

Melksham Railway Development Group

1. Minutes

26th February 2016 at 19:30

Melksham Town Hall

Present

Peter Blackburn *Chairman*
Rolf Brindle (MWPC)
Alison Christy (MTC)
Graham Ellis *Vice-Chair*
John Hamley *Secretary*
John Money *Treasurer*
David Phillips (WC)
Eddy Watts

Apologies

Lee Fletcher
John Glover (MWPC)
Tom Steward
Phil McMullen

Actions in bold.

2. Minutes of meeting 20th November 2015

- Minutes of previous meeting approved (proposed Rolf Brindle, seconded Eddy Watts) except:
 - Typo Item 3 - '19:36' should read '17:36'
 - Item 8 – Rolf Brindle is arranging a cheque based account with HSBC, not John Money.

3. Station Issues

- The TVM, although working, displays a notice indicating that the banknote feeder is blocked. As the machine does not cash, this does not prevent usage, but could confuse occasional travellers.
- Information presentation
 - Station display not often working.
 - Banner displays typically found at other stations would be ideal.
 - Ideally a remotely driven public address system should be provided.
 - The CCTV status is not known. But some clear indication of its operation would provide additional deterrent to vandals.
- Station signage could be improved/updated. The sign pointing to the Town Centre could usefully be relocated to the new cycle racks, where users unfamiliar with the station would get an immediate indication of the route to be taken.
- A request to remove the 'bicycle houses' should be made. The space available could be used for a station bench.
- The station display boards are filled with GWR information. Some TW and MRDG displays should also be included.
- There are signs of burnt material on the station to the North of the shelter.
 - This should have been observed using the CCTV facility.
 - It will be reported to the local police **by Alison Christy**, and the transport police **by Eddy Watts**.

4. Platform Extension and Longer Trains

- As a number of trains are overcrowded, and also for long term expansion of the services, a cascade of 2/3 car trains on the TW corridor is planned, and confirmed in the recent investment report by Sir Peter Hendy.
 - With revised timescales for the electrification of the main line, implementation of longer trains is likely to be delayed but is still expected in CP5 (period up to 2019), probably by 2018.
- MRDG, in support of TWCIC, commissioned an initial review of a possible revised infrastructure for the required platform extension to handle longer trains on a regular basis.
 - This report was funded by MRDG at approximately £1,000.
 - It takes in account the related aspiration of a pedestrian, and (longer term) bus, corridor to the ALDI / MacDonalds area.
 - The plan shows the platform extension to the North. Although there is an existing derelict remnant of the original platform to the South, the current tyre business now own most of that site, and it is not practical to reinstate this.
- Funding for the platform now seems probable as it is detailed in the Hendy report, and further development work will be in the hands of Network Rail.
 - MRDG must ensure that whatever design is implemented, the North pedestrian route is incorporated, and at least passive provision is made for a bus corridor.

5. Trans Wilts Rail Partnership (TWCRP) and Community Interest Company (TWCIC)

TW issues consider the services and general issues for the entire TW corridor. The following summary lists the key issues that relate directly to the Melksham station.

- The first TWCIC AGM was held on 6th February 2016. MRDG was represented by 3 members.
 - The TW annual report and accounts for 2015 is available at <http://transwilts.org/tw/images/TWCRP/TW-Annual-report-2015.pdf>
 - Membership (Friends) of TWCIC is open to individuals and businesses. Several MRDG members are 'Friends' on a personal basis. It was agreed that Friends will automatically become TWCIC Members, unless they choose not to.
 - A key issue is that of service / route designation, and therefore being an obligation under the service franchise TOC.
 - Wilton Parkway station, and through trains from Swindon to Salisbury/Southampton airport are key objectives in the next few years.

- Amongst the achievements highlighted over the past 3 years are:
 - (in 2015) the 7th highest (in the UK) percentage increase in usage over the corridor
- With the reduction in bus services planned (in some cases implemented already), the Transwiltts rail route may become the dominant public transport mode on this corridor. However the TWCIC are also pressing for retention of many of the bus services particularly late night, as part of an integrated transport service.
- Further disruptions to services is foreseen over Easter in 2016 & 2017 with services not running between Bath and Bristol. This will result in the Cardiff – Portsmouth service again being diverted as a Swindon-Portsmouth service, with a two hourly stop frequency at Melksham. There is a possibility that 'via Melksham' tickets will only be valid for trains that stop at Melksham. This is under review.
- **Alison Christy** will distribute TW timetable wallets amongst local residents to encourage service usage.

6. Operational grant to WC

- WC will be submitting an application for operational funding for transport over the TW corridor, emphasising pedestrian/cycling modes (such as a feeder cycle routes etc). Possible projects should be identified asap, but could include
 - Publicity and travel plans.
 - Related 'special' bus operations.
 - Link between Scotland Road and Murray Walk upgraded for better pedestrian access using proposed ew route by Aldi.
 - Possible late train service from Swindon.

7. Christmas Special

- *Accounts for the 17th annual Santa Special, held on 13th December 2015, have been finalised. Costs were £702.24 against an income from tickets of £895, showing a profit of £192.76.*
 - Particular thanks were expressed to Peter Blackburn for his donation of refreshments, and to Graham Ellis for use of Well House Manor in preparations.
- Two return journeys were made (14.49 and 16:44 ex MKM to SWI) using a strengthened (2 car) train.
- 116 passengers were taken (53 children), and it was felt to be a very successful event.
- Thanks also once more to Paul Johnson as 'Santa'

8. Banking

- Rolf Brindle is proceeding with opening a regular cheque based account at HSBC. Ideally all cheques would require two signatures, although a low limit value for single signed cheques might be possible.
- Current banking regulations require considerable paperwork to ensure the account is being used for legitimate purposes, and this is taking some time.

9. Finance

- A grant application has been made to MWPC
- Payment of £268 from Westbury TIC for the Santa trip 2014 has yet to be received.

10. AOB

- None.

11. Next meeting dates

- **Friday 29 April 2016 - AGM**
- Friday 24 June 2016
- Friday 30 September 2016
- Friday 25 November 2016

- 5 March 2016 TWSW Taunton
- 16 April 2016 TransWiltts Link Red Lion, Salisbury