

SixShiresRail

Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire & Rutland

Newsletter for Railfuture East Midlands
& Lincolnshire branches

railfuture

Number 1 June 2023

Editor's comment.....

After 95 editions of *Rail Lincs*, we are moving forward with the first issue of a new publication: "SixShires Rail" combining news from East Midlands and Lincolnshire branches of Railfuture. The first venture into producing a joint publication was *Rail Lincs 90* in June 2021 and the two branches have now agreed to combine resources, bearing in mind the small membership of the Lincolnshire branch and the common thread inasmuch that local services operated by East Midlands Railway (EMR) originate within the East Midlands area to serve destinations in Lincolnshire.

This Summer season sees a meaningful change to services on the Skegness line

with the requirement for passengers to book seats in advance. Lincolnshire branch Chairman, David Harby, explains this on page 4.

A large part of this edition is focussed on the plethora of public bodies with a role in the development of our railways. It is hoped that readers will find explanations of the multitude of acronyms and abbreviations used in articles about funding rail projects helpful in understanding the complications faced by rail campaigners. This labyrinth of organisations must also exist in other walks of life such as defence, health, local highways, and social services etc. No doubt the cynics will say "it's a wonder anything gets done".

Looking back to my editorial in June 2021, I reported the publication of the "Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail" and the formation of a new public body "Great British Railways" (GBR). Alas, articles in this edition continue to speculate on the implementation of GBR and if it will ever take place.

Phil Mason, Editor



Local authority collaboration: Langley Mill station opened in May 1986. Its £130,000 cost was met by Derbyshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Amber Valley District Council and two local parish councils. A Class 158 calls there on 3 September 2019 on its way from Nottingham to Leeds.

Photo: Steve Jones

National Rail Contracts – an opportunity for Railfuture ?

Members will no doubt be aware that after the demise of Franchises and the Emergency Measures Agreements during the Covid pandemic, train operators are now signed up to National Rail Contracts (NRC). In the case of East Midlands Railways (EMR) this is a contract lasting up to 8 years to 16 October 2030.

The main change from a franchise that has been highlighted in the media is that EMR are now simply a contractor who is paid a fee to run a rail service, with additional money to be earned by meeting specific targets on such things as punctuality, the station environment and punctuality at intermediate stations as well as the terminating station. However, there is another big change that has not received so much publicity. That is that, unlike a franchise where the train service is specified at the start of the contract and cannot be changed without a lot of administrative effort, the NRC is a much more flexible beast where changes can be made as each annual plan is negotiated.

The intention is that there will be a review of services in the medium and long term to reflect the changes in use as the economy recovers from Covid. In the short term, these changes will be decided by Department for Transport (DfT) in consultation with Transport for the East Midlands (TfEM) and then by whatever organisation is given the role when Great British Railways (GBR) is established. This gives Railfuture an opportunity to lobby for service changes now rather than have to wait years for a new franchise.

East Midlands and Lincolnshire branches are therefore preparing a list of service changes we want to see. Our initial ideas are outlined below but as ever we are open to other suggestions from members.

In an ideal world we would be asking for the full implementation of all the franchise

promises made when the EMR franchise started, but this is not an ideal world so we will have to moderate our wishes to reflect the changing commuting and leisure travel patterns we are now seeing.

Some of the aborted May 2021 timetable changes have now been reinstated, such as extending all Matlock to Derby trains to Nottingham and restoring the full hourly service between Lincoln and Leicester. However, others are still missing, such as the 09:48 Lincoln to Peterborough and 11:12 return Monday to Friday plus the same two services on Saturday along with the 18:00 Lincoln to Peterborough and 19:26 return. We see restoring these as a priority especially as there is now a gap of nearly 2½ hours between the 08:10 and 10:35 trains.

Another priority is between Crewe and Newark Castle where the 08:08, 13:08 and 18:09 ex-Crewe along with the corresponding services in the opposite direction are missing from the hourly service pattern. This results in two-hour gaps at stations between Crewe and Derby, but it is even worse east of Nottingham where because of skip-stopping there is a four-hour gap to Burton Joyce, Thurgarton and Bleasby after the 07:57 ex-Nottingham.

The problem we currently face with getting any services reinstated is the DfT desire to see cost reduction. An option being considered elsewhere is to see if there are any possible trade-offs, such as thinning out services (one per hour instead of two for example) at less busy times, or shorter trains, both of which are difficult options in the East Midlands where we already have thinned out off-peak services and trains which can't be made any shorter. However that may be the unpalatable fact we have to accept though it's difficult to think of any possible cuts. Do members ►

◀ have any thoughts?

