**Minutes of the HVRUGs AGM 14.06.18**

1. **AGM**

The Minutes from 2017 were tabled.

These recorded that Kath Aspinwall had reported thatHVRUG has now been in existence for 27 years - since 1990. A long-standing member of HVRUG, Dr Hugh Porteous corrected this to say that it was first formed in 1982 and, after a break, was reconstituted in 1997.

**Election of Officers** - The following wereelected unopposed:

*Chair* Kath Aspinwall

*Deputy Chair* James Shuttleworth

*Secretary* Peter Gate

*Treasurer* Mike Pedler

*Members*

Kay Allinson

John Anderson

Andrew Dyson

Linda Grainger

Chris Morgan

Rosie Ollie

David Palmer

John Stubbs

Peter Townsend

Gill Wood from Hope FoGS and Derek Philips from Edale were voted on to the committee to ensure all Friends of Station Groups(FoSGs) are represented.

**TREASURERS REPORT**

**HVRUG FINANCIAL REPORT**

**13 JUNE 2017 – 11 JUNE 2018**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  **INCOME** | **£** |  **EXPENDITURE** | **£** |
| Balance at 11.6.17 | 295.60 | Room Hire (15.6.17)AGM | 40.00 |
|  |  | Room Hire (17.3.18)Friends of Stations Group | 36.00 |
|  |  | Room Hire (14.4.18)Friends of Stations Group | 36.00 |
|  |  | Room Hire (11.6.18)Friends of Stations Group | 40.00 |
|  |  |  |  |
| INCOME in this period |  0.00 | EXPENDITURE in this period | 152.00 |
|  |  |  |  |
| BANK BALANCE as at 11.6.18 | 143.60 |  |  |

NB: Payment due for AGM held on 14.6.18 of £40.00 reduces effectives bank account to £103.00

**TREASURER’S SIGNATURE** - (M Pedler)

**DATE 14.06.14**

The treasurer suggested that those present might make a donation towards the funds. This proposal was accepted and raised £93.65.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Peter Gait reported that HVRUG had 91 members. Eight more members joined at the end of the meeting bringing the total to 99.

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

KA reported that HVRUG ‘s main purpose is to press wherever, whenever and to whom ever possible for a better service on the HV line. Its aims are to ensure:

1. One train each hour stopping at all stations, all day, every day, including Saturdays and Sundays
2. Earlier and later weekday arrivals in, and departures from Sheffield and Manchester i.e. before 06.30 and after 23.00 respectively
3. One fast train each hour to stop at Chinley, Hope (or somewhere in the Hope Valley) and Dore & Totley (D&T)
4. More robust ticket collection/more accurate measure of passenger numbers

Progress on these this year has been as follows:

1. There has been a considerable improvement in the frequency of the service from May this year. Even though the lines capacity still hasn’t been upgraded, Northern, has come as close as it can to providing an hourly service. During Northern’s consultation about the proposed new timetable, Andrew Dyson and Glynn Waite from FoD&T made suggestions that helped to reduce the number of skip stops. There are still some gaps and we won’t be dropping this aim until they are completely filled. (Our line has been affected by the strikes but doesn’t seem to have been subject to the delays and cancellations caused elsewhere by the introduction of the new timetable.)
2. As above - will continue until the aim is fully achieved.
3. HVRUG will continue to propose that, once the line is upgraded and there are 3 fast trains an hour, one of these stops in the Hope Valley. The Invitation to Tender for the new East Midlands Franchise has just been issued There’s only one aspect of this franchise that is of direct concern to HVRUG – the part of the current Norwich to Liverpool service that provides one of the two fast trains on the HV line and we’ll be raising this issue with the preferred bidders. The DfT is attempting to negotiate a satisfactory deal with either TransPennine or Northern about taking over the part of this service that connects Nottingham and Liverpool from 2021.
4. HVRUG frequently raise the issue of non-collection of fares in our contacts with Northern. There are still many occasions when the conductor simply can’t or doesn’t collect all the fares. This may improve when the ticket machines are installed. We also raise the problem of the introduction of parking charges which have resulted in car drivers parking anywhere except in the station carparks, thus annoying local residents. Some people have also found the machines difficult to use. We have suggested, without success, that passengers should have the parking charge credited against their rail ticket.

