

RAIL ACTION GROUP, EAST OF SCOTLAND (RAGES)

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9TH AUGUST 2021

Present: - Barrie Forrest BEM; Stewart Leslie; Ian Bowman; Tom Dickson; Glenn Moulding; Harald Vox and Tom Thorburn.

Apologies: - Allison Cosgrove.

Chairman Barrie opened the meeting by thanking Ian for hosting the meeting due to the inclement weather.

Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Minutes. As there were no minutes available, these were recalled from memory: -

- Letter of Apology sent to David Jones on behalf of the Committee;
- Letter of Support by RAGES regarding the re-opening of The Berwickshire Railway sent to David Jones;
- The new Banner, Information Cards, Haddington Flyers and Membership Forms had all been purchased;
- The wish to attend the Haddington Farmers Market brought to light some shortcomings that exist for RAGES. A presence at the monthly Haddington Farmers Market to highlight the case for a new railway station for Haddington it transpired that RAGES as an organisation should have some form of Public Liability Insurance. We have received a quote from Access Insurance London, the cost of which represents a significant percentage of our annual income. The cost is £294.00 per year. This insurance would protect the Group and it's committee members from negligence where a member of the public or indeed one of our own members were injured etc. We have also been advised that we should have a Health & Safety policy, risk assessments for our business to cover galas, fetes etc and also an Incident Book. Tom D has been progressing with this and has been in contact with Reston Community Council and SEStran to see how they address these issues. Tom D, has contacted the three East Lothian Councillors (Paul McLennan, Sue Kempson, Norman Hampshire) for advice on how to obtain a permit/license to allow RAGES to have a presence at locations such as galas, fetes, high streets and is awaiting a response. It was also suggest that since the Group is affiliated to RailFuture, that avenue for insurance be explored. Tom D has subsequently had correspondence back from RailFuture and this will be discussed by the committee.

Station Reports: -

- East Linton – The Planning Application has yet to be approved;
- North Berwick – Due to industrial action there are no Sunday Services to North Berwick and all the other East Lothian stations. The Committee agreed that a letter is to be written to Alex Hynes, Transport Minister and East Lothian MSP's highlighting the issues this causes. For example visitors to North Berwick are forced to use their cars resulting in car parks and streets being full of cars.
Action TT
- Haddington – Reaction was favourable from people spoken to about re-instatement of the branch and station at Haddington;
- Berwick – appears to be getting back to some level of normality given the cars in the station car park;
- Reston – Letters had been received from Councillors Helen Laing and Shona Haslam regarding the poor level of service that the LNER Timetable Consultation suggests it will receive. Helen had a reply from Graeme Dey MSP, Transport Minister assuring her that negotiations had thus far increased this to 8 trains per day. Good progress is being made on the station construction;
- Dunbar – The Paul McLennan MSP arranged meetings had given some confidence that all CrossCountry services will be retained. PM organised a photo shoot at Dunbar which Barrie, Tom D and Allison attended.

Membership Report – There are currently 206 members of which 180 have renewed. Of the 26 still to renew, 3 were Corporate Members namely Tunnocks, Coldingham CC and Eyemouth Town Council. All 26 members have been sent a reminder.

Tom and Russell are testing new software for the membership database. This has thrown up several significant issues but our rental (which has been paid) will not start until these issues are fully resolved.

RAG – Glenn currently has no material for the next RAG which will be required to be distributed in time for the next AGM. Contributions are required.

Treasurers Report – Ian reported that there is £1866.77 in the account and that all invoices had been paid for the above purchases.

Website and Facebook – the web has been updated with the latest aerial photographs of Reston station construction. FB is fully up to date.

AGM – A date of 21st October (28th Oct as an alternative) was agreed for the AGM. Stewart will enquire if the Star Room in the John Gray centre is available. Stewart informed the committee that the ELC car park at John Muir House is available for parking at night time.

LNER Timetable Consultation – The public meeting in Berwick Town Hall organised by Councillor Georgina Hill, was attended by Tom D and Tom T. There were 50 members of the public at this meeting and LNER Head of Stakeholder Engagement, Ben Garrett was left in no doubt of the ill feeling for this timetable. Given the attendance at virtual meetings, meetings, letters and emails, it is reassuring that politicians from all parties, and at all levels are fully supportive of the Group's misgivings for this timetable and the cuts in services especially at Dunbar and Reston that this proposal could bring about. Some reassurance has been given at the Paul McLennan Meeting and the Helen Laing letter that no services will be cut from Dunbar and Reston will receive 8 trains in each direction/day. The Committee is not totally satisfied that this Timetable debacle will give all the services required for our stations and wishes to meet with Transport Minister Graham Dey MSP.

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Mobility Hub – This is a Scottish Government funded shared transport charity, offering share bikes and car club cars, plus other facilities as appropriate. Reston & Auchencrow Community Council have shown interest in this scheme and will join with ourselves in the meeting with Marian Marsh.

Meetings: -

- Paul McLennan MSP Virtual meeting – Mon 16th Aug 13:00 to 14:00
- Mobility Hub Meeting Virtual Meeting – Mon 16th Aug 14:00
- Martin Whitfield MSP Virtual Meeting – Thurs 19th Aug at 14:00

AOCB: -

- Reston Station Opening Celebration – Suggestions were to be circulated as to how best we as a Group should celebrate this great occasion;
- Update to Constitution required to remove a member who brings the Group into disrepute.

Date of Next Meeting – This was agreed to be Wed 22nd Sept at 13:00 at Glenn's house.