

## CROWBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

To all Members of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee (with copies to all other Members for information).

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee to be held at the Town Hall, The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 7.30 pm when it is proposed to transact the following business:-

Town Clerk  
18<sup>th</sup> July 2014

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### ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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Questions from members of the public (15 minutes maximum)

**1. APOLOGIES**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**3. MINUTES**

**3.1. Minutes – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

**3.2. Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)**

**3.2.1 Pedestrian crossing at Beacon Academy**

*The Lead Member resolved at a meeting 9.06.14 to approve construction of the pedestrian crossing as part of the capital programme for local transport improvements 2014/15.*

**3.2.2 Lighting improvements at Jarvis Brook pedestrian crossing (7073)**

*An application has been submitted for match funding – the closing date for the first round of applications is 31.07.14.*

**3.2.3 Planting at Clokes Corner (7023)**

*The hanging basket trees are now in position and the baskets installed.*

**3.2.3 Grazing at Palesgate Lane Meadow (7071)**

*The ponies have grazed the land and have now been removed from the site.*

**4. RAILWAY REPORT**

*Report from John Coleman.*

**5. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

**5.1 The condition of major road signs**

- 5.2 To consider items for the Strengthening Local Relationships meeting  
1<sup>st</sup> September
- 5.3 East Sussex County Council consultation on proposed changes to  
subsidised bus services
6. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
  - 6.1 East Sussex County Council consultation on draft East Sussex,  
South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Sites Plan
  - 6.2 To consider a request to install a dog waste bin to serve the footpath  
between Beacon Gardens and Old Lane
  - 6.3 Litter clearance and request to remove the litter bin at Goldsmiths  
Avenue
  - 6.4 Trees at Clokes Corner
7. CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS
  - 7.1 To review report of tasks completed against Management Plans
8. LIGHTING
  - 8.1 To note replacement lanterns at 4 Alderbrook Road and 11 Whitehill  
Road
9. FINANCE
  - 9.1 Management Account Reports to 31<sup>st</sup> May and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014
10. URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR  
NOTING and/or INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

## **RAIL REPORT for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**29<sup>th</sup> JULY 2014**

### **MEETINGS ATTENDED**

#### **Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

East Sussex County Council attended but Southern was not represented.

It was reported that recently services have been of variable quality. In addition to the usual and growing peak time overcrowding, the reliability and punctuality of services is quite often poor: sometimes due to signalling problems and sometimes to train failures. These may happen all over the network but often affect the Uckfield line passengers. A recent lightning strike also caused severe disruption.

When there are difficulties with the services the communication of the problems and information regarding the incident and the responsive action is not being passed on to passengers. For example, replacement buses arrive at stations without having knowledge of the destinations to which they are to go and sometimes of the route they are meant to follow.

It was reported that the Committee had received a letter from Go-via (to whom it had written on learning of their success in winning the new TSGN franchise) which stated that:-

“Additional capacity will be provided as soon as possible to relieve crowding on the busy Uckfield route. Timing will depend on when suitable diesel rolling stock becomes available (likely to be after electrification elsewhere on the network). At that point an additional 14 carriages into London Bridge will be provided in the three-hour morning peak (an increase of more than 50%), and an additional 10 carriages from London Bridge in the evening peak (an increase of more than 40%).”

The letter also invited a representative of the Committee to the Southern Stakeholders' Meeting in Brighton to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> July, at which Govia Thameslink Railway would be making a presentation. It was agreed that a representative of the Committee should attend and this would be arranged.

It was noted that GTR was itself making a presentation on 10<sup>th</sup> July at Euston and that it could be useful for someone to attend here. It was agreed that I should represent the Committee at Euston, and my notes follow below.

It was also agreed that a letter be written to our MP requesting him to establish the validity of the franchise contract with regard to the provision of the additional trains/carriages.

It was further agreed that local PPC's should be invited to attend our future meetings to enable us to establish future political support.

ESCC are keen to stress the importance for economic growth that it attaches to improved rail links including the Uckfield line.

## **Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) Stakeholders' Meeting at 3pm 10th July 2014**

The Meeting was provided with a presentation by Govia staff to give more details of their new franchise.

Go-via is a company jointly owned by the Go-Ahead transport group and Keolis a subsidiary of SNCF the French state rail system. The seven year franchise will run from September 2014. Go-via will operate the franchise under the name of Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) which will include the Thameslink and Great Northern franchises (currently run by First Group as First Capital Connect) and in July 2015 will absorb the Southern and Gatwick Express franchises currently separately run by Go-via. These will retain their present branding.

Unlike most rail franchises this is a contract for the provision of services and the revenue returns and risks remain with the DfT. This is because of the complexity of operating the trains through the period of the remainder of the Thameslink project.

The service requirement has been closely defined by the DfT. The definition covers the core timetables and the train passenger seat capacities.

The presentation confirmed the information provided by the letter referred to above in respect of the franchise capacity provisions for the Uckfield line.

In addition, as far as the Uckfield line is concerned the timetables will be similar to the present one (although temporary changes are probable throughout the Thameslink engineering project).

The trains will continue to be diesel powered and the present single-track sections of line will remain.

There is no mention of any of future work towards electrification, re-doubling of the single- line sections, re-instatement of the Lewes – Uckfield line or BML2.

During the new franchise considerable benefits will be introduced and widespread over the lines served, including:-

New customer apps giving loading information, door to door journey planning and car park availability information.

Audio and visual real-time train running information.

Real-time information on replacement buses linked to station customer information systems and the apps.

New flexible season ticketing will be trialled to with the aim of reducing the cost for journeys taken outside the peak hours.

Any future fare increases will be in-line with DfT policy. (As now.)

The Key smart-card ticket purchasing will be extended throughout the franchise.

The full presentation may be viewed on the Go-via web-site under the GTR banner.

The presentation was followed by questions and answers and those relating to the Uckfield line were:-

The date at which additional trains/carriages would be provided for the Uckfield line services was not known at present: however negotiations with other operators were ongoing at the present time. The negotiations were very difficult but would be successfully resolved and the trains would be provided as soon as possible.

It was then, stated that the service improvements promised for many coastal destinations would not result in a worsening of Uckfield line services. Indeed, it was possible that the much better timetabling that had become possible should result in a better and more reliable service overall.

Later in the Q & A session Govia stated that they expected to bid for the next franchise which it is assumed will be of the normal revenue risk type and would make every effort to assist in the development work for further improvements for the Uckfield line in the next Control periods, if this was required. They have been led to understand that electrification is both difficult and expensive because of the very poor supply situation that exists in Wealden and other parts of Sussex.

It appears that any progress at all with any of these aspirations will depend upon the Network Rail Route Study and of course the DfT's view.

## **OTHER**

### **Crowborough Station Frontage**

Two large holes have been dug in the grass strip and two or more of the newly planted trees removed. Please advise Sharon Gray at the Community Rail Partnership if you know who is responsible for the damage and who owns the strip of land concerned.

### **Network Rail**

The draft of Network Rail's Sussex Route Study will be published for consultation in September this year.

Work on the new Uckfield station car park will also start in September.

J N Coleman

21<sup>st</sup> July 2014