In the medium term (say 3 – 4 years) we are looking for something to be done about connections from Lincoln to the East Coast Main Line (ECML) especially if travelling northbound. This long-standing difficulty would have been solved had the hourly Lincoln to Doncaster service, promised in the EMR franchise, been implemented. To make matters worse, the almost hourly all stations Lincoln to Newark Northgate service included in the May 2021 timetable has now been dropped except for a few peak hours morning trains. For northbound connections to the ECML from Lincoln we are left with just five very unevenly spaced Lincoln to Doncaster trains, a two-hourly LNER Lincoln to Newark Northgate, or travel to Newark Castle and make the twenty-minute trek to Northgate station. From Hykeham, Swinderby and Collingham there are no trains after the 09:48 ex-Lincoln and 10:39 ex-Northgate return, which goes some way to explaining why Collingham station car park is almost deserted most days. There is also the often-forgotten alternative of going via Retford but with connection times of 37 and 60 minutes, depending on direction, one can see why that option is forgotten!

The other Lincoln issue that needs sorting is connectivity from Market Rasen. Currently the Grimsby to Leicester service arrives at Lincoln just a few minutes after the LNER service to London has departed, which is due to the LNER train running non-stop to Newark and being followed by the stopping train to Leicester. In the opposite direction, passengers from London face a wait of around 90 minutes for their connection to Market Rasen. Even

if the promised hourly extension to Grimsby of the Leicester service were implemented, this would not do a lot for connectivity. A possible solution to this and to improve the connectivity at Newark would be to introduce a Grimsby (or Cleethorpes) service to Newark Northgate in the hours that the LNER service is not running.

We have a medium term problem on the Poacher Line similar to that on Newark to Crewe. That is uneven stopping patterns between Grantham and Nottingham where the worst example in the existing timetable is the gap between the 14:44 ex Grantham and 19:46 ex Grantham to get to Radcliffe.

Another thought for the longer term is whether, with the increase elsewhere of weekend leisure travel, we could make a case for Joint Line services on a Sunday even if only every two hours?

On the Midland Main Line, there are aspirations for an earlier start of services northbound on Sundays. We also support the desire for more calls at Belper on services to and from Sheffield throughout the week, to supplement the very limited existing services. When compared with places of equivalent size on the Nottingham – Sheffield route, Belper is poorly served on the main line at present.

In summary, any service developments in future will depend on a credible business case. Railfuture is well placed, especially when working alongside other stakeholders, to influence the relevant decision-makers by means of presenting evidence and making plausible arguments based on the art of the possible. The annual review process in the new contracts gives us a potential opportunity.

David Harby, Lincolnshire Branch

Skegness is different this year

David Harby explains the new ticketing arrangements for the summer season

I don't need to tell readers that any travel on the Poacher Line during the summer holiday season (and even some winter weekends) can be fraught with difficulties. Long queues at Nottingham and Skegness with no certainty that you will get on the train unless you are near the front of the queue. For anyone trying to join at somewhere like Heckington to travel to Sleaford or Grantham there is always the possibility that when the train does arrive it will be so full you can't get on it!

Travel on regional routes is in many cases exceeding pre-Covid levels so it is highly likely that rail services to Skegness, especially on Friday, Saturday and Monday between 07:00 and 13:00 will be busier than ever this summer. In an attempt to deal with this East Midlands Railway (EMR) is trying something different this year between 9 July and 9 September. When those of you who are as old as me finish reading, they will realise that the 'something different' is familiar to them in that it is not a lot different from the seat regulation rules that used to apply to our summer holiday train travel to most seaside resorts when we were young.

What EMR is doing is asking passengers to book in advance to Skegness if they want to guarantee a space on their

chosen train and saying that if they have not pre-booked they will only be able to join a train if there is space for them. At Skegness and Nottingham there will be separate queues for pre-booked passengers and for those who have paid on the day. Pre-booked passengers will join first and then only as many passengers paying on the day will be allowed to join as there are spaces for them. For the very busy trains it is quite likely there will be no spaces at Nottingham and Skegness for pay on the day passengers. These trains will show as 'sold out' online.

This is radically different than previous years, but I do think that despite the restriction on spontaneous travel it is a big improvement for passengers as they can now book in advance with the certainty of knowing which train they will be travelling on. EMR won't be selling in advance every seat on trains and will be trying to allow space for local passengers so those making local trips should also benefit.

As in most recent years EMR will also be running rail replacement bus services between Skegness and Grantham with a new feature of some direct bus services to Butlins and Ingoldmells from Grantham and Boston.

