

## **NORTHAMPTON RAIL USERS' GROUP**

### **Minutes of meeting held 7th March 2009 at The Guildhall, Northampton**

**Present** Linda Addy, Michael Barlow, Simon Butterworth, Julie Chambers, Sandi Coles, Yousseff Cockbaine (LM), David Grayson (LM) John Ellerby (NCC), Malcolm Grice (VT), Gyde Horrocks, Alan Jones, Sally Keeble, James Kennedy (VT) , Paul Minton, Patrick Rawlinson, Mark Roberts, Roy Sears, Peter Smith, Geoff Steel, Paul Smith, Daniel Smith David Trill, Tom Welsh

**Apologies:** Fran Afonso, Colin Bricher, David Cheney, Shaun Hope, Mitzi Latham (L-M), Shaun Hope, Simon Mitchell, Elisabeth Townsend.

### **Minutes of Last Meeting**

Yousseff had sent apologies, otherwise accepted.

### **Website**

We welcomed Daniel Smith and thank him for his good work. The outline of the website is in the web, currently "Northamptonrailusersgroup.org.uk. It was agreed to go for the shorter NorthamptonRUG.org.uk.

For content:

- the about section should contain "aims and ambitions" and "current campaigns"
  - Paul Minton to provide input

- Join NRUG

- Members Area – minutes & agenda

- Links to timetables, NCC, LM, Virgin etc

- The case for a blog or discussion board was discussed but passed over as too difficult to moderate at this time.

The proposal is to "go live" on Geoff Hoon's visit.

London Midland Report (Youssef Cockbain)

RMT will strike next Friday and the following Monday resulting in an amended timetable for those 2 days. Youssef explained the background to the strike but this is an internal management issue for London Midland and not for NRUG to comment.

A new LM station manager and head of control will be put into Euston, and sit next to the announcer. This should improve communications and the general running of Euston.

A new Deputy Director Operations will go to Bletchley to strengthen negotiations with Network Rail.

In response to poor performance LM will add 3 free travel days on renewal of season tickets. This is in addition to the normal compensation scheme. Details on posters in the station.

February timekeeping – 72.6%, by 4<sup>th</sup> March back up to 80.5%. Cancellation figures were not available.

Sally mentioned that Mitzi had previously sent on the main reasons for delay and we found that useful.

Sunday working and cancellations is a 10 year old working day issue being addressed. Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March incident with the doors – unloading the train and virtually stranding the passengers at Hemel Hempstead is clearly seem as a major failure of passenger care by the management and the MD has required an inquiry and review into what happened and why. NRUG emphasised the serious nature of this incident and LM fully

understood that.

**Virgin** (James Kennedy & Malcolm Grice)

Virgin expressed a hope to manage the expectations of long distance commuters better in the re-franchise. They will also consider the use of Virgin capacity to relieve constrains MK to Euston.

They are happy to see their stats linked to the NRUG website.

The question of fares and routing via MK – was brought up – but this is a SRA/DfT issue rather than Virgin's.

Linda thanked James for seeing that one of the first class coaches was routinely declassified to ease crowding on the 07.12.

**Other business**

Geoff Hoon visit will be 2<sup>nd</sup> April – no other details yet

Meet the Manager on Euston Station Tuesday 16.30-19.30

Sally and Geoff Steel will follow up with MKRUG.

Concern over apparent repeated train failures was expressed – LM trying to sort this out with Siemens

Append Geoff's e-mails with Paul Fullwood to the minutes.

DfT have asked LM what they could do to fill the gap.

John Ellerby said the ICE programme was important and should be fought for.

**Next Meetings:** 4th April 2009, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2009

NORTHAMPTON RAIL USERS GROUP

Secretary: Paul Minton, e-mail pamin100@aol.com

Liaison Officer: Elisabeth Townsend, e-mail elisabeth-townsend@lineone.net

**Agenda for meeting on**

**Saturday 4th April 2009**

**at**

**THE GUILDHALL**

**NORTHAMPTON**

**at 10.00 AM**

1. 10.00 - Attendance and apologies
2. 10.02 - Minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> March meeting and matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda
3. 10.05 - London Midland Report
4. 10.20 - Virgin Report
5. 10.30 - Timetable & Service issues and campaigns
  - service usage figures etc
  - cancellation statistics etc
  - MKRUG meeting and way ahead
  - Geoff Hoon visit to Northampton
  - Transport Authority, RUGs, MKRUG, LM meeting
6. 11.30 Website update
- 7.11.45 - AOB (Please notify the Chair before the meeting of any items of AOB to be discussed.)
- 7.11.45 - Meeting closes

**Date of next meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2009, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

**Attachment: E-mails between Gerff Steel and Paul Fullwood**

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Paul Fullwood](#)

**To:** [Geoffrey Steel](#)

**Sent:** Thursday, March 05, 2009 10:54 AM

**Subject:** RE: COMMENTS ON WCML TIMETABLES - NORTHAMPTON

Geoffrey

Sorry for the late reply, I am in the process of chasing up various people and will give you an up to date (if likely to be incomplete) response tomorrow.

One comment I can make now is that I know that the Department for Transport have asked LM to consider what they can do to fill the gap caused by the withdrawal of the 7:12. The franchise manager is tasked to report back to Lord Adonis, so there is some political pressure (no doubt helped by Sally Keeble's efforts) to get this done but, as you would expect there are some "practical difficulties" the industry has put forward.

Will keep you informed.

Paul

Paul Fullwood

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**From:** Geoffrey Steel [<mailto:gsteel1947@yahoo.co.uk>]

**Sent:** 04 March 2009 21:59

**To:** Paul Fullwood

**Cc:** NRUG Secretary

**Subject:** Fw: COMMENTS ON WCML TIMETABLES - NORTHAMPTON

Dear Paul

Are you in a position to reply to my email dated 17th February 09?

Our next NRUG takes place on Saturday and I would like to report any progress on getting some improvements to our peak services to Northampton.

Also, perhaps you could get some loading data from Virgin Trains as I have noticed that there seems to be a lot of spare seats on the 1710 and 1810 North Wales services that pick up at Milton Keynes whilst the LM services are leaving full and standing.

Regards

Geoff Steel

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Geoffrey Steel <[gsteel1947@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gsteel1947@yahoo.co.uk)>

**To:** [paul.fullwood@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:paul.fullwood@passengerfocus.org.uk)

**Cc:** [stuart.baker@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.baker@dft.gsi.gov.uk); [julie.warburton@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:julie.warburton@passengerfocus.org.uk); NRUG Secretary <[pamin100@aol.com](mailto:pamin100@aol.com)>; Sally Keeble <[keeble@parliament.uk](mailto:keeble@parliament.uk)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 17 February, 2009 16:30:15

**Subject:** COMMENTS ON WCML TIMETABLES - NORTHAMPTON

Dear Paul

**WCML Timetables**

Please find attached a file containing some initial comments for consideration by the TOC's following the introduction of the new timetables.

I will be putting these forward at the next NRUG meeting for their comments / approval. I hope that the suggestions for improvements for Northampton will be given serious consideration.

In the meantime could you possibly find out when the resignalling works at Bletchley are going to take place and if there are any major shutdowns planned during 2009?

Geoff Steel

NRUG Member

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