

**Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.**

Feel free to forward RUEX to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources). If you want further details of any of the stories mentioned, consult the relevant website or, failing that, get back to me, and I will send you the source material.

*For details of group affiliation to Railfuture, see website [here](#) (from the "Membership Type" menu, select "RUG or similar").*

Further to my criticism of the National Rail Timetable on the Network Rail (NR) website, it appears that the only Train Operating Companies (TOCs) that produce complete timetables for their services are GWR and South West Trains. Given the categorical statement by NR, one might reasonably expect that a consolidated timetable for each period of validity would be a requirement of every franchise agreement. It's a candidate topic for the Railfuture Branches and Groups Day in Birmingham on 29 October.

With news breaking as the July edition was put to bed, I jumped the gun in naming the Rt Hon John Hayes as the Rail Minister. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State who replaces Claire Perry is Paul Maynard; his responsibilities include rail projects and infrastructure, safety and security, passenger services, strategy, funding and sponsorship, integrated delivery and accessibility, rail fares and ticketing. However, HS2, the Northern and Trans-Pennine Express franchises, local transport networks and smart ticketing all fall within the remit of another PUS, Andrew Jones MP.

*Roger Smith*

*We continue with the usual roundup of news items from groups around the UK. Please keep your contributions coming: they are all gratefully received.*

**Levenmouth Rail Campaign – complementary or competing timelines?**

Local constituency MSPs Jenny Gilruth and David Torrance pressed the Leven case with Transport Minister Humza Yousaf, whilst Transport Scotland officials met with Fife Council officials and consultants to discuss the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) for the project in more detail. This must also be assessed under the NR Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process, to confirm that the outputs align with rail network strategy, and could be delivered economically. However, GRIP is not mentioned in the Transport Scotland timeline for Control Period 6 (CP6) from 2019–2024: stakeholder consultation on NR's Route Study will conclude next February with a "review initiation notice" from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) requesting a High Level Output Specification (HLOS) and Statement of Available Funds (SoAF), with a Final Determination in October 2018; NR will then publish its CP6 Delivery Plan in April 2019.

**Rail Action Group for Eastern Scotland – local issues to the fore**

NR has revised the cost of reopening East Linton and Reston stations between Edinburgh and Berwick from £7m to around £22m, well over the Councils' combined budget of £3.5m, even if matched by Government's Station Investment Fund. The new Minister for Transport has agreed to fund 50% of the latest estimate, but this still leaves a substantial gap, so the councils were looking to the Edinburgh City Deal, further funding from the UK and Scottish Governments, and the private sector. Transferring the project to Transport Scotland could only happen once funding was in place. However, can December 2018 - the date in the franchise - still be met? Seemingly, Transpennine Express had been asked to include calls at a re-opened Reston station in its bid. Ultimately however, a regular service interval may require more than one TOC.

The Community Rail Partnership is seeking to integrate rail with council run bus services. The completed platform extension at North Berwick couldn't include a toilet block, as the station was unmanned. During the RMT dispute, there were no ScotRail services to North Berwick and Dunbar, nor any bus alternative. With a new northbound platform at Dunbar, trains no longer had to cross the southbound track twice to call at the station, so Virgin Trains East Coast might be able to increase the number of stops.

### **Furness Line Action Group – a dream receding**

Arriva North is doing its best with the new franchise, but the DfT has had to update its assumptions regarding the availability of new rolling stock. Or, as the FLAG Secretary puts it: “We are now deeply concerned that the new version will...leave services in the (Far) North West of the Northern franchise at Poorhouse, rather than Powerhouse, levels.” Thus Manchester Airport services on the Lakes and Furness Lines are being cut, while Cleethorpes and Scarborough enjoy an hourly service throughout the week, although few of their tourists come in that way, whereas many to the South Lakes do. Short notice changes to the timetable have been poorly advertised and often contained errors. FLAG has provided support to passengers, whilst bringing issues to the attention of the new managers, for whom it has been a baptism of fire. Day-to-day management in the area has been devolved to a new regional director, Sharon Keith.

