

MID CHESHIRE RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION
MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held on THURSDAY 21st JULY 2011 at THE GOLDEN PHEASANT,
PLUMLEY at 7.15pm

1. Welcome to the meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting on time and welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from John Hill, Eugene Ring, Malcolm Roughley, Ian Lowe, John Taylor, DA Ross and John & Pauline Boardman.

3. Approval of the minutes of the 2010 AGM

The minutes of the 2010 Annual General Meeting were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the 2010 minutes

There were no items arising.

5. Chairman's Report.

John Oates praised the number of attendees at this year's AGM and went on to cover the highlights of the last 12 months noting that it had been a very busy year, the culmination of which was the installation of the Harrington humps at Northwich for which there will be a formal opening ceremony on 2nd August at 2.30pm.

All members of the committee, together with Sally Buttifant, had worked very hard and achieved a lot during the year. The Secretary had worked diligently and was standing down from this role but he will remain as a committee member. John Oates offered thanks to Harry for all the hard work he had put in over the years. He also thanked all the committee members individually for their work and also Sally Buttifant and Chris Ingham of Northern for their work on the stations.

Music Trains, run by Mike Ross, had been very successful this year with several new initiatives included. This had been the best year so far on rail performance. The Chairman's Blog had now had over 30,000 hits and there were many, many more achievements, some of which Sally would cover in her presentation following the meeting.

Overall, we had had a lot of support from our 600+ members which was much appreciated towards improving the Mid Cheshire Line.

6. Treasurer's report

John Hanson presented the audited accounts for the year ended 28 February 2011 and explained that the bank balances of £37,000 was made up of 'free' cash of £16,000 and the excess (£21,000) related to the raitour in May 2011. These accounts were adopted by the members present without any objection. John noted that it was disappointing that the membership for this year was slightly down. He was looking to change one of the banks in order to obtain a higher rate of interest on money held in the high interest account. He explained that the lottery grant was kept separate in the accounts as it was ringfenced for a specific purpose. A question was raised about the

cost of running the railtour and was answered by John Hanson, John Oates and Harry Boardman.

7. Secretary's report

A plea for new committee members which was put out in the *Rail Report* had yet to produce results. Committee meetings were held every 6 weeks.

Correspondence log: there had been a 25% increase in correspondence this year with a current average of 4 items per week, some of which were put onto the website. The correspondence came from various sources and was sent to the relevant committee member for answer. Topics included complaints, notification of events, requests for assistance...

All correspondence had been answered within 1 week of receipt. Advice had been sought where necessary from Northern Rail. A considerable amount of mail had been received about Altrincham Interchange. A letter was sent to Passenger Focus about the reduction in hours at Hartford and Winsford station as the decision had been made based solely on the number of tickets sold and not on the number of enquiries. Harry had attended a number of stakeholder meetings and had made input into Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester railboards and the Northern RUS on behalf of MCRUA and sometimes jointly with the MCCRP.

Middlewich: Progress had not been excellent and the split in the Cheshire authority had not helped. The MP for Middlewich, Fiona Bruce, was active in helping the campaign. Re-opening of the line would benefit other towns, e.g. by providing a much faster service for Knutsford people wanting to go to Crewe and onward stations.

Baguley Halt: Transport for Greater Manchester would include provision for the station in future building plans for the Metrolink extension. The local MP was very much in support.

Harry worked with Sally Buttifant, Peter Davies and others to improve stations. Harry finished his report by saying that he needed to stand down from the secretary's role for personal reasons and looked forward to remaining on the committee to assist with stations.

8. Election of Officers: Nominations were received as follows:

- 8.1 Chairman - John Oates
- 8.2 Vice-chairman - John Hulme
- 8.3 Secretary –
- 8.4 Treasurer - John Hanson
- 8.5 Membership Secretary - Peter Davies
- 8.6 Publicity Officer -
- 8.7 Minutes Secretary - Elaine Sancto
- 8.8 Committee Members – Phill Bamford, Harry Boardman, Andrew Macfarlane, David Miller, Michael Ross, Malcolm Roughley.

As there were sufficient nominations received to fill the total number of committee places available, it was proposed and approved by the members present that all nominations be declared elected en-bloc to enable the work of the unfilled officer posts to be shared by all the individuals who have offered themselves for election.

9. Any other business.

John Allen noted that under the McNulty report category D stations, such as Knutsford, would suffer a drastic reduction in hours and suggested that MCRUA oppose this.

Dave Mardon asked whether there was any prospect of increasing Sunday frequency. *John Oates* replied that the franchise provided for a 3-hourly service only and that Northern were providing the two hourly through service to Manchester in excess of their base commitments. *David* also asked about the Northern Hub and whether this would provide any chance of extra rush-hour trains being re-instated. *John Oates* replied that Transport for Greater Manchester and the local city council were in favour of local trains over further London and Birmingham trains, but it was too early to know whether extra peak trains for our line would be possible. *David* made an observation on the *Rail Report* that trams did not allow bikes or have toilet facilities on board. He asked when train running information would be available on the stations. *John Oates* noted this was unlikely under the current franchise as it was not included in the scope, and would be lobbied for under the replacement franchise.

John Allen asked whether tram-trains would be in addition to the current timetable. *John Oates* confirmed that was the expectation.

Andrew MacFarlane said that *John Hill* would like to see more Middlewich news in the *Rail Report*. *Harry Boardman* replied that this had been requested throughout the year from members of the MRLC but to no avail. As soon as something of note is available it will be included in the *Rail Report*. *Andrew* noted that the Chorlton Metrolink service had opened and also that a new station on the MidCheshire Line at Baguley, would help with connectivity. He said that the survey on board the Railtour to Newcastle had shown that Edinburgh was a popular choice of destination for next year. He asked whether the current frequency of the newsletter was appropriate – it is currently produced twice a year.

David Miller was concerned that MCRUA was unable to carry out all it would like due to the lack of active members in both the association and on the committee.

John Allen asked whether we could try to go to new destinations on the Railtour for the next 2 -3 years. *John Oates* replied that we needed to go where people wanted. There is the possibility of a CRP steam train next year but we would need sponsorship to be able to run this - *Mike Ross* suggested that we might give first-class tickets to sponsors.

A question was raised about flanges and the poor ride of the new Metrolink trams on Heavy Rail.

John Hulme proposed a vote of thanks to *John Oates*.

The formal business of the Annual General Meeting concluded at 8.14pm so the Chairman closed the meeting..

Following the Annual General Meeting, there was an excellent presentation by *Sally Buttifant* on the Community Rail Partnership and achievements of the past year and plans for future developments. This was very much appreciated by the audience. *Sally* was thanked by *John Oates* on behalf of everybody for her endeavours in promoting the Mid Cheshire Line both inside and outside of Cheshire.