

*promoting quality public transport.....*

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## Minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of The North West Public Transport Users' Forum held on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June at Lancaster Town Hall.

Brendan O'Friel in the Chair

### 06/2/1F Introduction

The Chairman welcomed delegates and members of the public. He explained the role of the Forum for the benefit of new attendees. He expressed thanks to Lancaster City Council's Tourism Unit for providing the venue and facilities for this meeting and to TransPennine Express for its sponsorship and support of the event. The theme of the meeting was to consider the role of public transport in the tourism and leisure sectors and the role it plays in these economies. However he further explained that the Agenda had had to be changed due to the late notification that TransPennine Express was unable to attend to deliver its presentation due to another issue overrunning. This however would allow time for some extended discussion on the issue of the DfT's Cross Country franchise proposals recently announced.

The Chairman also announced that the North West Public Transport Users Forum will adopt the name "Travel Watch North West" from this meeting and that all other PTUF's in the country will adopt the brand.

### 06/2/2F Attendees and apologies

Those attending and those who tendered their apologies are listed at the end of these minutes.

### 06/2/3F Minutes of the Forum held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2006

These were accepted as a true and correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

### 06/2/4F Matters arising:

There were no matters arising that were not included on the Agenda.

### 06/2/5F Public Transport servicing the Tourism & Leisure Sector

#### 1. Trains & Tourism -

- Jim Trotman - Tourism Officer Lancaster City Council & Chairman, Lancaster - Skipton CRP Co.
- Historically mass tourism began by seaside resorts being linked to population centres by rail.
- Destinations were promoted by Rail Companies.
- Changes in holidaying trends and competition from overseas destinations brought drastic change from the 1960's onwards.
- Modern approaches to marketing destinations require the formation of partnerships. Much attention has been paid to car provision and coach but very little to train travel.
- However the growing importance of sustainability has brought new attention to alternative means to the car.
- Destinations need to have good dialogue with active partnerships with transport operators to create effective marketing solutions.
- One of the greatest difficulties is in persuading the visitor of the convenience of public transport and too often the lack of integration is a disincentive.

- Many good examples of integrated, inter-modal transport exist in Europe that have brought real results to many areas, both in sustainable travel and managed tourism and are worthy of further study and adoption.
- There is a need to influence politicians and public sector agencies to invest in transport to and within tourist destinations.
- Better ticketing deals and less complexity of purchase across modes need to be adopted by operators and be well marketed and promoted.
- Good marketing of the Leeds - Morecambe line, as an example, has led to large increases in patronage both to the operator and to the visitor destinations along the route.

## 2. Buses and Tourism, Chris Bowles, Stagecoach, Cumbria

### The Scenario

- Stagecoach operations in the Lake District are largely commercial.
- Lake District services peak in patronage between May and October.
- 84% of travellers visitors are from the UK, 16% from overseas.
- Tourism travel represents 15% of turnover in Cumbria but 30% from Kendal depot.

### Operation Experiences

- Foot & Mouth crisis resulted in a 9% loss of business in 2001.
- Realised that Marketing & Promotion was vital and restructured Marketing strategy to include: presence in hotel bedroom browsers; a dedicated website to Cumbria operations; joint inter-modal ticketing packages with attractions; fares promotions; active partnerships with tourism agencies; route branding has proved successful (555 Lancaster - Keswick and Open Top operations. experimental services in identified market sectors and areas; advance ticket purchase and outlets outside the Cumbria area; 135,000 copies of Lakesider Brochure
- Local Authority input by infra-structure improvements e.g. Information display, real time running.
- Extending the main season.
- Results have been a gradual recovery of business since 2002

### Next Steps

- Addressing punctuality problems caused by traffic congestion.
- Managing the increase in ridership due to new concessionary Over 60's scheme.

### Coach Market

- Coach visitors to the region are a vital contributor to the economy.
- Value and needs of the market are frequently overlooked.
- Local Authorities need to be more proactive in providing better facilities for coaches at destinations.

