

RAIL ACTION GROUP, EAST OF SCOTLAND (RAGES)  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT RESTON  
VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021

Committee Members present: - Barrie Forrest BEM; Stewart Leslie; Ian Bowman; Tom Dickson; Glenn Moulding; and Tom Thorburn.

Chairman Barrie Forrest BEM opened the meeting by welcoming Members to the meeting and asked for the apologies which were read out by the acting Secretary.

Apologies were tendered by 23 members. There were no apologies from the floor.

In addition to the named committee members above, there were 33 members present at meeting.

The Chairman introduced the first Guest Speaker, Graham Meiklejohn, Head of Regional Development, TransPennine Express (TPE).

Graham Meiklejohn congratulated the Committee on these exciting times which were taking place with rail services in our area and that it was all down to the courteous campaigning by the RAGES Committee. Graham Meiklejohn explained that TPE in conjunction with Transport Scotland would be providing a 'connectivity service', which would allow passengers to travel locally rather than a sparse calling pattern which does not encourage people to shift from car to public transport. This new service to the Lothians, Borders and Northumberland will be a semi-fast service and provided by TPE's Nova 1 fleet of trains.

TPE would be hosting a 4 week advertising campaign, starting in mid-November promoting their new train service. As soon as it is announced that Reston will be opening, the advertising campaign will take place in East Berwickshire. Fares will be very competitive as TPE wish to encourage patronage rather than transport fresh air. From the May 2022 timetable there will be an additional two trains running between Edinburgh and Berwick.

Graham Meiklejohn then took questions from the members

Q1. When will TPE trains stop running under diesel power between Chathill and Longniddry?  
Ans. TPE are engaged in discussion with Network Rail on this matter.

Q2. Are fares going to be realistic and affordable?  
Ans. TPE are committed to getting people out of their cars.

Q3. Line capacity between Edinburgh and Newcastle?  
Ans. There are many ways to achieve building in new services.

Q4. There is a late night service from Newcastle but not Edinburgh?  
Ans. We require to work with Scottish Government/Transport Scotland to achieve this.

Q5. What is being done by train operators such as TPE regarding their trains being scratched by overhanging trees and bushes?  
Ans. Claims are lodged with Network Rail for such damage.

Q6. Does TPE have any staff shortages?  
Ans. Not presently but we are recruiting.

Q7. Will there be connecting bus services at the station?

Ans. Graham Meiklejohn's colleague at TPE has been in dialogue with bus operators regarding this. Also, Graeme Johnston SBC, confirmed that they had been in touch with Borders Buses and their 'in house' bus services about calling at the station.

Q8. Poor quality TPE services were highlighted on the Scarborough – York – Leeds services, were we assured that there would be no repeat of this with our new services?

Ans. Graham Meiklejohn apologised on behalf of TPE, this in the main had been caused at the time due to Driver Training/Route Knowledge on the Newcastle – Edinburgh route. Lessons had been learnt and this would not be an issue.

Q9. Will these new TPE services be extended south of Newcastle to say Manchester Airport?

Ans. Keep campaigning for such requirements, TPE see no issue with this happening on their behalf.

Graham Meiklejohn was thanked by the Chairman for his enthusiastic talk and answering members questions.

The Chairman introduced the second guest speaker, Stuart Mackay, Community Engagement Officer, BAM Nuttall.

Stuart Mackay informed the meeting that he could not discuss the commissioning/opening of Reston Station as this information was privy to Network Rail. Reston was the fourth station to be built in the Scottish Borders by BAM Nuttall. However, Tweedbank, Galashiels and Stow were very much easier to construct given that they were not on a 'live line'. Reston on the other hand was on a 'live line' and all work had to be phased in as the working timetable allowed. For example, the platform sections were craned in during Saturday night/Sunday morning line possessions, and the lift towers and footbridge were lifted in during weekend possession of the line (maintenance of the line was undertaken at other places as well).

