

BRANCH AGM – SATURDAY, 25 MARCH
Central Methodist Church, High Street Lincoln LN5 7PR
Details and Reports – page 5

A Personal View of 2023 from your Branch Chairman

If there is one word that is going to dominate our rail industry during 2023 that word is *money*.

At the time I am writing this, all the industrial disputes in the rail industry are still ongoing. These are all essentially concerning money with the unions looking for pay increases and the government looking to save money through changes to working practices.

There does seem to be a glimmer of hope that the negotiations in the dispute with RMT could be working towards a settlement. However, even if all the current disputes are settled, I doubt if we will have a year clear of industrial disputes of some kind. Without naming specific TOCs, relations between management and workers have deteriorated to such an extent that it would not take much for a localised dispute to flare up.

The next most pressing issue locally is the question of whether DfT will allow East Midlands Railway (EMR) to reinstate, from May 2023, all the remaining services that were withdrawn when the May 2021 timetable collapsed within weeks of introduction. By the time of the branch AGM we will, hopefully, have

an answer.

For those of you who have not kept up to date with the intricacies of rail finance a short explanation is needed here. Under the National Rail Contracts all TOC expenditure is controlled by DfT who themselves have to work within cost limits set by HM Treasury. You could be forgiven for thinking that the total cost to DfT would be TOC expenditure minus revenue from fares etc. In any rational world that would be the case, but in the bizarre world of railway finance nothing is rational.

All fare revenue is going directly to HM Treasury. This results in the situation where TOCs (and DfT) have no incentive to grow revenue by any extra services. If extra services are introduced it is a cost to DfT but even if all extra costs are covered by increased fare revenue, neither TOC nor DfT get any benefit from this. Only someone in an ivory tower who is divorced from reality could dream up such a system.

Whilst on the subject of fares, Railfuture nationally, with input from branch officers, spent quite some time last year looking at suggestions for fares reform and formulating a Railfuture view ►

◀ which can be found in detail on our website. This is essentially that to attract more passengers fares must be reset to deliver clarity and encourage more travel by offering better value for money fares, removing the anomalies which lead to split-ticketing (or offering them seamlessly by default) and tackling the myriad and complex range of fares. This is something we will continue to campaign for in 2023.

Along with fares reform, the suggestions that to save money ticket offices will close is another subject that Railfuture has spent time in 2022 formulating a policy. For a rural branch Lincolnshire branch, with 11, have a surprisingly large number of station ticket offices in our area.

Whilst not wishing to see the wholesale destaffing of these stations, I must admit that there is scope for redeployment of staff. For example I spent nearly 15 minutes near a ticket office this morning and during all that time not one person purchased a ticket from, or even went in to, the ticket office. All tickets were purchased from the Ticket Vending Machines. We are campaigning for it to continue to be very widely possible to buy a ticket from a member of staff, but saying that it that does not have to be (indeed often should not be) with the glass of a ticket office window between passenger and member of staff.

Those organisations that are obsessed with doing everything on a computer or smartphone need regularly reminding that 42% of the over 75s do not use the internet and not everyone who does has a smartphone and is capable of using it for anything other than making and receiving phone calls and text messages. Members who know me well will be aware that I have arthritis in my hands and it is not wise for me to use my smartphone for anything remotely financial such as phone banking and buying rail tickets. If

for example, a car park has no alternative to paying by phone I just go elsewhere.

Infrastructure improvements are something else that are frequently 'deferred' (which often means kicked into the long grass and forgotten about) because there is supposedly no money to pay for them. In reality this often means that a decision has been made to spend the money elsewhere on a scheme that has a 'higher priority' or some would say because politicians in that area have made a lot more noise than our local politicians.

With that in mind, myself and Chris Brown are both members of the Nottingham to Lincoln Stakeholder Board where proposals for resignalling and line speed increases are currently being developed. These have the strong support of Midlands Connect, so we have high hopes that a decision will be made to fund them in the next Network Rail Control Period starting on 1 April 2024. Another branch priority which we want to see in the funding list is the delayed replacement of platform one at Gainsborough Lea Road.

