

Railfuture in London and the South East

quarterly branch newsletter

Campaigning by the Railway Development Society in London and the Home Counties - Kent, Surrey, Sussex, south Hertfordshire, south Essex, Bedfordshire, and Greater London

The *independent* campaign for a better passenger and freight rail network

Campaigns calendar

We begin as usual with a quarterly review of some of our key campaign activities, since March's newsletter. More details are always in the London and South East branch area of www.railfuture.org.uk/Local+action

Kent and Sussex & Coastway divisions held a joint February meeting in Rye with members of MLAG and THWART, ESRA, BRAG, and SHRIMP, ahead of:-



Presentation to MarshLink Action Group AGM 19/03/14

Hastings hosted the Secretary of State for Transport at a Rail Summit to announce his and Network Rail's commitment to upgrade MarshLink for the extension of direct HS1 services to Bexhill via Rye and Hastings in the early-2020s. See www.railfuture.org.uk/Marshlink

South East Local Enterprise Partnership's final Growth Deal and Strategic Economic Plan for 2015-21 includes rail developments we supported during consultation; it was one of many we responded to in our search for TOFI – The Opportunities For Influence.

Two line '150' anniversaries in early-June saw our campaigning taken to Bognor and Seaford, we had a much-visited stall at an Alexandra Palace rail event, and we presented to the East & South East Rail Group of the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers.

We continued to participate in **Stakeholder Forums** and **Passenger Groups** run by train operators such as First Capital Connect, London Overground and Abellio Greater Anglia, and in various CRP **line partnerships**.

See www.railfuture.org.uk/Welcome+to+Railfuture

Forthcoming dates for your calendars and diaries. Further details later or in www.railfuture.org.uk/events

Saturday 14 June Joint meeting with East Anglia branch: YMCA, 159 Magdalen St, Colchester CO1 2JX See www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia

Saturday 21 June National conference in Cambridge. See www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

Wednesday 25 June NRPS Spring '14 published.

Saturday 28 June 'All-day Sunday services' campaign event at MarshLink's Three Oaks station – come along!

Tuesday 1 July "Transport and the General Election" free CILT[UK] talk by Sir Peter Hendy, in Lewes.

Wednesday 9 July Eastern Division.

Saturday 12 July Railfuture stall at Uckfield Festival's 'Big Day' - see www.uckfieldfestival.co.uk All welcome!

Thursday 17 July Sussex & Coastway Division.

Saturday 26 July Herts & Beds Division, St. Albans.

Thursday 31 July Final copy date for *railse* 125, and London & SE branch Local Action in Railwatch 141. Send campaign news to rf-southeast@railfuture.org.uk

Saturday 16 August Kent Division, Tunbridge Wells.

Sunday 31 August Close of members' early-bird discount on bookings for our 1 November conference in London. Book at www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

Monday 1 September Final copy date for your letters and articles to appear in October's Railwatch 141. Send them to editor@railwatch.org.uk

Thursday 4 September Sussex & Coastway Division.

Wednesday 10 September Eastern Division.

Tuesday 30 September Closing date for entries for Railfuture's annual Rail User Group Awards 2014.

Thursday 2 October Sussex & Coastway Division.

Further details are available in our branch website at www.railfuture.org.uk/London+and+South+East

Rail infrastructure investment: Delivery Plan for CP5, 2019-24

Network Rail's new five-year infrastructure investment expenditure period, from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2019 aka Control Period 5, launched on the last day of CP4 with publication of the company's CP5 Delivery Plan. This came after almost three years of iterative planning through the Office of Rail Regulation's Periodic Review with, of especial note for us, opportunities for influence through consultation at every stage. Of no less note is that the CP5 Delivery Plan is the last fruits of the being-superseded Route Utilisation Strategies [more below].

Under '*Delivering a better railway for a better Britain*' at www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/better-railway/ the Delivery Plan's own website <http://betterrailway.co.uk/> titled 'Transforming Britain's railway' includes this for us <http://betterrailway.co.uk/regions/london-and-the-south-east/> which outlines plans for our region. The regional plan will be published 'in Spring 2014' – it's now June!

We have paid attention to the Enhancements Delivery Plan in www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/delivery-plans/control-period-5/cp5-delivery-plan/. Not an easy read at 163 pages but note these: p.9-10 Changes to the Plan [since the recent consultation on the draft, to which we responded], and p.11 Summary. There are nationwide ring-fenced funds eg Level crossings risk reduction fund [£96m], National Stations Improvement Programme [£110m], Access for All [£132m], CP6 Development [£57m], NR Discretionary Fund [£103m], Passenger Journey Improvement Fund [£206m], and New Stations Fund. Funding for 'Cross-Route' projects is provided: Crossrail, East-West Rail, and Thameslink.

