

Meldreth, Shepreth & Foxtton Rail User Group Inaugural Meeting
23 February 2010, 19.00– 21.00
Sheltered Housing Communal Room, Elin Way, Meldreth

Minutes

Attendees/Station:		Apologies:	
Beatrice Fisher, Meldreth	BF	Ollie Kenzie, Shepreth	OK
Sue Hanson, Meldreth	SuH	Tom Blundell, Shepreth	TB
Jane Eggleton, Meldreth	JaE	Meb Somani, Shepreth	MS
Jim Eggleton, Meldreth	JiE	Melanie Hickey, Meldreth	MH
Patricia Evans, Meldreth	PE	Christine Adams, Shepreth	CA
Charlie Kenzie, Shepreth	CK		
Martin Kenzie, Shepreth	MK		
Nick Willers, Meldreth	NW		
Rebecca Willers, Shepreth	RW		
Laura Mungovan, Shepreth (Minutes)	LM		
David Grech, Whaddon	DG		
Robin Tunnah, Melbourn	RT		
Surinder Soond, Shepreth	SS		
Jose Hales, Meldreth	JH		
Peter Draper, Meldreth	PD		
Steve Hawkins, Meldreth	StH		
John Evans, Meldreth	JE		
Simon Bedlow, Meldreth	SB		
Jonathan Burn, Meldreth	JB		
Susan van de Ven, Meldreth (Chair)	SV		

- 1. Welcome and introduction**
 SV welcomed all members, pointing out that there are many users from other villages who use the stations in Foxtton, Shepreth and Meldreth. No Foxtton users attended this evening's meeting.

- 2. Background to formation of user group**
 - a. Rail campaign impetus in 2008 and continuing rail campaign*
 - Student fare rise
 FCC have agreed terms with CCC on student fees during term times. We don't know whether fares will drop a lot, but it's a start that they're communicating and that fares will be pre-published, consistent and stable.
 - Car park charges
 The car parks in Meldreth and Shepreth are not being used because of the charges incurred. SV has escalated this issue with Larry Heyman at FCC who is more flexible. TBC
 - Booking office reduced hours
 Saturday booking office hours saved.
 - Continuing campaign by Meldreth Manor community for disabled access improvements

3. Feedback from attendees, by station

- *Student fare rise*

There was a lot of confusion experienced by young people and their parents about season ticket fares and where they could apply for these. Fares were also found to be inconsistent depending on where they applied (for example, FCC vs National Express).

Students also cannot use their Young Person's Railcard before 10.00. If a student cannot afford to buy a season ticket, they may wish to buy a ticket on they day, but cannot receive a discount because they travel before 10.00.

- *Car park charges*

Meldreth: commuters often park in the street as a direct consequence of the car park charges. Accidents do occur, but if no-one's injured, these aren't noted by the police.

Ideas:

- NCP to held administer restricted parking between 11.00–12.00, as at North Herts where FCC is collaborating with local authority?
- Meldreth residents would favour double yellow lines, but the County Council won't pay for these so it's up to parish councils.

Shepreth: FCC need to look at this car park as a business model – to charge £2.50 a day might get 2 cars a day; to charge £1 a day may get 10 cars a day instead. However, when FCC introduced the £1 charge as an initial 3-month trial, this didn't work. FCC has agreed to look at their figures again.

Members discussed other ideas:

- Have Parish Councils written to FCC to express their concerns? Is it worth asking them to pressurise? SV has been reporting incidents, but so far there hasn't been much action. This Group may help provide pressure. One member suggested a campaign for Group members to attend Parish Council meetings to raise issues on behalf of the Group.
- Why won't FCC consider free parking? If they make exceptions, this may force them to make other exceptions. Apparently, we have the lowest parking charges in FCC's patch.
- Charges are higher in Royston because of the faster trains, however one member noticed that prices have gone up dramatically in the last 5 years.
- FCC say that our problem is unique, yet we know that there have been similar issues with Welwyn, Hatfield and Potters Bar stations.
- The land is owned by Network Rail and leased to FCC, so what will happen if FCC lose their franchise?
- What is the point of paying for parking if you already pay for your train ticket? For example, the Park & Ride sites offer free parking and passengers only pay their bus fare.

