

WIRRAL TRANSPORT USERS ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting at Birkenhead YMCA on Monday evening 29.7.2019

Speaker – Steve Boulding talked about ‘Completely off the Rails- the Mis-Spent Life of an Obsessive Rail Enthusiast’.

4.0 Chairman’s Report (2018-19)

As in previous years, the committee met from September - June on the second Tuesday of each of those months, at 19.30 hrs in Port Sunlight Station, thanks to the generosity of *Merseyrail Electrics* in allowing us to use a room there.

One or more members of the committee attend:

In Liverpool, the regular *Liverpool City Region Rail User Groups Coordination Meetings* which are held in the morning and these are followed by an afternoon meeting with *Merseytravel*. A quarterly meeting is held in Chester where *Cheshire West and Chester Council* (CWAC) is joined by Rail User Groups and the *Community Rail Partnership* to cover matters concerning the triangle of lines N of Chester. In the North West, the *Travelwatch NW* conferences are held thrice a year. In Chester, the *Cheshire & Warrington Local Transport Body* permits us as observers, but we are allowed limited questions.

We were also invited to a *Transport for the North* presentation in Liverpool.

We continue to monitor the progress of a new housing estate at Ledsham (near Little Sutton), where approx. 2000 homes are being built, to try to ensure that the new occupiers will be provided with the extra public transport they will require.

Access for All – the Government scheme for improving disabled access at stations - currently *Merseytravel* have work going on at Meols to provide each platform with lift access to the existing overbridge.

Our Website is maintained by Jim Anderson. Please help him keep the site interesting by sending us articles or photos about local transport issues.

It has happened or is happening now:

1. Lime St, Mainline – improvement works have virtually finished. The new layout brings the number of platforms to 10 and the new signalling has improved performance considerably even when trains run late!
2. Halton Curve – bidirectional working was re-established in May after being delayed from its original intended completion date in December. It makes possible the new services which run, via Runcorn, from Liverpool to Chester and occasionally on to Wrexham which are provided by *Transport for Wales*.
3. New Trains – Class 195 diesel units started operating from Liverpool via Warrington Central to Manchester and to its airport station.

4. We still await *Transpennine Express*'s new trains to come into service.
5. Still some annoying cancellations resulting from the 2018 new timetable and industrial relations problems but *Northern Trains* are now far better, especially on Sundays.
6. *Merseyrail Electrics* are currently the best rail performer in the country.
7. *Northern* and *Transpennine* currently have overloading issues, but these should be solved with new trains?
8. *Transport for Wales* plan to provide extra capacity with new trains but not until 2022.
9. Buses – More cuts in Wirral services coming in September. Arrowe Park Hospital, in particular, has been the subject of many complaints about the reduced services being provided to access it. It is very regrettable that there are no longer meetings for the public to talk with the bus provider management about their bus travelling problems. Simon Wilkinson has been acting as our Bus Officer and has been following events closely.
10. Ferries/Water - No change to services. With now only two boats serviceable, so there is no spare vessel. This means that on Manchester Ship Canal Cruise dates, if a boat fails the timetabled cross-river services suffer.