As I say above, the ability to pre-book ►



◀ should make travel between Nottingham and Skegness a better experience but I'm yet to be convinced that travel between intermediate stations will be any better for those local passengers, especially those who need to make last minute trips and were unable to book in advance. In theory there should be space on trains but it remains to be seen what the reality is.

If you have not booked and when you arrive at Skegness the next train is fully booked there will be a bus at Skegness to take you to Grantham where you can then switch to a train service to Nottingham. Alternatively you could wait in the queue for the next train that does have space for you.

The full bus provision is:

On Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays, a bus service will run directly from Grantham – Butlins/ Ingoldmells – Skegness.

On Fridays and Saturdays, a bus service will run from Sleaford – Boston – Butlins / Ingoldmells – Skegness.

Passengers at Grantham will be encouraged to use the bus predominantly,

by the help of bus co-ordinators, as this will be the best way to clear passenger numbers and get people directly to where they need to go.

EMR is running the usual summer Saturday extras which are intended to be 4-car trains. The hourly service trains will be booked for 3-car trains. As we have come to expect in the East Midlands, the operator is, yet again, very short of rolling stock so EMR can only use 3 car units to Skegness by taking them from the Leicester to Lincoln/Grimsby route which will be reduced to 2-car units instead. That could result in some 'interesting' experiences between Grimsby and Lincoln.

If you are travelling between Lincoln, Market Rasen and Grimsby don't forget the alternative of the Stagecoach service 53 bus. This might take nearly twice as long as the train but it does run hourly and the £2 bus fare cap has been extended to October so a return trip by bus is no more than £4.

More details can be found here: <https://www.eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk/summer-skegness>

DavidHarby

...and very different 60/70 years ago!

Long before iphones and websites, one could grab an excursion leaflet from a rack at the local station. David Harby looks at the various routes excursion trains would take on trips in the 1950s and 60s to the East Coast from the East Midlands.

Doncaster to Skegness would be down the ECML to Barkston Junction where the North curve was still in place to join the Grantham to Sleaford route.

Derby Friargate to Skegness would be the Great Northern route to Nottingham via Ilkeston North and Daybrook, going over the Bennerley Viaduct, then past Gedling to join the old GN Nottingham to Grantham route. I am told the Gedling section survived after the rest was closed so there was access to Gedling colliery. A special from Pinxton South would use the branch line which joins this route near Kimberley West.

Leicester Central and Loughborough Central to Nottingham Victoria then Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway (LD&ECR) to Lincoln. I think using the GC route to Sutton-in-Ashfield and Ollerton and Tuxford to Lincoln. Then the direct route via Woodhall Junction to Skegness.

From Leicester various routes were used. Some used Leicester Belgrave Rd after it was officially closed. Belgrave Rd was a GN branch which joined the GN & LNW Market Harborough to Newark line at Marefield Jct. Skegness trains then left this route at Bottesford and joined the Nottingham to Grantham line. I know at times Humberstone Rd

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Influencing the Policymakers – an opportunity for Railfuture

Steve Jones tries to find a way through the jungle of public bodies with a role in rail development

In his article on page 2, David Harby considers the changed role of the train operating companies (TOCs) under the new National Rail Contracts structure that is replacing franchises. We await the details of how Great British Railways will be established and how it will operate, but we know that the TOCs will essentially just be contractors, running the train services according to the specification laid down by those who commission such services. It is becoming a more standard client and contractor relationship, with much less room for commercial manoeuvre by TOCs than perhaps used to be the case.

I say ‘perhaps’ because we all know the DfT has micro-managed the franchisees since the beginning of the Covid pandemic and probably for some time before then.

This change has implications for Railfuture, but it is another opportunity. We shall probably need to modify our approach when seeking rail improvements. TOCs will increasingly do as they are told under their contracts. If we seek better services over a bigger rail network, it will be less a case of pressuring the TOCs to do it. Increasingly, we shall need to focus on the policy-making, decision-taking, service-commissioning bodies. But who exactly are they? There are numerous levels of such organisations, and the structures and the relationships ►



Leaping forward through LEP funding. The track realignment scheme in full swing at Market Harborough on 29 May 2019. The ballast train is standing facing south on the new down line just to the north of the new platforms. The old route is being dismantled on the left-hand side of the image, while the bulldozer in the foreground is preparing the new up line trackbed. The new track and station opened on 3 June! Three Local Enterprise Partnerships, only one of them actually local to Market Harborough, contributed a total of £1.3m towards this major scheme, aimed at speeding journeys to and from London.