Currently the platform edge coping stones are being fitted, starting to surface the platforms, drainage work on the site continues, car park, lighting and telecoms will then progress. The landscaping plan of the station site had just received permission.

Stuart Mackay then took questions from the members.

Q1. Will the car park be free?

Ans Yes

To this there was an observation that Reston may get Dunbar passengers as the car parking costs £4 per day.

Q2. RAGES had a very successful meeting with Berwickshire Area for Voluntary Services (BAVS) who wish to place an electric car and two E bikes in the station. Kintore has an electric car placed at this station. Can facilities be made available for these to be at Reston?

Ans. Stuart Mackay will take this away and discuss with Network Rail.

Q3. It is the desire to have toilet facilities at the station. Can the BAM Nuttall electricity and water facilities be left to allow these to be utilised in the proposed toilet?

Stuart Mackay will take this away for discussion.

Q4. During the construction there was noise throughout the night from machinery and personnel shouting. Can this be taken away as a corporate issue for future sites?

Ans. This will be discussed.

Q5 Is there capacity to increase more charging points in the future if required?

Ans. Yes this has already been done at other stations.

Q6. Dunbar station charging point is not compatible with many makes of car?

Ans. Tom Thorburn. As this charging point was installed by Sustaining Dunbar, this point should be taken up with them.

Stuart Mackay was thanked by the Chairman for his informative talk on Reston station construction and answering members questions.

#### Chairman's Report - Barrie Forrest

Barrie Forrest welcomed members to our AGM. This is the first AGM in two years due to the restrictions and threats of the pandemic. Covid-19 has affected all of us in many different ways. Our guest speakers back in 2019 were:-

Sarah Cooper, Transport Scotland, Project Sponsor.

Damien Briody, Head of Project Delivery.

Catherine Hall, Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail.

Back then we were informed that the stations at East Linton and Reston would be built within Network Rail's Control Period 6 (CP6) which runs from April 2019 to April 2024.

It however was great news when BAM Nuttall arrived on site at Reston in January 2021 to set up their office complex and access. Scottish Borders Council approved the station planning application in February 2021 allowing work to start on the station in earnest. The fine spring and summer weather has allowed good progress to be made, and it is hoped that the station will be ready for opening in December 2021.

Further good news came with the approval of East Linton Station planning permission by East Lothian Council on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021. It is hoped that BAM Nuttall will be moving on site to commence the new station build at East Linton prior to Christmas, and that the station may open by the end of 2022.

RAGES next Aim is to have the branch line from Longniddry to Haddington reopened with its stations.

We are delighted that Reston and East Linton are being built and opened in mid CP6. This would not have been possible without the support of our members, as politicians react to membership/public pressure. RAGES committee wishes to thank their members for their loyal support over the years, and those new members who have joined us recently. We require your continued support to achieve our Aims of improving rail services between Edinburgh and Berwick including the North Berwick and eventual Haddington Branch.

As chairman, I would like to thank all of the committee who have assisted me over the past 18 months. Covid-19 has affected our ability to meet in person, but we have continued to meet virtually for committee meetings and meeting with our politicians and rail operators.

With regard to the LNER May 2022 Timetable Consultation, we are grateful to our members who wrote on behalf of RAGES with the result that LNER's proposals hit the buffers.

Since stepping down as Chairman, Tom Thorburn is now our Honorary President and acting Secretary. If it had not been for Tom starting the RAGES Group, we would not be here tonight.

## Secretary's Report

The Secretary's report was given by the Acting Secretary, Tom Thorburn.

The past 18 months have affected us all in some shape or form due to the pandemic, some of us lightly and sadly some very seriously. However, in this period we have some great progress to our rail infrastructure in that time we have seen the second platform installed and commissioned at Dunbar, we have seen Reston Station approved and being constructed, and we have seen East Linton station planning application approved in readiness for its construction. Next, we need to see the branch line to Haddington reinstated with a new station in the town centre and a parkway station on the outskirts of the town.

