



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

Report from Local Transport Officer

1. Trains.

Community Rail Partnership. The draft minutes of the CRP Line Group South meeting on 17th September are not yet available. The next meeting is scheduled for 3rd December.

Safe Footway from Melton Station to East Suffolk House. Paper PLA(19)56.02 (17th April 2019) contained the original request for part-funding, including the words “Without funding for the survey and design work, the scheme cannot proceed. Would the Council be willing to make a contribution of, say, 50% of the cost (i.e. £825?).”

The Clerk now advises me that councillors were under the impression that this project was being fully funded from s106 monies paid by Riduna Holdings Ltd. Perhaps my original report failed to make clear what I believe had been reported earlier, namely that this is a part of the wider CRP-funded scheme of passenger improvements at the station. It comprises forming a safe walking route from the platform to Wilford Bridge Road. It does not form part of the s106 agreement between Riduna Holdings and the local planning authority. A sketch plan of the works appears below.



New Trains. The first of the new Class 755 bi-mode trains are now in service on the Norwich to Lowestoft / Gt. Yarmouth and Norwich to Cambridge lines. One has been tested overnight on the East Suffolk Line and we hope to see them in passenger service here in November.

2. Buses.

Timetables: First Buses. Last month I referred to the discovery that the First website now shows all the recently changed timetables as being valid only until 19th October, with no details of proposed changes, more recently this became 9th November. As the confusion about whether further changes were imminent was delaying the publication of the Autumn edition of the 'new look' Local Transport Guide, I took the matter up with First local management.

I have now received the reply that *"In summary, there are no changes proposed at the present time. It is unfortunately a result of the way that the timetables are generated automatically from our scheduling system; the timetables pick up the end date of the schedule, which might be specified for operational reasons or changes to driver duties or contracts rather than public services. It also means, because the timetables are imported as a group by operating depot, it means that if one service is changing on a specific date, all the other services at that depot will also show as ending on that date. They will then be replaced by timetables with a revised end date, but which might be exactly the same in many cases. This is just a shortcoming of the current system, and not unfortunately something that we can change locally."* Clearly, the concept of customer service is lost on FirstGroup's central management team.

The email continues *"The best timetables for you to use are here: www.firstgroup.com/ipswichreds. These have maps etc. and are a downloadable copy of the print timetable. Apologies for any confusion that has been caused by this."* Despite being signed up to receive information from First, I had not heard of the Ipswich Reds website before.

Timetables: SCC Sponsored Services. I note from minute 19.146 that, following an overture by the Chairman of Woodbridge TC on the matter of bus cuts. He wished to know if Melton wanted to be involved in a move by a group of local parishes to engage with First Bus. It was AGREED that Melton would wish to be involved, and will let Woodbridge take the lead. Given my lifelong experience of public transport planning and management, would the council wish me to be involved in this.

Local Publicity. I am pleased to see from minute 19.143.02 that the parish council has gained access to the 'buses from this stop' website <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/mdv/stoptimetablesearch> and that these have been printed and are being displayed at bus stops. My only concern is that, as printed, the font size is too small to be easily read. I presume from this that my offer to help this process was not taken up.

Council will wish to note at that the email I received from First's Network Manager concluded *"Incidentally, our marketing manager is producing roadside timetables for all our routes at present (entirely at our own cost), to replace the withdrawn support of SCC."* The extent to which this includes Melton has yet to be seen.

Geof Butterwick
Local Transport Officer
11th October 2019