Photo: Steve Jones

◀ between them are almost as convoluted as the rail industry itself!

So, who do we need to influence? First of all, there is the Department for Transport (DfT). It provides strategic direction and funding to the railways in England and Wales. It thus retains the ultimate responsibility for the passenger and freight railway. Though heavily centralised, it does have a regional presence. At a governmental level, there is also the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), which is the regulatory body promoting safety and ensuring fair access to the rail network for all operators. Our direct dealings with these agencies may be limited, but one route into them is via our MPs. For example, you can read elsewhere in this newsletter of our campaign encouraging Railfuture members living near the Midland Main Line (MML) to write to their MPs asking them to put pressure on the Secretary of State for Transport to decide, once and for all, to electrify the whole of the route. Of course, we also have the enticing prospect of the new Great British Railways (GBR) organisation being headquartered in Derby – assuming it goes ahead...

Then there are the regional bodies. For us in the six counties, these fall into two categories. The first is the sub-national transport bodies (STBs), or sometimes SNTBs). Our main one is Midlands Connect, based in Birmingham but covering a broad sweep of the Midlands from the Welsh border to the Lincolnshire coast. Northamptonshire, however, is covered by England's Economic Heartland, which covers the south Midlands and northern Home Counties, roughly from Swindon and Oxford via Northampton and Milton Keynes to Cambridge and Peterborough. Finally, North Lincolnshire falls within Transport for the North, based in Manchester. Membership of STBs includes the local transport authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs),

local airports, Highways England, Network Rail and the DfT. They also work closely with Chambers of Commerce and other business interests. While they are normally led by local authority leaders, there is little input from the voluntary or social and environmental sectors. Having said that, Railfuture's East Midlands and West Midlands Branches have a good working relationship with Midlands Connect on rail matters, with a particular focus on east-west links across the two regions.

The second regional category for us is Transport for the East Midlands, (TfEM). Despite its name, it is not an STB; rather, it is part of East Midlands Councils, (EMC), which is a partnership of ten local transport authorities across the region. Overlapping geographically with the STBs, it seeks better rail links, including electrification of the Midland Main Line and construction of the eastern arm of HS2. It also had a joint role with the DfT in managing the East Midlands Railway (EMR) franchise under the East Midlands Rail Collaboration. We await further information on how that will develop under the National Rail Contracts and the anticipated GBR regime. As with Midlands Connect, however, we have a good working relationship with TfEM and EMC.

Next are the Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), which are usually the County Councils or unitary authorities. Though they are members of both the STBs and TfEM, they are significant players in their own right, and have fostered numerous rail developments across the East Midlands, such as the Robin Hood Line in Nottinghamshire and the Ivanhoe Line in Leicestershire, plus individual stations such as Ilkeston in Derbyshire, all part funded by the respective County Councils. In our six counties, there are the four remaining traditional county councils, plus seven unitary authorities covering the ▶

◀ cities of Derby, Nottingham and Leicester plus the counties of Rutland, Northamptonshire (now split into two unitaries) and North Lincolnshire.

Though they do not have direct transport responsibilities, the local district councils are usually interested in their local stations and train services. As well as contributing some funding, they can be good allies in seeking to influence the County Councils as LTAs. There are no fewer than 29 of these in the remaining two-tier local authority areas of our combined region.

However, that is not the end of it. There are other bodies with an interest in rail developments. These include the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). They are led by business but work closely with the local authorities in determining local economic and regeneration priorities, including infrastructure investment. Though largely mirroring the boundaries of local authorities – or groups of local authorities, their influence can go way beyond. A good example is the major line-speed improvement scheme that straightened the MML through Market Harborough. Though primarily in Leicestershire, it also affected speeds on the approach in Northamptonshire. However, as well as a contribution of £3m from the Leicester & Leicestershire LEP, funding for this scheme came from the D2N2 LEP (the cities and counties of Derby+shire and Nottingham+shire) (£5m) and even the South Yorkshire LEP (£5m). This was because of the scheme's importance in accelerating travel times between London and respectively Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield. Serious money for a major scheme! The role of the LEPs is diminishing, however, as the government has announced that its funding for the LEPs is likely to transfer to local authorities. For the moment, though, they remain in place. As well as those mentioned above, there are LEPs for

Lincolnshire & Rutland and the South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP) covering Northamptonshire.

