**HOPE VALLEY RAILWAY USERS GROUP HVRUG**

**MINUTES: AGM 13TH MAY 2015**

**AGM**

1. The Minutes for AGM 8th April 2014 were tabled
2. *Election of Officers*

The current officers were re-elected unopposed and the committee is as follows:

*Chair* - Kath Aspinwall

*Deputy Chair* - James Shuttleworth

*Secretary* - Peter Gate

*Treasurer* - Mike Pedler

*Members*

Kay Allinson

Kath Checkland

Andrew Dyson

Linda Grainger

Chris Morgan

Rosie Ollie

David Palmer

Sarah Roberts

John Stubbs

Chris Tselepi

1. **SECRETARY’S REPORT** Peter Gait reported that membership stands at 101
2. **TREASURER’S REPORT** - Attached
3. **CHAIR’S REPORT**

Kath Aspinwall reported that the process of renewing the Northern and TransPennine (TPE) franchises has made this a very busy year. The activity this has generated has been in 2 phases.

**PHASE 1: Responding to the Department for Transport (DfT) consultation that preceded the issuing of the Invitation to Tender (ITT).**

Action undertaken included:

* producing a pamphlet in July, 2014 to encourage people to write to their MP to ask for an hourly service calling at all stations. The chair recorded HVRUG’s thanks to Sharon Wagg for help with its design and to the Community Rail Partnership (CRP) for help with printing costs. Members of the committee distributed the pamphlet on as many trains as possible in both directions in a couple of days in July and also distributed copies to shops and pubs etc throughout the valley
* contacting parish councils, visitors centres, businesses including pubs, shops and estate agents to encourage them to write in supporting the provision of a better service. This appears to have been productive. The DfT acknowledges that they received a very large number of letters about the Hope Valley line.
* attending meetings including those arranged by the DfT in York, the DfT Northern Team in Huddersfield, The Campaign for Better Transport in York and Transport for the North in Manchester, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) in Manchester and regular meetings with the Community Rail Partnership (CRP) and Rail Futures which included items re the franchising process
* reading a number of DfT documents and writing the HVRUG response. The chair thanked John Stubbs who helped enormously in putting together a well thought through case for improving the service on the Hope Valley line, well supported by evidence, relevant statistics and other relevant data (see website).
* HVRUG is asking for:
* One train each hour stopping at all stations, all day, every day, including Saturdays and Sundays.
* Earlier and later weekday arrivals in, and departures from Sheffield and Manchester i.e. before 06.30 and after 23.00 respectively.
* One weekday fast train from/to Manchester Piccadilly each hour to stop at Chinley and Hope and Dore & Totley. *[This would mean the proposed 3rd fast train becoming a limited stop].*
* A robust ticket issuing and revenue protection system.
* Replacement of the Class 142 Pacers but not at the expense of service frequency.

*[It has been decided that Pacers will be replaced but the consequences for service delivery are not yet clear].*

* The bidders for the Northern Franchise are – Arriva, Arbellio, Govia and for TPE are First, Stagecoach and Keolis . Andrew Dyson and Kath Aspinwall met with representatives of all 6 of these companies at least once; some again at meetings arranged by the CRP and Rail Futures. These meetings seemed to be productive. The representatives took notes and said they found the HVRUG response to the DfT document informative and to the point. Some of the meetings lasted as long 90 minutes
* The Community Rail Partnership (CRP), South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE) and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) have also included a request for an hourly service for the Hope Valley line in their feedback to the DfT.

**PHASE 2: Responding to the ITT published on 27th February 2015**

HVRUG were initially disappointed when all the hard work appeared to have had little impact on the ITT except for some improvement to the Sunday Service from March to November

The key paragraph in *Transforming the north's railways: the* [*stakeholder briefing document and consultation response*](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/407939/northern-and-tpe-stakeholder-briefing-document-and-consultation-response.pdf), is as follows:

***4.51*** *Manchester-Sheffield (‘Hope Valley’ route):*

*We received many consultation responses from individuals and organisations who wanted to see enhanced services on the ‘Hope Valley’ route between Manchester and Sheffield, particularly expressing a desire for an hourly service calling at all stations every day of the week. Respondents felt that an hourly stopping service would encourage rail use by commuters, visitors to the Peak District and those travelling for leisure purposes. We recognise and understand this ambition for increased services. Network Rail is currently carrying out a consultation on the proposed infrastructure changes for this route. The train operators for the Northern and TPE franchises will be required to develop proposals for extra services on the line, once the timing and outputs of infrastructure enhancement schemes are clear.* (DfT 2014)

However, the DfT documentation makes it clear that they expect bidders to go above and beyond the stated requirements and produce some creative ideas. There will also be funding available in 3 years for developments that will need to extend beyond the 7 year franchises.