The new Moorside nuclear power station requires a 285m extension of the St Bees Loop to the south, a new 3.2km loop alongside the existing track between Corkickle and Mirehouse, with platforms for Moorside workers and maybe public access at Mirehouse; links to the north and south via new stretches of line and re-use of a branch line, and a new viaduct over the River Eden. Meanwhile, a battle is raging in the south of the county between those who want the trunk power cables carried on new, taller pylons, or on a £multibillion express roadway. However, burying the cables and expanding the rail link would meet all the criteria at significantly lower cost, both environmental and financial.

### **Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line – new views required**

Trains are now running through to Armathwaite, but for operational reasons return shortly to Appleby, where they await the booked departure time. However, the consequent adjustment to the connecting bus services is causing confusion; they were better as they were. The Class 158 Sprinters used on the line are being refurbished. FoSCL hopes that the opportunity will be taken to realign the seats with the windows to provide views of the spectacular scenery. The Group urgently needs fresh, preferably young, blood on the Committee, in particular a Treasurer to replace Stephen Way, who is standing down at the AGM next April. Expressions of interest should be made to Ruth Ellis, [ruth.ellis@settle-carlisle.com](mailto:ruth.ellis@settle-carlisle.com).

### **Ribble Valley Rail – hurrah for Station Friends**

Rather than an adopter at each station, Arriva Rail North prefers Friends of Station groups. The Ribble Valley line is one step ahead, having had these since it re-opened in 1994. Passengers cannot help but be impressed by the colourful displays at Clitheroe, Whalley, Langho, Wilpshire and Darwen. RVR is currently seeking additional volunteers to help with the upkeep of Darwen Station. May was the worst month yet for performance in 2016. Of the ten cancellations at Clitheroe, five were turned short and restarted at Blackburn. Causes included unit faults, trespass, train crew problems, and animals on the line.

### **Calder Valley Rail User Group – building an identity**

The new Group is seeking recognition from Northern, with the aim of benefiting from Northern Connect: improving services between Moston and Halifax, and facilities at both staffed and unstaffed stations. It will work with other groups and authorities to build a Calder Valley "line identity", and eventually a Community Rail Partnership, with a leaflet to promote tourism and off-peak use.

### **Support the Oldham Rochdale Manchester Lines (STORM) – a lament for the Station Adopter**

Northern Rail Station Adopters are volunteers, who report damage, graffiti, lights not working, faulty information screens etc, and clear litter, bottles and various other detritus. Their surveys provide statistics for cleanliness, revenue collection and timekeeping, overcrowding in the peak, and passengers being left behind. In return, they receive a Northern Rail pass. However, as RVR reports above, Arriva North prefers Friends of Station groups, but found it hard to sell the idea to a meeting of Station Adopters. Northern Rail is seeking an advocate for its customer community, and to bring a fresh perspective to the Board's decision-making process, knowledge development and problem solving.

There are more reports of ticketing problems in the Greater Manchester area. The ticket office at Rochdale overcharged for two child Wayfarer tickets. Then a Stagecoach bus driver claimed that they were not valid on buses, which is incorrect. On another occasion, a Yorkshire based conductor claimed that a national bus pass issued by TfGM was invalid for a return journey by train from Victoria between 16:00 and 18:30, which is correct for the West Yorkshire area, but not for journeys within the TfGM area, whereas the day ranger train ticket does indeed not allow travel at peak times on weekdays. Finally, ticket barriers between platforms 4 to 7 at Piccadilly (with 'side gates' preventing access to other platforms.) are causing chaos.

### **Huddersfield Penistone Sheffield Rail Users Association – a new high-speed link?**

Rather than Meadowhall station, HS2 Ltd is now proposing a spur from Toton, near Nottingham, onto the Midland main line, and thus into Sheffield Midland. The HS2 line to Leeds could then be moved further east through less densely populated areas, and a link back to this north of Sheffield could include a parkway station east of Barnsley. The Association welcomes the upgrade to Huddersfield station, which includes three new waiting rooms and a first-class lounge, and will benefit over 7,000 passengers every day. Platforms at the seven stations between Huddersfield and Penistone will be extended to take the refurbished Class 150 trains that will replace the Pacers, and increase capacity by 27% from 660 to 840.