Then there are other bodies set up to deal with specific economic areas. An emerging body that is likely to be important for us is the East Midlands Development Company. This has been set up to oversee the regeneration of the Toton and Chetwynd area between Nottingham and Derby, the Ratcliffe Power Station site when that is decommissioned, plus the East Midlands Airport and Freeport area. This area has huge importance for the greater region's railways, containing the pivot-point of Trent Junction on the existing network, and both Toton and East Midlands Parkway, both of which have been mooted as the East Midlands Hub for HS2. Clearly, major decisions remain to be made about HS2 and electrification of the MML, but effective land access to this whole area will be fundamental to its success. One to keep an eye on!

Finally, in terms of local administration, are the parish and town councils. Not all areas have these, and they have no specific rail responsibilities. However, they can be vocal and supportive regarding rail stations, services, and infrastructure.

Looking to the future there is a major player that is yet to come into existence. That is the proposed East Midlands Counties Combined Authority, covering the D2N2 area (Derby City + County and Nottingham City + County). This would be led by an elected mayor and follows successful implementation of devolution deals in other parts of the country. It would potentially unlock significant funding for infrastructure. Not being a metropolitan area, Derby and Nottingham never had a PTE, a Passenger Transport Executive, of the kind that brought about major improvements to rail services in, for example, the West Midlands. The combined authority provides a major potential opportunity for us. ▶

So, there are many official bodies that are not part of the rail industry but can be very important to it. We in Railfuture need to influence these if we are to succeed in fostering pro-rail policies and culture. We need to know who is responsible for what, and they need to know about us! We need to work constructively with them, in a way that impresses and helps them, remembering that rail is our focus, but it is only one topic among many for them. That means being professional in our approach, and, where possible, being useful in providing knowledgeable comment that is of value to the recipients. We also need to position ourselves as respected and worthy of liaison and consultation in proposals that affect rail. To sum up, and at the risk of mixing metaphors, we need to be both 'on the radar' and 'at the table'!

One other thought: in developing our role and status with these various agencies, it is important that we coordinate where possible and reasonable with other

relevant transport user and lobby groups. Railfuture is the leading independent national pro-rail lobby group, campaigning for better services over a bigger rail network. But it is not the only one. There are TWEM (TravelWatch East Midlands - on which Railfuture is represented); the Campaign for Better Transport; local Rail User Groups and station Friends groups; CRPs (whose campaigning role is limited, but they are a strong link with their communities); specific campaign groups for reopenings such as CRIL and MEMRAP; and other allied environmental and transport action groups such as Sustrans, Cycling UK, and Friends of the Earth. We know from experience that the policymakers are not impressed if the lobby groups cannot agree among themselves, so we need to work with them also. Let's have another metaphor: 'All singing from the same hymn-sheet'.

So, can I end with a plea for help? We have seen that there are many relevant organisations, and all of us live within the area of more than one of them. We can all play our part in building Railfuture's relationships with them, and its contributions to them. Mirroring what David says regarding National Rail Contracts, we have a great opportunity here in our dealings with the public authorities. Do you have contacts or experience that could be useful to us? Please get in touch if you do.

Our vision for Railfuture:

An independent organisation whose views are respected by the rail industry, to which decision makers come for advice, and which rail users are proud to join and recommend.



Trying to find a way through the undergrowth. A signal still in place overlooking the disused trackbed of former sidings behind the down platform at Spondon on 4 May 2023. Sometimes, trying to find the right people to deal with among the multiplicity of policy-making public authorities can feel a bit like finding a way through a jungle.

Photo: Steve Jones

Midland Main Line Electrification Campaign

Full electrification of the MML throughout, at least as far as Sheffield, has long been sought by Railfuture. Indeed, it should continue to Moorthorpe and Doncaster to link with the electrified East Coast Main Line, as part of a greater electrified network for a range of long-distance trains, both passenger and freight. However, MML electrification seems to be on, then off, then on again, then off again, rather as though the Government were operating an enormous switch somewhere. Network Rail has funding to continue development work, but actual installation of the overhead is only authorised and funded as far as Wigston South Junction, south of Leicester. Good progress is being made on this section; the wires are up through Market Harborough, for example. We understand it is also being delivered on time and within budget – unlike some other major projects! However, at the time of writing, Wigston South Junction is as far as it will go. We need to get the switch back to ‘on’ for the rest of the line!

East Midlands Branch Vice-Chair Terry Holt therefore wrote to his MP, Ruth Edwards (Con, Rushcliffe), calling for exactly this. He pointed out that not providing

continuity for the whole project risks disbanding the skilled electrification teams and the equipment currently engaged on the Kettering to Wigston phase (K2W). Doing that, only then to re-start at some future date, would greatly add time and cost compared with simply carrying on. It would be madness! In addition, per-capita transport funding for the East Midlands region is consistently



Electrification campaign sparked by uncertainty. An EMR Meridian departs with the 13:04 from Market Harborough to Nottingham on 2nd June 2023, passing a red signal protecting the bi-directional up line. The overhead is all-but complete in this view looking north from the station. However, electrification of the rest of the MML north from Wigston remains uncertain. Let's turn the electrification signal from red to green!

