

RAIL ACTION GROUP, EAST OF SCOTLAND (RAGES)

RAGES Committee Meeting

11th January 2023, 1pm East Linton Community Hall

1. Welcome and Apologies.

Barrie opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanked Allison for hosting the meeting and wished everyone a happy and healthy new year

Attendees: Barrie Forrest BEM, Harald Vox, Tom Dickson, Ian Bowman, Stewart Leslie, Tom Thorburn, Allison Cosgrove, Tom Flanagan.

Apologies: Glenn Moulding

2. Approval of Minutes of meeting held on 20th. October 2022

Minutes of previous meeting were approved from 20th October 2022.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes.

Ian mentioned a typing error, £4 for AGM agendas should have been £4.80.

4. Station Reports

- Berwick

Barrie reported that things were getting back to normal, some still going from Reston to Berwick due to uncertainty with TPE. Hopes that Berwick doesn't suffer from closure of ticket offices. Tom T reported that the intention is to shut ticket offices in totality, mentioned by RMT in meeting broadcast this morning. Tom T mentioned excellent help and provision of security, wondered whether toilets would remain open. Network Rail wants staff to be out, not stuck in ticket office. Allison expressed view that would not work at Berwick due to different locations of facilities. Barrie mentioned conversation with staff who confirmed that all ages were wanting assistance. Agreed that Allison would write to Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP for Berwick and Kenny MacAskill MP for east Lothian re. Dunbar and copy to Robert Samson of Transport Focus.

- Dunbar

Tom D provided an update: trains are always very busy, almost back to normal post-pandemic, often standing up all the way to Edinburgh. Tom D sent e-mail to Scotrail and Network Rail about vegetation between tracks, received a job number and vegetation confirmed removed. Project for Car Park extension now back underway, contradicting information from Scott Prentice of ScotRail, as well as access from south of station. Tom T mentioned potholes on access road, in the past Railtrack and GNER had to pay as an unadopted road. Tom D to e-mail same contact at Network Rail to ask him to take action on the road access.

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- East Linton & Markle

Negotiations still ongoing on land for road bridge at Markle to allow level crossing to be closed. There could be a conflict with signals so level crossing has to be closed, due to time for deceleration and acceleration of trains to station. Tom T mentioned three stations in Northumberland that had level crossings near station which seem to operate satisfactorily. Barrie mentioned level crossing in centre of Lincoln. Tom D is confused with land purchase issue as told last year it had been completed, then say it is one landowner, others more than one. Allison thought it was a father & son team that own the land. Something to raise with Jenny Gilruth MSP at next week's meeting. Tom T mentioned that meeting, agreed with Craig Hoy MSP, was to focus on Haddington, but ready to discuss if time allows. Also, train fare anomalies, with many people currently being disadvantaged.

- Haddington

Stewart mentioned the forthcoming meeting with the Minister on 18th January. Successful HFM in October, November and December, wait and see forecast for January and February. Date for Walk the Line on Monday/Tuesday 16th or 17th. Not essential for meeting with Minister but useful for members to undertake to visualise commentary in Stantec assessment report. Given recent request from Craig Hoy's office for a pre-meeting on the afternoon of Monday 16th January it was agreed to postpone the Walk the Line event until the spring when the weather might improve.

Tom T mentioned another big issue, as well as A1 severance, to bring access from old A1 to avoid reference to level crossings. Could require demolition of two houses to allow access from A199 in the north-west corner of the site or knock through neighbouring estate. This was pointed out previously to the Council. Stewart would argue NR stance on level crossings was a policy issue rather than a legislative requirement. Should be considered on a risk assessment basis, obviously less risk on a cul-de-sac that has already been narrowed. Two possibilities re. level crossings: north west corner and access via adjacent estate. Tom T asked could the lowering of A199 be an alternative solution? Stewart agreed that could be a feasible option, although expensive. Stewart contended that politicians should stand-up to NR, should be prevailed upon to accept level crossing solution. Allison mentioned that the issue could be raised in the forthcoming meeting with Paul McLennan MSP at meeting on 20th January. Tom D mentioned a new Haddington Rail Forum meeting.

Stewart mentioned the option of splitting trains at Longniddry. Tom T confirmed this practice happens elsewhere in the country, for example at Woking. The train stays on main line but waits for 10min. Barrie mentioned this would be difficult given the capacity issues on the ECML. Stewart suggested he would write to Peter Forsyth, Project Manager for Growth & Sustainability at East Lothian Council (ELC), referencing the new development at Longniddry. NR prefer station on straight track rather on any bends which would mean ensuring land is available for double track. Parallel to main line would mean it has to be south side at Longniddry. So, question is whether

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objectors need to write in now protecting the land. Tom T suggested copying in local MSP and MP cc Chair of Longniddry Community Council.

Tom T mentioned if train split then further extended platforms would not be needed at Drem and North Berwick as it would be the smaller trains that would continue to the journey beyond Longniddry. Stewart also mentioned use of bi-mode unit which is being used on the Leven line.