Other England & Wales Projects are five in the Anglia Route area [p.55] including late-comer GOBLIN electrification, five in Kent [p.63], five in Sussex [p.70], eight in Wessex [p.76], 13 for Western [p.87], eight for London North East [p.107]. One of the five projects in Sussex is for Wealden line train lengthening [p.73] and a scope review will now follow the TSGN franchise award [adjacent column] and lead to a 'change control' in July to update the 'delivery milestone' [completion]; mention is made of "the optimal combination of station works and rolling stock choice." So watch this space!

Network Rail's LTPP – after the Market Studies, Route Studies

In just two years' time PR18 starts, leading to CP6 for 2019-24. Route Studies are the next stage in Network Rail's new, post-RUS, Long Term Planning Process – see www.networkrail.co.uk/improvements/planning-policies-and-plans/long-term-planning-process/route-studies for the programme. Network Rail is working on five of interest to us, with groupings of local authorities and LEPs – Western, Sussex, Wessex, East Midlands, and Anglia – ahead of consultations this autumn before final publication in spring 2015. In your own individual-personal-private constituent-citizen capacity, members - and RUGs - may wish to contact their Councils to establish what is their local authority's participation and input – and report back. You are our eyes and ears!

Refranchising – extensions, direct awards, concessions

The much-heralded '**Fresh start for franchising**' bore its first fruit on Friday 23 May. The day after the local and European elections, the DfT announced that Govia Thameslink Railway Limited had been awarded the contract for the new combined **Thameslink-Southern-Great Northern** seven-year franchise. An interactive map is at <http://maps.dft.gov.uk/tsgn/index.html> with links to the DfT press release. Govia www.govia.info/ is owned by Go-Ahead Group www.go-ahead.com/ 65% and Keolis [SNCF] 35%, and already operates the Southern, Southeastern and London Midland franchises. Explore the above links to learn more about what's promised from this 14 September. One eye-catching headline is not just one, not even two, but three new train fleets: one is for Thameslink [already being built] by end-2018, two is for Gatwick Express by end-2015, three is for Great Northern Metro from 2016.

Due next is **Essex Thameside**, another franchise immediately affected by the re-franchising 'pause'. In May 2013 DfT awarded its first 'Direct/Single Tender Award' contract to National Express operator c2c Rail Ltd to continue running services from then for at least 16 months [with an extension option of up to eight four-week periods] until the start of a new franchise. Then last September a revised Invitation To Tender [ITT] for a new 15-year Essex Thameside franchise was issued to the four existing short-listed bidders [Abellio, First Group, MTR, National Express]. Bid submissions were in by Christmas Eve and franchise contract award is expected anytime now, to start on 14 September 2014.

The full background, and details of other franchises undergoing renewal and other changes, can be seen at www.gov.uk/government/collections/rail-franchising. A DfT publication on 8 April is of particular note, changing some dates www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-franchise-schedule which are reflected below.

In October 2013 the **Great Western** franchise was extended with a Direct/Single Tender Award to First Group's operator First Greater Western Limited until September 2015. A further such Award was originally planned to run to the start of a new 'long-term' franchise in July 2016. The revised franchise schedule above opened the possibly of September 2020 instead, to follow introduction of the new train fleet and much of the route modernisation. In early-May DfT launched a seven-week public consultation on just that prospect at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/great-western-specification-for-the-future-franchise. Read Railfuture's response here: www.railfuture.org.uk/Submissions

Last October re-franchising of **InterCity East Coast** began; Expressions of Interest returned by December. Three short-listed bidders were announced in January: East Coast Trains Ltd [First Group], Keolis/Eurostar East Coast Ltd, and Inter City Railways Ltd [Virgin and Stagecoach]. The ITT was issued on 21 March, see www.gov.uk/government/news/east-coast-on-course-for-improved-rail-services with bids to be submitted by 19 June, contract award this November, and an eight-year franchise start due on 1 March 2015.

