

# Minutes

## Minutes of Passenger Focus Board

**Date:** Tuesday 7 March 2006 (pm) and Wednesday 8 March 2006 (am)  
**Location:** Whittles House, 14 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9HF  
**Time:** (Tuesday 7 March) 1400 – 1700; (Wednesday 8 March) 1000-1300

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### Present

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#### Board Members

Colin Foxall	CF	Chairman
Jessica Barrow	JB	
David Burton	DB	
Brian Cooke	BC	
Phil Davis	PD	
Kate Gordon	KG	
James King	JK	
Christine Knights	CK	
Derek Langslow	DL	Items 1-7 only
Deryk Mead	DM	
Bill Samuel	BS	
Barbara Saunders	BSA	
Marc Seale	MS	Items 1-7 only
Nigel Walmsley	NW	
<b>Executive</b>		
Kafil Badar	KB	Business Planning Manager
John Cartledge	JC	Deputy Director, London TravelWatch (item 11 only)
Nigel Holden	NH	Finance Director (items 4 and 5 only)

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Vinita Nawathe	VN	Policy and Research Director (Items 9 and 10 only)
Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
Peter Thompson	PT	Passenger Research Manager (Item 9 only)
Nicola Wilkie	NW	PA to Chairman and Chief Executive (minute taker)

## External delegates

Andy Firman, Research Director, Outlook Research Ltd	Outlook
Chris Onley, Director, Outlook Research Ltd	Outlook
Ollie Farr, Associate Director, Outlook Research Ltd	Outlook

## Welcome and Apologies

There were no apologies.

## Board closed session

Members reviewed the Board Meeting and Stakeholder event held in Scotland on 7 February, and the launch events held in Edinburgh and Glasgow on 8 March. Members felt the visit had been worthwhile and had provided valuable opportunities to engage with passengers.

James King (JK) said stakeholders in Scotland had viewed their meetings with Passenger Focus as being very useful.

Members asked Anthony Smith (AS) to provide a structured programme of events for the Board's meeting in Cardiff, scheduled for 12-13 September 2006, encompassing the most useful aspects of the Scottish visit.

**Action:** AS to develop a draft programme of events (June/July 2006) for the Board Meeting in Cardiff, 12-13 September 2006 (BM 015)

Members discussed public transport integration in the English regions and requested that a future Board meeting took place in an area such as Manchester or Leeds in order to see the provision of services in such areas.

**Action:** AS to arrange for a future Board Meeting to take place within an English region (BM 016)

Members discussed Passenger Focus' approach to engagement with such issues as planning assessments and it was agreed that this issue would be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

**Action:** AS to include the subject of Passenger Focus engagement in planning assessments and similar areas on a future agenda (BM 017)

Members discussed the issue of open access rights and Passenger Focus' responses to the ORR consultation on Grand Central's application.

Members debated the process for deciding issues such as open access applications. There is a need to clarify both the process and the principles by which such decisions are made.

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CF felt becoming involved with the technical debate surrounding such issues would steer the organisation away from consumer issues.

The Chairman said the organisation had responded in the light of a short timeframe but that such issues probably needed additional Board involvement.

**Action:** AS to circulate background information on Grand Central Open Access/GNER issue to all Board members (BM 018)

AS informed Members about the Government's purchase of additional rolling stock for South West Trains.

## 1. Minutes of Meeting held 7 February 2006

1.1 Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held 7 February 2006.

1.2 With reference to minute 3.16, Bill Samuel (BS), Kate Gordon (KG) and CF agreed to meet to consider the existing procurement procedures.

1.3 Jessica Barrow (JB) requested that a note of explanation be included within the action matrix for items that may have been superseded by events following the meeting and are subsequently no longer required.

**Action:** Kafil Badar (KB) to include explanatory notes within the action matrix.

## 2. Action Matrix

2.1 AS updated members as to the progress of a number of items.

2.2 KB said that with regard to item BM002 (NDPB Board Members' indemnities), the Department for Transport had indicated that the level of indemnity offered to Members within their letters of appointment was sufficient.

2.3 Members discussed the issue and were content not to pursue the issue at the current time.

## 3. PERFORMANCE

3.1 **2005-2006 Budget Update** Nigel Holden (NH) spoke to the papers previously circulated. Members were content at the content and style of the presentation.

3.2 NH said the National Audit Office would be auditing the organisation at the end of April, an activity brought forward from July 2006. This would allow inclusion of the audited figures within the annual report.

## 4. Complaint handling and passenger satisfaction

4.1 Barbara Saunders (BS) and Christine Knights (CK) spoke to the papers and the Board noted the provision of short, medium and long term improvements, requesting that updates on these areas be provided in six months' time.