The RAGES committee are grateful indeed to their members for writing to complain about the LNER Timetable Consultation which would have greatly damaged services to our area. The committee require the members to remain with us as there is much work still to be done to get not just the better rail services we all deserve but all the linking bus services to achieve a proper integrated transport system.

## Treasurer's Report – Ian Bowman

Ian Bowman outlined the account balance sheet to members. The largest expenditure year on year being the publication and postage. Unfortunately, an undated membership cheque was rejected by the bank. On the positive side, members had shown their appreciation with a significant amount being pledged in donations, the largest of these being from Sir Boyd Tunnock of the famous Tunnocks Caramel Wafer.

Please note the original of the Accounts Balance Sheet was signed and dated by the auditor, Chris McArthur.

**Statement of Income and Expenditure  
For Year Ending 31 March 2021**

**Bank Balance at 31 March 2020** 1015.52

**Income**

Subscriptions	862.00	
Donations (Members)	307.00	
Undated Cheque	4.00	
		<u>1173.00</u>

**Expenditure**

Undated Cheque	4.00	
Stamps and Envelopes	217.31	
Printing RAGES Rags	279.65	
Railfuture Membership	25.00	
		<u>525.96</u>
		647.04

**Represented by Bank Balance at 31 March 2021** 1662.56

**Audited and found to be correct from information provided**

Chris McArthur

## Membership Report – Tom Dickson

Our membership remains healthy with 207 members, which includes three honorary members and 15 new members.

This year the number of members who have not renewed is 11, the main reason being probably due to the COVID 'lockdown'.

RAGES has nine corporate members, six of which are community councils;

Ayton Community Council  
Ayton Castle Railway  
Coldingham Community Council  
Dunpender Community Council  
Dunbar Community Council  
Haddington and District Community council  
Reston And Auchencrow Community Council  
T Tunnock Ltd  
Sustaining Dunbar

Hopefully next year we can get back to attending local public events and galas where we have been successful in recruiting new members.

The use of bank transfer as a method of subscription payment continues to be a more popular method of payment, 46% of members now pay by this method compared to 43% last year.

RAGES received very generous donations amounting to £180 when members renewed their subscriptions.

Membership breakdown by station is as follows;

Reston 52%  
Dunbar 14%  
East Linton 11%  
Haddington 4%  
Drem 4%  
North Berwick 3%  
Berwick Upon Tweed 3%  
Others 9%

### Software

We have upgraded our membership and email software, this is now cloud based, meaning it can be accessed from anywhere. The previous software was no longer being supported. This has not been without its teething problems, especially the email system.

### Web Site

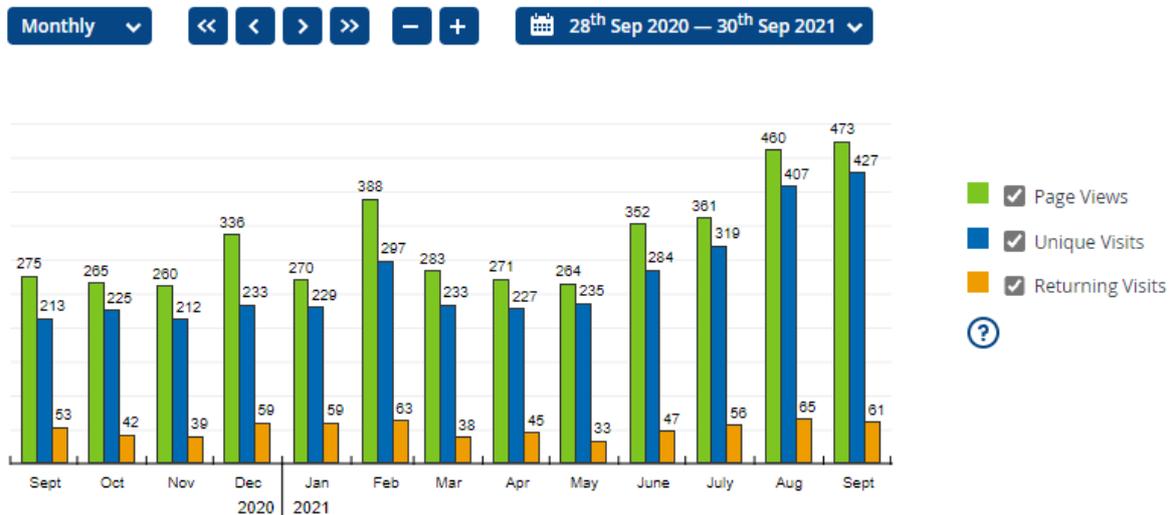
Our web site continues to be updated regularly courtesy of Russell Darling.

