

WIRRAL TRANSPORT USERS ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Report (for 2015-16) given at Birkenhead YMCA at the WTUA AGM on Monday evening 25.7.2016

4 0 About the Association

The committee meets from September - June on the second Tuesday of the month at 19.30 hrs in Port Sunlight Station offices.

Very sadly we lost our newly co-opted member, Alan McGiffin who passed away.

Two excursions were run by the WTUA in 2016 - one to the East Lancs. Railway and the other to both the Bala Lake and Welsh Highland Railways. We produced one newsletter (difficult to produce a second with limited resources).

We informally consult with other local Rail User Groups which cover all lines into Chester except Crewe-Holyhead which has no RUG, plus Wrexham Bidston Rail User Association (WBRUA). In this vein we attended an area meeting in Liverpool of the newly formed Liverpool City Region Rail User Groups Coordination Meeting, an essential regular meeting of 'minds'. There are new rail developments happening but especially unsatisfactory is the Wrexham - Bidston service. WBRUA is upping its game under new Chairman, John Allcock. A group has been started in Chester at the instigation of Chris Matheson MP for Chester under the Chairmanship of Tom Welsh who has moved to Chester from Northampton (ex. Rail User Group Member).

We also send delegates to Travel Watch NW about three times a year to meet Train Operating Companies, Merseytravel and Greater Manchester. We also meet them sometimes on other occasions and Angus attends Liverpool John Lennon Airport Committee. From time to time we meet Cheshire West and Chester Council, Train Companies and Merseytravel/Greater Manchester Transport Officers at other events.

I hesitate to single out committee members but must praise on 'artistry' grounds alone Angus and his sub-group for the newsletter and our web-master, Jim Anderson. Both could do with articles contributed by members to put in the newsletter or on our website.

There are still vacancies on the committee for a secretary, treasurer (Angus is acting treasurer, awaiting a suitable volunteer) and for one or two committee members. The lack of a secretary means we need to spend more time in committee organising things and limits networking with other organisations. We are trying to cover buses in our area by forming a small group within the committee to keep a watching brief on service changes.

If any member wishes to attend a committee meeting please ring me on 0151-334-7723 the day before i.e. on the Monday and leave a message.

4.1 About Transport Matters

Last year, I gave a summary of where we are in transport - especially rail. In the ensuing twelve months developments have occurred bringing out into the open the growth in rail travel. All this involves the RUGs. A leading Transport Officer once said 'If you didn't exist we'd have to invent you!'

Rail improvements in the area start with the much awaited **Saltney-Rossett track**

redoubling on the Chester-Wrexham line which is almost complete, replacement of old signal cable takes place in the Spring. Also extra trains from Northwich (but maybe Chester) to Stockport/Manchester on the **Mid-Cheshire Line** and Chester - Liverpool services via the **Halton Chord** in Dec. 2018.

The **Ordsall Chord** (Man. Vic.-Deansgate for Manchester Airport) work has started and construction continues of **Metrolink Second City Crossing**.

The **Liverpool Moorfields** platform works have just been completed with **Lime Street** mainline works due in the last half of 2017. Also a start has been made on a new station at **Maghull North**. Also **Halton Chord** work should be complete in the first half of 2018 in conjunction with resignalling of Weaver Junction (WCML) to Edge Hill. All the above have come about due to pressure by the RUGs.

NW Electrification - Liverpool-Manchester Stas./Wigan - Preston and Warrington Bank Quay trains became fully electric using 20 class 319's - 20 more are coming for other NW services e.g. Manchester - Preston in 2017 leading to more diesel train capacity. Broad Green to Huyton - provision of 4th track works now imminent.

Freight - Biomass is running from Liverpool Docks to Drax Power Station. The sand for Quinn Glass is now being unloaded at Helsby W Cheshire junction site near the works instead of Ellesmere Port Docks.

Buses - Franchising may be on the cards but the network is mostly the same as last July.

Water - Liverpool's new river quay nearly ready for Post-Panamx container ships.

Air - Passenger numbers are up due to some new routes despite the transfer of some Ryanair services to Manchester.