

CHILTERN RAILWAYS PASSENGER BOARD - 2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT



1985

Marylebone

2015

Chairman: John Elvin

Vice Chairman: Reg Whittome

Introduction

This is the 13th Annual Report of the Chiltern Railways Passenger Board (CRPB) and contains a summary of the key issues affecting Chiltern Railways during the past year together with the valuable contributions made by the Board members at each of the meetings and in correspondence.

The CRPB plays an important role in providing the opportunity for Chiltern Railways senior management to present their proposals and future plans and to be held accountable for any performance issues. The Board also acts as a useful information source enabling Chiltern Railways senior managers to understand, at first hand, the issues and concerns that directly affect passengers using their services.

Background: The Chiltern Railways Passenger Board was established in April 2002 and facilitating the Board is a requirement of the Chiltern Franchise agreement (schedule 13 – clause 11.7, page 393) which can be summarised as:

- The Board meets at least once each year and seeks to ensure that Chiltern Railways (CRCL) conducts its business in the best interest of passengers.
- The Board comprises representatives from Passenger User Groups and Local Authorities along the CRCL line of route.
- The Board monitors the operational performance of CRCL and reviews infrastructure upgrades, passengers' facilities, timetable changes, fares proposals and passenger satisfaction surveys and supports integrated transport scheme proposals.

Four quarterly Board meetings are normally held with the venue alternating between Birmingham Moor Street and London Marylebone stations. Additional meetings covering specific issues are convened when necessary.

Detailed minutes are produced after meetings that outline the Board members' views on proposals and progress, ideas for consideration and the responses from CRCL management representatives. These minutes are not published at the time to avoid any breaches of confidentiality or commercial sensitivity. The following is a summary of the major topics and projects discussed at meetings by the Board during the last twelve months.

PASSENGER BOARD MEETINGS 2014-2015

11 July 2014 - Annual General Meeting

The Chairman presented the Board's 2013-14 Annual Report to the meeting and this was met with acclaim with everyone agreeing the Report was very comprehensive and that its length reflected the amount of work undertaken during the last year. The Chairman was thanked for his work by the Board and for the quality and substance of the Annual Report.

Election of Chairman for 2015-16

Prior to the election process, the Board agreed that postal votes could be accepted as valid when electing a chairman for 2015-16 but it was also agreed to hold a separate meeting, at a later date, to review, amend and clarify whole voting process covering future elections. As this would require amending the Board's Constitution, it would require the convening of an EGM as changes to the constitution can only be made at an AGM or EGM.

After all votes had been counted, it was announced that John Elvin had been elected as Chairman for the next twelve months. Reg Whittome then consented to be co-opted as Vice Chairman. The new Chairman and the Board then expressed their thanks to Ian Rivett for all his hard work, achievements and contributions as Chairman over the previous four years.

New Line to Oxford

Members were updated on progress in the construction of the new route to Oxford and were reassured that the works were continuing at the planned rate.

Concerning the revised timetable, due to commence when the Oxford line opened, it was agreed to hold a separate timetable consultation meeting for CRPB members in Bicester during September.

Recent Disruption

Concerning the recent cable fire in St John's Wood tunnel that had closed Marylebone station for two days, Network Rail (NR) had not yet identified the cause of the fire. However, the devastation was caused by detritus being ignited with a nearby ventilation flue encouraging the fire. The NR signalling diagram was out of date so the damaged cabling took longer than planned to replace. In a subsequent meeting with NR, preventative maintenance was the key message from CRCL to NR.

Missing War Memorial Plaques

The Board was informed that the GCR Marylebone station War Memorial had been missing for many years and, in spite of in-depth searches, had not been re-discovered. The Rail Heritage Trust had agreed to help fund a replacement together with funds from CRCL, the Marylebone Travellers Association and the Marylebone Society. It would be unveiled and formally re-dedicated in 2015 (16 April).

12 September 2014 Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

Proposed Revision to the CRPB Constitution

The Chairman explained that, as changes to the CRPB constitution had been proposed at the AGM held on 11 July 2014, it was necessary to convene a special EGM to consider these previously circulated proposals as the CRPB constitution can only be amended at a formal General Meeting.

The main proposed amendment was that the ability for members to vote for the post of Chairman/Vice Chairman via post or email should be added to the wording of the CRPB Constitution.

Members then reviewed all aspects of the proposed voting process that would be referred to in paragraph 3 of the proposed amended constitution.

It was agreed that:

A Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected annually in accordance with the election process agreed and approved by Board members from time to time. The election process can be summarised as:

Nominees for the position of Chairman/Vice Chairman will be invited at the preceding CRPB (April) meeting. Members' names being proposed for the positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman should be nominated at least six weeks before the voting process. All members' votes shall be received (via post or email) no later than one week before the date of the AGM with the results being announced at the AGM.

The Board also agreed that those holding the positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman should only be permitted to serve a maximum of three consecutive years before being required to stand down. However, this requirement could be waived by the Board if there are no other members willing to stand for office.

12 September 2014 Timetable Discussion Meeting

In addition to the public consultation process, members were invited to a special meeting to review the initial draft of the proposed Autumn 2015 timetable. This included many changes as part of incorporating the new service to Oxford Parkway due to commence in September 2015.

Much discussion followed with several suggestions for amendments being put forward by both Chiltern and CRPB members. Concern was expressed by some members at the timing of and the number of daily services proposed to call at Islip and it was agreed that further discussions would be held with the local user group to resolve these issues at a subsequent consultation meeting (held on 30 October).

