

BEDFORD COMMUTERS ASSOCIATION

BCA COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday 28 June 2004

Present: Arthur Taylor Christine Fellner
 Chris Fox John MacLeod
 Dan Levene Jim Allwood

1. Minutes of Meeting on 26 April 2004
These were accepted.

2. Matters arising

Regular commuters had complained that during the Bank Holiday week West Coast main line blockade, passengers came over to Luton Airport Parkway and took up parking spaces. There is to be another blockade in August Bank Holiday week, from Hemel Hempstead to Lichfield – will the same thing happen again? DL wondered if overflow arrangements could be made, though it was not clear how this would work. CFox recommended that alternatives should be investigated and publicised. There was to be a 6-week closure of the Bedford/Bletchley line; it was not clear what effects this might have.

3. Correspondence

AT and JM reported items received. There had been complaints about the provision of clocks and screens at St Pancras Interim; the old St Pancras screen display (showing in much bigger format the next few departures and where they called) was to be available for the blockade. There would also be a dedicated screen announcing Thameslink movements.

CFox had replied to Mark Parry's email about Flitwick parking.

DL queried why advance publicity for the 26/27 July mini-blockade was not to be issued until the end of this week. People needed time to make alternative arrangements. TL planned no media advertisements. [A poster is now displayed at Bedford beyond the barriers on the right.]

AL would be asked to email items of interest direct to DL, who writes the Newsletter.

4. Treasurer's Report

JA reported that he had taken steps to identify himself to his local NatWest. Mary Pope had no comments on the accounts format. JA would be providing petty cash vouchers for claims.

5. Communications

DL was preparing another Newsletter, for dispatch following the weekend of 10/11 July, and comments were provided. Objections were raised that TL, while advising people not to travel during the mini-blockade, were not declaring void days. AT said

they were not doing this yet. Ginny Chart had stressed the need for security and comfort at stations: Flitwick was to have a toilet, but it would be closed at night! Bedford was hoping for secure station accreditation. The work on refurbishing the Bedford toilets would cost £15K, but TL was unwilling to say how much Charles Wells had given. The timetable for the toilets had been extended. Amazement was expressed that it could take so long, since at least in the ladies the plumbing was all right, it was just the tiling, doors, etc that needed improving. [Notices now say the work will be finished by 20 July.]

Qjump had been bought out from MML by Trainline, and complaints had increased from 2 a day to 90. DL had received incorrect advice about ticket availability – perhaps not entirely surprising since the operation had been outsourced to India.

CF proposed and all agreed with acclamation that DL should be thanked for his hard work on the Newsletter and communications generally.

6. Performance

The impression was that MML's punctuality was considerably improved. TL had lately been plagued by unit failures.

7. Timetables

Main blockade: AT reported success for Flitwick – there will now be 6 trains an hour throughout both 3-hour peak periods.

[AT has asked about the MML timetable, and was told the 16 14 and 16 30 off St Pancras would be removed, but there would be a new 16 45. The 18 00 would also be removed, and AT is writing to record our objection. The present 9 08 off Bedford would terminate at Luton Airport Parkway.]

Members wondered how the Interim station would work when coping with both MML and TL trains during the blockade. Would there be overcrowding? Would the subway for which escalators are already installed provide some weather-protected connection with the tube? [AT inquired and was told it would not be available during the blockade.] AT suggested monitoring for a week or so after the blockade starts.

8. Blockades

The main blockade was now definitely 35 weeks from 11 September. For mini blockade, see above.

The new maintenance facility is still on target to be completed by 10 September. JA asked for a guided tour. [AT asked about this and Ginny Chart agreed for nearer completion.]

9. Website

Nothing to report.

10. Bedford

[AT later reported that a new screen for beyond the barrier at Bedford was a matter for Network Rail, and would have to wait until 2006/7. This was rather

surprising, since we had been told some considerable time ago that it was “in the budget”.]

For toilets, see above.

11. Flitwick

The screen which was out would take 4 weeks to repair. There was scaffolding beneath the footbridge on platform 4, which was apparently the business of Network Rail.

12. Membership renewal – dates, membership forms and membership cost

There were sufficient membership forms left from last year, two years’ worth having been ordered. The subscription should remain the same. 21/22 September were the dates proposed for Bedford (members would liaise about who did when); 23 September [later altered to 28th] for Flitwick. There could be a flyer with a Newsletter, suggesting that people should remind their friends, or might get membership details off the website.

13. Thameslink 2000/EWRL

There was nothing to report at the meeting, but later a circular arrived from Thameslink 2000 Consortium reporting fresh submissions and an Environmental Statement from Network Rail to meet the earlier objections. There is to be a fresh public inquiry, probably in spring 2005, but limited to the objections raised on the last one. A decision may be made in early/mid 2006, with construction beginning in early 2007, completion late 2011/12. Blackfriars underground station will close for 24 months at the beginning of the construction period (supported by LUL and LTUC); the main line station will remain open, except for perhaps a 4-week closure at some point. Nothing to report on EWRL

14. Meeting with TL/MML

Further meetings pre-blockade on pathing might be useful. [Ginny told AT that this would be feasible, perhaps in the second week of August.]

15. AOB

JM will research which members would be interested in receiving their Newsletters by email. AT suggested they should be asked to insert their email addresses on the Newsletter flyer, or do so on the website.

16. Next meeting

Tuesday 31 August at 7 45 at CF’s