



Lakes Line Community Rail Partnership

Progress Report: September, 2016.

- Community Rail Cumbria (CRC) has completed the new Strategy and Delivery Plan and continues to produce the quarterly progress reports that are required under the new franchise. The Lakes Line CRP has been able to build on many of the existing relationships within Northern following the transfer of the franchise in April. However, there is no longer any direct financial support from TransPennine Express for the Lakes Line and there is only a small TPE fund for connectivity projects; CRC is considering making a bid in this financial year.
- Northern and CRC have prepared station development plans and discussions are taking place to align them so that Kendal is recognised as one of the “Connect” stations in addition Windermere. The Northern programme will see TVMs, new lighting and CIS being rolled-out at all the stations along the line. Access problems will be dealt with separately.
- The CRP and CRC contributed to the first round of the ICWC franchise consultation. This was shared with Rail User Groups and all have stressed the need for stops at more stations, punctuality and connectivity above the need for faster services. TPE has agreed to look again at the problem of skip-stopping and this will be raised with the ICWC franchise bidders.
- The Northern franchise continues to have some problems and the Lakes Line has seen a reduction in the quality and capacity of the rolling stock. One of the remaining ex-TPE Class 185 units has already gone and has been replaced by older two car Northern units. This has led to as many as 40 people being left standing at Oxenholme station on occasions when the two car units have been very overcrowded. Connections have also been missed at Oxenholme as two car units have a longer dwell time at the stations along the line. From the 5th September, an additional class 153 unit has been attached to the two car units in order to provide additional capacity but the problem of longer dwell time at the stations remains. These problems have been raised with the DfT and Northern but there has been no clear response from the DfT, or Rail North, to representations from the CRP.
- The CRPO attended a reception of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Rail in the North in London on the 7th September and again raised the problems Cumbria is experiencing with rolling stock and timetable problems; there do not appear to be any short term solutions.
- Following discussions with Northern, the Lakes Line Rail User Group (LLRUG) has registered as the Friend Group for the stations along the line. The former level 1 Adopters are LLRUG members and Northern is also issuing travel passes to Friends members.
- Chris Cutts and Jane Murray have visited stations along the line and are dealing with the weeds and litter problems as Carillion has taken over the maintenance role.

- There has been very good news that the LLRUG and its chairman have both been shortlisted for awards at this year's Community Rail Awards that are being held in Southport on the 29th September. In addition, the "family" of Walks leaflets and the Discover leaflet have also been shortlisted for an award.
- There is additional good news that, after many weeks of disruption to services, electrification now extends as far as the Kendal end of platform 3 at Oxenholme station. The new layout should allow for faster entry and exit from the branch to the WCML. The question of Bank Holiday disruption to services has been raised again with Network Rail and the TOCs.
- Thanks go to Northern for agreeing to have all the promotional leaflets reprinted, following logo changes, and this also gave the CRPO the opportunity to update each leaflet. The Burneside walk had to be amended following the destruction of the Hagg Foot Bridge in last winter's storms. 50,000 copies of each leaflet have now been printed and are being distributed by Northern, TPE, Virgin Trains, Cumbria Tourism and the CRPO.
- The CRPO is still awaiting an announcement that he can bid to the new Seed-Corn Fund for £25-30k towards the cost of a combined feasibility study for the Burneside and Staveley station/passing loop proposals.
- Unfortunately, Cumbria Tourism was not able to get additional funding for a new SeeMore 2 programme and Gemma Procter, a member of this group, has now left.
- As the CRPO dropped to part time working from the 1st September, Dawn McGough and Claire Bradshaw are taking over some of his responsibilities. Claire is developing the new umbrella CRC website and Dawn is taking on more of the strategic work from Jim.
- The CRP still holds funds for the SLDC and Kendal TC signage project but this project is currently on hold and the money will be carried over into next financial year's budget. This may be beneficial as the (draft) Kendal Master Plan includes proposals for the development of the "station opportunity area" with potential better access to the station.
- The CRP is working with a contractor and Northern to get the CIS running in the Kendal TIC as soon as possible, using existing grant funding from ACoRP. It is likely that the total cost will now be less than first quoted by TPE.

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