### **Stourbridge Line User Group – more integration required**

Better integration of public transport is essential to encourage rail users to get to the station without a car. Many of the Centro car parks at stations in the West Midlands are at saturation point. The free one at Stourbridge Junction now holds over 1,000 cars, but is full by 8am every morning. June 2016 saw the creation of the West Midlands Combined Authority, with an elected mayor; Centro was absorbed into it as Transport for the West Midlands. SLUG hopes that the new Authority will use its powers under the Bus Services Act to force bus companies to provide interchange services at every local station.

### **Peterborough-Ely-Norwich Rail User Group – new blood, better stock, poor service**

Parking at Thetford railway station can be a costly business! Booking clerks may report a faulty machine, but not sell parking tickets – and it's £75 (ching!) if you don't display one. The 5,000 new houses in the north of the town will not be within walking distance of the station, and many of the sites for a new car park have been built on, so many commuters will use the park-and-ride at Cambridge or Norwich instead. Wymondham has a modern, council run car park where passengers can confidently leave cars overnight. However, the step-free access to westbound trains proved to be only a temporary facility.

The Norwich-Cambridge annual TOC report did not even mention the problems last autumn, when a third of the trains were suspended for five weeks. Passengers turned up for trains that the company knew would not be running; many Liverpool trains failed to make connections at Ely, and risked losing their paths through Grantham by calling at intermediate stations. Emergency timetables in October would have cost no more than compensation posters in December. The TOC response to the Group's concern was that passenger communication would be covered in the ongoing Curley report on what went wrong. Contact [penrugjohn@gmail.com](mailto:penrugjohn@gmail.com) if you would like a copy.

The station footbridge at March reopened, resplendent in "heritage" green and cream, albeit with temporary handrails; each platform also has a new information screen. At Thetford, the area behind the east end of Platform 1 now looks so much more inviting as a result of the efforts of local people removing litter, and planting and tending flower beds.

PENRUG welcomes the new Stamford Oakham and Melton Mowbray Rail Users Group. Local issues include a missing platform canopy at Stamford, and an aspiration for more trains. If have any comments regarding facilities or services on the line, [penrugjohn@gmail.com](mailto:penrugjohn@gmail.com) would be happy to pass them on.

Liverpool-Norwich stock is being fitted with power points and a disability-friendly toilet; 25 of the 26 units should be complete within a year, and the modification to unit 770 has improved the air-conditioning. Meanwhile, the seat reservation system now works when a Class 156 unit appears on this line.

## **Bedford Commuters Association**

### **Association of Passenger Train Users – *coping with adversity***

Thameslink performance has fallen significantly. Increased demand arising from the RMT dispute with Southern is causing delays at stations, and the network is highly sensitive to late arrivals from the south at East Croydon. BCA have sought data on net growth in the number of drivers (ie newly trained, less leavers) but get only the former figure. To bring the new Class 700 trains into service, even experienced drivers must undergo an eight-day course. Training starts in the classroom; semi-automatic driving through central London is taught on a state-of-the-art simulator. Finally, accompanied by a Testing and Commissioning Driver, drivers experience low speed operation at the Three Bridges depot, followed by two days on the main line. To date 124 drivers have been trained on the new train.

Reliability of the Class 700 has also been an issue, and the delay in their introduction has led to Class 319 units not being retired as early as planned. Engineers refer to the 'bath tub' curve of unreliability: a teething period, then sustained good performance before a steep rise at end of life. Unfortunately, Thameslink has trains at both ends – Class 700s at the start and Class 319s at the end.

Service Recovery and Command & Control aims to restore normal service ASAP after disruption, and minimize the impact on passengers. The control room team is developing its response to infrastructure equipment or train failures, whilst NR is putting more effort into responding to track faults and track circuit failures, focusing on those assets that fail more frequently and have the largest impact. Remote condition monitoring equipment on points in the Sussex area has shown positive results. An alarm sounds if any of 956 sets of points looks set to fail, prompting a visit from an NR technician. This proactive approach has reduced the number of points failures by a third in two years, from 256 in 2013/14 to just 169 in 2015/16.