Photo: Steve Jones

◀ among the lowest in the UK. How ironic that the intended Derby HQ for Great British Railways could be at least 30 miles from the nearest electrified main line.

However, let's not forget that there is a general election due before the end of next year. That is about the time when K2W is finished and EMR's new Aurora bi-modes will be entering full service. We are aiming to contact every MP along the route, asking them to put pressure on the Secretary of State for Transport to authorise full completion of MML electrification. It has been talked about for decades; it's time to get it done!

You can help, as MPs will respond to their own constituents. Do you live in a constituency somewhere along or near the MML? If so, please write to your MP, making the case for full electrification of

the whole line. A personalised letter is best, referring to the benefits it would bring to your area, as well as the wider economic and decarbonisation benefits. However, we have prepared a template letter you can use if you wish, for you to tailor to your own area as you see fit. The template is available from eastmidlands@railfuture.org.uk.

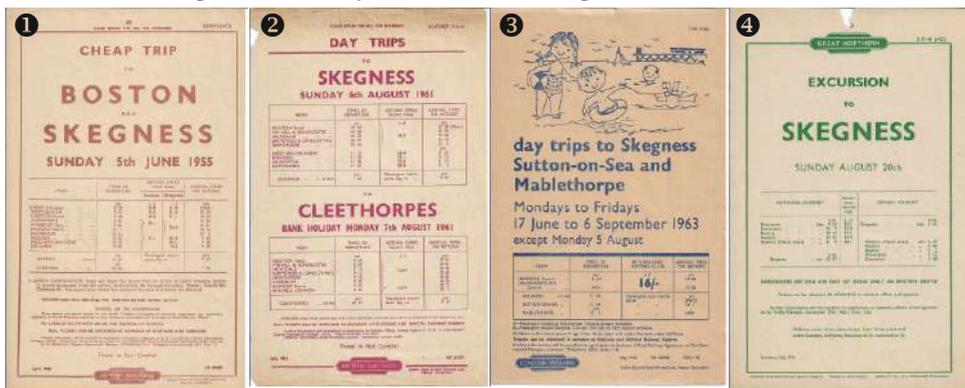
It would do no harm to get this on the agenda of the other election candidates - especially those in constituencies that may change colour. Over the next few months, you could contact your prospective parliamentary candidates, asking about their support for full electrification of the MML. It would also be worth attending hustings events in your constituency, armed with the same question. (Electric Power to the People!

Steve Jones, East Midlands Branch

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in Leicester (on the Midland route less than a mile east of Leicester Midland station) was used as a starting point for some summer Saturday trains rather than the Midland station.

I am sure there were other routes used especially over the maze of lines along the Lean valley around Ilkeston and Newstead. A lot of the lines now closed. It would be fascinating to know the rolling stock used. My bet would be all freight locos.



- 1 An excursion from Derby Friargate, West Hallam, Ilkeston North, Awsworth, Kimberley East, Basford North, Daybrook, Gedling, Radcliffe on Trent and Bingham.
- 2 Another interesting route was from Pinxton South, Pye Hill & Somercotes, Jacksdale, Eastwood & Langley Mill, Newthorpe, Radcliffe on Trent, Bingham, Aslockton and Bottesford, to Skegness, or from stations to Newthorpe and then Kimberley, Basford North, Bulwell North and Bulwell Common to Cleethorpes.
- 3 A day trip from Leicester Central and Loughborough Central
- 4 An excursion from Doncaster, Rossington, Bawtry, Retford and Newark North Gate to Skegness.

Friends of the Barton Line

- Unfortunately, there have been reports of damage to property, graffiti and litter, including drug paraphernalia, at various locations along the Line.

- East Midlands Railway (EMR) has refused permission, on grounds of safety, for the installation of a wheelbarrow on the platform at Barrow Haven to commemorate the annual Barrows at Barrow event.

- Local railway author Malcolm Hayles has released a 51-minutes video on Youtube entitled the "Railways of Grimsby and Cleethorpes 1980s". It can be viewed on the following link: <https://youtu.be/H2T8yRaZ7Vg>.

- All Class 156 trains on the Barton Line have been replaced by Class 170s from the May timetable, but on Sunday, 21 May the first train was a Class 158.

