

Guided Bus Newsletter 2

Newsletter 2, January 2004



Dear Resident

Welcome to your second newsletter updating you on the progress of the Guided Bus project proposed for the old St Ives - Cambridge railway line. I hope you found the first one useful.

When we last wrote to you we were awaiting an announcement from the Government on the funding for the project. I'm delighted to say that we have now received the news that the Government has now approved funding of £65 million to provide you with a modern, fast and flexible method of public transport. This shows the measure of the Government's confidence that Guided Bus is an excellent solution to the problems of the A14 and that Cambridgeshire County Council has the ability to successfully deliver it. The scheme is desperately needed to serve the planned new settlement of Northstowe (near Longstanton and Oakington.) Funding from Government has also gone to a Guided Bus project between Luton and Dunstable. Making the announcement, Local Government Minister Tony McNulty said:

"The Guided Bus was part of a package of measures designed to relieve congestion on the A14. It is seen by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as an essential element in delivering the Communities Plan in the area as it will enable a new community of 10,000 homes at Oakington/Longstanton."

So what happens next? Well, we are currently working on a submission under the Transport and Works Act which we need to give us the legal powers to carry out the project. We aim to submit this in February and after this we will be holding exhibitions at venues along the route and placing the detailed plans on deposit in a variety of venues to give you the chance to have a good look and pass your comments straight to Government. The list of areas which will have exhibitions is on the back. Our next newsletter will fill you in on venues and dates or you can contact us by phone, email or look at our website.

You may have seen in your local press in recent weeks the proposals by rail enthusiasts Cast Iron for a rail system. We have met with Cast Iron to discuss these proposals and found them disappointing in their lack of detail and inability to solve the fundamental problems of rail on this corridor. We are alarmed by the total lack of proper scrutiny of these proposals.

In contrast the County Council's proposals have rightly come under government and legal scrutiny and have held up robustly.

Later in this newsletter we spell out what your journey will be like on Guided Bus when it opens in 2007 and what it would be like on rail (as proposed by Cast Iron). I know which one I'd rather catch!

Yours,

Shona Johnstone (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Cambridgeshire County Council.)

A quick reminder

Just to remind you. Guided Bus is an innovative new transport system proposed between Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Huntingdon and Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. Guided Bus is so-called because it uses a dedicated guideway to take buses along a fixed route with small guide wheels keeping the bus within the guideway. The buses will run along a guideway installed along

the route of the old railway line and will leave the guideway at either end to finish their journey on the roads as normal. It is flexible as buses can join or leave the guideway at several points and passengers can get close to destinations without having to use other forms of transport. A comparison between how rail and Guided Bus would operate on this route follows:

Your journey on Guided Bus

You will be able to hop on a state-of-the-art bus in Huntingdon, St Ives, Cambridge or many of the villages along the route. You will then travel along the roads to the Guide way, join it and travel quickly along it and then back onto the roads to travel straight into the centre of St Ives, Huntingdon or Cambridge.

You will also have the alternative of leaving your car (or bicycle – there will be lockable cycle facilities at all stops) at one of the Park and Rides proposed for St Ives and the new settlement of Northstowe or using a drop-off point at Swavesey, all on the edge of the guideway.

All of this will be provided from day one of the scheme opening.

Guided Bus – the added benefits

- **A new 19km bridleway**

Buses won't be the only mode of transport on offer along the guided sections of the new guided busway. The project will bring with it the creation of what will be the county's longest bridleway – a new 19 km bridleway to the north of Cambridge. A new cycleway will also be created to the south. This is possible because the maintenance track which will run parallel to the guideway will be made available for leisure and commuting use. The bridleway and cycle route will connect to existing footpaths and bridleways, providing increased access to the countryside.

Your journey on rail as proposed by Cast Iron

You would have to drive to Swavesey station and find your own parking as none is proposed. This would probably mean parking on the streets of the village. You would then get on 40 year old diesel trains, travel to the edge of Milton Road and get out. From here you would need to catch a bus to any other locations you wanted to get to. Other phases of the proposals by rail enthusiasts Cast Iron have been promised but have no timescale or clear delivery proposals and so this is likely to be the best service you would get.

Exhibition Venues

Exhibitions on our proposals will be held in Mid February to mid-March in the following areas. Detailed proposals will be on display here also:

Huntingdon
Swavesey
Cambridge (several city centre venues)
Histon/Impington

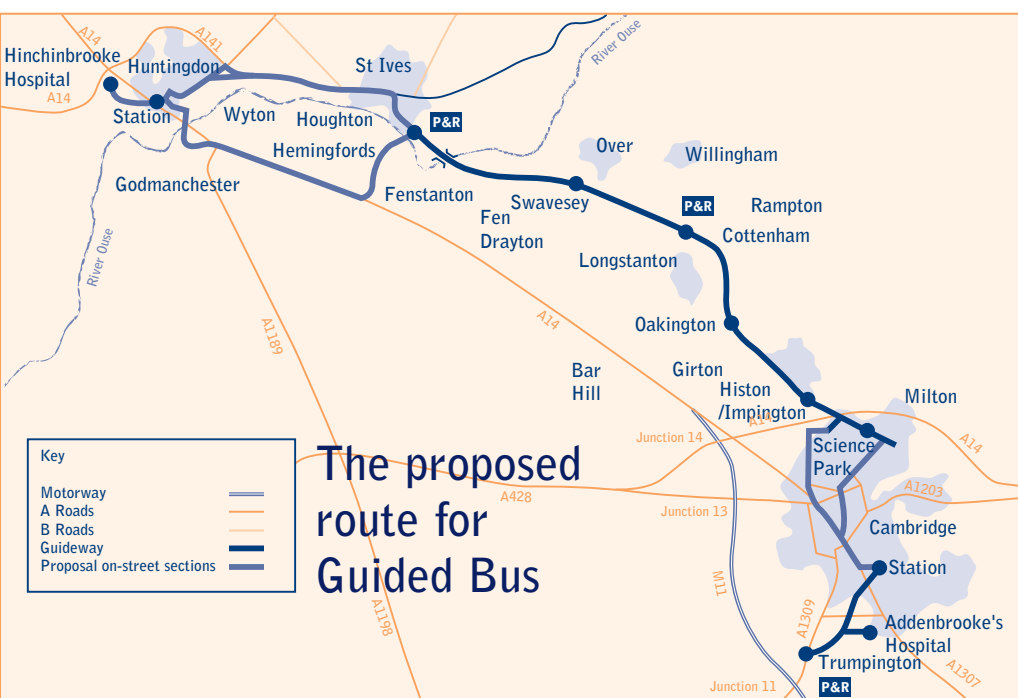
St Ives
Oakington

The detailed proposals will also be on display at Parish Councils and Libraries along the route.

The cycleway will provide improved access from Trumpington to the railway station and Addenbrooke's.

- **New jobs and improved access to employment**

The Guided Bus scheme will provide improved access to employment in Huntingdon, St Ives, Cambridge and the villages and create jobs itself. Being able to get around quickly and flexibly without having to have a car or change continually from bus to train will offer a more pleasant trip to and from work and may encourage people to seek jobs in areas they would normally rule out because of transport difficulties.



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How can I find out more?

You can contact the Guided Bus team at the County Council by email at transport.plan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or phone 01223 716972. You can find out more about the project on the County Council's website at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk under Council Services – Planning – Projects and Studies.

If you or someone you know would like this newsletter in large print, audio, Braille or another language please contact us on 01223 716972.



Cambridgeshire
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