

SEVENOAKS RAIL TRAVELLERS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Thursday 17 October 2019 at 7.30pm

Chairman: Tony Clayton

Attendees: Rt Hon Sir Michael Fallon MP and 22 members, supporters and guests of the Association

1. Chairman's introduction

The Chairman welcomed members, supporters and guests and presented the Committee's Annual Report for 2018-19.

He said that after two extension of the existing Franchise, the Department for Transport had now abandoned the franchise competition and extended the existing Franchise until the middle of 2020. It was unclear when the promised benefits of the new franchise would be delivered or what would be the fate of the planned 2022 timetable revisions.

Continuing, he said that it was very disappointing that Thameslink had again postponed the introduction of the new fast Maidstone East to London via Otford. Plenty of time had been given for the new Thameslink timetable to be sorted out, and Thameslink would not now give a date for the introduction of the promised service.

There was also no progress on the longer-term strategic issue of providing additional capacity between Sevenoaks and London - despite the Government's desire for yet more housebuilding in the area. Without strategic investment peak-hour standing from Sevenoaks would become even more prevalent than it already was.

The Association had been working with Sevenoaks Town Council and others to help set up a Community Rail Partnership for the Darenth Valley line. It was essential that local rail users had a strong voice in this.

2. Sir Michael Fallon MP

Sir Michael Fallon addressed the meeting. He expressed his frustration that there had been a further delay to the new Southeastern franchise and that there was a continuing delay to the new Maidstone East service.

He said that it was clear that there needed to be strategic reform of the rail industry with a bigger role for local authorities, more meaningful performance measures (such as whether a train was actually "on time" rather than mere less than 5 minutes late), a modernised fare structure and stronger leadership. The forthcoming Williams Review would give the basis for that debate

3. Rail company presentations and questions

It was noted that:

- The extended franchise would be able to implement delay-repay payments for delays between 15 and 30 minutes, and it was hoped to reduce the time taken to claim to less than 30 seconds.
- Southeastern would consider allowing Dunton Green passengers to travel via Sevenoaks during the leaf fall timetable that reduced the number of London-bound trains stopping at Dunton Green.
- Southeastern would consider providing more tables in the Sevenoaks station waiting area.

4. Bus update

Go-Coach said that there would be significant changes in local services in November including:

- A renumbering of routes
- Westerham buses would no longer serve Chipstead; Chipstead would instead be served by an extension to the Kemsing to Sevenoaks services.
- The 421 would no longer serve Shoreham
- There would be a new taxi-bus service.

5. Formal business

- The Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting were approved.
- The Annual Report for 2018-19 was approved.
- The Accounts for 2018 were approved.
- Tony Clayton was re-elected as Chairman.
- The following were elected to the Committee: Ms Canet, Cllr Parry, Messrs Dolby-Gray, Johnson, Ryan, Dodds, Crawley and Stott (Secretary).

Andrew Stott
Secretary
Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association