- The Brigg Line services have ceased to run on Saturdays and are replaced by one per weekday running from Sheffield to Cleethorpes and back (but without calling

at Habrough) giving 1½ hours at Cleethorpes, but making day trips to westward destinations impractical. The Doncaster-Scunthorpe resumes as 2-hourly.

- Work on extending the car park at Barton Interchange was nearing completion in May and looking smart. However, it would appear that the contractor's remit contained no provision to integrate this with the expected enhancements proposed by Barton Civic Society – no sign of public convenience, bus lane adjacent to the platform, improved waiting facilities, Customer information Screen, cycle lockers, electric charging points, etc.

- It is good to report that trains at Cleethorpes are now cleaned on Sundays as well as other days.

- Friends of the Barton Line member Pete Myers has been appointed a director of Railfuture.

*Anthony Berridge
Hon. Secretary, Friends of the Barton Line*



Traction variety in North Lincolnshire: TransPennine Trains Class 197 at Grimsby and a Class 156 at New Holland.

Photos: Tim Mickleburgh

Midlands Connect Rail Projects

The East Midlands Railfuture branch organised a talk by Andrew Clark of Midlands Connect following their recent AGM. I won't go into detail explaining the role of Midlands Connect as Steve Jones has done that very ably in his article. However, it was very interesting to hear from Andy about the rail related projects that Midlands Connect are promoting. For those who were unable to attend the meeting, we have Andy's slides available and can send them to individual members if requested by emailing eastmidlands@railfuture.org.uk

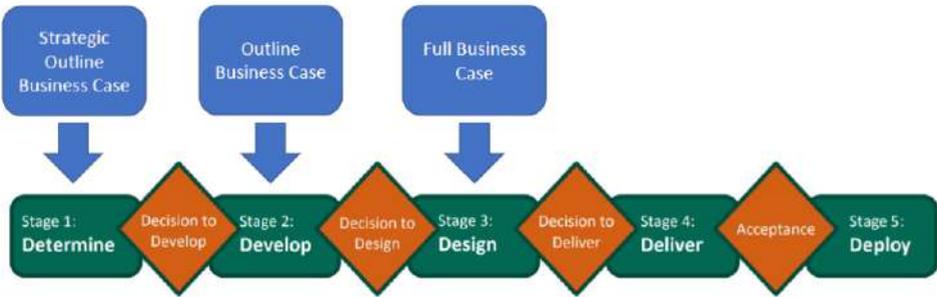
Andy described the work that has been carried out scoping possible improvements at Nuneaton, the benefit of additional rail chords at Bordesley (central Birmingham) and more locally line speed

increased role for improved rail connections and paths from 'super quarries' supplying crushed rock to the construction industry. We need to understand the potential for these expanded services especially in our quest to encourage a switch from road transport with the significant benefits to decarbonisation of the environment. However, we need to be aware that there may be an impact on the expansion of passenger services.

One key slide from Andy's presentation I would like to share in this article describes the stages in the (long) process to get an idea through from concept to final completion.

I'm sure we will have heard the term 'business case' being used but I think this

Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline



improvements on the Nottingham to Lincoln line and reinstatement of four tracks between Wigston North and Leicester station on the MML.

These improvements are being partly justified by the need to provide more rail capacity for freight movements. He stated that growth in rail freight is being driven by long distance traffic from key ports (Felixstowe, Southampton, DP World London Gateway) to the distribution parks we see along the main north/south motorway/rail arteries. There is also an

slide clearly explains the progression of the decision-making process that is used these days in most project work, certainly those financed by the public purse. The 'business case' requirement becomes more detailed (and therefore more expensive) as the project stages progress. There are 'standard' acceptance criteria at each decision point (although political pressures may also have an impact on the decision). These days each level of business case will be written by a third-party contractor (MottMacDonald, Jacobs etc.). ►

◀ At each stage funding has to be justified to move forward. This funding as it usually comes from Central government (directly or indirectly) and will be a political decision.

How does Railfuture fit into this process? We can lobby the relevant decision makers to encourage them to provide the necessary funds to move the project forward, our arguments will be factual and professionally argued but we have to expect that we may have to repeat them in slightly different ways to keep the pressure on these decision makers.

The other area that Railfuture can have a role is being allowed to give input to the contractor developing the business case and providing a critical review of the draft

of the proposed report. We can provide specific local knowledge which the nationally based contractor may not have. This has been the case with the work we have done with the contractor working on the outline business case for improving the rail service between Grantham and Nottingham.

