

# raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

Issue 176 • Nov 2017

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## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR RAIL STATIONS



### 10 pages of news about East Anglia's stations

We cover the state of East Anglia's railway stations, achievements, progress, looking at how the passenger experience can be improved, and some exciting plans for the future.

Waterbeach is set to have a new, large, modern, stylish, station. That's what we are told. At the moment we have only sketches (above, courtesy of Turnstone Estates) to go on, but Railfuture is already talking to the developers to push for the passenger experience – and the interests of local rail users – to be put first. We look at whether Cambridge North has lived up to expectations and give some principles on what a new station should provide.

### Inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

- New trains: class 700 train service from Peterborough
- A Bigger and Better Railway: East West Rail, Wherry Lines Re-signalling, Hunstanton line, Level crossing closures
- Station news
- Passenger matters: seamless travel, through ticketing, station experience, comfy seating, community rail partnerships

# MORE NEW TRAINS FOR EAST ANGLIA

## GREAT NORTHERN'S CLASS 700 TRAINS

During 2017 RAIL EAST has concentrated on Greater Anglia's new trains, which will enter service between 2019 and 2020, not least because Greater Anglia has sought Railfuture's opinion and given us a behind-the-scenes look. Great Northern, operated by GTR, cannot quite boast a 100% fleet replacement, but we already have the fairly new class 387s (with air-conditioning, Wi-Fi and power points) cascaded from neighbouring Thameslink and now brand-new Class 700 trains are running between Peterborough and King's Cross in preparation for the main service through London.

On Monday 6th November 2017 Railfuture East Anglia branch chairman, **Nick Dibben**, joined the first train on active service at Huntingdon. He commented: "I travelled on the first Great Northern class 700 service this morning. The train is much quieter than the 22-year-old class 365s but the ride was less smooth. It had folding tables on the airline seats but nothing in the bays. There were no announcements on the platform so first class passengers had to walk down the train to their to hunt for it. The on-board information displays, which show the occupancy of each carriage (high, medium, low), said there was standing room only when it left St Neots." The photo below shows a Class 700 with plenty of seats at each end of the train.



Prior to trying out the train, Nick contributed a piece towards GTR's press release, and the following was quoted: "Many commuters will have seen these new trains in the sidings in recent months so will be looking forward to trying them out in real life. The new information screens will help people find a seat and I look forward to the new cross London services and extra seating that will be provided from next May."

Full press release at: <https://www.mynewsdesk.com/uk/govia-thameslink-railway/pressreleases/first-new-thameslink-trains-arrive-on-peterborough-route-2251954>



New class 700 on left, beside class 365 that have served us for 22 years. (Nick Dibben)

# SPOTLIGHT ON EAST ANGLIAN STATIONS

## ALL CHANGE FOR WATERBEACH? PETER WAKEFIELD REPORTS

Waterbeach is a large village a few minutes north of Cambridge by train. Peter Wakefield knows it well. It has, he says, a population of about 5,200, many of whom use the station in considerable numbers. During the year 2015/16 a footfall of 420,730 was counted, up by 10% over the previous year. People from surrounding villages also use the station as all 69 car park spaces are taken every day with an estimated 60 cars being parked along roads near the station. There is some official provision for cycles but many more are tethered to nearby fences.

Most people walk to the station, which is relatively well situated for much of the village. The train service is hourly with additional trains providing a half-hourly service towards Cambridge and London in the morning and the return evening peaks. Trains run to Cambridge from 05.35 to 23.08 and to Ely from 06.23 to 00.13. A good service but the station itself is not really fit to serve the increasing number of users. The platforms, which have totally inadequate shelters, are accessed via a half-barrier level crossing that has many rail services running through non-stop. The car and cycle parking is inadequate spilling onto the adjacent roads and very much an irritant to the local community.

The planned half-hourly service provided by eight-carriage trains is currently in abeyance as the platforms need lengthening. Network Rail (NR) has found the ground conditions difficult for the lengthening but it is not an unknown problem as British Rail had to use lightweight wooden materials when it too extended them. However, NR's approach is different and it intends to sink deep piles (apparently tests showed no firm ground 23 metres below the surface) but will install modular metal-construct platforms that can be used elsewhere in the future, which is important as you will see from ongoing text.



The current Waterbeach station doesn't have the most welcoming (or safe) entrance

### New town proposals

The site is a large area of MOD owned land to the west that was formerly RAF Waterbeach (1940-1963) Royal Engineers Waterbeach Barracks (1963-2013) together with the land up the railway line in the east, owned by a landowners' trust. The trust has appointed RLW Estates to promote and deliver that land. RLW brings together three developers. The first stories that the site was being considered for a new town emerged about 20 years ago and serious planning for about 10,000 homes, for at least 15 years. However, it has only been since 2013 when MOD finally left the site that the current proposals were made public.

Original planning centred around building a new station about two miles north of the existing station. Railfuture supported the view that as it could not possibly serve the existing village very well, it should be in addition to the present Waterbeach station. This

view was reaffirmed at Railfuture East Anglia's committee meeting in September 2017 in Norwich. However, Railfuture has since researched the latest plans held at South Cambridgeshire District Council and the developer, whilst bearing in mind the growing opposition to closure of the existing station.

### Exactly where will the new Waterbeach station be?

On 8<sup>th</sup> November Railfuture East Anglia representatives visited the offices of Turnstone Holdings in Cambridge to establish the facts of exactly where the new station will be and its design.

We found a planning team well aware of some current users' concerns. They have 'pulled' the new station as far south as possible so that it can serve both the new town and much of the existing settlement equally well. Note: we say "much of the existing..." as it obviously cannot serve every current user well, as some may well have deliberately moved a while back to be close to the existing station.