The picture for **other franchises** of direct interest to our London and South East region looks like this:

Abellio Greater Anglia's 'inner' West Anglia services will transfer to TfL's Rail for London on 31 May 2015. Services between Liverpool Street and Chingford and Enfield Town/Cheshunt will be London Overground [not the Lea Valley's Stratford services via Tottenham Hale and Lea Bridge station]. See April's confirmation of the date, and new trains order, at www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2014/april/tfl-begins-search-for-supplier-to-provide-new-trains-on-new-and-existing-london-overground-routes and May's confirmation of LOROL as the initial operator at <http://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2014/may/tfl-appoints-london-overground-operator-to-run-additional-services>

A year ago TfL announced the four short-listed bidders for **Crossrail** as Arriva Crossrail Ltd, Keolis/Go-Ahead, MTR Corporation (Crossrail) Ltd, and National Express Group PLC. Contract award is due by end-2014, and 31 May 2015 will then see start of the concession with the transfer of Abellio Greater Anglia's Metro services between London Liverpool Street and Shenfield.



Image of Bombardier's class 345: www.crossrail.co.uk

Abellio Greater Anglia – current franchise extended to July 2014, then Direct/Single Tender Award to Abellio, announced on 16 April, until start of new long franchise in October 2016. For full details see this from DfT www.gov.uk/government/news/better-services-for-passengers-on-the-greater-anglia-franchise and this from Abellio www.abelliogreateranglia.co.uk/about-us/news/2014/04/abellio-greater-anglia-to-deliver-significant-upgrades-for-customers-and-communities

London Overground – extended to November 2016.

London Midland – current franchise to be extended to April 2016, then Direct/Single Tender Award until start of new long franchise in October 2017.

South Eastern – current franchise extended until October 2014, then Direct/Single Tender Award, under negotiation, to start of new long franchise in June 2018.

South Western – current franchise to be extended from January 2015 with Direct/Single Tender Award until start of new long franchise in April 2019.

Chiltern – current franchise runs to December 2021.

Branch TOFI quest continues

It's all about campaigning, folks, but not necessarily as you might think of it. The **O**pportunities **F**or Influence [TOFI] come in all shapes and sizes, guises and disguises. Since the previous newsletter went to press we have 'had our say' on several consultations which have afforded the chance to make ourselves known as an organisation which has something worthwhile to contribute. Some examples: Southeastern's timetable for December 2014, West Sussex County Council's Strategic Transport Investment Programme, the South Downs National Park Authority's draft Local Plan, and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Growth Deal and Strategic Economic Plan.

The 39 LEPs across the country, brought together in the www.lepnetwork.net/leps include several in our area, of which South East www.southeastlep.com and Coast to Capital www.coast2capital.org.uk are the largest. After submitting their Strategic Economic Plans and Growth Fund bids on 31 March, in July central government will announce funding to become available from April 2015, much of which will be for investment in transport infrastructure. We need to build new relationships to support our LEPs' advocacy of rail as a means to their end of stimulating economic activity to advance and spread prosperity. Railfuture has a voice to influence the allocation of resources.

More RUGs under the spotlight

Since welcoming WSRUA www.wsrua.org.uk and ABFLY www.abfly.org.uk as affiliated RUGs in the previous newsletter, a SHRIMP has now joined us too! The St. Leonards and Hastings Rail Improvement Programme <http://1066shrimprail.org.uk> has taken a leading role in the locally-based campaigns to improve East Coastway services and that includes connections with Ashford International via MarshLink – more later.

Meanwhile reports are coming in of a potential new RUG possibly to be known as MOLLUSC, doubtless to reflect the snail's pace of progress with improvements to the Northern City Line – the Moorgate Line Users' Consortium. The advent of a new operator from this September, with the promise of a fleet of new trains and all-day/every-day services, should offer fresh hope for other improvements. Our aspiration for the next re-mapping of London's mainline operations is devolution to TfL of the inner Great Northern. Interested? Please contact gn-inners@railfuture.org.uk Flanders & Swan would of course prefer the name **Great Northern Users!**

Awards for RUGs will again feature at our national autumn conference, in London. Keep an eye on www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Express for details. Email ruglink@railfuture.org.uk to receive RUGEx direct.

A GB Rail Timetable lives on

With the demise of the all-line national timetable from The Stationery Office, the only known source is now Middleton Press: www.middletonpress.co.uk The summer 2014 edition has larger page and bigger print sizes than this publisher's previous 'Rail Times'.

Bridge the gap: connect the east of East Sussex

Unashamedly we extend our original 'Bridge the gap' theme eastwards, from Wealden and Lewes Districts to Rother District and Hastings Borough, and transfer its application to a rare gap in our electrification network south of the Thames, between East Sussex's Ore and Kent's Ashford International – the MarshLink.