We also have an important role in the formal Consultation stages that precede every 'decision' milestone in the process.

I hope this helps understand what may at times seem long and contrived processes to get what we may see as an obvious investment to improve the rail network.

Philip Thomas, East Midlands Branch

Meetings with South Yorkshire PTE Restored

Readers may well remember that I used to get invited by members of Yorkshire branch to meetings at Sheffield City Region with staff from the Passenger Transport Executive. At the last meeting in March 2020, progress was being made with proposals for a half hourly service between Scunthorpe and Doncaster and a potential Sunday service. However, those proposals got overtaken by events.... Meetings have now resumed and I was invited to a meeting in early March at what is now called the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). I am always impressed by the experience and commitment of officers to developing public transport. Rachel Sprigg, Rail Development Manager, assures us that she is putting pressure on the powers to be to restore our hourly service but it's unlikely before December 2023. We do, at least, have our early morning service back, thanks to successful approaches made by me and Mike Savage to Pete Myers at

Northern in the days before our service was suspended.

Rachel also committed herself to visiting Doncaster Station some time to look at some of the issues around Platform 0, including a monitor at the bottom of the stairs on Platform 3, and the lack of response experienced when pushing the help button. (Since then, I've been on Platform 0 when two trains were due at the same time because of an incident on the Hull line. This was during the Easter holidays with several children present. It was clear that the platform is too narrow to accommodate this number of people safely.

I've also been invited to take part in monthly Zoom meetings with Northern - I'll make sure members of South Humberside Rail User Group (SHRUG) are kept informed. Thanks to both Mike Savage and Don Peacock for support with these issues.

Ann Hindley, Lincolnshire Branch

EDITOR'S MAIL



Oh where have the timetables gone? where oh where can they be?

On the way back from our April committee meeting at Sleaford, I decided to check the display of railway timetables at Lincoln station. The only one displayed is the Lincoln to Nottingham service. There was no sign of any others. As there now appears to be an official ban on the display of paper timetables on the rail network, the question arises as to how the prospective rail passenger is to access information for services between say Lincoln and Peterborough or Lincoln and Grimsby unless a members of staff is available.

It does not follow that we all know which train we are going to catch or return by. If we miss a particular train we need to know the time of the next one.

The information may be available for smartphone users but this rules out those who are not, and presupposes that those with these devices know how to access the timetables. It also presupposes that people will be regular travellers between particular stations.

I checked the notice boards both in the station foyer and those outside. What they show is: Timetable changes; Engineering works, Onwards Travel Information Times; Lincoln City Centre maps; rail route maps; Ticket information; Contact numbers; Bus destinations; Rail replacement road services; Lost items notice; Ways to talk to us; Emergency Alert System; Other helpful contacts; four adverts. Anything other than a timetable. Often repeated on more than one noticeboard, so there is no shortage of space. Northern Rail do not have a problem displaying timetables at their stations, but of course Lincoln is not

problem displaying timetables at their stations, but of course Lincoln is not one of their stations. Perhaps with all the extra duties allocated to rail staff there is no-one to display timetables?

It seems that the problem is likely to be lack of interest by EMR and is widespread over their area. If people are to be encouraged to use our railways then timetables need to be displayed. What I object to is the autocratic style of it all. The prospective passenger is not free to choose. He is being managed.

Tom Rookes, Lincoln

I thought I'd make a short journey to New Holland, returning on the same train. But though there are electronic indicators at Grimsby Town station giving departure times, I couldn't see any printed timetables.

Yet I noticed them at the stations en route, then at New Holland itself. So why can't we have one at Grimsby Town?

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby

I notice on the website: Rail Forum Discussions Groups, that Cross Country Trains is being congratulated on publishing a PRINTED timetable booklet detailing timetables from 21 May and including a map so people can realise the places served.

I have also read that East Midlands Railway is displaying notices to remind passengers to ensure mobile phones are fully charged so that e-tickets can be checked during their journey. To assist passengers, Conductors are carrying phone chargers. Ed.



When I arrived at Sleaford station on 26 April to attend the Lincolnshire Branch meeting in the lovely old waiting room on Platform 2, I was surprised to see His Majesty waiting for a Class 180 at the east end of Platform 1. Despite apparently having lost his hands, he was certainly getting into the spirit of his forthcoming Coronation. As that event took place almost flawlessly on the great day, complete with a sword-wielding Penny Mordaunt, I can only assume that his Class 180 turned up as anticipated,

Fit for a King: the splendid coronation display in the garden on Platform 1 at Sleaford on 26 April 2023.

Photo: Steve Jones

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