In the first sentence of this article I say that money is going to dominate the rail industry, but having just read again my 2022 report and this article, I can see that there is another key factor involved and that is that the railways are in limbo with nobody in authority prepared to make any decision. The 'guiding mind' promised at the launch of the Williams-Shapps Plan published nearly 2 years ago has yet to be appointed and when he was speaking to the Commons, Transport Committee on 7 December the Transport Secretary, Mark Harper, said he wanted to take some time to listen to alternative views about the Plan. We can but hope he does not spend too long listening and finally gets on with making decisions. A ship without a captain is soon going to end up on the rocks. ▶

◀ I think that is enough of my rantings, so now on to looking forward to our branch AGM. Our speaker, Pete Myers, will be well known to many of you from his numerous visits to branch AGMs from as long ago as when Brian Hastings was our branch chair. Pete has recently retired from his position as Stakeholder Manager East at Northern Railway and is going to talk about his long career on the railway. Now he has retired he no longer has to tell us what his employer wants us to hear, so we could be in for an interesting afternoon. I hope as many of you as possible will be there to hear him.

David Harby (Branch Chairman)

Editor's Mail



Historic Day – No advance notice

Having travelled with dad on the Barton line several times this year, I was pleased to read (*Rail Lincs 94*) that Barrow Haven station was officially re-opened on October 14. But why hadn't I seen anything about this in advance? For though I plan a visit to the station, I would love to have been there on that historic day.

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby

Improvement Plans for Barton Station

It's great to be able to report a good news story especially in light to Tim Mickleburgh's accurate letter about the state of Barton station, in the October edition. Barton Civic Society has been campaigning for improvements here and in 2018 we employed Landscape Architects to draw up a scheme for improvement, which received wide support from North Lincolnshire Council, who lease the land from Network Rail, the

Community Rail Partnership, Friends of the Barton Line and Barton Town Council. As always it's a question of funding, but the recent announcement of £19.7m levelling up money for Barton includes the upgrade of the station. At the time of writing, it is not clear how much of the Civic Society's ambitious plans will be implemented, so watch this space. The concept all parties agreed on is below.

Neil Jacques, Chair Barton Civic Society.



Railfuture National Conference

At a time when the railway needs to understand (and influence) what politicians want from the railway, but money is tight, where should the focus of campaigners for a bigger, better, railway be? What can justify money being spent? – either on day to day support or on investment – and how can best use be made of the money already being spent? The railway can be a highly effective contributor to decarbonisation, to levelling up and as part of many wider initiatives – but only if it is successful in attracting passengers and freight to use the railway. The post Covid railway can no longer rely on commuters who “have” to travel to work each day – who can replace them?

Sessions include:
the value of new railway lines and stations,
making trains more family friendly,
Railfuture on “Is the Railway working for Passengers?”,
engaging young people in the railway,
the Rail Freight Group on making better use of the railway for freight,
Encouraging more women to work in rail and making the railway more accessible and inclusive for all.

Our conference is priced to appeal to all -- no more than £50, sometimes less (and including lunch and refreshments). To learn more and to book, please visit www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/



Turning Point for the Railway:

Our Conference in Leeds

Thursday 30 March 2023

What is a railway for? And how can the railway meet the needs of its customers – and get more of them?





www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/

For members, the rail industry and anyone interested in the railway

railfuture Lincolnshire Branch ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Saturday, 25 March 2023 at The Central Methodist Church Lincoln commencing at 12:30

Timetable:

- 12:30 Assemble – Complimentary coffee or tea available
13:00 AGM (Agenda below)
14:15 Break – Complimentary coffee or tea available
14:30 **Speaker:**
Pete Myers, Retired Stakeholder Manager, Northern Rail
16:00 Meeting Closes

BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dear Member,

The Annual General Meeting of the branch will take place on Saturday, 25 March 2023 at The Central Methodist Church, High Street Lincoln LN5 7PR.

