

CHILTERN RAILWAYS PASSENGER BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09

John Elvin – Chairman.

Don Barton – Vice Chairman.

This is the seventh Annual Report of the Chiltern Railways Passenger Board and summarises the Board's work over the last year. When formally approved by the Passenger Board, the Annual Report will be placed on the Chiltern Railways' web site and submitted to the Department for Transport.

The Board continued in its role of bringing together those who have an interest in Chiltern's activities, including local authorities, voluntary passenger user groups and statutory user groups.

The Board plays an important role in allowing Chiltern's senior management to explain their plans and be held to account for any performance issues, whilst also acting as an additional conduit to enable Chiltern senior managers to understand the issues and concerns directly affecting its passengers.

Background

The Chiltern Railways Passenger Board was established in April 2002. Facilitating the Board is a requirement of the Chiltern Franchise agreement (schedule 13 – clause 11.7) which requires that:

- The Board meets at least once each year.
- The Board comprises representatives from passenger user groups along the Chiltern Line route in addition to individuals representing London TravelWatch, Passenger Focus and local authorities.
- The Board monitors Chiltern's performance.
- The Board seeks to ensure that Chiltern Railways conducts its business in the best interest of passengers.
- The Board promotes integrated transport schemes on the Chiltern line of route.

PASSENGER BOARD MEETINGS 2008 - 2009.

Record of Meetings

Although detailed minutes are produced after each meeting, the main issues dealt with during the year are summarised below. Until 2009, meetings had always been held in High Wycombe but, commencing May 2009, are now alternating between in-house venues in Birmingham and London.

Passenger Board Meeting July 2008

At the meeting, John Elvin and Don Barton were both re-elected unopposed as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively.

The latest Project Update document was discussed and feedback given on recent developments at Marylebone including new customer information screens and the forthcoming relocation of the men's toilets to alongside the side exit to Harewood Avenue. Progress on building a new replacement platform at Denham was noted together with the recent formal reopening of Leamington Spa station following a £0.75m refurbishment.

The board was pleased that the Chiltern Railways website had been voted best business website in Britain at the Communications in Business awards.

Nominations were requested from members for allocating expenditure from the 2008/09 User Group Fund.

Members received a presentation on the role of British Transport Police and how route crime was being tackled along the Chiltern Line route.

Passenger Board Meeting: October 2008

The Board reviewed the latest Project Update document that included details of future development proposals at High Wycombe for increased car park capacity and purchase of the former goods shed (listed) building.

Plans for the eventual connecting up of platforms 3 and 4 at Birmingham Moor Street for use by some terminating trains from London were reviewed.

Proposals for installing MIP passenger lifts at Aylesbury were welcomed.

Forthcoming December 2008 timetable changes were also reviewed together with proposed fares increases due to take effect from January 2009.

The board also discussed the structure and format of future meetings and possible suitable alternative venues instead of High Wycombe.

Passenger Board Meeting: January 2009

Members were reminded about submitting ideas for allocating expenditure funds for improvements from the User Group Discretionary Fund

The May 2009 timetable consultation process was imminent and a request for feedback and further suggestions was made in addition to specific questions raised during the meeting.

Several members expressed concerns that passengers could no longer travel from Leamington Spa to Birmingham using a cheap day return ticket because of changes to the fares structure. The board was informed that these changes had been instigated by Cross Country Trains who now determine the fares on that section of route. Further investigations would be made by Chiltern and local user groups.

The suggestion for later evening trains from Stratford to London for RSC theatregoers was discussed but this was ruled out for the near future by Network Rail requiring evening track possessions.

Passenger Board Meeting: May 2009

The board were pleased to hear that Chiltern had achieved an industry best PPM of 97.51% during the three months to 31 March including two weekdays when performance reached 100%.

It was reported that work was underway to increase car-parking capacity at Wendover, Bicester North and then at Haddenham. Security was being improved at Birmingham Moor Street where ticket gates were being installed by London Midland but, when operational, would be manned by Chiltern Railways' staff.

In order to relieve overcrowding on certain peak hour services, Chiltern was looking at acquiring a set of loco-hauled Mark 3 coaches for use between Banbury and London and members were shown details of the proposed seating layout.

Metropolitan Line train replacement programme – effect on Chiltern

Much concern was expressed by several members that the lack of seating in the new S-stock trains, due to begin replacing the existing Met line trains from 2010, would cause overcrowding on existing Chiltern services south of Amersham. It was confirmed that Chiltern were currently unable to promise any new carriages, for use on the Met line, that could be used to alleviate this forecast scenario.

Project Evergreen 3

After a brief summary of the main proposals, members requested further details of Project Evergreen 3 and it was agreed a separate meeting would be arranged for those interested.

Evergreen 3 Project: Presentation by Allan Dare on 24th June 2009

Members had been invited to a special meeting for a presentation from Allan Dare, Strategic Development Manager, on the proposals being considered for inclusion in Chiltern's Evergreen 3 development project.

Delivery of this project would result in the speeding up of existing services between London and Birmingham through infrastructure improvements between Neasden and Aynho. This would then release track capacity for a direct Marylebone to Oxford service using a new chord line linking with the existing Bicester to Oxford line which would be re-laid with double track for higher speeds.

Board members supported these proposals and asked to be kept updated as the project was further developed.

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John Elvin

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Don Barton