

PUBLIC MEETING

DEEPING ST NICHOLAS RAIL AND BUS SERVICE

Jubilee Hall – 13th April 2006

In the Chair – Mr A Ivatt

Present

Members of the Parish Council and the Clerk
Mr Geo. Scott – Spalding & Peterborough Transport Forum
Martin Trude – Peterborough City Council
Graham North – GNER Intermodal Access Manager
John Hayes MP
53 Parishioners

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting and introduced Mr Scott, who then went on to speak.

He said that the Meeting was primarily to gauge support for an early morning and evening return commuter link bus service to Peterborough, that would be the first step in a programme to re-open the rail stop. This step was necessary in the campaign, in order to assess the amount of people likely to use a rail service. He had just received a letter from Tony Cross (LCC), stating that they would be willing to subsidise this service to Market Deeping as part of the Local Transport Plan. The subsidy could amount to £30,000, and would require 9 or 10 passengers per journey to qualify.

Questionnaires concerning the service had been circulated in the Parish by the Transport Forum; some had already been returned, but not everyone had received one at this stage. On a show of hands, 4 people said that they would use an early service, 7 a slightly later one. There did not seem to be a great deal of support from those present for a bus service, for the following reasons;

- People felt that more than one bus would be needed
- It was difficult to know the time you would want to return in the evening
- Changing buses in Market Deeping
- It would not service leisure purposes
- If the service was not well used, how would it affect the rail stop campaign?
- Would it not be easier to run an early service into Spalding instead?

It was stressed that the campaign would need to support a bus service before a train service would be considered. Mr North, GNER, said that the result of the survey was very important as it was also necessary to link things together, in order to develop, support and get backing. There was, however, no funding available in the Local Transport Plan for a train service, and the project itself could take anywhere from 5 to 12 years and cost up to one million pounds.

At this point Mr Branton said that a temporary bus link was not what was required. Trains were already going through, were seldom full, and a service could be provided. All this unnecessary bureaucracy and cost was ridiculous, and could possibly kill interest in something that was fairly straight forward.

These remarks were fully supported by most of those present. Mr Hayes also went on to say that he thinks there is a strong case for reopening the station. Trains, track and station are all in place; although signalling and timetables would need to be looked into.

Deeping St Nicholas might be able to be made a special case under the **Community Railway Fund**, for rural, isolated, sparsely populated areas, as it already meets a number of the targets. It would need to explore, analyse and put a bid together. As Deeping St James would also like to reopen its station, it might be beneficial to liaise with them.

He felt that there was also a good case for an improved bus service, but that it was a separate issue to the train service, and that he would support both.

Mr Hayes's remarks also drew a great deal of support from the audience.

Before closing the Meeting, those present that intended using a bus service were asked to leave their names and addresses. Only three people did so.