

DRAFT

SEVENOAKS RAIL TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Annual Meeting – 18 October 2011

Chairman: Roger Johnson

Present: Speakers and around 20 SRTA members

Apologies: Mr. M. Fallon M.P

1. Chairman's Report

Roger Johnson said that it had been a busy year with a lot of activity for the Association in the aftermath of the snow disruption. Although there had been an extensive engineering response little had been done to improve passenger information where there had been serious deficiencies.

On normal train services the Association continued to be concerned about the threat to Cannon Street fast services, but it was now hoped that most of these would in the end be retained. There continued to be a threat to Bat & Ball services but we had been reassured by SER's statement that they did not intend to change these during the current franchise. There were concerns about the disruption to services during the London Bridge rebuilding and it was still unclear what the post-2018 Thameslink services would be like.

The Chairman paid tribute to Ray Gulliver, who had had to retire from the SRTA Committee for health reasons. He thanked Ray for representing the interests of Otford travellers diligently for many years.

2. Bat & Ball

Keith Alderman as a regular commuter gave his perspective on Bat & Ball station and services. Signs were in the wrong places and the electronic train information display usually just said "Welcome to Bat & Ball". He called on SER to introduce a regular half-hourly service, better connections especially at Sevenoaks, CCTV, earlier and later trains, improved access to the "up" platform, reliable information systems, seats and a ticket vending machine. Mike Gibson (SER) offered an on-site meeting to follow up the points made.

3. Network Rail Report

Mike Smith said that the station improvements would commence after Christmas 2011 and subject to contract would complete by September 2012. Changes would include a rationalisation of ticket windows, more ticket vending machines, larger and refurbished toilets, a wider concourse and approach ramp, new CIS screens, CCTA, increased retail space, new cladding, 300 double stacked cycle spaces, 75 extra motorcycle spaces, and new platform shelters.

In preparation for the forthcoming winter conductor rail heating would have been installed in 120 locations by mid November. 2 more multi-purpose vehicles had been bought, bringing the total to 8. Twenty 375-trains had been fitted with in-service anti-icing capability. Network Rail had also bought extra stocks of salt, 220 hand pushed ploughs, 16 motorised snow clearance vehicles (including one at Sevenoaks) and 4000 foil blankets. A contingency timetable had been agreed and

was ready to implement and the station public address system was now directly linked to central control.

4. Southeastern Railways Report

Mike Gibson said that overall punctuality was now 91% against a target of 85%. In the 2010 winter communications had been the biggest failure. Swanley would have full disabled access in time for the Paralympics 2012. SER had no plans to alter the Bat & Ball services, but had noted what was said in the Kent Action Plan.

5. Bus company reports

Arriva said that changes in 2011 included off peak journeys on the 452, reinstatement of the 402 Weald service and new buses for the 402 route. Arriva were considering a Plusbus ticket service for Sevenoaks.

Go-Coach had relocated to Otford. The 401 was now a commercial service Monday to Saturday, which gave the company more control over fares and timetables. A loop had been introduced at the Westerham end of the route, to improve time-keeping. At Hildenborough the 200 commuter service was well used with takings of £100 a day.

6. Other points

- * concern was raised about public transport services to Pembury Hospital. Cllr Peter Fleming said that it was disappointing that there were bus routes from Maidstone to the new Hospital but not from Sevenoaks.
- * there would be changes to Greenwich services during the Olympics but no significant changes to Sevenoaks services. Nevertheless getting season ticket holders to and from work during the period would not be an easy job given the expected congestion at London stations.

7. Formal business

The Annual Report and the Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2010 were accepted and approved.

A motion having been proposed, Roger Johnson was re-elected unanimously as Chairman of the Association and Andrew Stott was re-elected unanimously as Secretary.

Andrew Stott proposed that the other members of the Committee (Mr. Houghton, Ms Canet, Cllrs. Clayton, Parry and Gulliver and Messrs. Dolby-Gray, Miles, and Ryan) should be re-elected en bloc and the motion was unanimously carried.

Andrew Stott
Secretary
Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association