**The Capacity Improvement Scheme.**

On the 13 February 2018 The Secretary of State finally published the Capacity Order which gives approval for new passing loops at Bamford and Dore. Previous to this, KA had written to a wider range of MPs than in the past about the inordinate delay in this process. In addition to the local MPs Ruth George and Patrick Mcoughlin, this included all MPS in Sheffield and three in Central Manchester:

Ruth George, Paul Blomfield, Gill Furniss and Jared O’Mara in Sheffield and Afzail Khan and

Lucy Powell in Manchester all sent written questions to Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport, as did Patrick Mcloughlin. He then raised it in the House as he was not satisfied with the answer he received to his written question.

K.A then wrote to DfT to ask when the work was likely to start. Their answer was distinctly equivocal and referred to the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) document which includes some worrying sentences:

*When government considers Enhancements, the needs, constraints and benefits of the wider portfolio will always take precedence over individual interventions'(p8)

It is important to remember that each decision taken on each Enhancement relates only to whether it will progress to the next stage of the pipeline. At no point will government make a decision that commits to progress any enhancement beyond the next stage of the pipeline.

The pipeline will also be kept under constant review.*

A further letter to MPs raised HVRUGs concerns about the uncertainty these words induce.

In the last couple of weeks notices have appeared at Dore & Totley (D&T) and Bamford stations referring to the compulsory purchases orders that will become active once the capacity improvement works are given the actual go-ahead.

**Pressing Our Case**

Members of the committee, including those from FoSGs, attend any relevant events, stakeholder meetings, road shows. They talk to as many people as possible from the train companies, Network Rail, Transport for the North/Rail North etc. stressing the point that Manchester and Sheffield are the two worst connected cities of their size and proximity in Europe and that the line also runs through the most visited National Park in the Country. In contrast to our 3 trains an hour, there are 6 between Manchester and Leeds.

Andrew Dyson and KA have had useful meetings with people from Transport for Greater Manchester and Sheffield and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executives with whom we have also stressed the advantages to residents and visitors of their cities of having rail access to the Hope Valley. Both Northern and Network Rail split this line between 2 regions at the Totley tunnel. This means that the five Hope Valley stations are part of Northern’s Central region although Sheffield is probably the principle destination for residents of the Hope Valley. We have regular contact with Vicky Cropper from Northern’s Central Region and KA discussed our concerns with Paul Barnfield, Director of the Eastern Region, at a drop-in meeting in Sheffield in March.

Andrew Dyson has recently become membership secretary of the committee of Railfuture’s Yorkshire Branch. Last September AD and KA responded to a request for an interview re the upgrade of the HV line by Robert Cumber of the Sheffield Star who produced a useful article about our concerns and aspirations for the line. He has continued to contact them when relevant. They also had a meeting with someone from the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce which is also actively pressing for a better service on the line. Their strong preference is for fast journey times between Sheffield and Manchester rather than stops en route.

Responding to the DfT’s Community Rail Consultation about how the DfT can best support community involvement, led to the realisation that HVRUG has necessarily been focused on the need for a more frequent service. The best way of involving local communities is through Friends of Station Groups and the Community Rail Partnership (CRP) which provides them with resources and support.

**Friends Of Stations Groups.**

There is now a FoSG for each of the Hope Valley stations and at Dore &Totly. In March the HVRUG committee decided to arrange a meeting for the 5 HV to decide what they could usefully do together to create a Hope Valley brand and to attract visitors to the valley to come by train rather than car. So far, there have been 3 meetings and 3 projects have come into being with the active support of Andrew Walker from the CRP and Vicky Cropper from Northern.

**1.** The development of di-bond posters for each station that will provide information about 6 – 7 local points/places of interest. The groups are in process of deciding on these, taking photographs and writing brief information about each. Andrew will then pass these on to a graphic designer who will make line drawings of the places and put these onto a map which will also show footpaths.

**2.** New signs or Totems with the name of each station. [Thanks to Phil Rogers and the Edale FoSG who have taken the lead on this.] Local schools are participating in a logo competition. One logo from each school will be chosen as the winner for their local station and there will be one winner for the Hope Valley overall. Northern will be contributing to the funding of these.

