

BEDFORD COMMUTERS ASSOCIATION

BCA COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday 5th February 2007

Present: Arthur Taylor Andrew Long
 John MacLeod Jim Allwood

Apologies: Mark Spurgeon Ben Foley

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the committee meeting held on November 6th 2006 were agreed.

2. Actions

AL was unable to attend the Bedford Carol Service due to other commitments.

JM provided an insert about membership renewal for the December newsletter.

AL attended the Meet the Bidders meeting at Leicester. See report back in the EM Franchise section of this meeting.

AL attended the Bedford Town Centre Transport Stakeholders Meeting on November 28th.

3. Correspondence

A letter has been received from Nadine Dorries MP regarding transport issues in Bedfordshire and her appreciation of the work the BCA does.

A letter has been received from Bedford Borough Council re Air Quality.

January issue of Railwatch received. Letter from MML re their Smoke Free Policy. Copy of East Midlands Rail - Autumn issue received.

Letter from Bedfordshire County Council re Biggleswade Transport Study.

4. Treasurers Report

JA reported that at the end of December there was a healthy balance in this years account. Last years accounts are still with the Auditors.

5. Communications

Media coverage continues to remain good. AT has been on local radio and also in the London Evening Standard commenting on the lack of rolling stock for the Thameslink route.

Content for the March newsletter was discussed. Items to be included would be updates on Performance, Thameslink Project, station improvements and details of this years AGM.

AT/AL would finalise the newsletter and send to JA by the end of February.

6. Performance

Performance has suffered since the last meeting . This was due to infrastructure problems.

AT has raised this with Elaine Holt who has had a meeting with Network Rail. Hopefully a plan is now in place by NR to resolve problems. We will continue to monitor the situation and if necessary will have further discussions with Elaine.

7. Timetable

FCC - as a result of a further 319 unit being made available to FCC from Southern for the December timetable change the 07.58 Bedford to Sutton becomes an 8 car train. In the evening the 16.32 Sutton to St Albans becomes an 8 car train.

MML - Nothing to report.

8. St Pancras TL Station Fit Out

FCC have confirmed that the new St Pancras Thameslink station will open on December 9th 2007 to coincide with the December timetable change.

9. East Midlands Franchise

AL reported back on the Meet the Bidders meeting held on 11th December at Leicester. All Bidders had an individual slot where they gave a presentation followed by Q&A's. AL felt the presentations were rather bland concentrating on the bidders existing franchises. Not much information was given about their bids. However all Stakeholders agreed that the present off peak service was fit for purpose and did not need altering especially the fast services to Sheffield and Nottingham. All felt a service to Corby should be over and above the present timetable i.e. a fifth train per hour. The BCA view was put across to all bidders. AT referred to an article in the February Issue of Modern Railways about the EM Franchise. AT reported back on his meeting with First Group. Again he reiterated the BCA views on the new franchise/new timetable.

The meeting agreed that AL would write a further letter to the DfT Franchising office restating our views on the new Franchise and its proposed timetable and copy to MP's.

10. Thameslink Project/EWRL

AT reported that the Thameslink Consortium Meeting due on January 25th was cancelled and will now take place after funding for the project has been agreed. There was an article in the February issue of Modern Railways about the latest situation for the project. Essentially it will be in 2 phases. Phase 1 to be completed in 2011 and Phase 2 completed in 2015. For Phase 1 to be completed on time funding will need to be agreed by this summer so that the Moorgate branch and terminal platforms at Blackfriars can close in 2008. This will mean more trains running through the tunnels so that all 319's will have to be back on Thameslink by then plus probably some more dual voltage trains as well. Elaine confirmed the above at the meeting we had with her in November. We now await further news but it appears that there is some movement as the government announced that £30M has been given to Network Rail to continue with planning for the project.

EWRL - Nothing to report.

11. Website

Nothing to report as MS was not at the meeting.