AGM AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2022 meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report by David Harby
5. Hon. Secretary's Report by Dr Don Peacock
6. Financial Report – Branch Income & Expenditure Account (see page 8)
7. Election of Officers:
 - a) Chairman
 - b) Vice Chairman
 - c) Hon Secretary
 - d) Hon Treasurer
 - e) other committee members
8. Any other urgent business (notice of items appreciated by Hon Secretary before meeting commences or telephone 01652 688549)

Yours sincerely, Don Peacock, Hon Secretary

1 Queens Road, Barnetby le Wold DN38 6JH. Tel: 01652 688549

No members contacted the Hon Secretary to stand for the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary and therefore there will be no candidates' statements published and no voting carried out at the AGM. Branch full members can volunteer to join the committee at the AGM.

Dr Don Peacock, Hon Secretary

Getting to the AGM.....

Walking instructions from Lincoln Station: Turn left as you leave the station and walk to the junction with High Street. Turn left into High Street and cross over the railway, keep walking and cross over Tentercroft Street keeping to the right hand pavement. Central Methodist Church is about 150 yards on the right. Total walking time 8 minutes. Entrance to our meeting room is from the right hand side of the church.

Recommended car park is on Tentercroft Street.



Chairman's Report to be presented at the 2023 AGM

Well what can I say about 2022? Better than 2021? Certainly, but nowhere near the service level we could have expected by now if Covid had not intervened. As far as service levels are concerned East Midlands Railway (EMR) did manage, in December, to extend 6 Matlock branch services on to Nottingham and reinstate a handful of afternoon/evening calls at Hykeham and Collingham. These are welcome but that means the full May 2021 timetable has yet to be reinstated, let alone the hourly trains to Doncaster and Grimsby that were promised when the EMR franchise was awarded. On a positive note punctuality has been generally good and, with the transfer to EMR of class 170 units now progressing well, we are seeing 3 carriage units on the busy Leicester to Grimsby services. On Northern the peak hour Gainsborough Central services have returned as has a Doncaster to Scunthorpe service every two hours. Whilst these are welcome they are not the hourly all day services we had before Covid. Northern punctuality is generally good.

I have left until last TPE because it is difficult to think of anything positive to say about them. During the year the Cleethorpes to Manchester service has varied between poor and atrocious with matters coming to a head in autumn when as many as 17 or 18 services were cancelled in full or part on some days. If one looked at the official statistics then the service would appear to be much better than this, but this is only because if a train operator cancels service before 22.00 on the day before, it is not counted as a cancellation in the official statistics. A "cheats charter" was how this was described by one of our committee members – I'm sure passengers who were faced with a service which sometimes had 3 hour gaps between trains would agree with that description! In January 2023 this manipulation of statistics was after some criticism in the media outlawed by the Office for Rail & Road (ORR).

With their record of cancellations, it is not surprising that TPE passenger numbers have struggled to recover from Covid. Comparing quarter 2 of 2022 (July – September) with quarter 2 of 2019, TPE passenger numbers are still only at 63.8%. Northern have done better at 73.1% with a poor recovery of their commuter market being partly countered by some very strong leisure figures at weekends and during the summer. In contrast to both the northern operators, EMR at 99.9% is close to pre Covid. These figures are not quite a direct comparison, in that, with their extra hourly Corby to St Pancras service EMR are operating 99.8% of pre Covid passenger vehicle Km, despite the missing regional trains. All of these figures are however eclipsed by our other local operators LNER and Hull Trains, whose passenger numbers have recovered to 105.7% and 102% respectively.

Looking back at my report from last year, I was complaining about the lack of detail in the Great British Railway (GBR) proposals. One year on, despite considerable sums of money having been spent on the GBR Transition Team, we have hardly any more detail than we did 12 months ago and the parliamentary process setting up GBR is proceeding at such a snails pace it is debatable if much will now happen before the next election. Another long awaited reform on which the government has been silent during the last 12 months is fares reform.

On a positive note the painting and other work at Sleaford station has been excellent, especially the restoration of the 'Old Waiting Room' and conversion into a community meeting room, and kitchen, which was used by your branch committee for a meeting in September.

We were sorry to see the closure of the excellent cafe 'Carriages' at Newark Castle ►

◀ where customer numbers never really recovered after the Covid closure. Being midway between Lincoln and Nottingham this was a favourite place to hold meetings with good food and coffee.

