



July 2020

Welcome to the Rail User Express

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A recurring theme this month is the state of the railway as it recovers from lockdown. For weeks, we have been able to drive anywhere in the country, safe in our own bubble, whilst trains were shuttling fresh air to and fro. The Chancellor is incentivising eating out with his meal deal budget; we can but hope that he will do the same for public transport when the time comes. Use it or lose it!

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

NR briefed LMRC on options for the rail link emerging from the GRIP 3 process. Electrification and double tracking are under serious consideration, with plans for two stations and freight as far as Methil Docks. The amount of land available and the accessibility of each site will be considered, along with issues such as flood risk and land tenure, before the options are further refined prior to a public consultation.

Almost 11 months since the Scottish Government's decision to fund a Levenmouth Blueprint, LMRC still awaits detail of its priorities and elements, and how it will operate. The Government and Fife Council will each commit £5 million. However, the Programme Manager was appointed only 3 months ago, and the Blueprint is heavily contingent on decisions regarding the line, its stations and freight terminals, and links with The Leven Project, a 10-year initiative with government and non-government agencies, the private sector and communities working together to deliver improvements in and around the river.

Rail Action Group East of Scotland

One of RAGES original founders, Tom Thorburn, has accepted the role of Honorary President with immediate effect. A main driving force for the reopening of Reston and East Linton stations, and the campaign to improve local services to North Berwick, Dunbar, Haddington and Berwick Upon Tweed, Tom will bring a wealth of knowledge and experience regarding the railway networks and infrastructure.

Campaign for Borders Rail

Television presenter Rob Bell is CBR's first appointed patron. He captured the hearts of the Borders with his presentation of an episode of the Channel Five series Walking Britain's Lost Railways. It brought the case for extending the former Waverley Route to a new audience of almost two million viewers.

Lakes Line Rail User Group

A recent Kendal Vision document wants better use made of Kendal station. It aspires to two trains per hour between Oxenholme and Windermere, although an extra stop at a new station at Hallgarth would make this more difficult, so must be weighed against any possible gain in passenger numbers.

LLRUG contribution to CRPE's response to the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) 'Call for evidence' as part of its Rail Needs Assessment for the North and Midlands highlighted the need to increase capacity on the Lakes Line, recommended resolving pinch points such as the Castlefield corridor in Manchester that can lead to cancellations if an incoming Windermere service is late at Oxenholme, and suggested that HS2 could actually disadvantage Cumbria services by adding high speed trains to an already overcrowded track.

Friends of the Settle - Carlisle Line

Newspaper reports that the Ribbleshead viaduct is threatened with collapse after walkers were hit by falling rubble are mercifully untrue. Major work three decades ago almost certainly left it stronger than when it was built. Marc Vipham, NR route asset manager for structures, said: "Ribbleshead viaduct has got to be one of the crown jewels of Victorian civil engineering. We know that the structure is incredibly important both locally and internationally, and we want to give it the care and attention that it deserves, so that it can be enjoyed by future generations of both passengers and sightseers."

Since Horton Quarry was disconnected from the rail network in the late 1960s, the Dales have suffered badly from lorry traffic. But if reopened, slowly manoeuvring stone trains would straddle the foot crossing, so NR wants to replace this with a footbridge with lifts. FoSCL has grave concerns that the proposed structure would look totally out of place. Lifts failing in service at a remote unmanned location are also a worry. The hazardous foot crossing has to go, but there is an existing underpass, or space for a new one.

Ribble Valley Rail User Group

Ribble Valley Borough Council's bid endorsed by Nigel Evans MP is to receive a share of £500,000 to develop proposals to build or reopen/railway lines and stations. There are three main service options: extend the Rochdale - Blackburn service to Clitheroe or to Hellifield and beyond; add a new Preston - Clitheroe service, with some to Hellifield or beyond, or enhance the DalesRail service. If services terminated at Hellifield, the station would require new infrastructure to avoid the need to turn trains at Settle Junction. The business case for each option will probably rest on its wider benefits: does it support housing and/or develop the local economy, as well as providing new or enhanced connections?