Our website www.railfuture.org.uk/Marshlink details the recent and dramatic transformation of prospects for not just that rail route but through that transformation, the prospects for the economically-challenged coastal communities of both Bexhill and Hastings, each with three [but all slow] rail routes to London. This is a story about a **new Brede of total route modernisation**.

The 25-mile long MarshLink route between Ashford International and Ore could now be on the brink of shaking off its entrenched image as a remote, sleepy rural backwater and instead fulfilling its destiny as part of a strategic cross-county coastal connector.

Opened in 1851, the Ashford-Hastings link was proposed for closure by The Doctor in 1963 with that fate confirmed by Transport Minister Richard [hint of irony] Marsh in 1969. The inevitable campaign group then secured a two-year reprieve, which became permanent, but the penalties of economy measures included a maximum line-speed reduced from 85 to 60 mph [only 40mph Ore-Doleham] and two-thirds of the route singled. The 'Thumpers' introduced in 1962 were eventually replaced by the present Turbostars in 2003.

Realisation of the route's true potential came in 2005 with the inauguration of Southern's new hourly through service between Ashford International and Brighton. Yet that too had a penalty in the form of service reductions at MarshLink stations except Rye - its patronage has leapt 60% since the advent of the Turbostars. Part-restoration of those services at two of the four intermediate stations – Winchelsea and Three Oaks – came a year after Southeastern began their HS1 services through Ashford International in 2009.

County elections in 2013 brought a new, rail-minded administration to East Sussex, covering stations as far east as Rye, complementing that in Kent which had established its Rail Action Plan including aspirations for a better MarshLink service to support rural communities and link economic centres across the county boundary. Within just six months County Hall in Lewes had adopted its own Rail Strategy and Action Plan, following stakeholder engagement and public consultation - a highly creditable accomplishment demonstrating fresh commitment, and a vital building-block for the realisation of economic aspirations underpinned by a more successful county rail network.

The new Action Plan has just two priorities - upgrade the two diesel-operated routes, as initial stepping stones to more extensive ambitions. The core proposition is the same for each: improve the economic performance of the inland and coastal communities served through journey-time improvements and extra capacity from electrification

and restoration of double-track. The County Council clearly wishes this treatment to be applied first to MarshLink, taking in the bucolic Brede Valley, as one of three links with London for the Bexhill-Hastings conurbation but whose economy, like its train service, is in urgent need of acceleration; only the link to Ashford, and onto HS1, holds out the visionary prospect of a material change from the status quo.

East Sussex's number one priority aligns with analysis of the evidence which emerged, during their Rail Strategy formulation, from the Railfuture-commissioned report "*Access and Connections: East Sussex - Opportunities to align railway investment to the economic growth requirements of East Sussex*" from independent consultant Jonathan Roberts and published last July. Taking its cue from the language of Network Rail's then draft Passenger Market Study for London and the South East, highlighting the role of journey-time reductions in securing economic and environmental performance outcomes, the 'ACES' report demonstrated how a 10-minute Hastings-Ashford saving could knock up to 30 minutes off a direct Hastings-London service, if via HS1 instead.

If all that seems an implausible prospect, pause to reflect on the comparison with what has already been achieved in east Kent, with the progressive build-up of HS1 services for Deal and a post-Pfizer Sandwich, and a shared commitment to increase line-speeds between Ashford and Ramsgate via Canterbury West in CP5.



2020 Vision: High Speed Hastings
Railfuture painting by local member Mike Turner GRA

East Sussex, like Railfuture, believes in the virtues of an incremental approach to rail development. That simply reflects the wisdom of accumulated nation-wide experience of the way railways develop best - through evolution not revolution. County number one priority - the MarshLink upgrade - is the precursor to a bigger and better East Coastway rail corridor connecting communities, economies, and numerous colleges. East Sussex priority number two - upgrading the Uckfield branch - is the precursor to a bigger better Wealden route reopened through to Lewes for an additional link between coastal towns [Brighton, Newhaven, Eastbourne], their inland siblings such as Uckfield, Crowborough and also Tunbridge Wells, and the capital city. Each will enable more and quicker rail journeys to work, journeys to shop, journeys to learn, journeys to visit and see family and friends.