In the background for most of the year and bursting into life particularly in the autumn were the industrial relations difficulties. Railfuture is non political so whatever our personal views we have refrained from saying much in public except to express sadness for the disruption passengers have suffered and urging all parties to seek a solution.

At branch level we have had opportunities to regularly meet with staff from EMR and Northern both in person and online to the extent that opportunities to put forward the Railfuture view have arguably been more frequent than before Covid.

There have also been frequent contacts with East Midlands and Yorkshire branches to discuss issues of mutual concern and opportunities to provide a local view into national Railfuture discussions. Often in this post Covid climate, our experiences in Lincolnshire with our commuter flows consisting in large part of school, college and university students have been very different to those experienced by branches with large commuter flows of office workers and I have pointed that out on numerous occasions.

As we have done for a few years now the branch had a stall at the Caistor Rail Show. During both days we had a steady stream of visitors asking about Railfuture and wishing to discuss the current rail scene.

Finally a few words about your branch committee. All of us have other commitments as well as Railfuture so our successes, when we do have any, are due to the efforts of the committee as a whole who between them take on specific tasks which reduce the workload of the chairman and secretary. I would like to give special mention to Phil Mason for the many hours he devotes to editing, printing and distributing *Rail Lincs*; Don Peacock for his branch secretarial duties in addition to welcoming all new members who join Railfuture nationally; Tom Rookes for another year minute taking at meetings; Peter Honniball as branch budget holder; Chris Brown for the numerous occasions in the past year when he has raised concerns with EMR and Ann Hindley likewise for her lobbying of Northern to ensure trains, rather than buses, returned to the Doncaster to Scunthorpe service. From this list of thanks you might be forgiven for thinking that there would be nothing for any new committee volunteers to do. However this is far from the case. As mentioned we all have a life away from Railfuture and we are all a year older with the health issues that come with age. New volunteers would be welcome and someone who has time and enthusiasm to look after our website page would be especially welcome.

David Harby, Branch Chairman

Hon. Secretary's Report to be presented at the 2023 AGM

From David's report you will have seen that with the restrictions imposed for Covid being lifted it has been a busy year.

I have had no response to the request for nominations and so there will be no elections at the AGM, the officers, committee members and corresponding members will be elected "en bloc" However, if anyone would like to volunteer for the committee at the meeting they can do so.

One of our members, Ann Hindley will be transferring to the Yorkshire Branch when she moves. I would like to thank her for all the work she has done on behalf of the committee and hope that she will continue the role of liaising between the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Branch committees. ▶

◀ We have continued to respond to various consultations.

There will be an AGM in March in Lincoln which will have a guest speaker who is a well-known speaker to us, Pete Myers who has now retired and will not be as much constrained as he was in the past with the confidentiality restraints of being employed by Northern.

The remote meetings were, I think, successful and allowed more members to “attend” including non-committee members. They do however pose a logistics problem in keeping the committee members “in the loop”. I needed enough prior notice of items that attendees want to bring up along with background information to circulate to those not on the net. Once the agenda is finalised there can be no more items considered until the next meeting. At least we did manage a very good “proper” meeting at Sleaford in 2022.

So hopefully things will improve in 2023. I did renew my railcard in February after it expired last October and in the meantime used my North Lincolnshire Council bus pass for my trips in North/North East Lincolnshire and rediscovered that I got a 50% reduction on return fares. From Barnetby I can go to Cleethorpes, Lincoln, Scunthorpe, Gainsborough and Barton on Humber. In the early days when I first got it (10+ years ago!), you could have used it to Doncaster.

Last but not least many thanks to the committee for all the time and effort that they have put in under rather testing times.

I hope that you are all well and will enjoy an improving 2023.