### **Hatfield Association of Rail Travellers – *another member of the RUG community***

A recent Railfuture Herts and Beds meeting was attended by a member of the newly formed HART. Email them if you would like to receive their newsletter, make them aware of an issue at Hatfield Station, or even join the Committee; contact details are on their website: <http://www.hatfieldrail.com>.

### **Chesham & District Transport Users' Group – *parking problems prevail***

Operational issues included a lack of communication at Baker Street, closure of the Chesham ticket office, and the introduction of ANPR parking in the car park there, which has led to extreme congestion as drivers meeting passengers choose not to use it. With the support of the new Mayor, Transport for London is re-examining the proposal for step-free access at Amersham with the JNP Group, the Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers who designed and delivered it at Birkenhead North. Enabling work has started on the Metropolitan Line Extension from Croxley to Watford Junction. Main works will start in the autumn, with a target date of December 2020 for start of service.

### **Pembroke Rail Travellers' Association – *getting the hump***

Pembroke and Pembroke Dock stations now have a Harrington Hump, a raised section of platform to facilitate access and egress, so called after the station in Cumbria where it was first installed. However, so that trains stop at precisely the right point, there has to be a separate S-sign for every type that may call at the station – or in the case of the single platform at Pembroke, two sets of signs. Both Pembroke and Tenby have seen surplus track taken up. Stena Line has reportedly applied to close Fishguard Harbour station and run a shuttle bus instead from Fishguard and Goodwick.

During engineering work between Carmarthen and Swansea, the 11:28 Sunday morning service from Milford Haven was brought forward 15 minutes, which caught a few people out. The change allowed the replacement bus service to reach Swansea in time to maintain its onward departure time – but it missed the connections to the London and Manchester trains. These could still have been made with two additional buses: one running non-stop from Carmarthen and Swansea, and a stopping service from Ferryside that would have allowed the 11.28 to depart as per the timetable.

### Transwilt Community Rail Partnership – boom time in Wiltshire

The annual footfall on the Westbury to Swindon line via Trowbridge, Melksham and Chippenham has increased from 18,000 in 2012 to a quarter of a million, thanks to a shuttle train running an extra 6 round trips a day (4 on Sundays), funded by a grant from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Traffic is a healthy combination of commuter, education, business, personal and leisure, and combines local flows with links into and out of the national network. The need now is for longer trains, more services to plug long gaps, even at peak time, a later evening train, and services extended south of Westbury. GWR continues to look at other small changes that might make a big difference. The CRP is also looking more to the leisure and occasional user, to encourage newcomers in the area to try rail for the first time.

### West Sussex Rail Users Association – Southern woes

The Association quotes two responses from Southern in response to industrial action by ASLEF and TSSA:

“Twice ASLEF has tried to block our plans to improve the railway and twice the courts have ruled their attempts unlawful. ASLEF members have been successfully operating this timetable for three weeks to deliver more reliable services for passengers and staff in the face of train crew shortages. To call a strike ballot against this timetable now is a cynical and desperate attempt to heap even more misery on passengers, especially as we have met with ASLEF on two occasions and have a further meeting with them next week on this specific issue. Passengers should remember that ASLEF and the RMT signed a pact last year to fight any extension of driver-only operation tooth and nail. The news of this ballot comes at the very moment we are trying to find a resolution with the RMT at ACAS, and is premature and opportunistic.”

“The TSSA union has announced that it is to ballot GTR ticket office staff over our plans to improve the customer experience at 83 of our stations. TSSA now seems to want to join the RMT in heaping more misery on our passengers. Balloting for industrial action over proposals which will see affected staff earn more, where jobs have been guaranteed and which will result in station staff being available for longer seems not only pointless but ridiculous. We trust station teams will see these proposals are good news for them and for passengers.”

### RAILFUTURE



Nominations/submissions for Railfuture’s annual Rail User Group Awards close on **Saturday 3 September**, so this is the **LAST AND FINAL CALL!** Details about how to make a nomination are on the website at: [www.railfuture.org.uk/RUG+Awards](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/RUG+Awards). Just click on the logo on the left side of the Railfuture homepage.