Northern Weekly Salvo (Paul Salveson)

There's a lot of speculation about what is going to happen to travel patterns in the coming months and years. Some writers are already talking about 'another Beeching' being on the cards, which runs the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. But there are big problems ahead without a doubt. We've been told, relentlessly, these past three months not to use public transport. Even now, the messages are unclear. The winners at present are the car and bike. Yet if the roads become clogged once again (as they are doing) that will deter some of the recent converts to cycling, and we'll be back to square one – the 'old normal'.

The role of community rail partnerships in helping to promote rail travel, particularly on local, perhaps more rural, lines will be critical in the next year. While there's a need for strong community-based local promotions, there's also a need for national marketing initiatives urging people to 'use your local train'.

Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester lines

Owain Roberts, Northern's West Regional Stakeholder Manager, says that uplifting the Todmorden Curve service wouldn't work at the moment from a diagramming perspective. A Victoria – Blackburn circuit and back via Todmorden takes just under three hours, so a two hourly service would need two unit diagrams, with an hour of dead time in each round trip. So at the moment, Northern is leaving it as three hourly, but will reconsider when there is a further uplift.

SELRAP is being challenged on the amount of freight that might be expected. A study by MDS Intermodal for the DfT suggests more freight between Liverpool and Leeds could use Diggle or Calder Valley.

The problem with using Skipton - Colne for freight is the availability of paths between Skipton and Leeds, which already has five passenger trains per hour plus freight, mostly stone and gypsum traffic. Freight using the Calder Valley currently avoids Leeds; if rerouted via Skipton, it would have to use the Whitehall curve to access the Woodlesford and Castleford line, with more conflicting movements on the approaches to Leeds. However, TfGM, DfT, and NR suggest that, far from more freight through Manchester, there are very good reasons to want less, as current passenger trains in that area already have a congestion problem.

North Cheshire Rail Users Group

From December, Northern will switch its early morning and evening return services to and from Leeds from Ellesmere Port to Chester. TfW is withdrawing its 0712 departure from Chester and return from Piccadilly at 1719 to reduce congestion through the Castlefield corridor, so Northern will pick up the Manchester service, albeit to Victoria not Piccadilly. The upside is that Helsby, Frodsham and Runcorn East passengers will have an extra peak service to and from Leeds.

To compensate, Northern has requested a weekday peak Ellesmere Port to Liverpool Lime Street service via Runcorn and return, presumably 07xx out and 17xx back. It would provide a much quicker route to the employment areas of South Liverpool and the Airport than the half hourly Merseyrail service.

Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association

The [Mid Cheshire Rail Walks](#) leaflet has been updated, with a new one to the Salt Works Museum.

To allow greater social distancing, and due to delays in introducing the Class 769 bi-modes (Class 319 EMUs with a diesel engine), Northern is returning Class 142 and 144 Pacers to passenger service on the Southport to Stalybridge/Alderley Edge service, coupled to a DDA compliant unit. There is to be a feasibility study into reopening the line from Skelton Junction, Altrincham to Glazebrook. Altrincham won the TfGM award at the 2019 Cheshire Best Kept Stations awards.

Campaign to Re-open the Ivanhoe Line

The item last month commending the CRIL “fly-through” of the Ivanhoe line incorrectly stated it was between Leicester and Corby. It should of course have read “between Leicester and Burton-on-Trent”.

Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association

The level crossings at Lidlington, Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick have failed off and on since the Class 230s arrived; one incident involved a collision with a lorry. NR identified two problems: firstly, the amount of sand deposited by Vivarail trains was interfering with the track circuits. Secondly, the crossings have devices known as predictors. At Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick the barrier is not raised until the train has entered the station and cleared the crossing, but the longer Class 230 units cannot pull sufficiently clear to allow the predictors to function properly. It is likely that the Stewartby crossing will be manned until a new one can be installed. The solution at Kempston depends whether the predictors can be re-programmed, and how quickly; a platform extension could be built in the interim. In time, the line will form part of East West Rail (EWR) from Oxford to Bedford, and eventually Cambridge.