Dr Don Peacock, Hon Secretary

RAILFUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH

Income and expenditure Account for the Year Ending 31 December 2022

Income	2021	2022	Expenditure	2021	2022
	£	£		£	£
Opening balance at 1 st January	0.00	316.44			
Funding from national funds	536.00	585.00	Newsletter printing and distribution*	169.56	361.78
			Room hire	25.00	65.00
Sale of donated DVD's		535.00	Cost of sales (postage)		40.89
			Campaigns:		
			Stand at Caistorail	25.00	25.00
			Membership of BCCRP		5.00
			Closing balance at 31 st December	316.44	938.77
	536.00	1,436.44		536.00	1,436.44

Note:

2022 Newsletter costs include one joint issue for Lincolnshire and East Midlands branches

Rail travel conditions

Tom Rookes asks how MPs view our railways

Previous government Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has talked about getting rid of regulations “which go back to the Ark”. In the light of reasons for the current strikes this is misleading. Was he talking about paper timetables, ticket offices, travel centres, or guards on trains? Had he got something else in mind? Driver Only Operated (DOO trains refers to the driver being responsible for opening and closing doors rather than the train guards; ticket collectors and revenue protection officers will still be employed on trains. I suspect that as our MPs sit in the House of Commons they have a view of the railways which is centred on how trains are run in London where most people use Oyster cards, elderly people have free rail travel over a large commuter area, and booking trains over long distances is relatively easy because major railway companies built their lines to terminate in Britain’s great metropolis where there is likely to be a wide choice of ticket offices and travel centres. This is not the case elsewhere.

Bus service routes from Lincoln are, for most people, less than 20 miles whereas train journeys are usually much longer, more complicated, and more varied in price. To introduce DOO across the whole rail network would require the implementation of safety equipment at every station to work in conjunction with the rolling stock used and overall security enhanced to control access to trains using barriers and a form of ‘tap-in-tap-out’ ticketing system, at the same time reduce vandalism and threatening behaviour.

Later this year I am expecting to attend a conference in the Stoke-on-Trent area. It would be an advantage to have advice about the journey: how to get there and by what route. There is the possibility of

more than one route, although the most likely one would be via Derby, but as I have never been there before I cannot be certain of the answer and how often I would need to change trains. The closure of Lincoln Travel Centre would be a disadvantage and a discouragement for using the railway, something which I know applies to other people.

I wrote to current Transport Secretary Mark Harper on 6 December about the intention to close travel centres and ticket offices. I received a letter from Department for Transport dated 9 January which also informed me that my correspondence has been forwarded to Rail Passenger Services for reply. The letter states that changes need to be made to put our rail network “on a sustainable footing for the future” otherwise “it may not have one”. The letter continues that staff are being moved out from behind the glass of ticket offices onto stations but presupposes that these will be the same staff as in ticket offices and travel centres which is not my experience at Lincoln. Reliance on ticket offices has fallen as more stations are fitted with “tap-in-tap-out pay-as-you-go, and online and digital ticketing is improved as part of a £360 million Government-funded ‘retail revolution’”. “However, as modern ticketing and payment methods are rolled out more widely, we will continue to ensure all passengers who need to use cash, or do not have access to a smartphone or the internet, can buy a ticket”. “Any train operating company that is proposing to make changes to the operating hours of a ticket office must follow the tried and tested consultation process set out under the Ticketing and Settlement agreement”.

I get the impression that this is a standard letter. Although it states that there has been “a huge increase in online ticket sales” the statement that an ►

◀ unwillingness to make necessary changes could leave our railways without a future suggests that overall sales are not being sustained. We know for example that, leaving aside the problem of strikes, services are being cut or not maintained. The huge increase in on-line

sales will refer to the regular travelling public not the population of Britain which is the potential travelling public. Our politicians need to encourage as many people as possible to use our railways, not discourage them.

Tom Rookes.

Timetable Update

Both East Midlands Railway (EMR) and Northern timetables for May are now available online. They can be found on Real Time Trains or if you want to compare services at individual stations this link is useful:<https://live-departures.info/rail/timetable-comparison/>

The three Saturday Brigg Line services are removed and replaced by one return service each day Monday to Friday. EMR have restored the full May2021 timetable for Lincoln to Leicester, Most Matlock – Derby are now Matlock – Nottingham and Robin Hood Line is two trains per hour again on Saturdays. There may be some other minor EMR changes but I've not spotted them.

David Harby

Latest Station Usage Statistics

The station usage statistics for the year ending 31 March 2022 were released recently. As these do not include last summer when leisure travel recovered strongly, they can only be of limited value, so we have only listed stations with a minimum of 50,000 passengers before Covid hit us.

