



WEST SUSSEX

RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION

m e e t i n g

Purpose	Annual General Meeting
Venue	Salvation Army Community Centre, Booth Way, Horsham RH13 5PZ
Time	10.15-12.00 14th May 2011
Attendees	WSRUA Committee, David Scorey, Franchise Improvement Director Southern Railway and team.

a g e n d a

1. 10.15am Introductions and apologies for absence
Jake Clausen (Littlehaven rep)
Roger Keyworth (Chichester rep)

2. Minutes of AGM on 15th May 2010
No formal minutes were taken last year.

3. Appointment of officers and committee members
- Jane Cobb to be Chairman - Agreed
 - Trevor Tupper to continue as Treasurer - Agreed
 - Call for nominations for Secretary – no offers
 - Appointment of other Committee members – Current members agreed to stand again, Michael Cover was put forward and accepted to represent Bosham
 - Stations without reps are Arundel and Billingshurst – no offers

4. Treasurer's Report

This had been printed on the back of the agenda but with the wrong dates. Trevor Tupper had brought 3 signed copies of the original accounts which were passed round the meeting for approval. The signed copies were accepted and this correct version will be sent to members.

A question of how many members did WSRU have was raised and answered by Trevor as 190.

5. Appointment of Auditor

There are currently 3 signatures for the bank account, Trevor Tupper, Monica Edmonds and Roger Keyworth. As Roger is also the auditor there were concerns raised about him also being a signature for the bank account. It was agreed that the new Chairman (Jane Cobb) should be added to the signatures, the current Chairman (Monica Edmonds) to be removed and Monica Edmonds to become auditor.

A question was raised as to how many signatures were required on the cheques and answered by Trevor as 2.

6. Chairman's Report

Separate document from Monica.

7. Questions to committee

No questions but a member of the audience (Michael Jarvis) thanked Trevor Tupper for his timetable updates during the snow period which were very useful.

8. 10.45am Southern presentation – David Scorey, Franchise Improvement Director

David's presentation contained an explanation of what his job covered, where Southern is now and plans for the future.

David's role was introduced in the new franchise to oversee the large amount of change, 139 projects were agreed to in the 5 year franchise. His role also covers managing environmental impact, stations, contracts and communications (internal and external).

The performance targets during the winter months was not met, although the weather was extreme and other modes of transport were also badly hit the communications with customers was not good. Network Rail are installing conductor rail heating which should improve performance in the cold weather along with software updates to the trains.

Overall performance since winter has been reasonable but the average punctuality is lower than Southern would like to achieve.

Capacity has grown 45% since 2004 and growth continues at 3-4% of volume each year.

The franchise contract is tightly specified and very difficult to change. The franchise can also be extended by the DFT at their discretion for up to 2 years, to July 2017.

On the positive side, a lot of investment has already been delivered – for example, all stations are now covered by CCTV and monitored by the control centre. 80 new help points have been installed and increased ticket gates has improved security at a number of stations.

900 cycle spaces have been introduced across the network with another 600 to come before the end of the franchise.

In the pipe line is the pilot for smart cards – which can be thought of as "Oyster for national rail".

The pilot starts later this year on the East Coastway and is planned for implementation across the network by the end of 2012. There are challenges with interfacing with Oyster, although this is currently scheduled to happen by the end of 2012.

The redevelopment of Horsham provides the opportunity to add more car parking.

Improvements have been made to how disruption is managed especially the area of communicating to customers.

David's final comment was that he likes to think of Southern as a progressive train company which cares about passenger feedback.

9. 11.00am Questions to Southern (These will be posted on the WSRU website)

1. When booking advance tickets on the Southern website there was no place to enter disabled.
DS update – Disabled railcards can now be used on the website.

2. When will all 8 doors be able to be opened at Billingshurst?

DS - By the end of May coaches 1-7 will open and by end of 2011 coaches 1-8 will open.

3. A camera is needed on the up platform at Billingshurst.
DS - This will be in place by end of May.
4. What are the plans for the reduction in service to London Bridge in the medium term and when will WSRU benefit from extra trains?
DS – Between now and the Olympics the station roof will be replaced and the new gateline (1 single gateline rather than the current 2 for Southern railusers) will be in place by end of May 2011. There will be no changes to WSRU trains into London Bridge before 2012.
May 2013 will see platform capacity down from 9 to 6 for Southern trains. Currently there are 29 Southern trains in/out of London Bridge at peak times and this will be reduced to 24. 24 is the agreed minimum number of trains. The exact details are still be worked on but the London Bridge to Victoria trains have been cancelled.
Although the number of trains will be reduced the length of trains is being increased, on the metro to 10 and on the East Grinstead line to 12 so seat capacity should be maintained even with the reduction in actual trains.
Low level construction will be completed by 2016.
5. Will the disruption at London Bridge be finished by 2016?
DS - all disruptive work should be completed by 2017.
2017 – 20 Thames Link trains per hour are scheduled to run through London Bridge and by 2018 this will increase to 24.
6. Will there be services to Peterborough running from Horsham when the work is completed at London Bridge?
DS – All train services are specified in the franchise and can't be changed until the new franchise.
7. Monica Edmonds stressed that the WSRU only have 1 direct London Bridge train and would it be possible not to have this one cut as part of the necessary cuts when the platform capacity is reduced.
8. Timetables – The paper timetables are not always available at stations, an example was given where it was possible to pick up a timetable for Dorking to London at Horsham station but not at Dorking.
There was no mention in the paper timetables of London Bridge trains from Horsham stopping at New Cross Gate. You need to get a metro timetable to get this information.
There used to be a timetable book you could buy which included timetables for all Southern routes, is this still available?
DS – Will check with area station managers to ensure appropriate timetables are available at each station. The timetable book is still produced and is available for purchase but this needs communicating to staff and customers.
DS – update - Station managers have been asked to review the pocket timetables being held locally. The 'complete timetable book' is currently being printed and will be available for sale in approximately 3 weeks. We expect to be able to offer this at the same time as the timetable changes normally, but found printer's errors in this version so we are having them reprinted, hence the late availability this time around.
9. The barriers at Crawley don't accept certain tickets which is very annoying in peak times. The example given was of a season ticket from Ifield to London not working when breaking a journey at Crawley.
DS update - we checked the gateline remotely and all ticket types should be accepted. We are sending a member of the team out to Crawley to physically check all ticket types in case there's a local issue which isn't replicated on our remote monitoring system, although this shouldn't be possible.
If you are still having problems please let WSRU so we can follow up on your behalf.
10. Buying tickets on the Southern website involves several pages of "are you sure" before you actually get to buy the ticket.