- **North Berwick & Drem**

Harald reported trains are running on time to North Berwick with no particular issues. Parking at Drem has been improved by adding a further piece of land after removal of redundant tracks.

- **Reston**

Barrie reported that since station opened it had been beset with unreliable service from TPE and rail strikes so no consistent and reliable service even though people would like to use the trains. Meeting arranged for 3rd February to discuss service frequency. Local signage which the Council forgot to order still not in place. Signs to station now being manufactured and will hopefully be installed soon. Same conditions apply to other TOC's but LNER have virtually no cancellations, so a mystery why TPE has suffered such service disruption.

5. Meeting with Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth MSP, 18th January

Arrangements have been made for 5 attendees. Barrie confirmed main issue for the meeting was Haddington and if time allows, Markle Crossing, TPE reliability issue and fair anomalies. Monday has been suggested for a pre-meeting on Zoom, Tom D to confirm the time with Callum Brunton. [Now agreed at 3.00pm, Tom D to forward Zoom link].

Reston services are an agreement between TPE and Transport Scotland, so TS need to press TPE to improve performance. And ensure same poor performance does not replicate in the case of East Linton.

Tom F mentioned need for Transport Scotland to re-start work on ECML capacity issues otherwise Haddington may be caught in a Catch-22. This might come via a commitment in CP7, although Tom T mentioned CP6 projects that had not yet been delivered, e.g. Portobello junction, which also might hinder improved capacity.

6. Membership Report.

Tom D mentioned that fully paid-up members had reached 208. Barrie has asked how many new members have joined since we started attending HFM, at least 30 are new members but a number in the Reston area have lapsed. The new members have balanced out those lost in the Reston area.

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7. Treasurers Report.

Ian provided the following treasurers update –

Balance at meeting on 20/10/2022	1756.47
Income:-	
28 memberships @ 4	112.00
Donations	<u>24.00</u>
Total	1892.47

Expenditure:-

Projector cable	8.99
E. Linton hall hire	14.00
Leaflet holders	18.30
50 second class stamps	34.00
3 membership and donation refunds	15.00
HFM pitch for 2023	56.00
TVRC membership	5.00
200 Rages Rags	<u>91.31</u>
Total	242.60

1892.47

- 242.60

Bank Balance at 11/01/2023

1649.87

8. East Linton Official Opening Arrangements

Nothing heard as yet. Agreed to write to Council regarding signage for the station to be ready for station opening.

9. Transform Scotland Membership

Tom F declared an interest as a Policy Advisor to Transform. There was a discussion on what Transform could provide principally via Paul Tetlaw as the Rail Policy Advisor. Tom F reported that Paul had been helpful in providing information on the 'big picture' in advance of the meeting with the Transport Minister. The information gleaned from Transform could assist Rages in its own campaigns. Tom T thought it eminently sensible that RAGES should re-join Transform Scotland. All agreed. Tom F to follow up.

10. Correspondence and Meetings attended

Meetings attended and correspondence received

East Lothian Rail Steering Group took place on 26th October

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Future Meetings

Zoom Meeting with Craig Hoy MSP to discuss meeting with Transport Minister now arranged for Monday 16th January at 10.00am.

Allison mentioned the forthcoming Rail Futures committee meeting with Paul McLennan MSP and Barrie has been invited 26th January.

Wednesday 18th. January - RAGES meeting with Scottish Transport Minister and Craig Hoy MSP.

Friday 20th. January - Local Rail Group Meeting hosted by Peter Forsyth ELC

Friday 3rd. February - Tom T, Barrie F & Tom D meeting with John Lamont MP and Graham Meiklejohn Head of Regional development TPE.

Monday 13th. March - Haddington/Blindwells rail link meeting, hosted by Paul McLennan MSP

29th. July 2023 Berwick Probus Group – RAGES presentation

11. Next RAG & Subscription Reminders

Barrie thanked Glenn in his absence for coordinating most recent RAG which had been well received. Next edition should be coming up soon, members were asked to develop articles for next edition and submit to Glenn. This could certainly include outcome of meeting with Transport Minister, Tom D agreed to arrange photograph on the day.

12. AOCB.

1. Table Cover for HFM

Allison agreed to obtain quote, Tom D to forward table dimensions.

2. Hydrogen Trains

Tom D referred to an article that this could be a myth due to cost involved, also lithium batteries max capacity 76 kwh capacity, just a couple of hundred miles, larger batteries coming 1500 kwh, so some way to go before batteries can replace current diesel vehicles. Dies and petrol engines more environmentally friendly when production of resourcing of raw materials are factored in.

3. HFM – agreed to continue during 2023, now permit paid for and received. Next HFM Saturday 28th January
4. EV's can now be charged at station car parks even if people are not using the trains. If the issue is raised then potential backlash is that ScotRail or TOC's could charge everybody.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 1st March, 1pm. East Linton Village Hall.