raised.
- Bury station – this was a matter that created some significant discussion on the general state of the station and the adjoining buildings. Alan had raised this during his talk acknowledging that the operator was aware and agreed to look holistically at the issues.
- Connections – there were concerns over the new timetable with connections along our line from Ipswich especially from the Lowestoft direction. Alan agreed that whilst the new timetable did resolve many issues it still caused problems for some. Regrettably it could not be everything for everybody although some changes were being made in areas where issues were known and there was flexibility to change.
- Bstitutions – there was a lot of concern over the number of rail replacement

buses being used sometimes along the whole length of the line when engineering work was only taking place along part of it. During a very recent Sunday all engineering had been cancelled and trains on the main line restored but buses still ran along our line from end to end. Alan did not know the answer to this and thought that possibly maintenance on units had been planned and could not be changed at short notice. He agreed to find out.

- Newmarket Station – the station is a poor gateway to the town and was in need of some enhancements. Alan did not know what could be done that was affordable and thought that some third party funding was essential.
- Linking of Websites – it was deemed sensible that the NXEA website be available as a link on local parish web sites and, wherever possible, the other way around.
- Haughley Junction – Alan was not aware of what enhancements were going to be made at Haughley or the timeframe. He would find out.

4. Minutes of the Last AGM (17 April 2010)

These were accepted as a true record of the meeting. They were formally adopted by Ben Walsh and seconded by Chris Polkinghorne._

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters raised.

6. Chair's Report

This was available in written form and was accepted at the meeting.

The following matters were raised additionally to the report;

- Soham Station – there was still work ongoing in an effort to re-open the station. Network Rail would report back on the feasibility and costing to re-open.
- Ipswich Chord – there had been a recent public presentation in Ipswich and public notices had appeared in the local Ipswich Press in relation to the construction of this chord.

7. Treasurer's Report

Ann Henderson spoke to the meeting on her report and balance sheet of accounts that had been distributed and explained the items within. The accounts were accepted at the meeting. In relation to the membership there were 34 members with 2 of these being Honorary.

Chris Polkingthorne thanked those committee members who had made donations to Marpa to cover many administrative functions.

8. Election of Chair

John Drake was content to seek re-election. As he was unopposed he was unanimously elected.

9. Election of Officers and Committee

All Committee members were willing and available for re-election. The Committee was unanimously elected en masse.

Treasurer & Membership Secretary – Ann Henderson

Correspondence Secretary – Ross Taylor

Newsletter Editor – Peter Rutt

Railfuture Representative – Ben Walsh

Members – Allan Hayman, Bryan Moss, Peter Wakefield, Clara Zilahi & Keith Jobson

10. Any Other Business

There were no matters raised

Finally the Chair thanked every-one for their attendance and contributions and formally closed the meeting.