DS update - we will be launching a new and improved version of Webtis around November, this improves the way you select your journey, the way you select the fare and the number of screens. From June we will be looking to use permanent cookies, allowing you to set your preferences such as home station, so these are populated appropriately by default.

11. Train noise at Amberley. Ann has lived next door to the railway for 26 years and it's only in recent times that the noise of the trains has become an issue, to the extent of house vibrating. She has kept a log of times/noise and this was passed to DS to investigate.

DS update – I have fed this through to Network Rail and they are investigating. I will continue to liaise with them on this and will give further updates as I receive them.

12. Luggage racks are not as big as they used to be and can cause problems with baggage falling down. Mainly the “older” 319 trains which also have rather small seats.

DS – the 319 trains will be replaced with the new Thames Link trains (2017) and the 319 used on other parts of the network for shorter journeys.

13. Questions received by email.

Chichester refurbishment – minor point which could make a big difference, having hooks on the back of toilet doors.

DS update – the local maintenance team have been asked to install hooks!

There was recently a delay of 1.5 hours when a non Southern train was stuck on the Southern network and a shunter had to be called in from Poole.

DS update – have asked Andy Leister to investigate this with our Head of Control. They have responded separately to Monica (response copied here):

I have investigated the issue of the failed freight train and why it couldn't have been moved to Barnham with Andy Farrant from Southern Control.

The train was stuck at Chichester due to no shunter being available.

The reason it couldn't go forward to Barnham is that the route was not cleared for that type of train. This has now been sorted and the route is cleared. However, if it happened again, the length of the train might prevent us from moving it to Barnham as it is too long to fit into the loop (platform 1) and it would foul the next signal section.

However, I am assured that measures are now in place to ensure that the train never leaves Eastleigh unless it has been confirmed that a shunter is on site.

I hope this explains what happened and reassures that it shouldn't happen again!

14. Toilets on trains are often not available.

DS – this has been a problem since the introduction of the 377 trains. The toilets on board trains automatically report back water levels and if levels are low they are automatically put out of service. However this doesn't include out of paper, jammed or other problems. All toilets are now manually checked at least every other day and this feeds into a reporting system. If for some reason a toilet is not manually checked at this interval it moves to the top of the list for checking. 6 months ago toilet availability was 80% it is now between 90 and 95%. The franchise commitment is to achieve and maintain 95%. There are 10 engineers dedicated to the maintenance of the train toilets.

15. Why can't the trains be turned off at night when in the sidings? Not only is it noisy but it impacts on the environment.

DS – the 377 have a “hotel” mode which should be used when in sidings, this dims lights and turns some equipment off. However some equipment needs to be on at all times to ensure water/air conditioning etc is in a ready state for the morning and performance is not impacted.

DS – to check on timings for “hotel” mode at Horsham and report back to WSRU Chairman.

DS update – have checked our berthing plan for Horsham and trains which are berthed (parked) there for more than 2 hours are supposed to be shut down, so they ought to be quiet. However, trains are ‘re-energised’ for cleaning staff to work on them, so we are putting in place a plan for a member of staff to visit the location and ensure everything is shut down after cleaning is finished – please report if this improves the situation.

16. Cycle racks seem to be full at some stations all the time.

DS – it has come to light that at some stations the cycle racks are being used by nearby residents rather than commuters. This has been a problem at Brighton where a campaign was launched to reduce this, any bike appearing to be permanently at the station had a notice attached giving the owner 3 days to remove it or the bike would be removed. DS committed to getting this done at Chichester where the complaint was from.

DS update – Station Manager has been looking into the issue – several bikes have been removed and a monitoring regime is in place.

17. When buses replace trains is it possible to have drivers who know where they are going?

DS update – we do ask for drivers who are familiar with routes to be provided, as well as providing maps for the drivers. We will continue to monitor this and try to improve. If there are any particular issues please feed them through so we can take up with the company involved at the time.

18. Engineering works often overrun, is it possible to have replacement buses on standby to ensure the services continue?

DS – During engineering works there are updates to senior managers every 2 hours so any hold up should be identified early on and necessary measures taken. It is not cost effective to have buses on standby just in case of overrun.

19. Car park season tickets seem to fade after a couple of months.

DS – Smart cards are coming within 18 months so this problem will stop then.

DS update – the fading issue with the current ticket is a long standing problem. However, we are planning to introduce a new system from late summer which will avoid the need to display car park tickets in car windows, so this will eliminate the problem.

10. 11.30am Summary and A.O.B.

11. Meeting closed at 11:50

Trevor Tupper

Membership Secretary – contact@wsrua.org.uk