Within the MarshLink upgrade itself, incremental steps are also identifiable. Network Rail has confirmed that reducing the inequality in the lengths of the two single-track sections either side of the Rye station passing loop would with re-signalling enable service frequency to be at least doubled, to two trains per hour each way - in effect an all-day/every-day extension of the present peaks-only Rye shuttle - and that a short extension of that loop towards Winchelsea would secure that output. An hourly all-stations Hastings-Ashford would enable acceleration of the hourly limited-stop Brighton-Ashford service, in combination achieving both journey-time reductions for the inter-urban service, more opportunities to travel by rail, and adding capacity - market-growing developments all.

Restoring and improving on historic line-speeds is another step, as is electrification to take full advantage of higher line-speeds and the new Brede Loop between Rye and Winchelsea. Another surge of the magnetic 'sparks effect' can be expected to attract greater patronage, and enhance the image and self-esteem of Bexhill-Hastings businesses and communities alike.

The final day of CP4 saw a Rail Summit in Hastings convened by local MP Amber Rudd and honoured with the presence of Secretary of State Patrick McLoughlin. The previous time he officially visited East Sussex, in Lewes with local MP Norman Baker last May, he announced a review of prospects for what is now the second of the county's top two priorities, extending the Uckfield route through Lewes and beyond, a potential deliverable in CP6. His visit to Hastings played to the county's number one for CP5. Released Turbostars will be handy on other diesel routes around the country.

To mark the occasion, which coincided with the launch of Network Rail's CP5 Delivery Plan and the South East LEP's submission of its six-year Strategic Economic Plan Local Growth Fund bid to government, Railfuture had commissioned its own Turner painting - shown opposite. Our local member Mike Turner, also of the Guild of Railway Artists, illustrated a vision of the future in the shape of a Hastings Javelin as an aspirational target to inspire, motivate and energise those who believe that the Bexhill-Hastings area can reinvent itself as a quality destination of choice.



"Electrifying vision – presented to Amber Rudd MP by Railfuture and Hornby Hobbies to mark the visit to Hastings by Secretary of State for Transport the Rt. Hon. Patrick McLoughlin MP on 31st March 2014"
 Patrick McLoughlin with local MPs Amber Rudd [Hastings & Rye] and Greg Barker [Bexhill & Battle].

Bridge the gap: connect the west of East Sussex

Wealden District Council are about to consider granting planning permission to Network Rail for construction of the new station car park next to the original station site in Uckfield. This will be a vital next step in securing the first tangible result for the Uckfield Transport Hub Working Group, proposed by Railfuture. The Group co-ordinates town centre traffic improvements since proposals in the March-April 2012 public consultation, and follow-up a year later which deferred consideration of an inner relief road across the track-bed following vigorous representations from Railfuture and many others. The new station car park is due to open in the autumn, and will be followed by improvements to the bus station and High Street public realm. Both the car park site and an equivalent length of track-bed beyond it are owned by Network Rail following acquisition from the former British Railways Board [Residuary] last year.

Another affirmation of Network Rail's commitment to the Wealden Line's extension southwards was seen on 1 May when the DfT published a report by Network Rail *"Brighton Main Line: Emerging Capacity Strategy for CP6, Pre-Route Study report for DfT"* The DfT says it "agrees with [Network Rail's] recommendation that Lewes-Uckfield reinstatement could make a longer-term contribution to capacity on the Sussex Route and that as such the alignment should continue to be safeguarded." One of the report's conclusions is that "there remains a long-term case for protecting Lewes-Uckfield but this may rely on a longer-term new lines solution for the inner area of the BML"; another is "Network Rail remains of the view that protection of that alignment is still the correct policy for the long term." The report, and DfT's response, are here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/brighton-main-line-emerging-capacity-strategy-for-control-period-6

The genesis of this report is the Transport Secretary's visit to Lewes on 9 May last year, when reopening was cast in the context of "meeting the demand for the future growth in rail travel" and, significantly, Network Rail's then Director of Network Strategy and Planning spoke of "ensuring that the rail network can continue to support and drive economic growth in the region." See www.gov.uk/government/news/lewes-uckfield-rail-route-to-be-re-examined We know, as it was referred to in the Commons at the time, that the draft report was with the DfT late last year, about the time that Network Rail had published their Passenger Market Study for London and the South East. A missed opportunity, that in the six months since, the old RUS-style language of the draft BML Study was not brought into alignment that of the PMS which identifies economic and environmental benefits as drivers of rail investment. In this autumn's consultation on the draft Sussex Route Study we shall seek to influence, and realign language!

We await news on train lengthening, thus far presumed to involve platform lengthening, for December 2016. Network Rail's CP5 Enhancements Delivery Plan says "Confirm scope and delivery programme following TSGN franchise award" in June. "A change control to update the GRIP 6 delivery milestone will be submitted in July." Longer diesel trains, but from where, we ask?

