

FOSBR AGM Saturday 22/1/2011: Minutes of the meeting

Minutes from previous AGM (9/1/2010) were accepted without amendment

Chair's Report:

- FOSBR has been working behind the scenes to lobby politicians and public bodies, e.g. Network Rail strategy, responses to councils' core strategies, postcard campaign about electrification, etc.
- Pressure continues on Bristol City Council to continue investment in Severn Beach Line
- long-term neglect, high fares and old trains; improvements are required and long-overdue
- success of Ebbw Vale line - why not here too?
- next meeting at Halo on 8/4/11 will feature David McCallum from Ebbw Vale railway
- asked for members to use the trains, campaign and encourage others to join FOSBR and to also campaign; campaigning includes writing letters to papers or to politicians.

Treasurer's Report

The report was presented by Lionel (auditor) in the absence of Tony Lloyd. The balance at end of the calendar year was £639.35. expenditure exceeded income by £1028.38 but this was partly due to expenditure of over £600 on the FOSBR awards. Subscriptions were up (from £840 to £978)

The accounts were accepted by the AGM. Members commented that more donations could be sought by events such as that at the FOSBR 15th birthday celebration at La Ruca last autumn.

Proposal to raise subscription fees from January 2012

It was noted that fees have remained the same for at least 10 years. The following subscriptions were agreed by the AGM with effect from January 2012:

- Ordinary to increase from £5 to £8
- Unwaged to increase from £3 to £4
- Under 18 years old to remain at £1
- Affiliations to increase from £15 to £20

Other Reports

Campaigns: Julie Boston:

- Bristol City council have told us that negotiations with First great Western have made significant progress and are expected to finish in February.. They have stated that the current service on Severn Beach line will continue and there could be improvements.
- South Glos have agreed to fund the Sunday service to Severn Beach and so a 'Thank You' card has been sent to Brian Allison (Executive Member for Transport)
- There remains a lack of understanding that the half-hourly service we are asking for is wanted at all stations and that this in the WEP Rail Vision of 2005.
- The nature of government rail funding is changing: it will be devolved to local authorities

Core Strategies and other submissions: Tina Biggs, on behalf of Brendan Biggs:

- Responses submitted to each of the West of England councils' core strategies
- the third Joint Local Transport Plan now includes Ashley Hill station
- Objected to BRT - the conversion of the Harbour railway to Bus Rapid Transit
- Letter to Port company re: expansion: asking them to ensure that future passenger status is considered in the development of Henbury Loop
- Ashton Gate station is not part of the plan for Portishead railway; Brendan has queried this

FOSBEER:

- New leaflets are to be printed because copies of the first edition have run out
- Applications for membership of FOSBR are included and some memberships have resulted
- Positive response from pubs and CAMRA, including a feature in their *Pints West* magazine

FOSBR in the media, Network Rail's strategy and Electrification: Rob Dixon

- Coverage of campaigns by BBC Radio Bristol, BBC News website and Evening Post
- 15 year celebration: Evening Post double page spread, photo and editorial praising our efforts
- Postcard campaign to Network rail resulted in invitation to meet them and analysis of the service on the Severn Beach line; recommended additional Avonmouth/ Clifton to Bath train
- FOSBR Awards produced goodwill and recognition as well as valuable publicity.
- Electrification and the Quadrupling of Filton Bank: as reported in the Evening Post we asked MPs to

- to put pressure on the government prior to any announcement being made about electrification
- Postcards are being sent to the Transport Secretary
- Dawn Primarolo and Liam Fox contacted the Transport Secretary on our behalf
- Rob and Bernard had a very positive meeting with Charlotte Leslie, who will try to arrange a meeting with the Transport Secretary to press for local investment including quadrupling and electrification of local lines as well as the mainline.

FOSBR Constitution

Bernard presented a draft Constitution. This was approved by the AGM with the addition of the following to added to Paragraph 10: "Members will have one vote each. Affiliated organisations have one vote. If an affiliated delegate is also a member he or she will only have one vote." A proposal that no officer could be elected in absentia was lost when it did not have a seconder.

Elections to the committee

- Bernard was re-elected unopposed as Chair
- Tony Lloyd was re-elected as Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary. One person opposed this and no one abstained; no other candidate stood
- Rob Dixon was re-elected unopposed as Press Officer
- Julie Boston was re-elected unopposed as Campaign Secretary

First Guest Speaker, Gary Abbott, (Bristol RMT Branch Secretary)

- Lack of investment in rail in the Bristol area: Bristol signal panel is 40 years' old, HSTs are 35, and last local track investment was removal of tracks on Filton Bank
- Confidence that electrification will happen: plans have been drawn up in preparation, e.g for half-hourly trains from Portishead to Severn Beach, Bath to Cardiff and Weston to Yate; the refurbishment of HSTs means new trains required
- restructuring of railway will lead to the creation of kingdoms as Network Rail will be nationalised and then sold off to train companies, resulting in a lack of integration
- Reminded us that quadrupling is required for further service improvements
- The 40 minute service on the Severn Beach line only happened through FOSBR's persistence

Bernard Kennedy, (Bristol ASLEF Branch Secretary)

- Recession and cuts have shown the effect of market forces: rail freight industry redundancies, passenger fares up despite increased demand; jobs not being filled; franchised railway is a fractured railway
- Hopeful about electrification of Great Western mainline; Bristol suburban electrification is a possibility
- It would cost only 9.3 billion to electrify the whole network; UK has poor record
- Benefits of electrification: 'clean and green', more efficient, better service, reduced emissions, less reliance on oil and increased reliability

Resolutions

a) "FOSBR supports the national demonstration called by TUC, RMT, ASLEF and other unions against the cuts, in London on Saturday 26th March 2011. We agree to publicise our support on the FOSBR website and through the local media."

- Proposed by Bernard Kennedy, ASLEF Secretary and seconded by Julie Boston
- This was passed with 14 in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions.
- It was also suggested that examples of the affects of cuts should be publicised.

b) "Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR) calls on North Somerset Council to submit a bid for a passenger rail service to Portishead under the government's Regional Growth Fund, and for the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)/Transport Partnership to examine how these funds can be accessed for other local rail improvements. This meeting calls on members ad supporters to lobby local councils to promote this campaign."

- Proposed by Rob Dixon; seconded by Julie Boston.
- Amendments were made (resulting in the wording above) and it was passed unanimously.

Other Business

- David Redgewell expressed concern that Long Ashton BRT plan includes buses from North Somerset & Portishead, which will undermine both the harbour railway and Portishead rail scheme
- David Redgewell informed us of RMT bus seminar with Norman Baker which we are welcome to attend