



Supporters Newsletter for the



Heritage Railway Trust

Spring 2018

AGM

A good number of members attended the Bramley Line AGM held at March railway station on Saturday the 7th April. Shortly after the meeting one of those members reported 'an interesting and lively AGM' which it certainly was.

The results are that there are no changes in officers within the organisation, and that the Trust continues in it's aims to create and reflect the railway heritage of the Bramley Line in the local area.

Whilst we all continue to wait on the deliberations of governments and local authorities on the future of the line itself, the Trust will as always be focussing on retaining any railway related local heritage for the longer term benefit of the community. This may be in the form of amassing railway memorabilia associated with this and other local historic lines, along with continuing to press for decisions on the future of the Bramley line track between Wisbech and March.

Whilst many pressure groups both in government and the local area are pressing for the reopening of the line, we are also awaiting the outcome of investigations into possible development of the Newbridge Lane area of Wisbech which will have an effect on the present 'end of the line'. Decisions made around this area may have a direct effect on the opportunities on both the reopening of the Bramley Line to March, and it's terminus in Wisbech, and also opportunities possible to the Bramley Line Trust.

During the AGM meeting, a presentation was made to the attending members which may possibly enable the Trust to move towards one of it's main ambitions in creating a railway heritage centre of interest. A community enterprise is in the embryo stages of planning and developing a learning/ heritage facility, centred around our area of Fenland, and is looking for supportive partners to assist in its ambitions. This could be a 'watch this space' for the Trust.



A pair of Class 20s approaching March with a goods train around 1973

Waldersea Depot, Long Drove, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180

BACK ON TRACK

Membership.

As most members will know, our membership year runs from April to March annually, meaning that for many members it's time for that annual reminder to renew. If you have recently joined us as a new member, since September last year, then your membership will run over to March 2019. Unfortunately, we have had to bring in a small increase in membership fees, and have also restructured some of the membership options. The changes are shown on the website, but for those without internet, the details are following:

Revised Membership Fees for 2018/9

Individual Annual Members	£12 each
Family Annual Membership	£24
Individual Life Membership ONLY for over 55's	£250
Individual Life Membership ONLY for over 65's	£150
Corporate Membership (Annual)	£100

We very much hope that you will renew, and continue to support the work and efforts of the Bramley Line Heritage Railway Trust.

Heritage projects.

Waldersea depot is currently occupied by a 1950's era tank wagon, along with a 1915 open plank wagon. Whilst both of these vehicles are owned by members, we also have the 1897 grounded carriage body No 21. New timbers have been used to replace some of the floor which was badly deteriorated, but it is hoped that much of the upper superstructure may be retained in the original wood.

We are hoping after a winter where very little work was possible, that the coming spring and summer weather will give members better conditions for making some progress on restoration work on all of these vehicles, whilst everybody waits for further developments on the possible reopening of the line to commercial service.



A Wisbech bound diesel multiple unit seen here at Chatteris station in the 1960's.

The line then went via Wimblington to join the Ely-March line south east of March and then on the Bramley Line to Wisbech.

The A141, now Fenland Way, was the railway track bed.

Waldersea Depot, Long Drove, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180



Wisbech Rail Consultative Group.

A new group has been formed aiming to put further pressure on Wisbech's pursuit of a rail link to the national network. The consultative group, which is associated with Railfuture, a national organisation pursuing the reopening of many previously closed lines, has developed and published its strategy. This includes their stated aim of absolute need for a station in Wisbech town centre, or more precisely for those who know Wisbech, at the end of Oldfield Lane. You may recall in our last newsletter, we examined the prospect of a station for Wisbech being located just south of the A47 trunk road, if the line were to reopen commercially. To examine and compare these two options in more detail, we have prepared the following comparison, simply using the options of **IN** (Wisbech), or (just) **OUT** side Wisbech.

Infrastructure- suggested proposals and requirements.

IN- A new station, proposed for a current industrial area with vehicular access via Oldfield Lane only.

OUT- A new station, proposed on current agricultural land, access by direct slip road, or mini roundabout, off the A47. This area is between two of the town's bypass roundabouts, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile apart, thus creating easy vehicular access from the town.

IN- A new network of cycleways in town to service the station. One cycle/ pedestrian access is identified in the proposal. The remainder of the site is apparently landlocked by large industrial sites and gardens of adjoining residential areas, it is thus unclear what car parking capacity may be available for potential commuters.

OUT- Scope to create plentiful commuter car parking directly accessed via slip roads off and onto the A47 trunk road. This will enable the local rural community to access the station along with town dwellers, without creating additional road traffic issues in Wisbech in an already very densely traffic polluted area during rush hours.

IN- It is expected that the main users of the proposed railway service initially would be commuters to Ely and Cambridge, the lion's share to Cambridge which is struggling with the pressures of growth and house prices. Demand for housing close to an in-town station in Wisbech would no doubt have a significant impact on local house values, particularly those within walking distance of a station.

OUT- Whilst residents close to a station within Wisbech could see a steep increase in house values, it would be expected that a significant area would experience a much higher level of interest in residential property, including rural locations in West Norfolk and South Lincolnshire, as well as North Cambridgeshire.

IN- Freight options (longer term). If the Bramley Line track from March were to be reopened, this would rekindle interest in rail freight with major industrial sites in Wisbech. Some such sites enjoy very close proximity to the proposed route to the in-town station site, dependant on identifying the required space needed for marshalling any rail freight traffic.

OUT- Direct access to a freight terminal from the A47 would widen the areas industrial attraction to existing activity, and possibly new industry, without impinging unduly on the town's current increasingly high road traffic levels.

