

## WIRRAL TRANSPORT USERS ASSOCIATION

### Annual General Meeting at Birkenhead YMCA on Monday evening 30.7.2018

**Speaker – Cedric Green**, Secretary of NCRUG, ‘How the Halton Curve was won’

#### Chairman’s Report (2017-18)

The committee meet on the second Tuesday of each month from September to June at 19.30 hrs in Port Sunlight Station offices courtesy of *Merseyrail Electrics*.

We consult with other committees of Rail User Groups and attend regular quarterly morning *Liverpool City Region Rail User Groups Coordination Meetings* followed by an afternoon meeting with *Merseytravel* chair Cllr. Liam Robinson and his assistants. Other, now regular, quarterly meetings are with *Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC)* attended by Rail User Groups and the *Community Rail Partnership* to deal with the triangle of lines north of Chester. We are also invited to the *Travelwatch NW* conferences thrice a year in the NorthWest.

Additionally in the first 6 months of the year we were invited to the following non-regular events:-

1. *Transport for the North Strategic Development Corridors* progress meeting
2. *Cheshire & Warrington Local Transport Body* as observers, limited questions.
3. *Transport Consultants AECOM* meeting re Chat Moss (Liverpool-Manchester Victoria rail corridor) and other routes leading through Cheshire north of Chester.
4. *Passenger Focus Emergency Conference* to debate the May ’18 timetable failures in the NW – some questioners didn’t mince their words!
5. *Liverpool Airport Noise Committee* keeping us in touch with developments at JLA.

With several emerging issues earlier this year, WTUA issued two papers:-

A. On Wirral Electrics services:

1. Proposals for earlier and later running services (updated reissue of an original letter 2016).
2. Desire to make permanent the Chester/Ellesmere Port temporary timetable with its better turnround arrangements at Chester.
3. A call for more lifts at stations as per the government’s *Access For All* policy.

B. Being aware of an ongoing plan for approx. 2000 new homes at Ledsham/Little Sutton, urging *Merseytravel/CWAC* to look quite urgently at public transport provision by means of bus/train services.

#### **What have your committee members been doing?**

Ian Allsopp- On residents’ committee in Ledsham and Little Sutton, set up to fight against inadequate transport services for pedestrians and worsening road conditions (overloading due to higher traffic volumes created by the new estate). We can see this problem growing.

Gordon Ditchfield- Keeps a weather eye on Mersey Ferries/Shipping/Bus changes. Assists Angus on excursion days.

Brian Grey- Membership Secretary for many years keeping us up to date with subs. Members can help him with prompt renewals and can now use bank transfers if they wish. Membership

details kept in line with the Data Protection Act. Leading member of *Railfuture* and organises the accommodation at the YMCA for the AGM.

Dennis Harrison- Man of many parts, scribe for all meetings since our last secretary died, keeps committee informed through *Local Transport Today* & also is the follower of Chester developments. He attends many conferences/meetings as WTUA rep. He assists Angus in the newsletter production team.

Jim Anderson- Jim is our webmaster so he would welcome copy from members to keep the site interesting and up to date. Also he was heavily involved in drawing up our first constitution document, followed by much work modifying the design of application forms to comply with the new GDPR laws which came into force last May.

Angus Tilston- (Vice Chairman and Acting Treasurer.) We have Angus to thank for the WTUA's formation. It grew out of the *Bebington Rail Action Group* – very urgently formed in the 1970's to save Birkenhead – Chester line stations from closure! Angus now has easier (?) portfolios:-

1. Heads WTUA Newsletter editorial team.
2. Coach excursions – there's already been one this year to the Llangollen Railway [and last Saturday to Lake Windermere].
3. Liverpool Airport Noise Committee.
4. WTUA Rep at many conferences/meetings.

Mike Laycock – He lives quite near to the long-proposed Town Meadow station (to be sited between Moreton and Meols stations), not such a priority as Ledsham. Local politicians recently invited Paul Maynard, Rail Minister to the site. Mike is keeping a watch on the situation. Hopefully we may be able to move it forward through our Liverpool RUG meetings. Thanks to Mike we have an amplifier at the AGM tonight. Mike also keeps on an eye on his local bus services and attends *Travelwatch NW* conferences.

John Ryan – Chairman (me) – My job is chiefly to conduct and attend meetings. Due to my background with over 30 years as an engineer in British Rail, rail is in the blood so rail is my big subject.

This is the time to thank all the team for their work during the last 12 months. We are strongest together and hope it stays that way.

We urgently need a Secretary to join the Committee on Tuesday evenings. Any questions, please contact one of the Committee.

### **It's happening now**

#### **Rail**

Liverpool Lime St. – The main line station should reopen today with ten platforms. No more long blockades despite some unfinished work.

Maghull North – Latest new station opened in June at a cost of £13m.

Community Rail Officer – Marina Farey is now in her job based on Chester-Helsby-Hooton-Chester triangle. Chester University at Thornton (Stanlow) is hosting the Partnership.

Chester Station – A Rail Event is to be held at the station on 1.8.18 with stalls etc.

Community Rail Officer for the Mid-Cheshire line, Sally Buttifant, is the prime mover.

New Service - Liverpool Lime St. to Chester due to start Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> (No! Postponed till May

timetable change as awaiting refurbished cast-off class 150 rolling stock from S Wales). These will pass the new Alstom Train Care Depot at Ditton, opened last year where all 56 Pendalinos will be overhauled and repainted.

New Freight from Liverpool Seaforth rail terminal to Glasgow Mossend ran 3 times a week from May.

New Merseyrail Trains – Class 777 4-car trains by Stadler. The first body has been fabricated at one of Stadler's works. Our dream coming true!

New loco-hauled Mk 5A carriages for Transpennine Express are now arriving from CAF (Spain) and Arriva Rail Northern will get a new Class 195 dmu any day now. Five of Vivarail's 'new' ex. Tube 230's including for Wrexham-Bidston starting March – May '19.

### **Buses**

Cuts in Sept '17 have left some passengers in difficulty - especially those affected by PTE supported cuts. Not passenger friendly to end the issue of bus maps and does not encourage bus use. Five million plus British inhabitants still do not have online access. The WTUA still does not have a Bus Officer, so making it difficult for us to monitor and attend bus-orientated meetings to put our case.

Ferries and Water – Basically no change and a new vessel still only a dream.

Air – John Lennon doing very well with 7.5m passengers last year and new airlines have come this year - but Manchester now has 29m passengers.

**Finally** – overlooking tonight that's what we do but we always think more is possible. We stop when our resources run out. If we only had a General Secretary, Permanent Treasurer and a Bus Officer we would be better equipped to deal with our local transport issues. **I appeal to members to join our committee and get involved - we cannot stand still in these exciting times.** Transport is exceptional; part of our lives.