English Regional Transport Association

ERTA wants the trackbed around the old Bedford St Johns station protected, possibly for use as a 12-carriage washer plant. The junction where EWR will diverge from the Midland Main Line north of Bedford should have provision for reopening the line to Northampton, and thus the DIRFT freight depot.

Responding to ERTA's proposal to reinstate the Gloucester-Ross-on-Wye-Hereford rail link, a senior planner said: ‘[the Council] will only support the re-opening of railway lines where a robust business case can be provided by the scheme promoter.’ The business case for reopening March-Wisbech cost £1,445,376, so where are members of the public supposed to find such sums to get councils to show an interest?

Windsor Lines Passengers Association

The first of South Western Railway's fleet of 90 new suburban trains has arrived: 60x10-car units and 30x5-car units. The 10-car trains will replace those on the Reading and Windsor lines, and on the Hounslow and Kingston loops. This first train is based at Eastleigh, and will be commissioned as part of Bombardier's network testing regime to gain Office of Rail and Road (ORR) Certification for full passenger usage ahead of the fleet being introduced later this year.

Over 100 delegates joined the SWR Stakeholders Zoom conference in May opened by Chris Heaton-Harris, Minister of State for Transport. MD Mark Hopwood gave a business update listing the challenges ahead as Performance • COVID-19 • Industrial Relations • Long-term financial sustainability.

Cotswold Line Promotion Group

Extending the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway (GWSR) north of Broadway to a main line connection at Honeybourne would entail the total rebuild of five bridges, so would not be financially viable. Nor is a southern extension into Cheltenham along the old trackbed, which has numerous breaches. However, John Dyer, a former NR engineer, has proposed an alternative: expand Cheltenham Racecourse station as a P&R facility, then swing the line west for about a mile to join the Birmingham to Bristol line between Swindon Lane and Hyde Lane. The link would provide recent housing developments with a commuter service to and from Cheltenham Spa station, and enable through trains from London, Bristol and Cardiff, race-day specials, and excursions onto the GWSR, which would continue to operate independently.

Whilst NR reviews the [Strategic Outline Business Case](#) to expand Cotswold Line services, the CLPG Task Force continues to develop it with the volume of traffic that would transfer from road to rail, the impact of housing developments, and the effect of Covid-19 on the economy and people's travel choices. Meanwhile, a new Task Force sub-group has formed at Hanborough.

West Midlands Trains plans to bring its new Class 196 DMUs into service at the end of this year from Birmingham to Shrewsbury and to Hereford. The 14x4-car and 12x2-car units are based on the CAF Civity platform, and will replace the Class 170 and 153 fleets.

Tunbridge Wells Rail Travellers

The July South Eastern Railway Stakeholder Forum was conducted online. David Statham and his management team gave the presentations. NR was not represented, but many rail user groups were, including those from Sevenoaks, and also local authorities.

SE is making additional funds available for CRP activities across the region, and CRP's have submitted bids for various projects. Funding is to be provided for Kent – Medway Valley line and Swale. Sussex and Darenth Valley bids were also successful. New CRPs are being supported in Thanet and the Dover areas.

West Sussex Rail Users Association

Littlehampton and Eastbourne services to and from Victoria no longer split and join at Haywards Heath. Each is 8 cars throughout, thus providing more seats for those travelling to and from stations between Hove, Worthing and Littlehampton. The platforms at both Lancing and Goring have been extended accordingly to take the 8-car trains.

Tarka Rail Association

Incredibly in these straightened times, the Exeter - Barnstaple line is currently enjoying a more frequent service than ever before in its 165 year existence, with 17 trains on weekdays and 13 on Sundays.

