

# BEDFORD COMMUTERS ASSOCIATION

## BCA COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday 19 January 2004

Present:                    Arthur Taylor                John MacLeod  
                                  Chris Fox                     Dan Levene  
                                  Christine Fellner          Mark Spurgeon

Jim Allwood joined us, with a view to coming on the Committee. We were very pleased to welcome him.

### 1. Minutes of Meeting on 20 October 2003

These were accepted.

### 2. Matters arising

- AT had had a response from Inglis Lyon to his letters to Stagecoach. They will not be interested in developing routes via the station without funding from the council and/or the rail companies, at least until the bus station redevelopment is farther advanced. Did we want a meeting. We decided we did not, at this stage. DL suggested AT might contact the county council, with a copy of Stagecoach's letter.
- The Mayor had responded in the same sense to AT's letter asking about likely developments

### 3. Correspondence

- DL confirmed that RAFA's kind offer of parking spaces at their Ashburnham Road club had been taken up and would be advertised in the next Newsletter.
- Paul Bunting, the new managing director of MML, would be taking up his position in March
- TL should be able to tell us about the expected extended franchise by mid-February
- TL's latest newsletter showed that season ticket offers would be open only to annual ticket holders. This was observed to be hard on quarterly and monthly purchasers.
- MML had received compensation for the disturbances caused by CTRL
- John Harrison had sent an email asking why TL could not lay on coaches to Sandy when necessary. It was thought that this was a counsel of perfection, which was unlikely to be fulfilled
- CFox had attended a meeting about the "box" for St Pancras Thameslink. CTRL would provide platforms and footbridges. The Fleet River would be carried across the lines in a pipe. Hoardings would be left in place for fitting-out work to be done without obstructing the trains. No further news about funding for the fitting-out.

### 4. Performance

AT produced SRA figures showing that in the quarter up to 30 September 2003, 70.5% of TL off-peak trains and 66% of their peak-time trains had arrived on time.

Both were down from the March and June quarter figures of 73.1%/69.3%, and 72.6% and 68.1%. MML's figure was 65.4%, again down from the two previous quarters.

## 5. Communications

- DL reported that he had been drip-feeding journalists with the view that TL can afford not to increase fares. Their parent company had shown a 32% increase in profits. 32% of TL trains are more than 5 minutes late.
- The next Newsletter, to be sent out next weekend, would contain some quite inflammatory headlines.
- TL had put out a disabled travellers' protection policy, drawing attention to particular problem spots, but not at present offering any solutions at those spots.
- Alistair Burt, one of the local MPs, was expressing an interest in commuters' problems and indignation at the fare increases.

## 6. Timetables

- AT had received from TL an outline of the blockade service principles. We awaited the draft timetable so that we could comment on it.
- MML had been asked, from December 2004, to have extra trains stopping at Bedford between the 6 46 and the 7 54 and the 8 24 and the 9 17 in the morning and between the 16 30 and 17 40 and the 18 00 and 18 55 in the evening – as recommended in the Route Utilisation Survey and facilitated by the new Meridians.

## 7. Blockade

- The new maintenance depot was being built.
- MML were to get 3 platforms at the St Pancras interim station, leaving 3 for TL.
- The blockade was still due to start at 2am on 11 September.
- Ginny Chart has asked for a meeting with BCA and APTU in London, to discuss a variety of blockade-related matters, such as the interim station. AT would notify members of the date.

## 8. Bedford

DL again raised the appalling queues for the ticket offices (and ticket machines) eg just before the 9 15am. He and his partner had missed the train, and she had been threatened with prosecution if she tried to pay at the destination. DL had pointed out that CPS prosecution guidelines advised against prosecution in such circumstances. He had inquired about the permit to travel machine, which is supposed to be provided for travel into the London area. The response had been to put a bin bag over it.

MS raised the increased car parking charges, and there was a discussion about comparative costs.

## 9. Flitwick

Nothing to report.

10. Thameslink 2000/East-West rail link

Nothing on East-West. AT and AL had attended the Consortium meeting on 10 December. The atmosphere was determinedly upbeat, but even if everything happened to time, TL2K was unlikely to be open before 2011/2012. AL had produced a lengthy report, containing a number of questions.

11. MML Meeting Review

Separate minutes had been circulated, and would appear on the website.

12. AGM arrangements

It was confirmed this would take place on Tuesday 23 March 2004 at 7 45pm at Dom Polski. The original date of 30 March had been shifted because Mark Causebrook could not make it. Food would probably best be confined to nibbles. All committee members present were willing to continue to serve, and Jim Allwood would like to join. CF would ask Ben, Rob and Andrew whether they wished to continue. She would further communicate with MML.

DL would liaise with Ginny Chart about posters, ticket extensions from Flitwick, and so forth. She had asked AT if we could forward questions in advance. DL would include a note in the Newsletter inviting these by 1 March. We would like Mark Causebrook to talk about the blockade, the franchise extension, and the intended service enhancements post-blockade.

13. AOB

Jim Allwood mentioned a proposed new TL station for Staples Corner (between Hendon and Cricklewood). This was greeted without enthusiasm from the Bedford/Flitwick point of view.

14. Date of next committee meeting

Monday 1 March 2004 at 7 45pm at CF's.