

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee held at the Town Hall,
The Broadway, Crowborough on Tuesday 27th May 2014 at 7.30 pm

Present	Councillors	Quentin Burch Michael Cooke Elizabeth Fermor Philip Fermor Beverley Johnstone * Kay Moss Ronald Reed Wendy Scrace Andrew Steen Sandra Timms	Vice Chairman Chairman
Also present		John Coleman Colin Stocks Cllr Richard Stogdon Cllr Peter Cowie Philippa Hewes David Foot Susan Barnard	Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Comm. Tree Warden, Wealdlink East Sussex County Council Crowborough Town Council Town Clerk Operations Manager Operations Administrator

* *Denotes non attendance*

APOLOGIES

None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MINUTES

Minutes – 25th March 2014

7177 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2014 as confirmed be signed by the Chairman.

Minutes – 13th May 2014

7178 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2014 as confirmed be signed by the Chairman.

Matters Outstanding (including reports on updates)

Pedestrian crossing at Beacon Academy

Cllr Richard Stogdon reported that a meeting has been held between County Council officers and objectors to the crossing. The application has been referred to the Lead

Member's meeting on 9th June. NOTED

Planting at Clokes Corner (7023)

Flowering shrubs have been planted. The hanging basket trees will be installed in time for the Summer Fun Day on 31st May. NOTED

Grazing at Palesgate Lane Meadow (7071)

The fencing has been installed. The introduction of the ponies has been delayed as there is currently insufficient food for them in the meadow. NOTED

Bus shelter at Croft Road

The bus shelter has been installed and is being used. NOTED

RAILWAY REPORT

A supplementary report had been circulated prior to the meeting. John Coleman further reported that, in addition to the Uckfield Station site, Network Rail has bought the West Station at Tunbridge Wells; both sites are vital to any future reinstatement of the line. Peak time capacity increases on the Uckfield line may be addressed by extending platforms and adding more carriages. Cllr Richard Stogdon advised that the reason the 2008 Re-instatement Study reported an insufficient business case for reopening the line was due to the requirement for bridges to be built over every road where there was a level crossing. Cllr Peter Cowie requested the Committee consider inviting a senior executive from the rail franchisee to discuss the situation on the Uckfield line.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

To note report from the Wealdlink Forum (North Wealden Community Transport)

Cllr Sandra Timms has been appointed as the Town Council representative to the Wealdlink Forum. Colin Stocks emphasised that Wealdlink's main aim is to help counter social isolation. Members were urged to invite groups or individuals involved with people in this position to contact Wealdlink.

It was **AGREED** that a letter would be sent to East Sussex County Council in support of the continuation of the 226 bus service as the service is so well used.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

To consider a request to install a dog waste bin in Blackness Road

7179 RESOLVED not to install a dog waste bin in Blackness Road.

Litter clearance

It was acknowledged that Crowborough has a growing litter problem but that organising a town-wide litter clearing day for volunteers would not be practical. The Town Council provides staff and equipment for Quality Street events.

It was **AGREED** that the Environment Warden would be asked to identify whether significant amounts of litter emanate from particular establishments.

It was **AGREED** that Wealden District Council, as the litter authority, should be contacted regarding public awareness/education campaigns.

The Environment Warden had reported that some litter bins were being used for the disposal of household waste. It was suggested that Neighbourhood Watch groups may be able to help address this problem.

Report on role of Tree Warden

Colin Stocks outlined his work as Tree Warden, which mainly consists of reviewing applications to Wealden District Council for work to trees subject to tree preservation orders or situated within conservation areas. He also receives updates from the Tree Council and will pass on any initiatives likely to be of interest to the Town Council.

CROWBOROUGH'S NATURAL HABITATS

To review report of tasks completed against Management Plans

A list of tasks completed in April and May 2014 as part of the Management Plans for the Country Park, The Ghyll, Palesgate Lane Meadow and The Bluebell Wood was reviewed and noted.

Fallen trees that do not obstruct paths are usually left in place as wildlife havens, particularly for insects.

To review the Health and Safety Statement Policy for Volunteer Workers

7180 **RESOLVED** to accept the Health and Safety Statement Policy for Volunteer Workers as amended.

To review the Tree Inspection Policy

7181 **RESOLVED** to accept the Tree Inspection Policy as amended.

POLICE

To review CCTV in Crowborough

The Town Clerk reported on a visit to the CCTV control room for East Sussex. The monitoring station is to move to Lewes and merge with the West Sussex unit. The

Police are keen for Crowborough's four cameras to remain in place as they provide a valuable police resource. The current contract is due for renewal in 2015.

FINANCE

Management Account Reports to 31st March and 30th April 2014 (the reports at 31st March are noted subject to year end adjustments)

7182 **RESOLVED** to adopt the Management Account Reports for the two periods ending 31st March and 30th April 2014.

