



Uckfield / East Grinstead/Oxted Line Steering Group meeting

07/09/21 (90mins) Via Teams

Minutes of meeting

Present:

Bob Howes, Dan Wright, Paul Codd, Debbie Bond, Philip Lunn, John Coleman, Jacky Downing, John Fowden, John Carvey, Anita Scaife, Lewis Jackson, Sharon Gray, Tim Barkley, Agy O'Brien

Apologies:

Jamie Dallen, Holly Goring, Liz Parker, Philip Ayres, Rob Whitehead, Donna Anderson, Helen Preston

Minutes of last meeting: Agreed

Update from Southern:

Paul Codd: On 17 May timetable changes were implemented then 26 July service was reduced on 5 routes mainly due to pandemic and other related causes. 20% of 334 drivers were unavailable. The decision to reduce daytime services on some lines was taken to ensure that school services were able to run. Expected that reductions in service will be reversed to planned timetable in December (hopefully earlier). New trains not being brought into service for the foreseeable future until replacements are available or line is electrified.

Tim Barkley: asked if GTR had plans to enhance the publicity of the revised Timetable . . .

Bob Howes: Asked about new contract for Diesels

Debbie Bond: SER also has timetable restrictions.

Partner Updates:

Jacky: Recent visit to Buxted station saw 29 cars using carpark. URLPC is concerned re timetable changes. The Reading Room is unavailable temporarily, the Parish Clerk is looking for advice for re-opening.

Philip: Toby Illingworth, Chair of Wealden Conservatives lives in one of the new houses neighbouring the station. Should be approached re-joining the steering group. Action Sharon to obtain contact details from Philip.

John Coleman is looking forward to returning to normality and installation of 3rd rail.

John Carvey: Issues with the train service have caused the annual carnival to be held virtually.

John Fowden: Frankly, there is little hard information available about the future of the Uckfield line in respect of electrification, whether it be battery powered units south of Hurst Green or full electrification of the line. One gets the impression that the ORR is softening its attitude to 3rd rail but if definite plans are afoot, they haven't reached me, not that I'm well connected! If I do pick up anything I'll pass it on to John.

Sharon@southeastcrp.org

East Grinstead/Uckfield/Oxted Line Officer Southeast Communities CRP



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Officer Update:

Sharon explained she was now planning to re-start postponed projects from last year.

Oxted – nothing to report

Eridge – lift installation, accessible parking, Parish Council working to reduce on-street parking, Parish Council supporting platform planting, an event was held to celebrate the PBF works/new waiting room at the station.

Edenbridge Town (and Edenbridge) A new welcome to Edenbridge map/town plan etc is being produced in partnership with the Town Council.

Hurst Green – Moorhouse school have been invited to produce artwork for the platform waiting room.

Lingfield – nothing to report

Dormans – nothing to report

East Grinstead – approached NR for volunteer support to finish the gardens project. Installation of a bug house. (Sharon is this something you can take up with Greg given his recent email looking for volunteer opportunities for NR colleagues?)

Buxted – A new station partner has signed.

Crowborough – still working on the proposed empty building being made available to a community group. The new community noticeboard installed running on a rota with community interest groups.

Uckfield – The waiting shelter was ‘skirted’ to prevent litter being kicked down to the riverbank. We have used the station noticeboard to support the opening of a new food bank in the town.

Hever – working on better partnership with the Castle. Want to promote the safe walking route more clearly with Castle assistance. Have Eden Valley Museum artwork waiting to be installed.

Cowden – Nothing to report

Ashurst – Nothing to report.

A joint project with Kent CRP/Southeastern is being planned for CRN ‘Green week’ at Tonbridge station.

North Downs Way - walking route posters from a number of stations along the line are in the process of being re-designed by Southern.

East Grinstead - chosen destination for the Thameslink Guide. EG (and Tonbridge) is a destination in our new Days Out Guide.

Lingfield – Nothing to report

Dormans – Nothing to report

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Heritage Railways updates:

John Coleman: Bluebell is open and operating as normal as possible (attach John's update) and is attracting new volunteers.

Spa Valley re-opens? Should this be re-opened on 22 May.

Bluebell and Spa would like ticketing deals with Southern Action: Rob to investigate

CRN Update:

Dan Wright: CRN annual awards shortlist has been announced. Community Rail Week 18 – 23 September promoting sustainability.

Tim Barkley: CRN have Q&A on Williams Shapps review on their website.

Bus Update:

Lewis Jackson: Service changed on both Brighton & Hove and Metrobus as capacity restrictions have been lifted. Similar timetables to the pre-covid level. No action from Bluebell on reciprocal advertising with Metrobus. Action Sharon to send Lewis Paul Bromley contact details

GTR Update:

Agy O'Brien Southern Project Manager for Access for All schemes and Minor Works: There has been a slight delay at Eridge, lift will be open in time for Christmas. Accessible parking has now been agreed with ESCC. A ramp is being installed to allow access to Spa Valley's platform. East Grinstead lift installation starts in January 2022. Crowborough lift installation starts in Jan 2022. Both will take approx. 7/8 months for completion.

Anita Scaife: Disabled parking is situated at the front of the station. Accessibility to the top carpark is an issue due to ownership; this is being looked into. Action Sharon to send Anita Jamie's contact details

SCRP Update:

Tim Barkley: SCRCP has been shortlisted for several CRN Awards. Has expanded with an extra line Reading/Ascot/Ashford (Middlesex) with SWR. Have employed a new Officer for the Seaford to Brighton line. The SCRCP is working hard to resolve funding challenges as a number of Train Company funding have to be renewed in March 2022 at the same time as the rail industry is going through major changes arising from the Williams-Shapps review.

AOB: There was none, and the Chair thanked those present for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

John Fowden will send Railfuture report to attach to minutes.



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Date of next meetings: annual meeting 1 October, Eden Centre has been booked, since postponed and re-arranged for 4th February 2022

Bluebell Railway notes for SECRP Steering Group Meeting 7th September 2021

The Bluebell Railway is open and operating as near normal as possible having in mind the cautious approach to things in the presence of the Covid 19 pandemic which is still a risk and requires close attention.

The Bluebell has a wide selection of vehicles which offer different types of accommodation allowing a choice to passengers and the ability to book in advance if available.

The Railways 60+1 and Road Meets Rail Events both passed off successfully and The Beer and Giants of Steam Weekends are amongst the specials still to come in the next couple of months.

The very popular pre-Christmas Steam Lights and Santa Trains are also available, and some are already fully booked.

The Railway is working hard to recover from the effects of Covid which have affected it in much the same way as the national rail network, and so there are occasional unforeseen staffing problems due to isolations, the expiration of qualifications and shortage of trainers, etc. Therefore, it is advisable to check in advance that the expected service is available.