The Awards aim to recognise and reward the achievement of some 300 Groups in fulfilling Railfuture's mission: to be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users. They will be presented at its annual conference in Birmingham on 12 November in the following categories:

- 1 & 2 - Best newsletter - Gold and Silver awards [not available to last year’s winners]
- 3 & 4 - Best website - Gold and Silver awards [not available to last year’s winners]
- 5 - Best social media promotion
- 6 - Best campaign
- 7 - Best individual RUG campaigner [for Railfuture members only]
- 8 - Best new group
- 9 - Judges' Special Award



Following the appointment of The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP as Secretary of State for Transport, an open letter from Chris Page, the Chairman of Railfuture, set out its top ten recommendations, and the priorities within each, and invited the SoS to discuss them further: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/display1338>.

## **PASSENGER GROUP**

All TOCs follow the National Conditions of Carriage and the Railway Byelaws (sic) regarding the carriage and use of alcohol on trains. However, Transport for London Byelaws are more stringent: “No person shall enter, attempt to enter or remain on the railway while in possession of an open container of alcohol, unless expressly permitted to do so by the Operator in a particular area.”

As at Manchester Piccadilly (see STORM above), there are now barriers between platforms at Birmingham New Street, although they can be avoided by using footbridge at the west end. The West Midlands Branch is monitoring the situation.

## **NORTH WEST BRANCH**

From Dec 2017, all services from Southport to Manchester will go to Victoria; services to Piccadilly and the Airport are axed. However, over 800 commuters use this service, and hundreds more throughout the day in both directions for business, education and leisure. The economic impact will adversely impact a wide area.

A passing loop would unlock the potential of the South Fylde line into Blackpool South, which is constrained by the single track from Kirkham onwards, and access to that station would be improved by moving it across the road. There is also a case for reopening Wrea Green station and, as electrification work proceeds, reinstating the doubled track from there to Kirkham North junction. Meanwhile, modest investment in the Wrexham to Bidston line would fund a new station, Deeside Parkway, where it crosses the A548, improve frequency, reliability and connectivity to other routes, and promote economic growth in North East Wales and neighbouring areas of North West England.

## **THAMES VALLEY BRANCH**

At its AGM, Branch Chairman Richard Stow hailed Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village stations as examples of what a "can do" attitude could achieve. Oxford City opens in December, when GRIP 3 on the Bletchley Line will also be reached. The Branch supports a new station to serve Grove and Wantage, possibly sited between the A338 and the A417, as well as reopening the Cowley branch, with a service from Hanborough, once that station has additional car parking.

The first round of consultation on the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Heathrow Western Access has been passed; a new round will start in Feb 2017, with the DCO submitted in late 2017, and work finishing by 2024, within CP6. The route offers timings of 7 mins to Slough and 14 mins to Maidenhead, and does NOT depend on a new runway. However, that strengthens the case for reinstating the line from Bourne End to High Wycombe [and thus East West Rail – Ed.], which is now in the Local Plan, whilst the remodelling of Bourne End station to permit two trains per hour awaits additional funds.

From Spring 2018, the new Worcester Parkway station will enable a service from Kingham to Birmingham in 1hr 5m with one change. Plans to reopen the line from Honeybourne to Stratford have been approved: it would alleviate traffic congestion, whilst housing development at Long Marston will further strengthen the case. Land for a station there is protected, as it is for bridges to replace level crossings.

## **ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS**

Funding from the DfT and Arriva Rail North has enabled ACoRP to create two new departments, Operations and Commercial, each led by a senior manager. A Chief Executive will be recruited externally. ACoRP hopes to provide greater support to its members, CRPs and station friends groups across the country, develop the whole Community Rail sector, and promote the use of regional and rural trains.

Anyone in a Community Rail role is encouraged to get involved in Rail Safety Week, an industry wide initiative from 26 September – 2 October. Promote the Week on websites or in email signatures, and organise events at stations. In particular, seek to involve young people, and send out a clear message that rail safety isn't just about workers in the industry; it should be everyone's concern. The founder and organiser, Alan Tarrant, may be contacted via <http://railsafetyweek.info/>.

