

MK Rail Users
Minutes of Committee Meeting
2nd December 2008

Present: Philip Lawton, Alan Francis, Chris Wright, Jill Hope, Stuart Nightingale, Andrew Fisher, Jim Middleton, Steve Barker, Peter Smith

Guests: 2 representatives of (LM), Jose Woodhouse (Old Peoples Forum), Norman Dennis

Apologies for absence: Paul Bryan (LM), Lynne Button (prospective member)

Not Present: Louise Green

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- a) Accepted
- b) Cyclist issue had arisen yet again. LM advised that there had been complaints from 'folding cyclists' at the imposition of the ruling and as such Customer Services had withdrawn the edict. ?? did not know whether this was LM policy or a climb down at Management level. PL to investigate. Local LM staff were thanked for their support
- c) Refunds for Rupert had been resolved thanks to help of Paul. LM were now displaying posters about refunds which was welcomed. MKRU will continue to seek improvements.

2. London Midland Report

PPM report was circulated and seems to reflect a decline locally – Euston – Northampton 71% (reliability 97.1%). It was also noted that customer satisfaction surveys (81%) suggest a need for major improvements. LM is working on this and WCML upgrade completion should overcome many of the PPM declines.

3. Meetings Attended

Alan Francis updated the group on several meetings he had attended:

- a) MKC Upgrade – it was noted that Platform 1 is to be out of use at start of new timetable and some services starting from MKC would start at Bletchley. This does not seem to be in the public domain, LM will need to publicise this with only 12 days to go.
- b) Station Improvement Plan –LM may spend at MKC £0.75m+ but matched funding is sought and remains under discussion, including toilets.
- c) Station Square –new proposals being worked up and due late Jan. 09 and will consider traffic capacity.
- d) MK - East Croydon trains are due to start again this month run by Southern, but delayed until 26th Jan.
- e) Quality Rail Partnership has been set up between LM and MK Council, no other bodies invited
- f) EWRL is progressing with consultants due to have been appointed for next phase
- g) Network Rail organised a first meeting of the WCML Rail Utilisation Strategy (RUS) which will assess capacity issues on WCML and we can press for fast services. Passenger Focus is seen as main input route for RUGS.

4. AGM Review

- a) AGM minutes and notes were circulated and agreed except it was noted that MK Transport Partnership had funded the meeting, AF / AF letter of thanks and bill to be sent
- b) Disappointing attendance and marketing needs to be improved for 2009 – earlier posters, press release and leaflets on train. Web capture of web users would be explored and AGM info sent.
- c) The openness of Steve Banaghan was welcomed. Support of MPs was acknowledged.
- d) Lynne Button had agreed to join the committee, Simon Brown QC and Simon Navin had agreed to assist as required and Peter Rumens of Old Peoples Forum wished to be associated with the group. Mohammed Khalid of MK Hackney Association wished to be kept informed of developments
- e) The venue was considered very suitable and agreed the 2009 AGM will be on Thursday 22nd October at CentreCom. Andrew Fisher to book immediately.

5. Christmas Services

A daily commuter had raised a complaint that in spite of a reduced timetable and some bus substitution, normal peak fares were being applied. Philip had taken up the case with Rachel Webster at LM and her response was disappointing. Jill was asked to publicise the issue with a press release. Queries were raised if

this was Govia's approach. It was also noted that there were no timetables available for the period or publicity, a repeat of Xmas 2007.

6. Old Peoples Forum Concerns

Following an exchange of e-mails with David Rumens, Jose Woodhouse attended on their behalf and the groups had many common issues and some more relevant to the older or disabled travellers.

- a) Travel Shop offered the chance to get detailed personal service and if closed would cause problems e.g. elderly, deaf and visually impaired who especially find machines. Advised by LM that IF the TS closes then this would be replaced by a more open Customer Service centre on the concourse itself, very accessible to disadvantaged groups.
- b) A member of the Forum had received misleading advice for train enquiries having being given an 0901 number to call, resulting in excessive call costs. Re-assurance was given that 0845 local rate number should be used. Any other numbers are not LM linked and should be avoided.
- c) Toilets are always a concern to the older citizen when travelling and waiting on the concourse. New toilet facilities are being planned for platforms 1/2 & 3/4 but 5/6 will not be possible. Toilets on the concourse / Station Square should be a priority.

Philip thanked Jose for attending and suggested a place on the Committee for the Forum with an open invitation for whoever can attend from the group.

7. Future Direction

- a) RUG links - scope for joint campaigns needs to be explored as many common issues – fares, disruption, service cuts / improvements. Philip is attending Northampton RUG meeting 6th December to look at greater co-operation.
- b) Continue to press for faster peak time services
- c) WCML Stopping options - and re-franchising of WCML presents an opportunity for change. New member Jim Middleton agreed to review options for this and longer term rail improvement opportunities and strategies. Chris had passed across some timetables for comparison when more options were offered.
- d) Fares and refund policies – challenge TOC and Government on current policies
- e) Opportunities presented by CrossRail and MKC / EW Rail links

8. Web Site

Agreed this was an essential vehicle for engaging with the public but was suffering due to lack of content from members and had received criticism for out-of-date content from those who do use it. Hosting fee for next year paid and site has to become more valuable to the MK traveller.

Updating with relevant news and articles had been left to Steve and Philip, but to make maximum impact all members of the Committee were called upon to contribute. Themes, blogs and up-to-date news need to be considered. Chris to write article on E-W, Andrew to summarise relevant Rail press articles and Rupert to write report on performance and current issues.

9. AOB

Jill had been asked to comment by Horizon radio on the ORR's reminder to Network Rail to ensure WCML work is completed on time. All agreed the request was not worthy of consideration

10. Next Meeting: Tuesday 06/01/09 – 7.30pm MKC Station