**3.** A series of leaflets with maps and descriptions of straightforward walks between each station and the next, a round walk, and if possible an accessible walk from each station. Andrew Walker will again be organising the production of these leaflets.

The 6 FoSGs are independent organisations with their own structure but they are closely linked to the HVRUG. There’s some overlapping membership and this collaboration has great potential for enhancing the future of the Hope Valley line.

1. **REPORTS FROM FRIENDS OF STATION GROUPS**

**Dore And Totley**

Chris Morgan reported that FoDaTS:

* have brightened the station by buying planters, plants and bulbs.
* provide publicity for the station in 3 quarterly local magazines. They have very active Facebook group with approaching 200 members and maintain a Website. Posters on station are frequently updated with topical items - too often details of strikes and extra trains by East Midlands!
* Litter-picked around the station and car park.
* are actively in negotiation with Northern, TPE, SYPTE, ACoRP, HP & HV CRP and others to provide additional canopy protection on the old station building.

Passenger numbers are up by 5.8% having doubled in last 7 years. A passenger count on the previous Monday showed 324 commuters, of whom 60% going towards Manchester and about 55% use TransPennine trains - that may be over 10% more journeys than last year.

**Grindleford**

Liz Bailey reported that the FoSG was formed in the spring of 2017. In the last year it has:

* received support from individuals and groups within the Grindleford area

including the donations of plants and Christmas decorations

* carried out tidying, weeding and planting on Platform 1
* made contact with other rail user (‘friends’) groups in the Hope Valley, including station-to-station walks
* liaised with Northern Rail and Network Rail
* created a FoGS website – [www.fogs.website](http://www.fogs.website/) and also Facebook page [www.facebook.com/fogs.website](http://www.facebook.com/fogs.website)
* held their AGM – March 2018
* raised funds by organising a showing of ‘Murder on the Orient Express’ along with afternoon tea.

They plan to do more of the same in 2018 and beyond**:**

* Clear, seed and plant additional areas of the station
* Improve habitats for wildlife
	+ Plans in progress to build insect hotels at the station with local children’s groups invited to assist
	+ Support from Network Rail, Northern and, in particular, Peak Park Conservation team at Brunt’s Barn, who have offered space for design and construction activities, and will transport completed habitats to site
* Station to station walks
* Build on relationships with community and rail groups
* Develop displays relating to station history (2019)
* Celebrate 125th anniversaries of
	+ The completion of Grindleford station and commencement of passenger trains in 1894
	+ The completion of Totley tunnel and commencement of goods trains in 1893

**Hathersage**

Peter Gate reported that the FoSG:

* Has planted daffodil bulbs on the edge of the carpark
* placed 2 planters in front of the two shelters on the platforms.
* is planning to ‘garden’ the 2 scrubby areas between the footpaths up to the platforms and the line once they are made accessible with a gate. A design is being developed that will provide all year-round colour and be low maintenance.
* is planning to provide a real time display board re train times for the centre of the village.

**Bamford**

Elaine Randal reported that:

* the FoSG is now in its third season of summer bedding in the planters (Northern Rail funded this year and previously donated by Hope Valley Garden Centre))
* the damaged faded maps have been replaced with weatherproof di-bond ones (funded by Northern Rail)
* the FoSG has designed, built and installed bird feeding stations on each platform (NR funded)
* there is also information and photos in each shelter that help identify some frequent bird visitors (NR funded)
* three groups of foreign students from Sheffield Hallam University have been taken on round walks from the station.
* the FoSG has created a Friends of Bamford Station Facebook pagehttps://**www.facebook.com**/**BamfordStationFriends**

**Hope**

Gill Wood noted that Hope is the most recently formed group. It has been set up, and will be supported, by the Hope Valley Rotary Club. Hope is different from the other stations in that it is outside the village of Hope and is the nearest station for both Castleton and Bradwell. The FoSG:

* is in the process of contacting the 3 parish councils.
* has talked to Union Carbolite about the possibility of tidying up their piece of land next to the station car park. The company is proposing to replace the gate and fencing and to plant some shrubs.
* has approached Breedon about the possibility of the Cement Works providing some chippings to keep down weeds and approve the appearance of parts of the station.
* has encouraged the primary school to join in the Logo competition as intending to have more contact in the Autumn.

Gill concluded by thanking the Edale group for all their support and help.