The Community Rail Awards dinner on 29 September is at The Floral Hall (Southport Conference Centre).

### COMMUNITY RAIL LANCASHIRE

CRL is a not-for-profit company that acts as an umbrella body for the four Lancashire CRPs. Community Champions at Preston are working with Virgin Trains to develop a community room on platform 4 for the use of schoolchildren as part of its educational engagement programme. Arriva Rail North is funding a number of posts through a newly established Community Rail Executive Group (ComREG), including a Chief Executive Officer, Senior Commercial Manager, Operations Officer, Operations Manager, and Tourism & Heritage Officer. There are two new promotional leaflets for the West of Lancashire, one for the Bentham line and another for the new service via the Todmorden Curve. The series of 12 Rail to Trail walks along the Bentham line has also been rebranded and reprinted. Dalesrail from the Ribble Valley to the Eden Valley and beyond is also going strong; the season ends on 11 September.

### CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT

CBT endorses the DfT consultation on how InterCity West Coast (ICWC) services can best meet passengers' needs, particularly part-time workers: "We want the future train operator to deliver more flexible products...including tickets that will benefit those who work or commute part-time".

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/523169/icwc-consultation-english.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523169/icwc-consultation-english.pdf)

<http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/tell-government-franchise-must-work-part-time-commuters-day-one>

Following the announcement that fares will increase by 1.9% in line with inflation, the Campaign is calling for fair fares for ALL rail passengers. It claims to have changed things for the better: "until recently, fares increased each year by 3% MORE THAN inflation. The fact that they now 'only' increase in line with inflation is due to our campaigning."

*...and now the rest of the news ...*

Abellio East Anglia has been awarded a new nine-year franchise starting in October that will see a £1.4 billion investment, heralding a transformation in the region's rail services. Key benefits include:

- at least two 90-minute weekday services each way between London and Norwich, and two 60-minute services between London and Ipswich
- 1,043 new carriages from January 2019 to support the faster timetable
- refurbishment of the current fleet in the interim
- free Wi-Fi for all passengers on trains and at stations
- automatic 'delay repay' for season and advance purchase tickets
- higher targets for operational performance levels: 93% against 89.7% currently
- new ticketing initiatives from October 2017, catering for regular users who don't travel every day

Bombardier in Derby will supply 660 Aventra electric multiple-unit cars (EMU), while Swiss company Stadler has an order for 383 Flirt (Fast Light Innovative Regional Train) electro-diesel and EMU cars.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/better-journeys-for-rail-passengers-and-boost-for-derby-train-industry-as-new-east-anglia-franchise-announced>

The DfT has updated its list of rail vehicles built or refurbished to modern accessibility standards:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-rail-vehicles-built-or-refurbished-to-modern-accessibility-standards>.

It has also responded to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), regarding its initial consultation on Periodic Review 18 (PR18), setting out areas of opportunity, and thoughts on their future engagement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-regulation-network-rails-outputs-and-funding-for-2019-to-2024>

Meanwhile, on behalf of the DfT, Highways Agency has published a number of strategic road studies, including Oxford-Cambridge, Trans-Pennine and the A1. If NR doesn't deliver, the road lobby will! – Ed.

The ORR has published its Annual Health and Safety report for 2016. Britain's railways are currently the safest they have ever been. **For the first year ever, there were no workforce fatalities.** There were top-level safety improvements, particularly around reductions in harm at level crossings and to the workforce, but some worsening trends, including earthwork failures, and an increase in harm to passengers at stations. Safety leadership has strengthened and broadened, but must now ensure that initiatives to control risk are cascaded to and implemented on the front line, and focus more on occupational health management.

<http://orr.gov.uk/what-and-how-we-regulate/health-and-safety/monitoring-and-reporting/annual-health-and-safety-report-2016>

Following a consultation on the proposed charging framework for the 5m 75ch of railway infrastructure owned and operated by Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL), which links the airport to the Great Western Main Line (the Heathrow Spur), the ORR has ruled that HAL may not introduce all of its proposed new charges, a decision that applies to both Heathrow Express and Crossrail services.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/heathrow-spur-charging-framework>.