TRA expects to hear the detail of Direct Award 3 for its area in early September. It is hoping for good news for the line and for Devon.

Avocet Line Rail Users Group

The May Monday - Friday timetable resolved problems with the GWR timetable: very long evening connections from Paddington, and the loss last December of the early morning connection to arrive in London around 0900. Evening trains after 1900 now run 25 minutes or so later to connect with arrivals from Paddington. There is also an earlier morning train leaving Exmouth at 0551 arriving at 0620 in good time for the fast train, although neither of these is running in the emergency timetable.

Devon County Council has adopted its Transport Infrastructure Plan. A completed scheme on the Avocet Line is Exmouth station and links to the town. ALRUG hopes that platform extensions will happen later this year. A bridge over the railway at Newcourt is expected 2025-29. Other railway schemes include the building of Marsh Barton station, expected over the next couple of years, and the creation of a transport hub at Pinhoe station. Two aspirations are a half hourly rail frequency to Crediton, and a daily rail service to Okehampton.

RAILFUTURE

Rf welcomes new members, both individual and groups: the more we are, the more effective our campaigns. Join [here](#): from the "Membership Types" menu top right, select either the appropriate category of individual or, to affiliate, select "RUG or similar". Read the latest from Rf and its Campaigns by clicking on [News and views](#), [Press releases](#), [Railfuture in the news](#), and [Railfuture consultation responses](#).

[Rf Chairman Chris Page](#) believes that there is an urgent need to get the rail system working effectively to support economic recovery: "There's a real risk of damage to the credibility of public transport, which has huge implications for the environment. The long-term effects of climate change have not gone away because of the present crisis. If rail use declines and use of private cars increases...the long-term consequences would be serious. There has to be a balanced approach to this, and getting the railway back to normal is a key component to economic and environmental health."

"Let the train take the strain," exhorted British Rail's famous slogan in the 1970s. Rf President [Christian Wolmar](#) is worried that we are now being urged to do exactly the opposite. Next year, the railway may have only 50% of its pre-Covid passenger numbers, as people are too scared to use it. Whilst there is a greater emphasis on cycling, walking and public transport, the March Budget earmarked £27bn for new roads. A year or two of empty trains will prompt suggestions that Beeching did not go far enough.

However, the second round of the Restoring Your Railway 'Ideas Fund' attracted no fewer than [fifty bids](#). An announcement regarding the successful schemes is expected by the end of the summer.

In the latest issue of [Rail Action](#), Rf vice-president Paul Abell reviews the progress being made in using hydrogen fuel cells for rail traction, whilst Graham Collett of Rf Yorkshire reports on Grand Central's plan for dual fuel operation, and its long-term preference for a trimode – an electric train with dual fuel plus battery for "last mile" operation.

RAILFUTURE NORTH EAST

Redcar & Cleveland Council is studying the feasibility of a passenger service on the eight-mile freight-only line from Redcar to the Boulby potash mine, which sends up to six trainloads a day to Teesport, near Middlesbrough. It proposes stations at Saltburn West, Skelton, Brotton, Loftus, Carlin How and Easington. Boulby is just over a mile from the coastal resort of Staithes, where there is a Captain Cook heritage centre.

RAILFUTURE YORKSHIRE

The [Upper Wensleydale Railway](#) has been set up to rebuild the six-miles of line from Hawes to the Settle-Carlisle line at Garsdale (formerly Hawes Junction), with the aim of extending Manchester, Blackburn and Clitheroe trains to Hawes. Its first newsletter, Hawes Return, was published in May.

RAILFUTURE LONDON AND THE SOUTH EAST

Eight of a further 12 stations in the CP6 Access for All programme are in the LSE region: Apsley, East Grinstead, Eridge, Flitwick, Ockendon, Motspur Park, South Croydon and Tooting.