Over the twelve-month period from the end of September 2020 we have had around 3575 page views, which averages out at 68 per week. This is slightly less than the previous twelve-month period.

The web site has been regularly updated with the progress of the new station at Reston. Selected images showing the progress can be seen on the web site with the latest at the top of the web page and captions below each photograph. There are also some aerial images captured from a drone courtesy of Logan Inglis.

A new folder, called Publications, has been added to the drop-down menu of the web site. The Newsletters index has been moved into a subfolder of Publications. There are other subfolders, such as recent e-rags, committee minutes and reports which are presented at AGMs.

The bar graph below shows the monthly figures for the last year:



## Facebook

Our Facebook page continues to attract a lot of interest from users of social media, and is updated regularly with progress at Reston, this has allowed us to reach out to a wider group of people and to provide a broader content of transport related issues.

On conclusion of Tom Dickson's report, questions were raised by the members.

Q1. Rather than charge a membership fee, should we not consider making this free such that we would have more members and get the Community Councils to pay for this?

Ans. We require to have genuinely interested members and it is felt that not all (if any) community councils would wish to make a contribution for something such as this.

Q2. Should the Group not adopt PayPal to enable members to pay their membership?

Ans. This could be investigated but there would be a fee to pay for this.

Q3. When will the station be opened?

Ans. We have heard this evening from our speaker that no date will be given. In all likelihood the Transport Minister will be informed before ourselves at RAGES.

Councillor Helen Laing added that SBC are looking into putting together the celebrations for the opening of Reston station.

## Election of Office Bearers

Tom Thorburn proposed that Tom Dickson become the Vice Chairman, Barrie Forrest seconded the proposal and Tom Dickson was duly elected to the position of Vice Chairman.

Barrie Forrest asked the members present if there was a volunteer for the Secretary's post. Max Eaves intimated that he would be interested. Max was proposed by Rhona Goldie, Joyce McLean seconded the proposal and Max Eaves was duly elected Secretary.

#### Update of Constitution

It was explained to the members that the committee wished to update the Constitution but there had not been enough time to have this done and out with the members four weeks prior to the AGM. The main reason for the update being the ability of the committee to withdraw membership from a member who brought RAGES name into disrepute. There were other refinements which were also required. These points will all be addressed by the committee and sent to the members four weeks prior to for ratification at an EGM or the next AGM.

#### General Discussion

Q1. RAGES require to move from being a campaigning group to a promotional group.  
Ans. RAGES already do this in conjunction with their campaigning.

Q2. Are we going to get the ScotRail Edinburgh to Berwick local service up and running?  
Ans. Given the current financial climate due to the pandemic, we require to show good patronage of the trains that are already scheduled to call at Reston when it opens.

Q3. Is the Community Rail Partnership going to cover Reston?  
Ans. This will be pursued.

Q4. Trains require to call at all stations as buses are greatly held up due to congestion.  
Ans. Current track capacity may restrict this.

#### AOCB

Rhona Goldie, on behalf of the local communities gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the committee for all their commitment to getting Reston station reopened.

Chairman Barrie Forrest closed the meeting by thanking Reston & Auchencrow Community Council for hosting the meeting and Mary Hastings and Joyce McLean for providing the refreshments.