**Edale**

Derek Phillips reported that since, the group was formed last May, Edale FoSG has gathered more members and produced a comprehensive project plan.

* They have established excellent contacts, and a source of possible future funding, with Moors for the Future who are based in Edale and who are engaged in the conservation of the bog above the village and Cowburn Tunnel. The group has received a £300 grant from Moors for the Future for the planting of moorland specific and bog-based plants in 2m long planters with an explanation board.
* Boards picturing the skyline are to be erected at the station. The professional photos of the Mam Tor side being done right now. The Kinder Scout side will be done later to benefit from the purple heather flowering.
* With the help of a member who is a school governor, the group has established a relationship with Edale school. Pupils who were taken to look at the station reported it to be ‘old and broken’. Future Edale Station projects include new wooden fencing and better, hopefully stone built station shelters.
* With the help of the arrangement of free passes from Northern, the school children were taken to Manchester for the Chinese New Year.
* The group is collaborating with the Hope station group re an inter-station walk and welcome the fact that Hope FoSG is making moves to involve Castleton which has no station but is the most visited village in the Valley.
1. **ANDREW WALKER - PROJECT OFFICER, HIGH PEAK AND HOPE VALLEY COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP**

Andrew outlined the support available to FoSGs from the HP&HVCRP. This covers the Hope Valley, Glossop and Buxton lines and provides a very useful link between Rail User and Friends of Stations groups with therailway operators, local councils and other community organisations. It supports Friends of Station groups to which it gives an initial set up grant and then support, ideas and further funding for suitable costed projects. He has been actively involved with the FoSGs in D&T and the Hope Valley and the CRP is firm in its support for HVRUG’s quest for improvements to the Hope Valley Line.

The CRP also provides information on their work and current issues affecting the local rail lines on their website [www.peakdistrictbytrain.org](http://www.peakdistrictbytrain.org) which was not ready at the time of the AGM but is nearing completion. There will be a page for every station in the CRP and Andrew would like the page to include information about: what tourist attractions there are within a couple of miles; what amenities there are in the town/village for visitors; and what public events of a decent size there are which might attract day-trippers. The FoSGs will need to help with this by providing this information to Andrew on a regular basis.

**VICKY CROPPER REGIONAL COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER NORTHERN**

Vicky opened with a Business Update on the current situation on Northern:

‘This is an unacceptable situation and the position we have found ourselves in has meant that many colleagues in front-line teams have been bearing the brunt of the disruption while colleagues in teams such as Control, planning and resourcing have been working extremely hard to help stabilise the situation.

Our energy and focus is firmly on delivering for our customers, including the temporary timetables in parts of the North-West.

The temporary timetable is designed to give customers much more certainty and is now bedding in, with the number of cancellations reducing this week. It has been developed and delivered really quickly and is beginning to provide more stability and certainty.

Essentially, until the end of July, this means we will be temporarily reducing the number of train services we run each day by 6% - that’s 165 services out of our normal 2,800 daily.

The Government has announced an inquiry into what has happened, we will be fully involved and are clear that the delays and postponement of new infrastructure resulted in re-writing the May timetable in incredibly tight timescales, with the consequences we have seen.

**Why did this happen?**

The delay of Network Rail’s Manchester to Preston electrification programme
severely impacts our plans to increase services and capacity across the network. This is because we are unable to run electric trains along the Bolton corridor (until electrification is completed) and therefore we are having to reallocate diesel trains from elsewhere to continue to be able run these services, rather than them being available to enhance services elsewhere. As a result, whilst we will be delivering an increase of 1,300 new services a week from May 18, disappointingly for customers, 900 new services a week will not be delivered until December 2018.

For Northern’s train planners, this major set back left them with less than four months to fully re-plan our May 18 timetable, less than half the normal time required.

**Driver availability**

Northern has 1,529 trained drivers, 180 more than when we started the franchise in April 2016. However, availability of drivers to operate timetabled services has been an issue over the last few weeks in some locations for two unexpected reasons.

Firstly, the completion of the electrification of the Blackpool to Preston line by Network Rail was delayed at the last minute, by three weeks, which meant that driver training became a real challenge. Before trains can operate on new lines, drivers have to undergo essential safety related route training, and for Blackpool this meant training 400+ drivers from all depots who operate this route. This means that some drivers are unavailable for their normal train driving duties whilst they are undergoing this training.

