

FOSBR: Minutes of AGM

17 January 2014 at Halo Café, Gloucester Road, Bristol

1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Minutes from the previous AGM (26 January 2013).

These were **accepted** without amendment.

Proposed by: Redvers Skillicorn and *Seconded by:* Bernard Kennedy.

3. Chair's Report (Bernard Lane)

For rail in our area, there has been both frustration but also progress in 2013. Some examples are:

- Bedminster & Parson St stations – we are lobbying to get more trains to stop.
- Our Stapleton Road event on 17th May. We managed to get the Mayor, councillors and MPs to stand on the new footbridge – to show local support for funding four tracking and electrification.
- On 23rd March, we 'celebrated' 50 years since the infamous Beeching report – with a trip to Severn Beach and back, followed by a meeting at the Halo bar.
- We organised a walk from Southmead Hospital to Horfield - to raise awareness of how close a new Horfield station would be to the new hospital.
- There is now a coherent plan for 'MetroWest' although still major issues to sort out – such as four tracking Filton Bank, the need for both Ashley Hill and Horfield stations to be re-opened.
- Salford Station Group is actively pursuing the re-opening of this station
- Park & Ride at Portway – the funding bid to open this was unsuccessful but we are still hoping.
- We liaise with other local rail groups, e.g. Salford Station Group, Trans Wilts Group
- Generally there is cross party support for rail and we have support from several councillors.
- FOSBR Committee members have been to endless Council meetings, putting forward the case for local rail. The Chair thanked all those who have been involved.

4. Speakers

Gary Abbott (RMT)

- Temple Meads: proposed enhancements look good but no decisions yet on the Train Shed
- MetroWest: this lags behind Devon Metro – because they have a unified voice and we do not.
- Electrification: the electrification train has been delivered to Swindon and will start work in 6 weeks. There is a problem at Bath Road Bridge due to insufficient clearance.
- New trains: we are going to get Turbos
- Filton Bank: passive provision has been made for Ashley Down station.
- Franchises: FGW handed in the franchise, so saving £850M. As a commercial company, this is what they are good at.
- McNulty report could result in: staff being cut down, reduced safety coverage, lower number of booking offices. Network Rail is expected to compensate TOCs for flooding, landslips, etc. TOCs make most of their money this way, rather than from fares

Alison Devonshire (BS10 Parks & Planning Group)

Group set up to (successfully) fight the proposed sell off of parks by Bristol CC. The Group (now 20 people) are now looking at other planning issues affecting their area. One major concern is ref. the 5,700 homes proposed for the now closed Filton airfield – which will generate huge amounts of traffic. They want the Henbury Loop and a station at Henbury is crucial. The proposed Rapid Bus is not the answer.

Alison Light (Wessex Walks co-ordinator)

- **History:** the Bristol-Weymouth line was under threat. Peter Gould organised 6 walks with the Ramblers along the line, ending up with 8 Sunday walks. This attracted many people to the line. Also, the train operator printed leaflets about the walks.
- Now from May to October, they organise 30-35 walks with about 20 walkers per trip. 70% of these walkers arrive by train. Wessex Walks is a registered charity, with its own website.

Warren Marsh

He gave a good update on the discussions about the development of Temple Meads station. A growth of 47% in passenger numbers over next 10 years is forecast.

Rob Dixon

He updated us on Network Rail's Long Term Planning Process (LTTP) an updated Rail Utilisation Strategy. For the Severn Beach line, they are saying many of the things that we consider necessary to improve the service. Local services funding is dependent on local councils. That is why we need an Integrated Transport Authority.

5. Resolution on the future of the GW franchise

There was a debate on a motion introduced by Councillor Martin Fodor (Green Party, Redland Ward) about bringing the GW franchise back into public ownership. He argued that public ownership would help reduce fares, reduce staff cuts and investment would go into railways not private companies.

Several people spoke against the motion as put forward. Nigel Bray said that the original nationalisation was as botched as the privatisation and present problems have arisen partly from BR policies. Sean Emmett thought we should engage with all political spectrum not just a left wing agenda. Dave Redgewell did not want to go back to a centralised controlled national railway. Rob Dixon and Bernard Kennedy would support such a motion only if the franchise was under local control. The following amended motion was put to the vote:

This AGM of FOSBR (Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways) calls on the Government to bring the Great Western Franchise back into public ownership when it runs out in two year's time – with decisions made more locally by local transport bodies as occurs in other major English cities.

The resolution was carried: 19 for, 6 against, 2 abstentions

6. Elections to the committee

The following were elected unopposed

- Bernard Lane as Chair
- Tony Lloyd as Treasurer and Membership Secretary.
- Julie Boston as Campaigns Organiser/ Press Officer.
- Christina Biggs as Secretary.

7. Treasurer's Report (Tony Lloyd)

- Income stayed about the same as for 2012 whereas expenditure fell.
- The final end of year balance (2013) is higher than at the end of 2012. Our account balance now stands at £1,113.73.
- 179 private members and 8 organisations gave money to FOSBR last year (2013). 10 new members joined us last year. Subscriptions from individuals fell by £245 compared to 2012 but donations increased by £180.

Meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.