Instead of our normal practice of comparing the last three years, we have this time compared the latest year with 2018-2019 which was the last full year not affected by Covid. The column headed 'Recovery' is the figure for 2021-2022 as a percentage of 2018-2019.

Looking in more detail at the splits between full, reduced and seasons, the drop in usage is not universal. Season ticket sales have dropped substantially at all stations but those used by students (school and college) have held up better than the rest. On the East Coast Main Line (ECML) the season tickets and full fares have dropped substantially as might be expected with the increase in office working from home, but reduced fare usage at Doncaster, Retford and Grantham, served by LNER who have vigorously marketed advanced tickets, has actually grown.

As well as Doncaster and Retford, reduced fare usage has also held up very well at Lincoln, Saxilby, Gainsborough Lea Road and Worksop which are all served by Northern which has also marketed advance fares. Maybe East Midlands Railway (EMR) should consider offering cheap advance tickets on little used services on their local routes?

David Harby



68026 'Lord President' at Cleethorpes
Photo: Tim Mickleburgh

Station Usage

Station	2018-19	2021-22	Recovery
Barnetby	73,998	42,282	57%
Boston	226,940	170,976	75%
Carlton	54,632	27,610	51%
Cleethorpes	296,002	228,184	77%
Collingham	116,434	87,440	75%
Doncaster	3,917,948	3,519,786	90%
Gainsborough Lea Road	164,188	145,840	89%
Grantham	1,413,006	1,191,658	84%
Grimsby Town	456,768	318,486	70%
Heckington	66,494	37,834	57%
Hykeham	176,244	102,206	58%
Lincoln	1,963,938	1,500,924	76%
Lowdham	72,494	30,880	43%
Market Rasen	69,840	51,298	73%
Metheringham	101,878	64,858	64%
Newark Castle	802,590	563,340	70%
Newark Northgate	960,922	674,472	70%
Newark Castle and Northgate combined	1,763,512	1,237,812	70%
Nottingham	8,004,938	5,202,438	65%
Peterborough	5,059,576	3,719,850	74%
Retford	519,976	456,144	88%
Ruskington	82,020	59,662	73%
Saxilby	75,172	69,026	92%
Scunthorpe	417,880	279,906	67%
Skegness	350,864	308,608	88%
Sleaford	310,906	224,066	72%
Spalding	193,034	134,834	70%
Stamford	384,560	227,100	59%
Worksop	440,390	365,284	83%

Looking to the future.

Pictured at the Hitachi factory, Newton Aycliffe, One of the first Class 810 bi-mode units destined for East Midlands Railway. Branded Aurora, the trains will operate on the Midland Main Line. Eventually replacing the Class 222s, which could be cascaded to replace IC125s on Great Western Railway and Scotrail.

(Photo from Twitter)



Friends of the Barton Line

- The Barton Cleethorpes Community Rail Partnership has made a generous contribution to the cost of renovating the station running in boards at Thornton Abbey station, the installation of the board on platform 2 took place on 25 September with the assistance of seven people. The unveiling taking place on 3 October.
- A licence is being arranged to permit the Friends of the Barton Line and Barton Lions to maintain the goods platform at Barton.
- The smart new station at Barrow Haven was declared open on 10 November by

the chairman of Barrow Parish Council. The rebuild was necessary because the previous structure was becoming unstable and the station was a lifeline for the local community and popular with ramblers and cyclists.

- During the past twelve months Network Rail has improved fencing on the line; installed new gates at Gatehouse Road crossing; replaced semaphore signals by colour lights at Goxhill, and rebuilt semaphore signals with improved sighting at New Holland,
- A 5mph temporary speed restriction has been imposed at Barrow Haven because of reduced sight lines caused by new fencing. Engineers visited last November to review options such as removing fencing or installing lights for road traffic. A lorry driver had been cautioned by police for crossing in front of a train. In his defence he said he thought it was a disused heritage line.

Anthony Berridge



*Re-built Barrow Haven Station
photo: Tim Mickleburgh*

LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH

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Please let the Editor, Phil Mason, 10 Cottesmore Close, Grantham NG31 9JL, philmason1nera4@gmail.com have copy by 20 May.

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