- The Government is trying to encourage green practices, instead these restrictions encourage us to use our cars.
- Our villages are small and don't have many options. FCC has a responsibility to the local community, especially if we cannot resolve knock-on traffic issues. There is a legal obligation to keep the roads free for emergency vehicles.

- *Continuing campaign by Meldreth Manor community for disabled access improvements*

The Station Road area where Meldreth meets Melbourn has dropped curbs and a layby – Meldreth Manor residents are happy to be dropped off at this area in order to catch the train. However, there are many issues that need to be addressed. Is the station accessible from Melbourn? Paths may have to be adapted. Any ramp that is constructed must follow the same standards for any paths that are adapted. The landowner must be approached. At the moment, this path has permissive cycling rights, granted by the landowner.

Sustrans have come to look at the access issues in order to find a way to use their Links to School grant money. Unfortunately the proposed project was unable to meet health and safety requirements at one snag along the route. However, FCC have now agreed to bid for “Access for All” grant money for a disabled ramp to the southbound platform.

The Cycling Officer from CCC is putting constant pressure on FCC to look for improvements to the current cycle wheeling channel at Meldreth.

4. Mechanics of MSF Rail User Group

a. Benefits of joining Railfuture

Railfuture will help publicise the Group and assist with ongoing issues. We have been asked to agree “must-haves” and “aspirations” to forward to them.

b. Railfuture East Anglia joining terms

Constitution circulated by SV and agreed by those present. It was agreed that members should pay £1 at first meeting to cover costs for the year; if a higher fee was needed to cover costs such as room hire, then the charge would be reviewed.

c. Appointment of officers

Chairman – Susan van de Ven

Secretary – TBC

Treasurer – Patricia Evans

Station liaison reps – Simon Bedlow (Meldreth), Laura Mungovan (Shepreth), TBC (Foxton) (Parish Council to be approached)

Website coordinator – Jose Hales

d. Communicating with FCC

SV explained that FCC wanted her to be the contact point as county councillor. Other issues to be carried forward to next meeting: announcements made at the station, in the media or passenger information boards; emergency timetables; FCC website.

<p>5. Action points to agree (A), including “must-haves” (MH) and “aspirations” (ASP)</p> <p>A Letter to Meldreth Parish Council expressing concerns about dangerous traffic</p> <p>A Letter to Shepreth Parish Council expressing concerns about a valuable village amenity being empty because of high car park charges</p>	<p>Meldreth Liaison? Shepreth Liaison?</p>
<p>A Post minutes on Parish Council notice boards</p> <p>A Request the Neighbourhood Police Panel to keep an eye out for illegal parking in the area between the Station entrance at Meldreth and the first chicane in High Street.</p> <p>A Create a link from village websites to new website.</p> <p>A Delay repay scheme on FCC website. Members to publicise more through posters in the villages and parish magazines.</p> <p>A Shepreth Wildlife Park to maintain a list of those using Shepreth Station.</p> <p>MH Drop the car park charge to £1 a day.</p> <p>MH Clear and accessible information about fares. Better communication with all schools and colleges.</p> <p>MH Ramps on southbound platform on Meldreth Station.</p> <p>ASP Drop fares for young people</p> <p>ASP Use Young Person’s Railcard in non-commuting direction before 10.00</p> <p>ASP Free parking in the car parks</p> <p>ASP Better provision for bikes on trains (this point to be carried forward to next meeting).</p> <p>ASP To improve timetables (this point to be carried forward to next meeting).</p>	<p>SV SV</p> <p>JH John Evans RW</p>
<p>6. Meeting cycle It was agreed to hold meetings in June, October and February.</p>	
<p>7. Any other urgent business Shepreth Wildlife Park expressed concerns at rumours that Shepreth Station may be closed. This is a concern for all business benefiting from this resource.</p>	
<p>Date of next meeting: 8pm, 16 June 2010, Foxton Village Hall</p>	