Having adopted its Transport Strategy in mid-July, sub-national transport body Transport for the South East will move on to detailed Area Studies to inform its Strategic Investment Plan. A 'South Central Radial' Study will encompass the area between London and Brighton, and Eastbourne and Chichester. Rf's case for a Wealden - Brighton link will be based in part on its 2013 report: "[Access and Connections: East Sussex](#) – opportunities to align railway investment to the economic growth requirements of East Sussex".

RAILFUTURE SEVERNSIDE

Wiltshire Council, Swindon & Wiltshire LEP and the TransWilts Community Interest Co all recognise the importance of Westbury as a rail hub. Since one of the tracks was removed in 1985, the number of trains calling there has increased considerably, notably on the TransWilts line. Even more congestion is likely if MetroWest is extended to Westbury: the West of England Combined Authority agreed a change of scope to the project on 19 June. The 8.5 miles of single track from Thingley Junction to Bradford Junction between Chippenham and Trowbridge is often used for inter-city and freight diversions. A dynamic loop at Melksham would allow an hourly TransWilts service, with less chance of curtailment due to diversions.

COMMUNITY RAIL NETWORK

CRN sees [the role of community rail](#) in Covid-19 recovery and renewal as building:

- Local understanding, communications and dialogue
- Community resilience and wellbeing, and supporting vulnerable people
- Positivity and connections, and gearing up to promoting rail again.

CRN, Bus Users, the Campaign for Better Transport, Community Transport Association, Collaborative Mobility UK, Greener Journeys, Living Streets and Sustrans have issued a joint statement on the importance of public and shared transport, walking and cycling to Covid-19 recovery and renewal. They will continue to help the government, transport partners and local groups put the health, wellbeing and environment of communities at the forefront of transport thinking.

CRN's [report on engaging young people in rail](#), sponsored by the Rail Delivery Group, has insights into the benefits of getting young people involved, and how embedding youth engagement can be of most benefit to community rail, communities, railways, and of course the young people themselves.

Although the message now is to 'avoid public transport if you can', CRN expects this to become more positive. Extra train services are being run; people are starting to plan journeys, and the tourism sector is gearing up to welcome people back. At the same time, there is a need for local awareness and sensitivity, to help avoid locations or routes being flooded with visitors. For those involved in promoting leisure travel, CRN recommends keeping in contact with tourism partners, and making clear how to promote green, community-minded travel by rail whilst understanding local needs and opportunities.

DfT has accredited Community Rail Norfolk, parent organisation of the Bittern Line and Wherry Lines CRPs, which aims to promote rail travel and tourism, as well as improving infrastructure, and the appearance of stations from Norwich to Cromer, Sheringham, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

TRANSPORT FOCUS

TF's latest [Travel During Covid-19 survey](#) shows that travel patterns have changed and are unlikely to return to the typical Monday-Friday commute any time soon. Half the people in the survey expect to work from home more often in the future, and 36% think their job will be home-based with limited travel to their workplace. TF urges the Government to reform the fares and ticketing system to offer better value. This could include more flexible season tickets or 'carnets' (which offer a discount for multiple journeys when bought upfront) for people returning to work part-time in the office, and to suit the way people travel now.

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

Asked by the Transport Select Committee what will follow when the emergency agreements with the train operating companies expire on 20 September, Grant Shapps replied: "We are working hard what to do next – one of the big pieces of work is the Keith Williams' Review. Without revealing too much, we are already moving to a different type of railway and different types of contracts. With everything that is going on at the minute, there is an opportunity to move things along faster than might otherwise have been the case".

To reflect Select Committee changes to the hybrid Bill, the DfT has revised safeguarding directions for Phase 2a of HS2 to provide more clarity on the route, protect land where there may be a risk of conflicting development, and allow eligible property owners to access statutory blight compensation. Also linked to the impact of HS2, the ORR is advising the NIC on rail needs for the Midlands and the North.