In phase two HVRUG has:

* Written to the DfT, questioning the decision to delay seeking specific improvements to the service until the line has been upgraded –no reply had been received at the time of the AGM. *(****NB*** *A reply arrived on the 15th May and will be emailed to members)*
* Written to the 3 constituency MPs - Patrick Mcloughlin, Andrew Bingham and Nick Clegg who have replied expressing their general support.
* Produced a document which has been sent to all the bidders entitled HOPE VALLY: A LINE WITH GREAT POTENTIAL. This is briefer version of our response to the ITT and stresses the potential of the line - its importance to residents and its untapped tourist potential.
* Andrew and Kath have met with 5 of the bidders again. The exception being Arriva with whom they had already met twice. Again these meetings seem to have gone well. Bidders say they are finding the conversations with stakeholders are providing them with useful local knowledge.
* The discussions with bidders have included raising the possibility of developing a Hub station in the Hope Valley.

The Franchise Timetable is as follows:

Bids for the Northern Franchise to be submitted at the end of May

Bids for the TPE Franchise to be submitted at the end of June

The successful bidders will be selected in the autumn

The new franchise must start in April 2016.

**Other issues.**

* Good news - The 18.14 from Sheffield now stops at Bamford!
* Network Rail consultation - HVRUG supports the upgrading of the line and would like to see it completed as soon as possible (otherwise there can be no real service improvements). We understand there will be a final round of consultation at the end of May. HVRUG encourages members to attend if they can.
* HVRUG are considering carrying out a feasibility study (with help/funding from CRP) about creating a hub station in the Hope Valley (as described by Paul Salveson at the 2014 AGM). At the moment Hope is looking the most suitable – being in middle of valley; the nearest station for 40% of residents; with some potential for parking - but all possibilities will be considered.
* After the second meeting with Stagecoach, Andrew and Kath have been invited to meet the EMT Route Manager North, who has responsibility for Sheffield station as the company is keen to promote the Hope Valley Line.
* The CRP is about to carry out another passenger survey in May. HVRUG will help if needed.
* HVRUG would be very pleased to welcome to the committee someone who’s good with social media.

**SPEAKERS**Jonathan Brown of South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE): ‘*RAIL NORTH – Shaping the North of England's railways’.*

This interesting and informative talk covered the following points. Rail North:

* is a new and developing organisation which brings together all 29 local transport authorities (working with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Chambers of Commerce) in the north of England. It is a company limited by guarantee and has 11 directors - all local authority leaders. David Brown from Mersey Travel is the lead officer. It is currently recruiting staff who will be based in Leeds. Its vision for the North’s railways is to support economic regeneration and contribute to a better quality of life for the 15 million people living in the north of England.
* is part of the broader devolution agenda and is, partly at least, a consequence of the awareness that rail in the north has a legacy of under investment. It has some of the oldest trains on the national network and requires greater than average subsidy. Many of its cities are better connected to London than to each other.
* has been closely involved in the refranchising process and has a partnership agreement with the DfT re-managing the new franchises from April 2016.
* is developing a framework for how rail in the north of England will be developed over the next 20 years. Its long term strategy has 4 key components
* Connectivity – improving connections across the region with targeted improvements to service frequency and journey times and better links with other forms of public transport.
* Coherence – planning for the North’s many routes to operate together as a single whole with a simplified fare structure.
* Capacity - increasing the capacity both of trains and track.
* Cost Effectiveness – reducing running costs for passenger and freight trains through judicious investment.
* will connect to user groups like HVRUG through the CRPs with which Rail North will have a more formal relationship. Funding for CRPs will be increased.

[More information is available at [www.**railnorth**.org](http://www.railnorth.org)}

Mike Rose **COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP: *‘****How can the CRP help HVRUG members to improve the line and its stations?’*

Mike Rose gave an informative talk about the work of the CRPs. These bring togetherrailway operators, local councils, RUGs and other community organisations. One of the ways CRPs work to increase community involvement and social and economic development is to support Friends of Stations groups in their area. He gave interesting examples of the work undertaken by such groups. This varies from quite extensive developments at stations such as Glossop (which has an art gallery) to specific improvements at others such as information boards for visitors and flower planting. There is no blueprint. What happens is in response to local needs and desires. Friends of Stations are able to access £250 start-up grants and support and advice from the CRP. Several members were inspired to express an interest in following up on these ideas.

**NEXT STEPS**

After thanks to the speakers and general discussion, it was agreed that HVRUG will continue to keep in close touch with developments and press the case for improvements to the service on the Hope Valley line whenever and however is appropriate.