**Action:** The Communications Director (CJ) was asked to update the Board as to improvements achieved in six months' time (BM 019)

4.2 The Board discussed the options for improving passenger satisfaction levels and highlighted issues as the difficulty in distinguishing between complaint handling and outcome costs, and the importance of identifying and managing the cost of dealing with each appeal complaints.

4.3 The Board requested that TOC complaint data be available and used for benchmarking and reporting purposes.

**Action:** The Communications Director (CJ) was asked to circulate TOC complaint data to Board members (BM 020)

4.4 The Board **endorsed** Option 2 within the Paper.

## 5. PLANNING

5.1 **2006-8 Corporate Plan** AS said that positive feedback had been received and that the "100 wins" had been widely commented on. The Board **agreed** the measures, definitions and collection system (subject to amendments) and **endorsed** the costs and proposed targets.

5.2 **2006-7 Business Plan** Members discussed the paper and commented on the use of external support, given that the Executive was unable to provide support in areas such as accessibility and European issues.

**Action:** AS to circulate a paper to the Board about external support to Passenger Focus (BM 021)

5.3 The Board **agreed** the general principle and structure of the Business Plan.

5.4 The Board discussed the budget and budget allocations in such areas as HR, as well as the allocation of staff time and cover during absences.

**Action:** AS to circulate a paper to the Board about Budget allocations (BM 022)

## 6. NPS Governance Board

6.1 Members were updated as to the current work of the Board and requested a list of the organisations consulted as part of the external review.

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**Action:** VN to provide a list of organisations consulted by the NPS Governance Board  
(BM 023)

## 7. Fares Research Procurement

7.1 Members discussed the organisation's procurement procedure and agreed that, whilst correctly applied in the case of the fares research, the process, including member involvement, needed to be reviewed.

**Action:** AS to arrange review of procurement procedures, including member involvement  
(BM 024)

## 8. Any Other Business

8.1 Members were requested that all outstanding expenses be submitted by the end of March 2006.

## 9. FARES

9.1 Andy Firman (AF), Chris Onley (CO) and Ollie Farr (OF) from Outlook Research Limited gave a presentation on the initial findings of the Passenger Focus fares research

9.2 AF said research indicated ticket complexity and a lack of consistency in ticket pricing caused passengers most concern. Passengers felt that advance booking on airlines was a more reliable way of securing cheaper fares in comparison with rail

9.3 Members discussed the presentation. KG noted that passengers appeared to lack trust in ticket booking procedures and this was important for the organisation to recognise.

9.4 AS said the Business Plan included 'Mystery Shopping' research in order to affirm whether passengers were getting value for money.

9.5 Members debated the issue of fares and agreed that it was an area wider than just the cost of tickets but encompassed such areas as value, flexibility of tickets, access etc. CF said it would be difficult to present a single view on the subject of fares – commuters, for example, represented a particular type of user.

9.6 Members agreed that the quantitative research should take place, with 'mystery shopping' research carried out alongside. Such research would be ongoing at the time of the Fares Conference.

9.7 Members **agreed** that it would be beneficial for the key points of the research to be included in the Chairman's scheduled meeting with the Secretary of State on 16 March.

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## 10. FARES CONFERENCE

- 10.1 AS spoke about the fares conference, the speakers and the programme content, including workshops which would be attended by members.
- 10.2 AS said background papers would establish the context of the meeting.

## 11. BTP REVIEW

- 11.1 CF said Passenger Focus had been asked to submit a response to the British Transport Police Review consultation process. It was likely that the organisation's submission would be the only one focussing on passengers' views.
- 11.2 CF drew attention to the position of Board Members who were also members of the British Transport Police Authority.
- 11.3 JK and CK explained the background to the review and John Cartledge (JC) outlined the questionnaire that had been circulated to consultees.
- 11.4 CF said the British Transport Police could be refocused or split up as an organisation; re-focus could mean the employment by Train Operating Companies of security guards or specialist groups on the railway.
- 11.5 JC said there was a strong BTP presence in London and the remainder were distributed across the country. Whilst the issue of personal security was highly regarded by passengers within the National Passenger Survey, it was not their highest priority (that being punctuality and reliability)
- 11.7 Members asked for JK, CK, CF, JC and VN to produce a draft response, which would encompass the principle that outputs are best delivered by a specialist force; where it sits would be a matter for others.

*Nicola Wilkie*

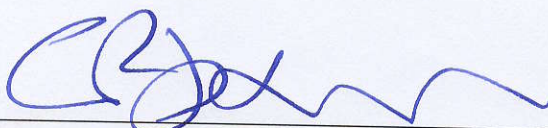
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Nicola Wilkie  
PA to the Chairman and Chief Executive, Passenger  
Focus (Minute Taker)

*7 March 2006*

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Date



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Colin Foxall CBE  
Chairman, Passenger Focus

*11 May 2001*

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Date