Responding to the same NIC call for evidence, architects Weston Williamson and engineering consultants Expedition propose an alternative design for Manchester Piccadilly station. [High Speed Station Square](#) would see a sub-surface station on a new high-speed line from Runcorn through to Leeds via Manchester Airport and Bradford. Cancelling HS2 Phase 2b from Birmingham to Leeds via Toton in favour of upgrading existing lines would save billions of pounds. However, political leaders in the Midlands and the North are demanding an early start to HS2 Phase 2b, as they seek to revive their regional economies. Research shows the eastern leg of the line could create up to 150,000 jobs.

The ORR [Network Rail Assessment](#) found it saved more than £385m in 2019-20, and plans to deliver £3.5bn of efficiency savings over the next five years. However, passenger and freight performance varied by region, so it could learn from its better performing regions to improve performance nationwide.

South Yorkshire has been awarded new transport powers and an additional £30m/year over the next 30 years. The Mayor of Sheffield City Region, Dan Jarvis, said: "This is a landmark moment...We are seeing powers transferred from Westminster – it means more decisions about South Yorkshire will be made in South Yorkshire."

The DfT has made a Direct Award to LNER to continue to operate East Coast Main Line services. It will run for 3 years with a possible 2-year extension, and enable LNER to complete the roll out of Azuma trains, increase the number and range of services, and shorten journey times.

The ECML is set to benefit from £350 million of new investment to install digital signalling, initially between Moorgate and Finsbury Park (2021), then King's Cross – Peterborough (2023), the Hertford Loop (2024) and eventually across the entire rail network in Great Britain. Grant Shapps has accelerated the roll-out to speed up Britain's economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis: "Upgrading this country's conventional signalling system...will boost train performance, cut delays, improve safety and support the supply chain."

David Clarke, Technical Director of the Railway Industry Association, has called for investment in hydrogen and battery trains as a way for the Government to spearhead a green economic recovery: "Alongside a rolling programme of electrification for intensively used routes, hydrogen and battery technology can help decarbonise branch lines across the network. The technology already exists; what is now needed is a commitment to a fleet order."

On cue, the DfT has awarded the University of Birmingham a £400,000 grant to take Porterbrook's Class 399 HydroFLEX train to final production design and testing, and thus commercial operation. And Hyperdrive Innovation in Sunderland has signed an agreement with Hitachi Rail in Newton Aycliffe to develop battery packs to power zero-emission trains, and create a battery hub in the North East. Hitachi has identified its 275 strong fleet as potential early recipients of the batteries for use in the UK, as well as installing them on new metro and intercity trains that will replace ageing diesel fleets.

Riding Sunbeams aims to link renewable energy generators directly to electrified rail networks. It has successfully connected solar panels to DC third rail traction in Aldershot. Now, with £400,000 of funding from the DfT and InnovateUK's First Of A Kind 2020 programme, the challenge is to develop a direct connection to AC rail networks.

[FlightFree UK 2020](#) aims to get people to use trains rather planes, especially on short haul routes. Meanwhile, a [report for the DfT](#) claims that all of the benefit of electric cars will be negated by the carbon cost of the new roads to accommodate them. The £27m allocated for road building would be better spent on public transport, cycling and walking.

A Transport for New Homes [report](#) makes salutary reading. It contrasts the vision of new Garden Towns and Villages - self-contained development with public transport, cycling and walking to the fore - with the reality of green field sites in the middle of nowhere designed to mitigate the impact of increased car ownership. Current planning models give hardly any weight to the benefits of sustainable transport.

On 16 June, Barnsley Council's Planning Regulatory Board approved plans to replace 2km of overhead power line with underground cables along the Trans Pennine Trail and in the village of Dunford Bridge near the Woodhead tunnel. It follows Peak District National Park's approval of the proposals last month.

