



Minutes of the ABFLY committee

Wednesday 4th October 2017

at 37 Bucknalls Drive, Bricket Wood

Attending:

- Trevor Gurd (TG)
- David Horton (DH) (by phone link)
- John Burke (JB)
- Kevin Ambrose (KA)
- Robin White (RW)
- Richard Hayward (RH)

Apologies:

- Roz Devlin (RD) & Sanjay Kulkarni (SK)

Richard Hayward was welcomed to his first meeting of the committee.

1. Report back from Franchise meeting

Sanjay attended the recent meeting in Birmingham (no-one was able to attend the Milton Keynes one). He made contact with Russ Cunningham (a key manager for the new West Midlands Trains (WMT) franchise. Mr. Cunningham said that other than a new Desiro on the branch and new ticketing (smart card etc.), there is unlikely to be further change to the branch operations in the near future. He offered to send details of Abellio/East Japan Railway/Mitsui analysis of the lack of business case for increasing services on the branch. Regarding through running to Euston, this is considered feasible but not until after HS2 is open, freeing up more paths for commuter services on the existing west coast line.

Action: Sanjay to follow up on Mr. Cunningham's offer of sharing the business case.

2. Meeting with new franchise operator (16th October)

Agreed that the Abfly delegation would be limited to 3 – DH, KA & TG as acting chair. Matters to be raised:

- Welcome early response from WMT to Abfly's contact.
- Invitation to Abfly AGM on Monday 20th November, and request that Abellio nominate a guest speaker as main item of meeting
- Explain Abfly's background & aspirations (including Abfly's contribution to recent enhancements and items that were included in the franchise specification)
- Discuss Business Case for further enhancements (more frequent services, through running etc.)
- Commemoration of the line's 160th anniversary with e.g. steam working sometime during 2018.

Action: (1) DH, TG & KA to take forward at 16th October meeting.

(2) KA to draft Agenda/Briefing paper for meeting

3. Newsletter

Much delayed & final newsletter would be published shortly. Updated to include details of AGM and future media for communication with members. To be sent to members via email and posted to those for whom no email address known.

Action: (1) DH to complete newsletter.

(2) RW to update member database & send to DH

(3) DH & RW to liaise about distribution (email, postage labels etc.).

4. Website & Facebook

KA had previously circulated the monthly website visitor stats which showed over 1,000 unique visits over September. Website emerging as a key part of future communications from Abfly. RH happy to take over website administrator role from DH. DH explained that it is vital that there are fresh, regular items posted to encourage repeat visits. Any documents (e.g. minutes of meetings) can be posted in the documents section and there is a blog for anyone to post comments, discussion items etc. Agreed it would be useful to have automatic alerts to all email subscribers when new items appear (as with Facebook).

KA described problems posting items onto Abfly Facebook site. This appears to be set up as a page rather than a Group. Agreed to make this a closed Group requiring those interested to apply to join. It will need moderators (RH & KA & anyone else to take on?)

Actions: (1) DH to give RH access rights for updating website

(2) RH to discuss email alert system with Primary Image who host site.

(3) RH to set up Facebook site as a Group & link to website

(4) All Committee members to submit items for posting on website & all to post regularly & directly onto relaunched Facebook site

5. Feasibility Study (including financing)

RH progressing a crowd-funding appeal (via Space Hive) to finance Feasibility Study to supplement donations & grants from councillors already promised. RH stated that it would be desirable to break down cost elements of the Railway Consultancy's proposal so that some could be progressed if not all money raised, e.g. cost of infrastructure, current usage analysis, potential future usage etc.

RH has produced a leaflet (circulated to committee) to help publicise initiative. Vital to build up momentum of publicity & donations to influence politicians & other stakeholders.

Actions: (1) Sub-group consisting of RH, RS & TG to progress leaflet production & distribution

(2) RH to post item on website & Facebook

(3) Agreed Space Hive appeal to run from mid-October until 1st December

6. AGM

To be held on Monday 20th November at St Peters Parish Centre (room booked by JB)

Agreed that Agenda would be:

Main speaker: senior representative from new franchise holder, WMT (45 minutes)

Other speakers: London Midland (Steve Helfert – 20 minutes)

Herts CC (inc. CRP) (Trevor Mason – 20 minutes)

Abfly (DH/RH focusing on crowdfunding initiative)

Members AGM – to follow

Actions: (1) TG to invite Network Rail, HCC, LM & CRP to attend and request speakers as described above

(2) DH/KA/TG to invite WMT during meeting on 16th October

7. St Albans Shuttle Bus-link

Intalink finally commenced publicity in August (6 months after this one year trial commenced!). Still little publicity at stations (particularly St Albans) & no announcements on trains. Not surprisingly, the service does not appear to be well patronized.

KA reported that a complaint had been submitted via Abfly concerning dangerous driving by Shuttle Bus driver – complaint passed to Herts CC for action.

8. CRP matters

- A Santa Special service will run on London Midland's last day of operation.
- Watford Junction's Platform 11 to be rebuilt – DH suggested we press for it to be built for 12 car operation

Action: (1) TG to raise at next CRP meeting proposal for Platform 11 to be built for 12 cars

9. Next meetings:

- **Committee meeting – Wednesday 8th November (7.30 pm) at TG's house** (JB has cancelled Parish Centre booking).

Meeting to discuss:

- 16th October meeting with WMT
 - Transport Vision latest & relations with CRP
 - AGM preparations
- **AGM – Monday 20th November at St Stephens Parish Centre**

Kevin Ambrose (kpambrose@gmail.com)

6th October 2017