



Severnside Branch Newsletter No. 29 Spring 2016

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome and should be sent to the Branch Secretary, Nigel Bray.
Email: nigel.bray2@railfuture.org.uk

23 James Way, Hucclecote, GLOUCESTER GL3 3TE. Tel. 01452 615619.

More information about campaigns is available on the Railfuture national website.

Annual General Meeting at Bristol, 9 April 2016

The Branch AGM will be held on Saturday 9 April at 2 pm, in the Colosseum public house, Redcliff Hill, Bristol BS1 6SJ. The Colosseum is next to the Bristol Mercure Hotel where the Branch hosted a national Railfuture Conference last November and about 10 minutes' walk from Temple Meads station.

Before the formal part of the meeting, our guest speaker, Bernard Kennedy, Secretary of ASLEF Bristol Branch, will talk about some of the challenges facing the railways locally and nationally. He is a driver with Arriva Cross Country.

If coming by train, leave the station by the main exit and walk along the right hand pavement to the bottom of the embankment. Cross Temple Gate on the pedestrian crossing and turn right, then diagonally left, passing a disused filling station on your left. The road merges into the dual carriageway Redcliffe Way. Keep on the left hand pavement until the first roundabout, turning left into Redcliff Hill (no second 'e' in its name) immediately after St. Mary Redcliffe Church. The Colosseum is on the opposite side of the road, just before its junction with Redcliffe Parade East.

The Colosseum serves hot food but the kitchen closes at 2 pm on Saturdays.

The Agenda for the formal part of the meeting is as follows:

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of 2015 AGM and matters arising.
3. Election of Officers.
4. Chairman's Report.
5. Secretary's Report.
6. Treasurer's Report.
7. Any Other Business.

Minutes of the previous AGM of Railfuture Severnside held at Well House Manor, Melksham on 11 April 2015. Nine members, two visitors and the guest speaker were present. John Hassall chaired.

Before the formal business of the meeting, guest speaker Graham Ellis gave a presentation on the successful campaign to quadruple train services on the TransWilts route.

1. Apologies received from Ian Beckey, Julie Boston, Glen Burrows, Gerard Duddridge, John Friedberger, Chris Hughes and Anne Lock.

2. Minutes of the previous A.G.M. held on 29 March 2014 were approved.

Matters arising: John Dixon referred to the lack of signage from Castle Cary station to the town centre. John Hassall added that a similar situation existed at Bridgwater.

3. Election of Officers

Nigel Bray took the Chair for the election of the Chairman. The following were re-elected unopposed:

<u>Chairman:</u>	John Hassall	<u>Political Chairman:</u>	David Redgewell
<u>Secretary:</u>	Nigel Bray	<u>Treasurer:</u>	Tony Lloyd
<u>Media spokesman:</u>	Bruce Williamson		

Committee members:

Philip Bisatt (Friends of Bridgwater Station)
Julie Boston (Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways)
John Dixon (Portishead Railway Group)
Gerard Duddridge (representing Somerset)
Anne Lock (Corsham Station Campaign)
John Stretton (Ashchurch, Tewkesbury & District Rail Promotion Group)

(*post-meeting note:* Philip Bisatt is standing down in 2016 because of pressure of other commitments. We are very grateful for his advice over the years, particularly on responding to Consultations, and wish him every success for the future.)

4. Chairman's Report

John Hassall read the report which appeared in Railfuture's Annual Report for 2014, referring to four Branch meetings, private meetings with Transport Minister Baroness Kramer and with the MD of Stagecoach West. He thanked Nigel Bray for reports to Bus Users UK and to an inter-Branch working group looking at ways of improving the Cross Country franchise.

5. Secretary's Report

Nigel Bray said the past year had seen Railfuture raise its profile, increase membership and achieve successes such as the completion of Swindon-Kemble redoubling and the start of work for Filton Bank quadrupling.

Bus / rail connectivity remained an area of concern, particularly in Somerset. where Chris Hughes had been very active in raising the issue and this had encouraged Nigel to write to the Central Somerset Gazette. He thanked Bruce for his advice on dealing with the media.

The Railfuture Severnside Branch had led the unified Railfuture response to the Great Western Franchise Extension Consultation. Philip Bisatt had collated the Branch input to Railfuture responses to Network Rail's Western and Wessex Route Studies. We had also responded to consultations on the Bristol Central Area Plan and Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan. It was a matter of serious concern that the last mentioned made no provision for a rail freight depot in the county.

6. Treasurer's Report

In Tony Lloyd's absence Nigel presented the outlines of the Branch Accounts and explained that the loss of £24.73 had to be viewed in the context of the previous year's profit, which was due almost entirely to the legacy of the late Eric Barbery and the sale of books and models donated by Eric's family. The balance at the end of 2014 was £1,184.60 compared with £1,209.33 a year previously.

Two cheques drawn but not presented at the end of 2014 represented grants made to Friends of Bridgwater Station and a joint FoSBR / TfGB campaign for the Henbury loop. In the former case the situation was due to the closure of the local branch where FOBS' bank account was based. Nigel would discuss with Tony how to resolve this.

7. Any Other Business

John Hassall summarised written reports from David Redgewell on freight depots in Greater Bristol; MetroWest and feeder buses; and developments around Temple Meads station. It was agreed that Nigel would add a précis of them to the Branch Committee Minutes.

It was noted that the Branch had renewed its affiliation to Bus Users UK. John Hassall said he hoped to attend its AGM in Cardiff. The potential of the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway to connect with the national network was discussed.

Report of MetroWest Stakeholder Update meeting, 17 February 2016

Five Railfuture members and representatives of Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways and Portishead Railway Group attended the meeting at Worle, which was eagerly awaited because of reported delays to MetroWest and Great Western electrification work.

A spokesman for Bristol City Council said the Mayor had allocated funding to re-examine the business case for Ashton Gate station, this time including the potential for football traffic. The study would be completed in the 2016/17 financial year. Asked whether it would also consider potential traffic from Ashton Court balloon festival, he said he could not give a definite answer.

A site for the proposed Portway station between Avonmouth and Shirehampton had now been agreed. The estimated cost was £2.5m and the target date for opening was May 2019. It was a separate scheme

from MetroWest because any additions to the latter would require the entire Governance for Railway Infrastructure Projects (GRIP) process for Metro West to be restarted.

James Willcock, Project Manager for MetroWest Phase 1, said Phase 1 was now in the latter part of GRIP Stage 3, which he described as a massive exercise. GRIP 3 had identified higher than expected costs to upgrade the Parson Street- Pill line to passenger standards. Parson Street Junction would have to be rebuilt as a double line junction so that trains could use the branch in both directions at the same time. Reopening to Portishead was now expected in late 2019 or the first half of 2020. Asked about the further delay, he replied that the project “did not really get going until 2013” when it was incorporated into MetroWest. Julia Dean, from the MetroWest team at the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, said the scope of the scheme had changed greatly since North Somerset Council first proposed it.

An alternative access to the Ashton Vale business park was being considered to remove the need for frequent closure of the level crossing to road traffic. The design of Pill station was also being reviewed with the possibility of its entrance being via Station Road.

James Willcock explained that the 2008 Planning Act required any plans for new railways of more than 2km in length to seek a Development Consent Order (DCO) before work could start. The DCO application, which was scheduled for December 2016, would have to specify the exact location of all work sites and their drainage arrangements.

Network Rail’s spokesman advised that Bristol Area Signalling Renewal was also required before electrification and the installation of additional signals on the Portishead line could proceed.

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Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only).
All other (non-branch) correspondence to 14 Ghent Field Circle, Thurston, Suffolk IP31 3UP