NR will ask ORR to ratify the closure of Newhaven Marine station. It would see the platform demolished, but the track remain both as a siding, and for access to Newhaven Port, where a new dock and freight handling facility are due to open. ORR has also been working with the DfT and NR on what inflates the cost of projects, particularly at the outset when excess costs can be baked in. Its review of the cost of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow will inform the Civil Aviation Authority's funding assessment.

Horden Station in Durham has opened to passengers, with one train per hour calling at all stations between Newcastle and Middlesbrough. It restores a vital link for up to 70,000 passengers in an area that hasn't had a station since 1964. Funding has also been agreed to expand Middlesbrough and Darlington stations.

The [Manchester Evening News](#) reports that MP James Grundy has launched a pair of bids to reopen Golborne and Kenyon Junction stations south of Wigan. The proposals could give residents direct access to the rail network for the first time in 50 years.

In its 170th year, planners have granted consent to open-up Grade I listed Newcastle Central Station to accommodate more passengers, improve traffic flows, and change taxi pick-up points and short stay parking. It will expose original features that have been hidden for years, and return the building to the way it looked in 1850.

North Lincolnshire Council has bid to restore regular passenger train services between Gainsborough Central and Barton-on-Humber via Kirton in Lindsey, Brigg and Barnetby. Trains between Gainsborough, Barnetby and Grimsby/Cleethorpes currently run only on Saturdays. Barton-on-Humber Trains operate only to and from Grimsby, as passenger trains have not run between Ulceby Station and Brocklesby since 1967.

When it reopens to passengers, the Wolverhampton - Walsall freight line will have an hourly service, with new stations at Willenhall and Darlaston due to open by the end of 2022. These will also have an hourly Wolverhampton - Birmingham New Street service created by diverting a Crewe service via Tame Bridge.

East Cambridgeshire District Council has approved a new station at Soham, between Newmarket and Ely. Funded by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, completion is planned for spring 2022. Greater Anglia services will then call at the new station.

Following a public consultation and a review of engineering and design data, NR has chosen the most northerly option as the site of the new Cambridge South station. Served by Greater Anglia, Thameslink, the guided busway and eventually EWR, it will give the biomedical campus a range of connections across the southern fringe of the city.

St Albans District Council has withdrawn its long-standing objection to a strategic rail freight interchange on the former Handley Page airfield at Radlett, Hertfordshire, between the old A5 and the Midland Main Line.

Two sub-national transport bodies currently have plans out for consultation (see below): Western Gateway from Gloucestershire and Bristol to Dorset, and England's Economic Heartland, the Oxford – Cambridge arc.

... and finally ...

[Tales from the Tracks](#) is an 8-part series of videos of a journey along sections of the West Coast Main Line from London Euston to Glasgow Central, shot from the cab of a Pendolino, with insightful commentary from Avanti West Coast drivers Dave Egerton and Darran Townsend. Enjoy!

The Grade II listed bridge over the River Ouse in Selby was kept open to rail traffic for two days in June because of soaring temperatures. If the rails expand in the heat after the bridge has been opened to waterway traffic, it cannot be closed again, cutting rail services between Leeds/York and Hull.

Trains at Pershore stopping at the new Worcestershire Parkway station are unfortunately announced as calling at WOP, its station code in booking systems. Let's hope that no Italians are listening!

A wag on the Internet designed a 'rail ticket' that reflects the instruction to stay at home. Whether or not there is trolley service to your seat will depend entirely on your domestic arrangements.



CONSULTATIONS

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority: [Cambridge Autonomous Metro Sub Strategy](#), closes 24 July.
- Western Gateway: [Draft Strategic Transport Plan 2020-2025](#), closes 31 July.
- NR: [Croydon Area Re-modelling Scheme](#), closes 20 September.
- England's Economic Heartland: [Draft Transport Strategy](#), closes 6 October.

Please advise [Roger Blake](#) of any other consultation, eg that of a local transport authority.