AGM 2014 – reports on 2013

The scale of our many and varied activities could now take up a whole newsletter to report, so what follows are of necessity edited highlights. Members on email received the full version, paper copies of which can be requested from Chairman Keith Dyall [see back page].

Chairman: 2013 was a good year. Highlight was the campaign to reinstate the Uckfield-Lewes railway. A team led by branch and national Vice Chairs, working with Sussex & Coastway division, has encouraged the formation of a group of stakeholders including local authorities such as East Sussex CC. This group, working collaboratively with our adviser, has identified benefits across the whole county which has enabled a wider spread of support for the scheme. The Society has obtained a wide amount of publicity for this activity.

The branch committee with Eastern division has met East Anglia branch to produce a coordinated campaign plan. Our campaign for Lea Bridge station would see it reopened for the December 2014 timetable, and the long campaign by us and others for Gospel Oak-Barking line electrification has succeeded at last.

Members have met all bidders for the new Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise. Work has started on the modernisation of London Bridge during 2013 and members and affiliates have been querying the interim reductions in service that will be required.

Reopening, and electrification, of East-West Rail Link between Oxford and Bedford, campaigned for by three Railfuture branches, has been confirmed. Concerns on London Midland were offset by good news of go-ahead for the Croxley Link. Welcoming prospects for Heathrow western access, we have been looking at ideas for access from the south including Airtrack-Lite.

Members met FCC, Southern, SWT, Greater Anglia, Southeastern, C2C, London Midland, LOROL, & TfL. We met East Sussex, Herts, and Kent County Councils, and Network Rail. We made advances in improving contacts and working with Rail User Groups; an increasing number attended our divisions. We are trying to work with the heritage rail sector; they have an important place to bring prosperity to their areas and could have an increasing role in the transport scene.

The branch kept contact with neighbouring branches and had joint meetings with one. We held members' meetings around the branch, and kept in contact with rail user groups. Our members served across Railfuture from Board to CRP line and RUG.

Thanks to the committee and members who have put in the work to make such a good year for the branch.

Treasurer: An end-of-2012 deficit of £912.19 was turned round to an end-of-2013 surplus of £514.46, thanks to lower running costs despite spend on our Divisions' meetings more than trebling. We invested in a new gazebo, replacing the old market stall, and a projector. Most of the costs of our '*Bridge the gap: connect East Sussex*' campaign were met from national Railfuture sources, such as the Fighting Fund.

Membership: By year-end we had 488 members and supporters after gaining 24 and losing 16. Nearly all our new members join online, drawn by our campaigns and news coverage that Railfuture gained. We need to continue to raise our profile, being seen to be active and campaigning, and maximising opportunities for publicity, so we can recruit more members than we lose. We must make use of electronic and social media. In particular we need email addresses for all our members so we can communicate by email - post is too expensive to notify details of meetings or events, or request support for campaigns. If not already done, please let branch membership secretary Chris Page [see back page] or loyd.butler@raifuture.org.uk our Company Secretary have your email address - it will not be passed outside Railfuture.

Divisions: Two active new and one still-nascent join our three longer-established county-based Divisions.

Eastern: kept watch on campaign developments involving the Lea Valley Line such as possible reinstatements of Lea Bridge station and the Hall Farm Curve [Stratford-Chingford-Link].

Meetings between L&SE and East Anglia Branches discussed matters of common interest: Greater Anglia timetables, railway devolution proposals, and a review of Greater Anglia franchise commitments. The East Anglia Rail Users' Federation (ERUF) had developed five investment priorities for the extended GA franchise covering: rolling stock; stations; train service frequency and pattern; ticketing; and integration and connectivity.

HM Treasury approved £m115 for electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking line in mid-CP5. Plans for increasing capacity on the Lea Valley Line [the STAR project – **ST**ratford-**T**ottenham-**A**ngel **R**oad], plus refurbishing Angel Road station, is also for CP5. Project development later in the year for reopening Lea Bridge station foresaw work on site starting in April 2014. The Division learned of firm proposals, supported by Railfuture, for Transport for London (TfL) to take over West Anglia inner suburban services and incorporate them into the London Overground network.

There has been greater involvement of members in the work of the Eastern Division in 2013, and this will help with more effective campaigning in the future.

