



## Newsletter April 2010

### AGM 2010

The Annual General Meeting for Lightweight Community Transport Limited will be held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May at Friends of the Earth Birmingham's excellent venue, the Warehouse, Allison Street, Birmingham B5 5TH. It is not far from the New Street and Moor Street stations.

We will start at 11am, and after the formal business of the AGM there will be an open forum where ideas for the future can be discussed. Lunch and refreshments will be available. As well as the usual AGM business, there will be an amendment to our rules – a change that will allow us to save money on accountancy by having a simplified audit at the end of the year.

**Would you like to stand for the committee?** We are always keen to hear from people who would like to serve on the committee – the only qualification is a strong commitment to our aims. If you'd like to find out more about what is entailed, give Alex a call on 0845 458 1473.

**Will you be attending?** Do please contact us to let us know you if you might be coming, so that we can supply accounts and other papers. Of course, you are very welcome to request these even if you can't be there on the day – and you can appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf. Please note the response form at the end of this newsletter.

**Do you have any questions?** While you are welcome to put them on the day, if you would like to email them to [alex@lcttd.co.uk](mailto:alex@lcttd.co.uk) in advance, I can ensure that a written answer is in the papers. Members have the right to propose resolutions for the meeting to consider; please contact Alex if you would like advice on drafting.

All resolutions, candidate statements, written questions and other notifications need to be received by Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May. I hope we will see plenty of you there - as well as updates on LCT's progress, we will be inviting some of the manufacturers of lightweight rail technology to attend.

### Light Rail Innovation: the case for Ultra Light Rail

This long awaited joint statement on ultra light rail from organisations reflecting all sections of the UK industry is now available. It explains in detailed but non-technical language why we need lightweight rail services, where they can (and can't) be introduced, what the difference is between ultra light rail and ordinary light rail, and what action can be taken by communities and local authorities.

You can download it from the website, and you can order a printed copy from us (though I regret that this will cost you £5). It's well worth a read, and should prove very helpful to explain to people what we are up to.



### Radstock – ripe for reopening?



The Radstock to Frome branch line is almost a cause celebre in rail re-opening circles. It was cited as a strong candidate in the recent ATOC 'Connecting Communities' report. However, it failed to make it into the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy and is thought by many to require too much subsidy to ever be included in a rail franchise. Could ULR provide a solution?

Large parts of the track are still extant, though overgrown and in some places undermined. There is an almost complete

section from Radstock to Kilmersdon, a village two miles away. This could be used as a small scale demonstration, to make the case for a full clearance of the line and reconnection to the freight branch in Frome (which would put it in spitting distance of a modest mainline connection).



The ownership of the line is complex. Most is in the possession of Sustrans, which is fiercely protective of the excellent cycle path that runs alongside it (and in two places, over it). The Radstock end is in the possession of the Norton Radstock Regeneration Company, who have an ambiguous interest in light rail.

Two local councillors have recently visited Stourbridge to see the service there, and they seemed to like what they saw. We are waiting for the dust to settle over the general election, after which we will be in a position to start detailed negotiations.

### Hotting up in Hampshire

The long search for a line where a commercial ULR service could be introduced quickly may be nearing an end. Discussions in Hampshire involving the County Council, Go! Co-operative and the Mid Hants Railway may just lead to a simple but effective new service being introduced in the very near future.

The Mid Hants Railway is a long established and popular heritage line, with a connection to the mainline at Alton from which trains run in to London. Many commuters live in the villages of Medstead and Four Marks (I say villages; with a population of 5,000, it is practically a town) and struggle with parking and traffic around the station in Alton. The County Council is keen to ease this problem by operating a shuttle from the MHR station in Four Marks, and the railway is happy to support this measure and has personnel available and willing to be drivers. The line has a 25 mph speed limit, but as the distance involved is quite short (4 miles) this should not be too much of a handicap.



There is also the enticing possibility that the example of a service here might be instructive for the developers of the nearby proposed 'eco town' at Whitehill Borden. A new connection might yet be constructed to link the new settlement to the mainline at either Hook or Bentley.

A meeting with the railway is expected in early May - watch this space...

### Your contributions

Just a reminder - I am always keen to receive items for this newsletter from members. Please don't hesitate to provide opinions, ideas, requests and holiday snaps (... of railways. Nothing else, thanks).

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Name:

Postcode:

Email:

I will be attending the AGM  I'd like someone to be my proxy at the AGM

I'd like to know more about standing as a candidate for election to the committee

Please send the AGM papers by post  by email

(Return this slip to LCT, 12 North St, Stoke sub Hamdon TA14 6QP)