IN- Access options. Walking, cycling, road based public transport, and driving, (subject to parking constraints).

OUT- The provision of a cycle/ footbridge over the A47, together with a half hourly round town bus feeder service, could alleviate concerns over access. This option could reduce the overall budget to reinstate the line by multi £millions. It would also open up access to many more potential commuters from outside Wisbech, whilst encouraging tourism to this historic town.

Waldersea Depot, Long Drive, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180



Heart, or Head?

The heart says it would be preferable and necessary to have the station close to the town centre.

The head says, along with all the Best Cost Ratio tests examined to date, a station outside the A47 barrier makes more economic sense, both short term and long term, and therefore, the option far more likely to succeed in getting the railway to Wisbech at all.

However, a Wisbech Access Study involving Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Wisbech Town Council, following on from a public consultation towards the end of last year, takes the heart view. The following is a press release from the three authorities.



Public consultation shapes Wisbech transport schemes

Proposals for a new Wisbech access road have been amended following feedback from the public to ensure the scheme does not jeopardise prospects to re-open Wisbech Rail.

The Southern Access Road scheme, which would link New Bridge Lane and Boleness Road, is one of a number of transport improvement projects in the Wisbech Access Strategy, which was developed to address congestion and accident blackspots, while increasing road capacity and supporting much-needed housing and job growth.

A series of public consultation events last November showed support for the overall programme of schemes, but there was concern the Southern Access Road would negatively impact the railway project. Objectors said the road would cut through the March to Wisbech railway line and prevent the re-opening of a railway station in Wisbech town centre.

Now Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Wisbech Town Council are proposing a phased approach to the road, to take the railway line into account and ensure any decisions taken now will not prevent any future delivery of rail.

The phased approach involves designing a new roundabout on the A47 to provide access into south Wisbech so that if railway studies conclude that the preferred location for the station is north of New Bridge Lane there will still be access into the South Wisbech Development area. If the preferred station location is determined to be south of New Bridge Lane, New Bridge Lane could be reconnected.

The amended approach would allow the Wisbech Rail study to conclude the station location without any impact from the Wisbech Access Strategy, and enable the plan to proceed within government-specified funding timescales.

Fenland District Council along with the County Council and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (GCGP LEP) successfully bid for £1 million from the Government's Growth

Waldersea Depot, Long Drive, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180



Fund to develop the transport schemes and a further £10.5 million to implement them – and the funding has to be spent implementing the first package of schemes by 2021.

The two councils are also proposing to amend the original short-term package of schemes, which, if approved by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, could secure an additional £10.5 million of funding from the Combined Authority.

A scheme to relocate the A47/Elm High Road roundabout further east has been brought forward from the medium-term package of schemes (being delivered by 2026) to the short-term package (to be delivered by 2021).

Although the project will require more development and further public consultation with the affected communities of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, bringing it forward means a smaller improvement scheme at Elm High Road/A47 will no longer be required, resulting in money being saved. Completing the project sooner will also mean inflation savings and transport benefits will be felt more quickly.

The revised preferred package of short-term schemes now consists of:

- New Bridge Lane/Cromwell Road signals
- Southern Access Road Phased Approach - development of new A47 roundabout
- Elm High Road/Weasenham Lane roundabout
- Relocation of A47/Elm High Road roundabout, with further development and delivery towards the end of the short term package (subject to funding approval)

The phased Southern Access Road approach, and the new package of short-term schemes, will now be taken to the County Council's Economy and Environment Committee, Fenland District Council's Cabinet and Wisbech Town Council later this month to seek approval to recommend these schemes to the CPCA and GCGP LEP.

These important transport enhancements are a partnership approach which has not only support from the Wisbech, Fenland and Cambridgeshire councils but also the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk along with Norfolk County Council due to the location of the town's infrastructure and communities straddling the county border.

Cllr David Oliver, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Transport, said "The local community feedback has helped shape the future of transport in Wisbech to ensure both road and rail proposals support each other and that the important government funding for the Wisbech Access Strategy is not jeopardised."

Cllr Ian Bates, Cambridgeshire County Council's Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee, added: "These essential improvements to the infrastructure of Wisbech will enable the much needed housing and economic growth for this area of North Cambridgeshire. It also demonstrates the effective partnership approach across all tiers of Local Government and the important role the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority have played with funding support."

Waldersea Depot, Long Drive, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180

BACK ON TRACK

Wisbech Mayor, Cllr Steve Tierney, said: “The Wisbech Access Strategy has been tested to make sure it offers the best solution to address existing transport problems in and around the town of Wisbech. The improvement schemes will also encourage growth and regeneration, improve accessibility, and help support the delivery of more than 3,500 new homes and 2,500 new jobs as set out in the Fenland Local Plan.”

The outline scheme design drawings along with detailed reports for each location, and the process followed can be found on Fenland District Council website at: <http://fenland.gov.uk/wisbechaccess>



The photo to the left shows the area proposed for an ‘in town’ station. Currently the area is occupied by a concrete mixing works, along with some small industrial units. The intended access via Oldfield Lane (top arrow), for vehicles and pedestrians, is seen coming in from the red brick houses on Oldfield Lane.

The original railway track, leading to what most recently was used by Spillers petfood factory, now Nestle, can be seen bottom right going into undergrowth behind houses in Victory Road.

This picture, taken from the same spot as above, but looking in the opposite direction, shows the old track again, coming from the factory and heading out of town. The tarmac road seen crossing it is Weasenham Lane, before it heads off towards Newbridge Lane and the A47.



Waldersea Depot, Long Drive, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180



This page is intentionally blank.

□