Herts & Beds: Lack of a formal meeting, due to the 'pause' in the re-franchising process, has not broken contacts especially with affiliated Rail User Groups. We have met at franchisee Stakeholder meetings and at Bedfordshire Rural Transport Consultative Committee. We have met all bidders for the combined Thameslink franchise, agreeing to put forward a common agenda. RUGs took up concerns - that works at London Bridge might halve the number of trains going south to East Croydon, Gatwick and Brighton - with decision-makers.

Withdrawal of services on the Abbey and Marston Vale lines was of concern. A franchise commitment for extension of Marston Vale trains to Milton Keynes after infrastructure alterations at Bletchley has yet to be honoured. On the Abbey line disappointment that the light rail proposal did not go ahead is coupled with the possibility of a better service being damaged.

Kent: Joint conveners Chris Fribbins and Ian Killberg looked for topics to encourage attendees, investigation and campaigning. We met in Faversham, Sevenoaks, Maidstone, and Canterbury. Meetings have looked at activities that we could campaign on such as issues with poor connectivity. We replied to Southeastern's consultation ahead of their franchise end, and on the priority stations for DfT's 'Access for All' fund. We supported Trains4Deal to find a solution to the 6-month funding gap for HS1 services to Deal and Sandwich.

We were represented at Southeastern Stakeholder Forums and on Kent CRP and Medway Valley Line CRP. We invited community representatives along the Faversham/Dover line and other stations in East Kent to Canterbury to discuss issues with falling passenger numbers and the role the CRP could play.

Metro: the still-nascent one! For all things TfL.

Surrey: Held two open meetings, with a popular Saturday morning round-table format. At Staines in June, 14 people included reps from rail user groups and local community organisations had a presentation by consultants for LB Wandsworth on a proposal for Southern Access to Heathrow. Guildford in December, with 22 present, had presentations by Vic Mitchell on Cranleigh light rail and Crossrail South concepts, and by George Bathurst on Windsor Link Railway proposal to combine western and southern access to Heathrow. Next meeting in Redhill, continuing our venue-rotation.

We fed into the consultation on Surrey CC's draft rail strategy. The final strategy published and adopted by the Council prioritises electrifying the North Downs line and building the regional option of Crossrail 2.

Sussex & Coastway: Monthly meetings were held at Edenbridge, Uckfield, Lewes, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Newhaven, and Worthing - locations to encompass the many RUGs invited. With them we fed into Network Rail's new Long Term Planning Process: London and South East Passenger Market Study consultation draft, also with Sussex CRP and Newhaven Town Council.

We continued efforts on reinstatement of the Lewes-Uckfield line, with East Sussex County Council and interaction in a wider arena. We commissioned JRC Ltd to report on 'Access and Connections: East Sussex'. ESCC opened formulation of a Rail Strategy which after consultation with local RUGs and stakeholders they have adopted. We attended four Southern Stakeholder Forums. Options were in the TSGN ITT which we and others included in our responses to the DfT consultation. This prompted contact from all five bidders, whom we met.

railse: The branch Vice-Chairman has since mid-2010 taken lead responsibility for producing quarterly issues of the branch newsletter. After early experiments it has settled into a broadly consistent and familiar format, since mid-2012 being a regular eight pages with colour. Together with two other members of the branch committee, the publication has an editorial group. Each issue notifies the means and copy dates by which items for consideration for possible publication can be submitted, both for the branch magazine and for the branch's Local Action column in Railwatch.

Distributed with Railwatch to the near-25% of the national membership in our regional branch area, the content seeks to engage the membership with dates of notable events as opportunities for participation/contribution, news of decision-making processes affecting the future of our railways and opportunities for us to exert influence, some background information customised for our region to assist with campaigning, news about heritage and community rail especially in or near our region, and last but not least updates on our key campaigns which are making real progress.

Campaigns: As campaigners rather than commentators, with a primary interest in making things happen rather than merely watching them, we look for openings for our distinctive contribution to make a difference to the course of events. While our '*Bridge the gap: connect East Sussex*' campaign has continued to be the principal focus of the branch's efforts across the year, it quickly became more than a uni-dimensional focus on a few missing miles of a former railway in rural East Sussex, and was one among a number of other campaign topics.

Addressing some of those first, we maintained our interest in supporting the three-pronged campaign led by the Railfuture-affiliated Chingford Line Users Association for Lea Valley line improvements, backed by the JRC report '*Lea Valley Rail - better access to jobs and homes*', which had been enabled by a Fighting Fund grant and provided the evidence base to underpin the argument. We saw the fruits of labours with the mid-year commitment to electrify London Overground's only diesel operation, the 'GOBLIN' radial route across north London, acknowledged by our judging panel of Vice-Presidents giving the annual Rail User Group award for Best Campaign to the line's group. We responded to TfL's consultation on revised proposals for Crossrail 2 [aka Chelsea-Hackney line] by responding in favour of the 'regional' option which proposed connecting Greater Anglia mainline routes in the north-east across central London with South Western mainline routes.

