

MINUTES OF SPALDING AND PETERBOROUGH TRANSPORT FORUM OPEN MEETING 28TH JUNE 2007 AT COUNCIL OFFICES, PRIORY ROAD, SPALDING

Apologies:

M Wright, L capes, A Waddington

Minutes of Previous Meeting 25/1/07

Accepted

Matters Arising

To be covered by agenda items

Franchise Report

Chairman George Scott announced that Stagecoach had won the franchise, taking over in November 2007. Whilst the timetable is to remain the same until December 2008 there is no guarantee afterwards. Stagecoach own Southwest Trains that have recently hit the press re penalty fares being charged on trains to passengers that have boarded the train rather than miss it as the result of long queues at the ticket office. It is likely that a fast ticket machine will be installed at Spalding station, but very unlikely that existing service will change in the first year - this gives the Forum an inroad for a year to encourage changes to our benefit. However, there is concern that whilst the footfall at Lincoln and Peterborough stations has increased, the footfall at Spalding station is down by 9000. There are two parts to the new franchise from the Forum's point of view; dealing with the old crowd and dealing with the new crowd. The old crowd, Central Trains are responsible for the repair and maintenance of the station before handover. Central Trains have issued a schedule of works. This includes painting of station commencing July 2007, but not the repair of the footbridge over to platform 2. The Forum is to apply pressure to ensure this is looking nice whilst at the same time addressing several health and safety issues surrounding bridges and platforms. George pointed out that next year Spalding is to host the world Tulip summit and the stations appearance is important.

Mrs Wright queried the neglect of Park Road to Kings Road bridge stating that replaced woodwork had increased the trip hazard on the bridge itself, which is in increasingly poor state of repair. George said that the forum would enquire about this and that this was not the only health and safety issue with the footbridge at the station deteriorating and tarmac on platform 2 peeling off.

Mr Cakebread expressed a fear of cancellation of train services after 2008. This was recognised as a risk.

Report on Meeting with Peterborough City Council

Committee member David Hurdle reported on a recent meeting between the Forum and PCC. Peterborough is expanding as both a place to live and a place to work. The Department of Transport has declared Peterborough as a "sustainable travel destination town". The City has had considerable success with car usage dropping from 2005 to 2006 and increased pedestrians and cyclist numbers. We emphasized the need for better services to Peterborough along the Lincoln route and the benefits of a halt at Littleworth, Deeping St Nicholas. PCC is to undertake two travel studies that are overlapping into our area. They have agreed to meet with LCC and John Hayes once the new franchise was announced. We made the point that the travel shop at Peterborough bus station is closed on a Saturday, PCC are to fund Saturdays next year for this vital source of travel information. We view them as an important civil partner to help encourage Deeping St Nicholas station alongside Stagecoach, Network Rail, Lincs CC, and SHDC. With their support we aim to get a feasibility study for the station.

LONDON MEETING

Louise McGuinness reported on the Forums meeting with various parties at the House of Commons. At this meeting the improvement of Peterborough to Lincoln service. The absence of effective connecting services to Spalding and no Sunday service and no late trains were brought to the fore.

The following action points were brought from this meeting to be carried out by Lincs CC, Network Rail, Central trains and the Forum.

- to investigate the re-opening of an entrance to the station from Park Road
- to look at development of the derelict land at the station adjacent to platform 2
- Littleworth halt at Deeping St Nicholas
- maintenance of the station and bridges
- buses
- lack of bus shelters
- publication of and access to timetables
- whether the line is a TENS (Trans European Network) line or not (apparently it is not).

George Scott expressed the entrance to platform 2 from Park Road as a positive with a possible community garden on the derelict land.

PROPOSED PRESIDENT

George Scott proposed that John Hayes be made President of the Forum in recognition of the continuing support he gives us. This was passed unanimously.

DEEPING ST NICHOLAS - LITTLEWORTH STATION

George Scott quoted the conclusions from David Goodall's dissertation:

"The Littleworth project seems viable, however only from certain stakeholder perspectives, Spalding Transport Forum believe the station is viable, the demand is believed to exist from passenger numbers and views. However on the other side of the argument there is the County Council who ignore the issue, due to no finance being made available. The views of the Transport Operating Companies are negative which had been noted from the Virgin Representative and the council, they do not want there to be any change, or at least whilst their franchise is operating. Along with the two sides there is Network Rail in the middle of the equation trying to meet the interests of both sides."

It is certain that Littleworth station would not only be a benefit to those people living at Deeping St Nicholas, but all those south of Spalding that would find it easier to travel to this station than either into Spalding station, or in to Peterborough. It also needs to be remembered that a bus service can be cancelled within 52 days - it is not as easy to cancel a train route.

Whilst cost is repeatedly quoted as an issue the establishment of a platform to form a halt at Littleworth could cost as little as £200,000 - £300,000.

APPEAL FOR MEMBERSHIP

Andrew Elsdon gave a plea as to why every person in the greater Spalding area should become a member of the Forum. He said the area was being short-changed when it came to the provision of public transport and this would have a major impact on all our futures. He acknowledged he was probably preaching to the converted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Cakebread asked why buses going to Morrisons at Wardentree Lane, Pinchbeck did not use the bus stop and instead dropped passengers off on the opposite side of the road? To be investigated.

Louise McGuinness was to enquire at the town forum about the improvement of bus shelters and the availability of timetable information. It was pointed out from the floor that timetables were available at the library.

What was the prospect of a Lincoln to London route?

This currently does not look promising as Stagecoach have made it clear that their route from Lincoln to London is via Nottingham and not via Peterborough and there were no plans to change this.

Meeting closed 9.10pm - next public meeting to be