The NR report on route options for the Central Section of East-West Rail from Bedford to Cambridge was published on 7 June. An initial list of 20 corridor options was reduced to 7, and then to just two: Sandy and Hitchin. After a robust comparison, as well as opting for the Sandy corridor, it seems to favour new split-level interchange stations at Bedford Parkway over the Midland Main Line, and south of the existing Sandy station over the East Coast Main Line. [So why not join the ECML and use Biggleswade instead? Ed.] However, consultation on the proposal will await announcement of the actual "line-on-the-map".

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/East-West-Rail-Engineering-Summary-Report.pdf>

Tower Hill station on the London Underground is now step-free, following the installation of two new lifts between the ticket halls and all three platforms. Step-free routes have also been created between the Tube station and both Tower Gateway DLR and National Rail services at Fenchurch Street station.

On the morning of 21 June, London Midland caught 104 people at Euston Station dodging fares worth more than £3,000. It has also successfully prosecuted two passengers for making false delay repay claims worth more than £2,000, using information gleaned from the internet, the first private prosecution of its kind.

## **EVENTS** (See also the [Events listing on the Railfuture website](#))

Blob colour indicates the various types of event:

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture events (rail user group representatives are cordially invited).
- Local Group events.

### **September**

- 5. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail, New Inn, Clitheroe, 1930. (Also, 3 Oct, 7 Nov, 5 Dec).
- 5. Monday. Watford Rail Users' Group, Open Meeting, **Watford** Town Hall Annexe, 1845.
- 9. Friday. TransWilts CRP, Railway Inn, near **Westbury** Station, 19:00 for 19:30
- 10. Saturday. North West Branch, Patten Arms, **Warrington**, 1300 (Also 19 November, venue TBC).
- 10. Saturday. Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association, **Welshpool**, 1130. (Also 8 October (AGM), **Machynlleth**, 1100; 1 November, **Newtown**; 10 December, **Aberystwyth**, 1145.)
- 12. Monday. Levenmouth Rail Campaign, Fife Renewables Innovation Centre, **Methil** Docks, 1830. (Also 12 Oct, 16 Nov (to be confirmed).)
- 21. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton line, No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes** Station, 2000. (Also 16 Nov).
- 20 Tuesday. Thames Valley Branch, The Chamber, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, **Bicester**, OX26 6PS, 1800 for 1830.
- 24 Saturday. Passenger Group Meeting, **Birmingham**, 13:00. Also 10 December (London).
- 29 Thursday. ACoRP Community Rail Awards 2016, Floral Hall, **Southport**.



### Further Ahead

- 5 October. Melksham Rail User Group, Well House Manor, Spa Road, **Melksham**, 18:30.
- 6 October. Capital Rail Action Group, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, **Edinburgh**, EH1 2JL, 1930.  
(Also 3 Nov, and a special meeting on 24 November with Christian Wolmar and Nigel Harris).
- 6 October. English Regional Transport Association National Reopenings Forum, The Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, **London**, WC1X 8JR, 1930.
- 15 October. East Suffolk Transport Association Autumn Meeting, St Johns Church Hall, **Woodbridge**, 14:00.
- 17 October. Avocet Line, AGM - **Topsham**).
- 29 October. Railfuture Branches and Groups Day, Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, 1000.
- 12 November. Saturday. Rail User Conference, Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, B4 6AF, 1000 for 1045. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>
- 19 November. Huddersfield Penistone Sheffield Rail Users Association, Methodist Church Hall, Ben Bank Road, **Silkstone Common**, 1100.
- 19 November. Severnside Branch, Pulteney Room, Manvers Street Baptist Church, **Bath**, BA1 1JW, 1400.

Please say if you no longer want to receive Rail User Express, or if someone else in your organisation wishes to be included on the circulation list.

*This bulletin has been sent by...*

Roger Smith, Railfuture Rail User Group Liaison Officer  
e-mail: [ruglink@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:ruglink@railfuture.org.uk) phone: 01462 815992

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