17 October 2014 Meeting

Rail / Bus Interchange at High Wycombe

The issue of interchange with local buses at High Wycombe station was raised and it was reported there were only a very limited number of bus services that called at the station. It was agreed this should be looked at in conjunction with the bus operator and the local rail user group.

Northolt Park

Concern was expressed that certain morning peak hour services to London were often over-crowded at Northolt Park and it was agreed this issue would be taken away and reviewed by the train planning team.

Marylebone Station Facilities

Several members suggested improvement to some of Marylebone's station facilities and Chiltern confirmed they were looking at the station's operations in general to specifically include information provision. It was confirmed that an application was being made for a third mobility buggy to be provided and more staff would be driver trained to use them.

Engineering Director Meeting

Members would be invited to a separate meeting with the Engineering Director, Dave Penny, to update the Board on rolling stock issues including the new class 68 locomotives and plans to acquire more clubman DMUs to increase the fleet size prior to the line being opened to Oxford.

Bicester to Oxford Construction Progress

Below ground works had mostly been completed in time for winter but eventual running through beyond Oxford Parkway into Oxford was dependent on completion of the Oxford re-signalling work that was due for completion by February-March 2016.

26 November 2014 Additional Meeting with Engineering Director

The Board met with Dave Penny, Chiltern's Engineering Director, and heard about detailed plans for the acquisition of additional rolling stock to cater for increased demand once the service to Oxford opened in 2015. The class 170 DMUs being acquired would be upgraded to Chiltern 'Clubman' standard and renumbered as class 168/3s.

Members were also updated on the replacement of class 67 locos with new class 68s that not only were more powerful, but should be more reliable than the class 67s currently used to haul the 'Silver Sets'.

From 2016, the class 165 DMU fleet will be receiving a heavy overhaul with internal alterations being made to enable their compliance with DDA legislation that will ensure their eligibility for continued use beyond 2019. The class 121 bubble cars, used on peak hour Aylesbury -Risborough shuttles, would not be modified in this way and would therefore be withdrawn by the end of 2019.

30 January 2015 Meeting

Banbury Re-Signalling and New Maintenance Depot

It was confirmed there would be many engineering possessions in the Banbury area on Sundays from 24th May through to December 2015 while new signalling and a revised track layout was installed. This would be further complicated by additional possessions further south at High Wycombe for a new footbridge installation followed by platform lengthening.

A new maintenance depot and stabling sidings are planned for construction at Banbury and the scope is larger than that initially envisaged as Network Rail wish to future proof the scheme to cover requirements for the eventual electrification of the line from Oxford.

Oxford to Bicester Line Construction Works Programme:

An overview was given of the ongoing work to develop the new timetable together with progress on the ongoing work to re-construct the line to Oxford. There would not be formal ticket offices at the new stations but assistance would be available to use new ticket vending machines at Oxford Parkway and Bicester Town. Both stations would be staffed in some way from early morning until the last trains. Oxford Parkway will have ticket barriers but Islip and Bicester Town stations will not. It was confirmed that both Bicester stations will be in one station group from a fares perspective.

Concern was expressed at the loss of car parking at Bicester Town station while the line was being rebuilt together with the replacement bus service being unable to stop there. This was due to the land being owned by Bicester Village shopping outlet who had evicted Chiltern at very short notice.

Future Board meetings

There was a general discussion around the timing of future Board meetings that currently start at 14:00 and alternate between London and Birmingham. It was agreed to discuss this issue in depth at the next meeting when a decision would be taken after considering all viable options.

Passenger Information During Disruption

A briefing was given on the current 'Working during Disruption' project that Chiltern were working on together with Aston University. The object was to improve management of incidents and the subsequent flows of passenger information. The methodology and the use of some case studies were mentioned and, with this in mind, a new Customer Information System was being rolled out to the majority of stations that would enable easier dissemination of information to station screens with more consistent messaging at stations and via all on-line information sources.

24 April 2015 Meeting

Chiltern Line Future Projects

Members received a presentation from Stephen Barker, Chiltern's Strategic Development Engineer, covering Chiltern's future plans up to the end of their franchise in December 2021. The subjects covered included examining the possibility of linking up with Crossrail, the potential of East-West Rail and the option of a possible extension to Chiltern's franchise from 2021. In addition, members agreed they would like to be consulted as part of the forthcoming Network Rail LNE Route study.

Future Board Meetings: Days & Times

After a long discussion with many views and suggestions being aired by members, it was eventually agreed that, for an experimental period of one year starting from October 2015, the revised quarterly meeting times would be:

- London Marylebone 10:30-13:00 on Fridays
- Birmingham Moor St 13:30-15:45 on Fridays

Oxford to Bicester Line Construction Work: Update

Members were informed in confidence that the original proposed September opening had been postponed until October. The final October timetable would be released when the revised opening date had been made public.

The Board discussed the minimum time needed for boarding far trains on Platforms 1-3 and all trains on 4-6. at Marylebone. A waiting area was suggested by platforms 4-6 together with seating in this area.

The subject of Rail Replacement bus Services to Oxford once the service to Oxford Parkway had commenced was discussed and the Board was reassured about provision of an onward bus connection to/from Oxford rail station.

AGM - Election of Chairman – Reminder of Procedure

The Chairman reminded members of the new method for the election of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman together with the deadline for submitting nominations for either position.

Finally

On behalf of the Passenger Board, I should like to thank the Directors and Managers of Chiltern Railways for their time afforded to the Board during meetings, consultation processes and correspondence throughout the year.

In addition, I would also like to thank all members of the Passenger Board for their invaluable and knowledgeable input on all Board related matters during the year and for their time given in attending meetings.

John Elvin
Chairman
July 2015