## 3. Discussion

- Concessionary Travel for non-Cumbria resident Over 60's was a marketing decision.
- Connections and timings are still a challenge due to traffic congestion. Discretion and flexibility are exercised where possible.
- Lakes Day Ranger ticket suffers from poor marketing and promotion. Needs better attention from train operators who act as main outlets.
- Sustainable tourism majors on high value/low volume visits.
- Recently launched Institute of Travel & Tourism may be an important body in powerful lobbying.
- Bus v. Rail competition - Stagecoach is a private company and must seek optimum market share in line with customer demand.
- Traveline - Stagecoach acts impartially as an agent contractor to other transport operators.
- Need for consideration of more extra train and bus services to cater for travel to/from major events and festivals.
- Lancaster train/bus services are still challenging and the University may need a dedicated service. Discussions are ongoing.

## **06/02/6F Cross Country Franchise**

The Chairman introduced this item as the DfT had announced a controlled consultative period on the future of the franchise and changes to route operation affecting services north of Crewe.

Brian Johnson summarised the contents of the document as follows:

- Document is available on the DfT Website. Deadline for comment is 7<sup>th</sup> August.
- New franchise will operate from November 2007.
- The operational decisions are in parallel with consideration of the new West & East Midlands franchises.
- New timetable will be required to accommodate revised operations at Birmingham New Street.
- No direct trains will operate on the WCML to/from stations north of Crewe to Reading / Bournemouth, or the West of England, or between Manchester and Gatwick Airport / Brighton. A new hourly link will be created between Manchester and Bristol.
- Services from Birmingham NS to Glasgow will operate under West Coast franchise.

A short discussion followed in which it was agreed that:

- Consultees do not appear to include passenger representatives other than Passenger Focus who will respond on corporate basis.
- Need to consider paths of influence calling for the issue to be well publicised and campaigned.
- TravelWatch NW will consider a plan of action immediately and publish an action strategy for members to follow.

## **06/2/7F TravelWatch North West Update**

- a) Re-branding of organisation to TravelWatch North West active with immediate effect and Website address changed to [www.travelwatch-northwest.org.uk](http://www.travelwatch-northwest.org.uk)
- b) Rural Bus Project report is still progressing and is destined to be the next TW published report.
- c) Ian Watson, the TW rep. in the north had been extremely active in creating profile and challenging issues.
- d) Liverpool South Parkway was due to open on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2006.
- e) Financing has been secured from the RDA to add to that donated by Merseytravel and GMPTE as well as sponsorship, enabling TW to be active until 31 March 2007. However it was unlikely that the RDA source will be available after this, leaving challenges for the future. Other funding streams, particularly from the industry, are being pursued.

## **06/2/9F Disrupted Rail Journeys Report**

The Chairman formally launched the Disrupted Rail Journeys report produced by TravelWatch North West. He highlighted the importance of minimizing disruption to rail journeys caused by maintenance regimes and the increasing tendency to close rail lines for the convenience of engineering without consideration to passengers. He hoped that the report would impact on the industry and also the ORR and DfT in cautioning Network Rail to review its policies in this issue. He paid tribute to the work of Keith Pennyfather who had compiled the majority of the report and reminded members that a full version is available. Keith Pennyfather responded by highlighting the situation on the Stockport - Crewe line where replacement buses have been operating with regularity and result in 892 bus movements a week and the consequent effects on traffic congestion.

## **06/2/10F Passenger Focus**

David Sidebottom updated the Forum on the current progress of passenger Focus. He reported that the 3 year Corporate Plan had now been finalised and a 1 year Business Plan was in place. PF will be working to 6 themes on a national basis - fares/ticketing, information, accessibility to network, disabled access, service improvements and station improvements and will also be active in franchise replacements proposals. He confirmed that the PF approach to the Cross Country consultation would be a single national response supported by passenger research and themed by issues raised by passengers and stakeholders

**Chris Dale (BUUK)** outlined the results of his research in to the Over 60's concessionary bus travel scheme introduced in April 2006 and revealed the many differences between Counties, Districts and Regions, both in their content and in the way they were promoted. His findings confirmed that the system was over complex and requires consistency and simplification. He was concerned that money allocated the local authorities to implement the scheme was not ring fenced and it was left to the discretion of the authority as to the level of resource allocated and scale of operation. He further added that the system would become worse if, as expected it is expanded to national travel in 2008. Bus industry representatives endorsed the view expressed and added that it had pressure on vehicle capacity and timetables .

