

THE NORTHAMPTON RAIL USERS GROUP

www.northamptonrug.org.uk

**AGENDA for the AGM meeting on Saturday 8th September 2012
Time: 10am The Guildhall Northampton**

- 1. Chairman's Welcome**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Acceptance of Previous meetings Minutes**
- 4. London Midland (Neil Langford's) Report**
- 5. The NRUG Website**
- 6. London Midland Stakeholder Conference**
- 7. Rail Strategy – Chris Wragg**

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Minutes of meeting held Saturday 14th July 2012

In Attendance: Brian Binley MP. (Chairman). Paul Minton, Paul Anderson, Colin Bricher, Cllr John Caswell, David Cheney, Cllr Stephen Hibbert, Shaun Hope (Treasurer,) Alan Jones, Cllr Penny Flavell, Simon Mitchell, Cllr Beverly Mornell, Patrick Rawlinson, Paul Smith, Geoff Steel, David Trill, Tom Welsh, Martin Ball (Network Rail), Timothy Webb, Cllr Don Edwards, Liz Cox.

Apologies Given: Cllr David Mackintosh, Cllr Stephen Legg, Daniel Smith,

Minutes of the last meeting: Were accepted

Chairmans opening remarks & welcome:

Brian opened the meeting by thanking all present for attending, particularly welcoming Martin Ball From Network Rail.

BB went on to state that NRUG is most appreciative of the railway support, and the link North to South from Northampton is most important to the town.

Martin Ball / Network Rail: Martin introduced himself to those present, his role with NR is as Infrastructure Manager for the Bletchley area. He outlined his role within NR to the meeting, and the condition of the railways and tracks locally.

BB asked Martin to give him a brief report in writing on the "Power" locally available as it is thought that there is a problem, he can then use this information at future meetings with NR.

Upgrade work is being done in the Hanslope/Bletchley areas as an on-going programme.

MB then went onto to answer questions from members present at the meeting.

Paul Minton asked MB whose responsibility it was to maintain the lines locally, MB offered to supply details of this along with the history background.

BB thanked MB for all his input and in-depth discussion in the meeting and attending this morning's meeting.

BB discussed the on-going plan of a 4th Platform at the new Northampton Station, BB had already met Brian Higgins and asked for MB's support for a 4th Platform to be included in the new station plans. MB agreed to support this idea, BB suggested to MB that NR had some articles/editorial in the local Newspaper (The Chronicle & Echo) regarding Network Rail and the new developments coming to our town in the future.

Further to the meeting Geoff Steel has sent a summary of our key concerns to Martin. These are listed in the extract below:

"On behalf of the group we were delighted that you could attend our recent meeting and to explain the issues you face on a day to day basis for keeping the railway operational and to minimise the impact on train service performance.

For Northampton railusers there have been a number of key issues that we have raised at previous meetings in respect of the rail infrastructure that we believe would give greater reliability and flexibility to train operators to serve our expanding town.

1 Northampton to Rugby Line Speed - (Now 75mph max). The DfT had advised us that any line-speed increase could only be considered when the route is resignalled. Original plans under the WCRM project had been shelved due to the need to reduce spiralling costs. Now that the route is being resignalled it is hoped that opportunity will be taken to increase the current line speed from 75mph as track conditions allow.

2 *Northampton Station: With the reconstruction of the station due to start sometime in the near future NRUG is keen to see a fourth through platform constructed to increase capacity and provide more flexibility particularly with trains starting and terminating at this station.*

3 *Depot Points Heater: Following problems last winter, NRUG request that suitable points heaters are provided within the Kings Heath train depot and on key points and crossings connecting the depot with the running lines. This is to minimise disruption in getting trains in and out of the depot during times of bad weather, in particular when the weather is cold and icy.*

4 *Expansion at DIRFT: It is understood that the ongoing huge expansion at the freight terminal on the route between Northampton and Rugby will mean even more freight trains using the route. Whilst this a welcome development for getting lorries off roads, NRUG is concerned that this will have an adverse impact on the reliability of the route on passenger services. Under the WCRM it was proposed to include a full length freight loop at Hillmorton so that freight services could be held in the loop when access to the depot is restricted. We are asking NR to revisit this need which was raised by NRUG as part of the Route Utilisation Strategy and acknowledged as a potential "gap" in the infrastructure.*

5 *BLETCHELY RESIGNALLING - It is understood that there will be some disruption during 2013 when this section of the main line is resignalled and NRUG would be grateful for details of any blockades planned when the works are commissioned.*

Finally thanks again for your contribution to the meeting and we hope our needs will be taken on board at the earliest opportunity.

Regards

Geoff Steel
for NRUG

Transport Plan:

John Ellerby's presence at the meetings has always been highly appreciated, and the group were disappointed to hear that he might attend on a less frequent basis in the future. BB told the meeting that he would talk to Jim Harker (NCC Leader) on this matter. Cllr John Caswell also offered to put pressure on NBC to have an input in our meetings too.

Concern was expressed over the transport plan being outdated, and that the new transport plan should be sufficiently complete in itself and not a "master plan" with too much detail to be left to daughter documents to be developed at a later date.

Tom Welsh offered to put together an email of his thoughts on the Transport Plan too.

Website

Paul Smith will invite his son Dan Smith to the next meeting to discuss the website and the possible addition of a "fares finder" to it.

AOB:

1) Shaun Hope presented the Treasurers report to the meeting, it was stated that the Bank account with Santander currently has £532.49 in the account.

BB & SH also mentioned to all present that the Annual Subscriptions are now due please, which are £5.00 per person for the year.(Please send your payments to the Treasurer)

2) John Markham has promised he will be attending the next meeting in September, Neil Langford will also be present.

3)Paul Smith requested that the next meetings Agenda should include the Website.

4) It was agreed that also on the next Agenda would be a debate re-Bedford-Northampton Line Be re-opened, NRUG members present today agreed in principal to support an ongoing debate

5) It was agreed that in the November meeting we hold a debate on all issues/objectives on the HS2 project be discussed at great length.

6)BB concluded that we invite a representative both from NBC & NCC to be present at the Nov meeting for a more detailed discussions.

7)Cllr Beverly Morrell said that she was grateful of this debate in Nov, and that the people of Northampton should have this opportunity to learn of all new developments in the Town.

8) Tom Welsh mentioned we should be promoting the "Enterprise Zone" & advertise NRUG's support now, money is limited, but posters at the station leading to the Heritage Gateway would be a good way of promoting this.

BB finished by telling the meeting that getting companies with jobs into the town & filling those jobs is most important now.

The meeting was then declared as closed.- time: 11.50am

The next meeting will be on Saturday 8th September 2012.at 10am.