

Brentwood Bus & Rail Users Association Public Meeting

Saturday 11th August 2007 at 10.00am

Minutes

Chair:

Cllr David Kendall, Secretary, BBARUA with Wendy Way, Chairman

Guests:

Peter Smith, BHR NHS Trust (Queen's Hospital) Cllr Keith Francis. Essex County Council

Attendees:

50 members of the public, members and non-members.

Apologies:

Eric Pickles MP, Cllr Brandon Lewis, First Buses, One Railway and Essex County Council

1. Welcome

Cllr Kendall welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially new members, and thanked all present for giving up their morning.

Saturday was felt to be the appropriate time for the meeting, given that the lack of evening bus services made it difficult for members to get home.

2. About BBARUA

The Association was set up after the abolition of the Bus Task Force and Pensioners Forum when the control of the council changed 3 years ago.

It is a non-political group with everyone welcome to add their views and opinions. The Association now has 70+ members and its aim is to lobby for better local services. As BBARUA grows it has a stronger voice and we can talk to the bus and train services with authority.

The cost is just £5 per year and £3 for students and OAPs. This money goes towards running costs, newsletters and meetings.

3. Chairman's report

Wendy, a bus user, is an ideal chair for this group and has worked very hard since the group was set up in 2005.

Wendy gave the following updates:

- She visited Essex County Council to ask for more Sunday and evening services. (We have now got a Sunday service, but still nothing in the evening).
- 351 no longer goes into Romford, terminates at Brentwood
- 73 route will operate a Sunday service from Brentwood Station to Bishops Hall Estate.
- 498 will not go in to Queen's Hospital
- Arriva have lost their contract
- ECC have no further resources for our buses.
- Bus tickets are changing, you can buy a book of 6 for £6 in the High Street.
- Oyster tickets reduce the bus journey price from £4 to £1 (90p on an oyster card).
- Cllr Lewis has been asked to confirm that the free bus pass will remain.
- First Buses will not operate a service that is not commercially viable.

4. Rail Officer's report

Richard Enever reported that:

- The ticket office was now open for longer
- There is still no disabled access at Brentwood, but this has to be in place for 2012 Olympics.
- There is only access at Shenfield, Romford, Ilford and Stratford.

- Plans are afoot to link the station CCTV to the council.
- There are cleanliness issues with the rolling stock and the station
- The station toilets are rarely open.

5. Guest speaker - Peter Smith, BHR NHS Trust

Peter, a daily bus user, said how lucky Brentwood was to have such an association. He confirmed that the trust was also working with bus companies to ensure that people could use public transport and cut down on the car congestion at the hospital. Peter provided a map of Queen's Hospital, plus details of the buses that served it.

6. Guest speaker - Cllr Keith Francis, Essex County Council

Cllr Francis had arrived via the 351 and empathised with bus users!

As a passionate believer in public transport he feels the biggest problem was when the bus and rail services were de-regulated in 1985. No longer a public service, of course the companies have to make the routes viable but, unfortunately, passengers had to suffer the consequences of a shrinking service. The ray of light is that there is a Draft Public Transport Bill paper out for consultation and all transport associations, such as this one, and members of the public are asked for their opinions.

7. Questions

Cllr Kendall then asked for questions for the floor. Some key points were raised, and BBARUA will be dealing with them where they can:

- Lack of low level, disabled access buses.
- The bus utopia that is enjoyed in Havering should extend to Brentwood, we are overlooked.
- Telephone number on bus stops is incorrect
- There are no indicator boards at bus stops, no way of knowing if buses are late or cancelled.
- Buses are often dirty
- Bus and train fares are too high (i.e. £18 daily travel card into London from Brentwood but £8 from Upminster)
- Population in Brentwood is growing - can the infrastructure support it ?
- Timetables are being changed and bus journeys change from 15 minutes to 25 minutes without warning or consultation.
- Suggestion that councillors try to get to Town Hall by public transport for an evening meeting!
- No bus service to Beechwood Surgery in Warley
- Why has the 261 gone to half hourly?
- No buses to Southend.
- Can the ticket machines at station be changed to enable advance purchases?
- Why do peak time trains have to stop at all stations to Liverpool Street.
- What is the latest situation on Crossrail (no updates!)
- Is Brentwood station covered by DDA guidelines and should it have to make adjustments for disabled users?
- Isolation in some areas due to lack of buses.
- Evacuation plans at Brentwood need to be looked at - very disorganised at a recent incident.

8. Close

The meeting closed at 11.50am.