Secondly, we have been unable to ask our drivers to work on their Rest Days for the last three months. Rest Day Working is a normal industry practice adopted when there are short-term training requirements, which enables us to absorb those exceptional or last-minute training needs and provide additional flexibility for train driver rosters.

The combination of these two factors has meant that we have faced a shortage of available drivers in a number of locations which has, unfortunately, led to a far higher level of delays and cancellations to train services. An agreement with ASLEF to get Rest Day Working reinstated has been reached and this will help us to get on top of the driver training.

**What are we doing to ensure it won’t happen again?**

We are reviewing how timetable changes are introduced to better understand the root causes of exactly what went wrong here, so that future changes can implemented more smoothly.

**Compensation**

We will be offering compensation of up to one month’s refund for season ticket holders who have been affected by the severely affected routes

We already offer a Delay Repay scheme to compensate customers for trains that are late or cancelled and as a result get to their destination station more than 30 minutes later than scheduled.

To further support customers, we’ve reached an agreement with other rail operators that until 29 July, customers with tickets to travel on Northern will be able to travel on services provided by other rail operators if they are unable to complete their journey due to delays or cancellations.

On the Lakes Line, we have removed all rail services to and from Preston, Lancaster and Oxenholme and instead provided a replacement coach service to keep people who live, work and visit the Lake District on the move. We will continue to run coaches for another two weeks until Monday 2 July.

In conclusion Vicky summarised the station developments that are planned as follows**:**

**Ticket Vending Machines (TVM)**

Dates for the installation of TVMs is as follows:

* Dore and Totley - Installed
* Grindleford - August
* Hathersage - August
* Bamford - August
* Hope - August
* Edale - July
* Chinley - August

**Proposals for station improvements.**

* Dore and Totley - Existing shelter refurbishment, extra seating, CCTV and TVM
* Grindleford - Existing shelter refurbishment on both platforms and TVM
* Hathersage - Existing shelter refurbishment on both platforms and TVM
* Bamford – Existing shelter refurbishment on both platforms, extra seating, CCTV and TVM
* Hope - Existing shelter refurbishment on both platforms, CCTV and TVM
* Edale – CCTV and Shelter refurbishment
* Chinley – CCTV, CIS and Shelter refurbishment

**Service Enhancements**

This line has seen the enhanced weekday and Sunday service introduced, the only further expected enhancement is additional Sunday services between Piccadilly and New Mills Central, providing two trains an hour at that end of the route. We currently expect these Sunday services to be introduced in December.

In answer to concerns raised from the floor about car parking Vicky suggested writing to Northern’s Stakeholder managers Pete Myers Pete.Myers@northernrailway.co.uk and Alison Bell. Alison.Bell@northernrailway.co.uk

In answer to a question about TVMs not being able to issue split tickets Vicky's replied that this is one of the many issues re ticketing policy across the rail industry in being addressed by the Rail Delivery Group. *You can read more about this issue at*: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmtrans/64/6409.htm>

1. **TED HANCOCK – AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE HOPE VALLEY STATIONS.**

The evening ended with Ted Hancock showing photographs of steam trains leaving Sheffield and travelling through the Hope Valley to Chinley in the first half of the twentieth Century. In comparison to the approximate 100 train a day currently using the line, in the early days there were almost 200, half freight and half passenger. There was a lot of coal to be loaded and a lot of steam to be seen. The photographs showed the signal boxes along the line, the number of sidings at each station and water being taken on at Hathersage to top up the trains’ supplies. The station buildings almost all of which were later demolished, included ticket offices, waiting rooms, with sheltering canopies and station master houses. We saw the station master and his wife at Bamford tending the garden of their house and discovered that their names really were Mr and Mrs Bamford. We even took a small diversion on to the no longer existing line that transported the materials to build the Derwent and Howden Dams. Ted’s encyclopaedic knowledge was somewhat cramped by the amount of time available for his talk at a busy AGM. It was obvious that there was much more to say about almost every place visited, including Earle’s Cement sidings, on which, he said in a wry aside, that he could do a whole talk.

A very illuminating and enjoyable end to the meeting.

Kath Aspinwall 22.06.18