**Dr Paul Elliott (NCRUG)** discussed his concerns on the effects of the withdrawal of bus services on the Runcorn bus circuit after 9.30 pm. A major concern is that there is no bus service from Runcorn East after 9.25 pm to meet the trains from Chester, Warrington and Manchester. Passengers were now faced with the expense of a taxi or walking through an area renowned for its social problems and intimidation. He personally had been mugged and had money and belongings stolen during May. His attempts to persuade Halton Borough Council to re-instate a bus service had been met with sympathy but with no solution and he had been dis-satisfied with the responses he had received, despite an intervention from his constituency MP. He viewed the issue extremely seriously and felt that it would be only a matter of time before a major incident occurred. He requested that Halton Borough Council be asked to consider the security risk to passengers and find a solution. In discussion a bus operator commented about the difficulty of operating in areas of where the security of crews could be under threat.

**Next meeting of the Forum** Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2006 in Liverpool

The meeting closed at 13.15 and was followed by lunch kindly sponsored by Trans Pennine Express.

*JTO/TPC 06/06*

#### PRESENT

Barker	Mark	Northern Rail
Bearpark	John	Lancaster & Skipton RUG
Bowes	Derek	Arriva North West & Wales
Bowles	Christopher	Stagecoach Cumbria
Briggs	Janet	North Cheshire RUG
Clarke	David	Lancs CPRE
Clarke	Richard	BAFRUA
Colley	Peter	NWTAR/LLRUG
Conway	Malcolm	Lakes Line RUG
Dale	Chris	BUUK
Davies	Martin	Merseytravel
Elliott	Paul	North Cheshire RUG
Evans	David	BAFRUA
Fawcett	Paul	Travelwatch NW
Garrett	Tony	Wirral Transport Users Asscn
Greaves	Jessica	Kendal Bus Users
Green	Leonard	CPT
Grey	Brian	Railfuture
Jarvis	Chris	Inst of Traffic Admin
Johnson	Brian	Virgin Cross Country
Knowles	Denis	Liverpool John Lennon Airport
Macfarlane	Andrew	Mid Cheshire RUA
Machin	Mike	Lancaster & Morecambe RUG
Oakes	Russell	CILTI UK
Oakes	Bill	CILTI UK
O'Friel	Brendan	Travelwatch NW
Owen	John	Travelwatch NW
Pennyfather	Keith	Travelwatch NW
Potts	C A	Copeland RUG
Richardson	Malcolm	BAFRUA
Richardson	Malcolm	BAFRUA
Robinson	Peter	Travelwatch NW

Scoles	Alan	CPT North West
Sidebottom	David	Passenger Focus
Swallow	Ken	CILT (UK)
Talbot	Robert	Lakes Line RUG
Trotman	Jim	Lancaster City Council
Warhurst	Russell	University of Chester
Warner	John	Kendal Bus Users
Wrigley	Michael	STORM

## Apologies

Antrobus	Emma	NW Rail Investment Campaign
Burns	Lillian	NW TAR/CPRE
Butterworth	David	TravelWatch NW
Byrne	Paul	Transport 2000 Merseyside
Clarke	Clarissa	Access For All
Davenport	David	Merseytravel
Davies	Peter	Railfuture Yorkshire
Dawson	Peter	STORM
Easson	Andrew	N Yorks County Council
Eaves	Dawn	Blackpool BC
Eccles	Mark	Lake District National Park
Ferguson	Mal	Merseytravel
Goodwin	Leo	TransPennine Express
Kennington	Colin	Cheshire County Council
Koring	Dave	Crewe & Shrewsbury PA
Leyland	Steve	Virgin West Coast
Longworth	Bob	Manchester Airport plc
Lucas	Paul	GMPTE
Lunt	Tom	PT User
McCulley	Steve	Railfuture
McGurk	Kevin	Bus Users UK
Murray	John	STORM
O'Brien	Kathryn	Northern Trains
Rand	Mark	Friends of Settle - Carlisle Line
Ross	Jamie	Northern Trains
Threlfall	John	Capita Symonds
Tripp	Roger	GMPTE
Tudor	Robin	Liverpool John Lennon Airport
Watson	Ian	TravelWatch NW
Whiteley	Graham	Cumbria County Council
Winnington	Eileen	Blackpool BC

**TravelWatch NorthWest**

**supported by:** *NorthWest Regional Development Agency*   *Greater Manchester PTE*   *Merseytravel*  
*Manchester Airport plc*   *TransPennine Express*   *Virgin West Coast*   *Virgin CrossCountry*