**OLD CHESTERTON RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

**Newsletter – June 2015**

**Michael Bond attended the North Area Committee meeting on the 16th June 2015. Network Rail made a presentation about plans the new station and the Fen Road level crossing. He has the following to report:**

**New Station**

The highlights of the Network Rail presentation were:

1. Their current planning application which mirrors the existing approved application made by the County Council is expected to complete all stages to approval by 17th July.

2. They intend to make a new application to amend the original application as they plan to modify the track layout for freight so that it will run along the south side of the site adjacent the main line rather than around the northern edge of the site. This will release a large area of sidings land that allows relocation of car parking onto a rectangular plot alongside the freight line serviced directly from Cowley Road rather than using the triangular area identified in the original plan. I got the strong impression that they would like to do all this in time for the opening of the station in December 2016

3. The freight track modifications will allow all freight traffic manoeuvres to take place within the sidings area rather than having to use the main line and closing the Fen Road crossing whilst they are playing trains.

**Fen Road Crossing**

4. Network Rail are going to carry out resignalling from Bury St Edmunds to Cambridge that will replace signal boxes at Dullingham and Newmarket. As part of the work they will replace the Fen Road crossing and hope to bring it up to an acceptable standard by widening it to provide adequate footways on both sides of the crossing and the approaches to it with double gates replacing the single gates currently in use. This would allow the present speed limit for trains of 75 mph to be raised.

5. Ideally they would like to close the crossing whilst all this is done but as Fen Road is the only access to Chesterton Fen it cannot be closed unless an alternative access can be provided. Network Rail have looked at this possibility and not completely discounted it but creating it means crossing the railway somewhere else which will be costly and not easy. The most likely solution will be to keep at least one lane of Fen Road open at all times and do one side of the crossing at a time. There will be some rail closures with alternative bus services when work affecting the track itself is done.