

BARRUP (BROMSGROVE & REDDITCH RAIL USER PARTNERSHIP)

Minutes of a Meeting held at the Committee Room, Bromsgrove District Council,
Parkside, Bromsgrove on Monday 2 June 2025 at 19.00

Present

Members: Robert Cholmondeley (Chairman & Secretary), Margaret Evans, Paul Evans, Peter Hughes, Adrian Kriss, Nick Taylor, Tony Woodward.

Guests: Joyce Chamberlain

1. Apologies

- Apologies were received from Neil Franklin and Clem Huzzey.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2025 were approved.

3. Feedback from West Midlands Rail (WMR) meeting (11.4.2025)

- There are no major changes in the new timetable, which commenced on 18 May 2025, for the Cross City Line and the Hereford services.
- There have been no changes which would enable the Hereford services to call at Barnt Green (to give connectivity to Redditch). A temporary improvement would be for both the Cross City Bromsgrove services to call at Barnt Green (rather than the one per hour as at present) but this isn't a consideration until investigations are concluded on the viability of restoring the Cross City Line services to pre-covid levels (see Agenda item 5 below).
- A welcome additional service from Worcester at 07.23, arriving Bromsgrove at 07.42, has been introduced to partially fill the previous 90 minutes gap. The affect on loadings will need to be analysed though the aim of BARRUP remains that the 07.49 from Worcester should call at Bromsgrove at around 08.15 to provide a better commuter service for the town's businesses and institutions.
- On weekday evenings, there is no northbound service from Worcester calling at Bromsgrove between 20.58 and 22.24, notwithstanding a service passing through Bromsgrove, but not stopping, at around 21.55. WMT indicated that, from a quick look at the pathing, it may be possible to add a call. Further investigations will be undertaken.
- The last service from Birmingham New Street to Bromsgrove on Saturday evenings is the Hereford service at 22.21. The late evening Cross City trains, which on weekdays run to Bromsgrove, only go as far as Longbridge because Network Rail requires track possession. The last departure on Saturdays to Redditch is at 23.13, like weekdays.

WMR has flagged the issue with Network Rail for their next meeting. BARRUP will try to establish a relevant contact at Network Rail to lobby in parallel for this service improvement for Bromsgrove.

4. Correspondence with Cross Country Trains (XC)

- A response has been received from XC dismissing the case for their Nottingham-Cardiff trains to call at Bromsgrove. There are pathing difficulties and XC, as a long distance operator, doesn't see an obligation to serve the stations on which it has a monopoly over direct services. BARRUP has responded challenging some of the arguments pointing out, inter alia, inconsistencies when the Nottingham-Cardiff trains call at Long Eaton and Beeston, which have similar populations to Bromsgrove, yet they are also served by an East Midlands Railway service between Nottingham and Derby.
- It was agreed that the case for XC calling at Bromsgrove should already be on the table as a live issue and not something to be deferred and presented as a new request at the inception of Great British Rail.

5. Cross City Line – 6 trains per hour (tph)

- WMR is actively involved with developing proposals for the restoration of pre-covid service levels of 6tph. Any solution is unlikely before the end of 2026. The problem is that, once the Camp Hill Line stations open probably in early 2026, there is not enough capacity at Kings Norton to turn the Camp Hill Line trains round without blocking the path of the Cross City trains.
- The significant capital expenditure at Kings Norton to resolve this is part of the Midland Rail Hub's proposals, which is currently unfunded, though the aspiration is that it will deliver in the early 2030s.
- In the interim, the recovery of footfall at Bromsgrove, Redditch and Alvechurch stations languishes below 80% of their pre-covid highs in contrast to a national average of well over 90% recovery.

6. Station Round Up

- **Bromsgrove** – NickTaylor and Tony Woodward from BARRUP had earlier in the day met Noel Lavery, West Midlands Station Alliance Manager with responsibilities to WMR, West Midlands Rail Executive and Network Rail about the state of the station. (a) Flaking paint and Rust on Steps – funding is available for rectification though a date has not yet been set. (b) An additional shelter has been requested on both platforms to ease the congestion of passengers sitting on the footbridge steps. There is currently no budget for such an improvement. (c) Car Park Short Stay – the need for space for short term pick up and drop off was raised. Since the original spaces were given over to electric car charging, at busy times, there is congestion in the area around the bus shelters. It was proposed by BARRUP that the 8 spaces opposite the electric vehicle charging are made

available for short term parking with suitable signage to that effect. (d) Car Park ANPR – the screens were deactivated when Network Rail vehicles started to be charged. The position is resolved and the screens are now to be reactivated and the 2 faulty payment machines are to be repaired. (e) Bus Stops – the 2 bus stops need to be reconfigured so that one serves all the 6 different services to Bromsgrove Town Centre Bus Station and the other to all other destinations, each with appropriate signage. At present it is difficult to understand which of the 2 stops serves which destination. (f) Pedestrian Gate Signage – There's a footpath entrance from the Bottom Car Park to Breme Park residential area and towards the Industrial Estate. Improved signage within the station limits was recommended by BARRUP and further signage from the gate to the Industrial Estate. (g) Cycle Theft is to be raised subsequent to the meeting. Bromsgrove Stations has some of the highest theft rates. One of the problems is that those who have a bicycles stolen need to specify the 2 hour slot during which it was taken for the CCTV to be reviewed – somewhat difficult when you've used the train for commuting etc.

- **Redditch** – no update.
- **Alvechurch** – Stephanie Miall (Friends of Alvechurch Station) copied an update on WMR's involvement with Network Rail to resolve the car park flooding. Both parties are now engaged though whether Network Rail will incur the additional expenditure for a permanent solution still hangs in the balance.
- **Barnt Green** – (i) A reminder has been sent to Geoff Grant of WMR of the opportunity (during the lift installation) to secure an adequate electricity supply to enable the installation of a departure screen on Platform 1. It was noted again that the new screens are worse than those they replaced because there is no longer a list of departures and the smaller screen on Platforms 2 & 3 may cram in more information but it is unreadable from the footbridge. (ii) The work on the installation of lifts is on schedule for delivery in late summer 2025.

7. Poster and Pocket Timetables

- BARRUP regards the withdrawal of consumer information from those who do not possess or carry a smartphone, which is around 16% of the population, as a form of social discrimination. Raising these concerns so far has not elicited a reasoned response. Correspondence has recently been submitted to the Managing Director of WMR and to Transport Focus.

8. Any Other Business

- There was no other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be arranged for early September.