EVENTS

Do please keep your events coming, both to me and to [Roger Blake \(Railfuture\)](#), who maintains a [List of Events](#) and a [List of Key Dates](#) for consultations, franchise changes, CP6 planning, service alterations for major rail projects etc. As a Calendar of Events embedded in a document may be discarded, a stand-alone list would be very helpful.

Blob colour indicates the various types of event:

- Rf events (RUGs are cordially invited).
- National & regional rail events.
- Local Group events.

NB. Because of Covid-19, events are being cancelled, postponed or conducted online. Webmasters, please update your websites with any changes as soon as they are made.

July

- Thursday 23. Rf London & South East, Sussex and Coastway Division, **Online**, 1800 (also the first Thursday of each month (except August) at various venues).
- Saturday 25. Rf London & South East, Herts & Beds Division, **Online**, 1030 (Also 29 August).
- Tuesday 28. Levenmouth Rail Campaign, Fife Renewables Innovation Centre, Ajax Way, **Methil Docks**, KY8 3RS, 1830 (the last Tuesday of every month, but all meetings currently **cancelled**).

August

- Tuesday 4. Ribble Valley Rail, New Inn, 20 Parson Lane, **Clitheroe**, 1430 (Also first Tuesday of every month).
- Tuesday 4. Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passengers Association, Royal Oak Hotel, **Welshpool**, 1915 (Also 5 September, but **meetings cancelled until further notice**).
- Tuesday 4. Chesham & District Transport User Group, Town Hall, **Chesham**, 1930.
- Saturday 8. Cotswold Line Promotion Group AGM, **Online**, 1030.
- Monday 10. Bexhill Rail Action Group, **Online**. (Also 14 September).
- Tuesday 11. STORM, Blue Pits Inn, 842 Manchester Road, Castleton, **Rochdale**, OL11 2SP, 1400 (Also the second Tuesday of each month).
- Saturday 15. Rf London & South East, Kent Division **Online**, 1400.
- Tuesday 18. East Norfolk Transport Users' Association AGM, Christchurch, Deneside, **Gt Yarmouth**, 1345.

Further Ahead

- 3 September. Rf London & South East, Sussex & Coastway Division, **Online**, 1800 (Also 5 November).
- 9 September. Rf London & South East, Eastern Division, St. John's Church, Stratford Broadway, **London**, E15 1NG, 1830 (and second Wednesday of every alternate month.)
- 15 September. England's Economic Heartland Conference, Venue 360 - The Riverside, 20 Gipsy Lane, **Luton**, LU1 3JH.
- 16 September. Friends of the Barton Line, No. 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes**, 1900 (Also 18 November).
- 26 September. Rf East Midlands, Midland Hotel, **Derby**, AGM at 1230, open meeting at 1400.
- 26 September. Rf Yorkshire, **Sheffield**.
- 26 September. English Regional Transport Association Conference, The Court House, **Berkhamsted**, 1330
- 26 September. Rf East Anglia, Friends Meeting House, 5 Upper Goat Lane, **Norwich**, NR2 1EW (Also 5 December in Cambridge).
- 3 October. Rf Annual Conference. **Online event**.
- 3 October. East Suffolk Travel Association AGM, URC Church, Quay Street, **Halesworth**, 1400.
- 10 October. Cumbrian coast Rail Users' Group meeting, Methodist church hall, Gosforth Road, **Seascale**, Cumbria, CA20 1PU. 13.05.
- 31 October. Campaign for Borders Rail AGM, Tullie House, **Carlisle**.
- 4 November. Rail Action Group East of Scotland AGM, Village Hall, Ayton, 1900.
- 7 November. Rf North West.
- 9 December. Community Rail Awards, now **Online**.

Disclaimer: unless otherwise stated, views expressed are those of the contributing organization, and not necessarily shared by Rf.

Contact the editor by e-mail: ruglink@railfuture.org.uk, or phone: 01462 815992.

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Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP (NB. for legal correspondence only)

All other correspondence to: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingsstone, Suffolk, IP9 2ND