'Bridge the gap' has come to apply to more than just that between Uckfield and Lewes. The beginning of 2013 saw us selecting JRC, after competitive tender, for a report on how best to advocate that re-opening. The middle of the year saw us presenting it to the new County Council's Cabinet Member and his Director and staff, set in the context of analysis of evidence of needs and opportunities across the whole county and its neighbouring areas. The end of the year saw the County Council adopt a Rail Strategy and Action Plan which bore marks of that report's influence. It also saw the spread of our interest to MarshLink, that Action Plan's number one priority to which we responded.

Throughout the year the common thread was one of engagement and partnership-building, hearing others' messages as well as conveying our own, and in particular developing models of collaboration with existing local rail groups. Our advocated projects may differ little from those espoused by others; the difference may be in how we advocate them and project ourselves, as led by evidence not driven by assertion, inspired through collaboration with others not fired-up by confrontation with them.

Branch divisions' meetings – open to all branch members, and visitors

Eastern [s. Essex and n. & e. London] –

meets on the second Wednesday of the odd-numbered months, at 18.30 in **Stratford** – next meeting on **9 July** then **10 September**. Contact Division Convener Howard Thomas at howard.thomas@railfuture.org.uk or at 24 South Primrose Hill, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2RG, or phone 01245 280503 before 21.00 hrs. See www.railfuture.org.uk/Eastern

Herts & Beds – next meeting at 10.30 on Saturday **26 July** at St. Paul's Church, corner of Hatfield Road/Blandford Road, **St. Albans**, AL1 4JP. Contact Division Convener Keith Dyall [opposite] for details. See www.railfuture.org.uk/Herts+and+Beds

Kent – meets quarterly on the third Saturday, each in a different venue – next at 14.00 on **16 August** in **Tunbridge Wells**. Contact joint Division Conveners Chris Fribbins at chris.fribbins@railfuture.org.uk or at 42 Quickrells Avenue, Cliffe, Rochester, Kent, ME3 7RB, or tel: 01634 566256; and Ian Killbery at ian.killbery@railfuture.org.uk or at 11 Western Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6RX, or tel: 01304 362569. See www.railfuture.org.uk/Kent

Surrey – meets twice-yearly, next with new TSGN franchise operator Govia on a weekday evening in **July**, then probably in **December**. Contact Division Convener Chris Page at chris.page@railfuture.org.uk or at 'Clara Vale', Thibet Road, Sandhurst, Berkshire, GU47 9AR, or phone 01344 778643. See www.railfuture.org.uk/Surrey

Sussex & Coastway – meet monthly [except mid-summer] on the first Thursday at 18.00, in varying venues around Sussex. Next on **17 July** in Brighton, then on **4 September** and **2 October**. Contact Division Convener Dick Tyler at richard.tyler@railfuture.org.uk or at 27 Windsor Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN39 3PB, or phone 01424 211500. See www.railfuture.org.uk/Sussex+and+Coastway

This branch newsletter is free, published quarterly and usually distributed with each edition of the national **railwatch**. The copy deadline for **railse** issue 125, due to be published in September 2014, will be Thursday 31 July 2014. Items for this newsletter and the branch Local Action column in **railwatch** to be sent to rf-southeast@railfuture.org.uk



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Our neighbouring branches

These, and all our other branches' websites, can be seen in www.railfuture.org.uk/branches

East Anglia – contact Secretary Paul Hollinghurst – eastanglia@railfuture.org.uk

Board liaison is via Director Jerry Alderson.

East Midlands – contact is Secretary Roger Bacon – eastmidlands@railfuture.org.uk

Board liaison via national Finance Officer David Harby.

Thames Valley – contact is Branch Secretary Andrew McCallum – thamesvalley@railfuture.org.uk

Board liaison is via Director Roger Blake [below].

Wessex – contact is Branch Secretary Charles Burns – wessex@railfuture.org.uk

Board liaison is via Director Chris Fribbins [opposite].

Branch committee meetings

Open for members as observers, held on the fourth Tuesday of odd-numbered months, next on **22 July** then **23 September**. Contact our Secretary, below.

London and SE Branch officers

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