12. Reports Back

Meeting with FCC 23.11.06 : AT reported that the BCA and APTU meet Elaine Holt and Hugh Clancy on November 23rd. Elaine explained the latest on the Thameslink Project (see above) and would update us on progress. We were informed of an additional 319 unit being made available from December. They are continuing their efforts to secure the remaining

319's from Southern. From December trains would be stabled overnight/day at Cricklewood. All mtce is now done at Bedford and Hornsey, only the 8 sub leased 319's from Southern will be maintained at Selhurst. Train Planners are looking into train diagrams to see if some trains on the inners can be increased to 8 cars. APTU/BCA will be kept informed. FCC are concerned with performance and the recent infrastructure failures. She has meet NR and assured us that the problems were being looked and resolved. There is still no good data on Thameslink loadings (data for introducing ticket restrictions). 8 trains are fitted with data recording equipment of which only 2 are reliable. The other units are being repaired and should be OK by Xmas. We hope to get some good data for our next meeting. There had been some shift of cheap day tickets to Savers and the types of tickets being issued are being monitored. Passenger growth continues at 5%. St Pancras will be rewired by March and MML have reluctantly agreed for FCC to use St Pancras for planned engineering work from March 2007.

GN Capacity Meeting 11.12.06 : AT reported that the capacity study will shortly be completed and its recommendations passed onto the DfT for action.

Bedford Town Centre Transport Stakeholders Meeting 28.11.06 : AL reported that this had been a successful meeting although more interested in traffic problems than rail although AL had pushed rail hard. Further meetings will take place.

Station Improvement Meeting 22.01.07 : AT reported that he meet Belen McWilliam Projects Director FCC and David Byrne Head of Property FCC at Flitwick. AT passed around copies of improvements to be made at both Bedford and Flitwick. AT showed Belen the state of the footbridge at Flitwick (photos were taken). Discussions then took place about the forthcoming improvements. A new Ticket machine has since been installed and is operational. The renewal of toilets at Bedford commences this month. A most useful meeting. The BCA will monitor the improvements.

APTU Members Meeting 1.02.07 : AT reported he had been invited along to this meeting which discussed the role of the APTU, what policies it should follow, what services are valued by members, what other services might/should it provide.

13. AGM

The meeting agreed that the AGM should be held at Dom Polski's in May. **AT would contact FCC to invite Elaine and ascertain what dates she would be available and then book Dom Polski accordingly.** Since the meeting Elaine has confirmed May 16th is ok. JA has booked Dom Polski for May 16th and AT has informed MML of the date (they will again send representatives along).

14. Bedford Matters

JA reported that the Car Park Booth was closed . **AT will speak to FCC.**

15. Flitwick Matters

At a recent Transport questionnaire of commuters (BCA not consulted) 62% disagreed with Flitwick station being moved and combined with Amphill, 21% agreed and 14% did not know.

16. AOB

AT said that Adrian Jackson Robbins, Chairman of APTU would be stepping down in April due to health reasons. FCC will be naming a Class319 unit after him in recognition of his contributions to the rail industry over 30 years. The naming will take place at Bedford Depot on a Saturday, the date of which is yet to be agreed.

Larry Heyman FCC has asked for his contact details to be distributed to committee members. Please let him know of any operational problems etc. that you see on your travels. He will try to resolve them or if he cannot pass it onto someone who can. Tel 0207 713 2103, Mobile 07711 149167, email larry.heyman@firstgroup.com.

JM asked if Oyster when introduced (2009) will be available at all Thameslink stations. AT has spoken to Larry Heyman since the meeting and he has confirmed that Oyster will only be available at stations in the London Zones i.e. Elstree to Kings Cross.

AT said that a meeting with BABUS is being arranged for a Saturday during February.

AT provided details of the new Car Park fees. These were mostly lower than at other Thameslink stations.

AT said that the building at Wixhams will start soon. However no decision as yet been made about the rail station (2 or 4 platforms/length etc).

18. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday 2nd April 2007 at Jim's house **commencing at 19.15.**