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

It was reported that, following the introduction of the Dog Control Order, Wealden District Council is producing new signs. It was suggested that members may wish to consider possible locations for the signs.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

RAIL REPORT for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 27th MAY 2014

MEETINGS ATTENDED

There have been no meetings that I should normally attend since my last report for the March Environment Committee Meeting. The next meeting of the Community Rail Partnership Stakeholders is on the 20th May and that of the Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee is on the 21st May. I should be able to provide briefings of both at the Environment Meeting on 27th May.

Network Rail

The Network Rail work plan for Control Period 5, which runs from April 2014 to March 2019, does include platform lengthening for the Uckfield Line and this almost certainly will include at Crowborough station. The DfT have published the Network Rail document "Brighton Main Line Emerging Capacity Strategy for CP6 Pre-Route Study report for the DfT" and their letter of agreement with its findings.

The report essentially describes the capacity problems of the Brighton Main Line and in particular those of the flat junctions and lack of platforms at the major stations from Coulsdon northwards through East Croydon to Victoria and London Bridge.

The report provides information of possible schemes for overcoming these problems in the period 2019 to 2024. These schemes are all likely to be difficult and expensive to carry out. If implemented they will only boost marginally the number of trains on the existing main line but they would significantly improve reliability. The report goes on to say that because of these London area route problems, re-instatement of the Lewes – Uckfield line would not provide any real answers to them in the short to medium term and would not enable additional trains be run through to London. The findings of the 2008 Re-instatement Study (that there was an insufficient business case) also remain valid. The new report does support the existing long-term protection of the line formation along the route and the DfT has agreed with all of this. The report does include the platform lengthening mentioned earlier and the use of more carriages. The draft of the full Sussex Route Study will be published later this year and the DfT have since confirmed that Network Rail will be considering the BML2 proposals in that study.

The New Franchise

It is understood that the new TGN&S franchise operator now may not be announced until June 2014.

J N Coleman 19th March 2014

FURTHER RAIL BRIEFING for the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 27th MAY 2014

MEETINGS ATTENDED

Community Rail Partnership Stakeholders' 20th May 2014

Southern attended the meeting.

It was noted that Chris Burchell, Southern's Managing Director will be leaving the company and would be becoming the managing director of Arriva Trains UK. In addition Network Rail's Simon Chapman was moving to another part of that of that company. It was hoped that their successors would be just as supportive of the CRP.

The Uckfield line timetable remains more or less unchanged. Five suburban services have been deleted due to the platform work at London Bridge.

The young trees in front of Crowborough station are growing well.

The additional plant containers were still being sought. However, it was noted that the existing ones are looking a bit neglected.

There are normally plenty of car parking spaces in the station car park at Eridge, but the excessive number of parked cars in the neighbouring roads appears to be only marginally reduced since the white lines appeared.

The possibility of introducing cycle hire facilities at stations is being investigated.

Two other lines supported by the Sussex CRP are celebrating the 150 year anniversary of their openings.

The Barnham to Bognor on Sunday 1st June, and the Brighton to Seaford on Saturday 7th June. Details are available on the CRP web-site.

Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee 21st May 2014

Recently the service has not been particularly good. The overall reliability figure for the Southern services for our area has been 86.8%: well short of what is expected. The Monday and Tuesday of last week were not at all good. The problems appear to have been Network Rail's for the most part, but were not helped by Southern not knowing what was happening and failing to provide correct information to passengers. Southern apologised to passengers the next day.

Southern confirmed that all their diesel trains have now been through the recent refurbishment and overhaul programme and returned to normal service

It was learned that the planning application for the new Uckfield station car park will be considered in early June and if approved work could start immediately. It is believed that the daily charge may be £4.

The Key ticketing system has been extended so that tickets for journeys to the London stations can be bought using it.

The draft letter which it is proposed to send to the future train operator of our franchise, when appointed by the DfT, was discussed and will be suitably revised. The letter states the priorities that we should like to see pursued by the new company as soon as possible.

OTHER

On Friday 23rd May the DfT announced that they had selected Go-Via to operate the new Thameslink Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) franchise.

Go-Via will take-over from First Group in September 2014 and the First Capital Connect services will become Go-Via Thameslink.

Go-Via already operates the Southern and Gatwick Express services and these will continue to run as now until July 2015 when they will be absorbed into the TGSN franchise. The branding of Southern and Gatwick Express services will be retained after joining TSGN.

The press releases by Go-Via and the DfT do not mention the Uckfield line specifically. However, I understand that the DfT's accompanying interactive map states that the line will have capacity increases of 50% in the morning peak and 40% in the evening peak: there is no date stated for these improvements. It might be expected that the date will be December 2016, as specified in the DfT's tender documents.

The contract between the DfT and Go-Via should be signed ten days after Friday's announcement.

J N Coleman
26th May 2014