The new structure will be 1,600 metres (1 mile) north of Waterbeach's current station. It will be located on Bannold's Drove which leaves Bannolds Road to run north parallel to the railway. We felt that it will be in many ways ultimately better situated for the existing village. It will have a car park of 150-180 spaces thus removing the on-street parking and that from the existing car park. Eventually it might grow to 500 vehicles, taking traffic directly off the A10. The level crossing by the existing station will probably cease to be a safety issue as result.

It was explained to us that the station will be completed in 2020/21, well before much housing would be built. As such it will be basic with a station building of high standard being provided later in the project commensurate with house building. Needless to say we were not happy that this would be a good mitigation of the inconvenience some will suffer. Our view is that while understanding the need to get houses built there must be 'quality shelters and canopies on the up platform from day one, plus effective cycle and footpath provision to all parts of Waterbeach.

The new station will serve the emerging new town which will take 20 or so years to complete. The station will be "central" to the town plan, with a Square in front of it. The new station's two platforms will each be of at least eight-car length with land for extension to 12, plus a footbridge and associated lifts. The developers take the view that the station will enable good transport habits to develop and car use will be minimal. Indeed they foresee transport in 20 years' time being provided mainly by trains and autonomous vehicles. The parking area will be rebuilt for other uses.



## Progressive transport philosophy

The developers' philosophy is that Waterbeach, Cambridge North and Cambridge South stations will be growth poles enabling the train to be central to local transport which in turn will feed into it. They envisage trains every 15 minutes.

SUMMARY, the new station will:

- serve the existing village as well as the growing new community
- be safer
- be able to cope with growth
- enable provision of good cycle storage
- enable proper safe car parking
- remove commuter car parking from the streets
- eventually be a good regional rail station serving about 35,000 people efficiently and be an admired and valued part of the Waterbeach environment.

As long as the mitigations and promises are honoured via the planning system, Railfuture, East Anglia feel there cannot be any overriding objection to closing the existing station.

Meanwhile...

We urge Network Rail to hurry on with the lengthening of the existing platforms using innovation to build temporary extensions that will not waste money and can be reclaimed for use elsewhere.

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## **WHAT MAKES A GOOD STATION? (AND WHAT DOESN'T?)**

### **LESSONS FROM CAMBRIDGE NORTH — BY JERRY ALDERSON**

Five years ago, Railfuture East Anglia had hoped we could answer the question "what makes a good station?" by saying "Go and have a look at Cambridge North". In 2012 we responded to the Cambridgeshire County Council consultation on the new station (then proposed as Cambridge Science Park) with numerous requirements that we considered essential to creating a good passenger experience. See: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/docs/Railfuture-East-Anglia-Cambs-CC-CSP-Station-Consultation.pdf>

The planned £25 budget at the time gave us optimism. It eventually cost £50m, but was built *down* to that cost by sacrificing things that passengers consider important, such as not getting wet on the platform. It has to be said that Cambridge North station looks attractive and probably has more than 50% of what we asked for, some of it much better (e.g. 1,000 covered cycle park spaces with CCTV, although lacking secure areas).

There are some key principles that define a good station:

- End-to-end journey time is minimised by providing efficient routes and entry points to the station
- All passing trains are able to call at the station (if the operators wish to do so) so that a full service is achievable
- It's accessible to as wide a range of people as possible, both unaided and with assistance with no-one made to feel embarrassed by their situation
- It is somewhere that people will want to use and will be a pleasant, safe and productive place to wait for their train and to meet travellers
- The station, like the rest of the passenger railway, should be designed and operated to put the passenger first, not for operational convenience
- Standards of customer service should match the highest-performing industries.

Actually, Cambridge North station scores well on some of the above. Although it can only be accessed from one side of the station there are three walking/cycling routes, two for buses and one for cars. When all lifts are working, which in fairness is the vast majority of the time, it is accessible, although it has disappointed campaigners who wanted 'changing places' toilet facilities. It's visually attractive, fairly pleasant and will be much improved when the retail outlets finally open and a cash machine is provided. There is provision for

additional TVMs in the future (located outside the front door). However, cost-cutting means that many people boarding and alighting trains are likely to get wet when it is raining, especially as four-car trains in the bay platform are still deliberately stopped away from the stairs, lifts and canopies.

We can't blame the station designers for Cross Country's refusal to serve the station, nor capacity constraints further along the line that prevent some Great Northern trains calling until eight-car trains operate an all-day service on the Fen Line. However, the decision not to locate the crossovers closer to the station means that trains leaving the bay platform travel 'wrong line' for too long, which limits capacity on the line and, crucially, restricts the number of trains that can terminate at the station. If only Network Rail had considered Railfuture's suggestion for a long siding or loop beyond the bay platform end.

Cambridge North station was required to fit around the operational needs of the freight yard, effectively putting people second to goods. As a result of this and the decision not to provide any emergency exit, no platforms can be reached without using the footbridge. At least the new Waterbeach and Cambridge South stations will not be similarly constrained. Good design suggests that a footbridge should be about half way along the platform to minimise walking distance for any passenger, but at Cambridge North it is one quarter of the way along. If Cambridge South station is located between the road and busway bridges then it brings the possibility of exits at both ends of the platform.

Users of the new station can judge for themselves how successful Railfuture East Anglia was in its 2012 submission when we asked for the following facilities for passengers, knowing that it would be a staffed station with ticket barriers:

- Station building must be of the highest design standard. The station must be designed for a much higher footfall than the very conservative figure that Cambs County Council estimates
- There must be an adequate number of ticket gates with room for additional in the future
- The 'unpaid side' of the ticket gate-line must be adequately sized for 'meeters & greeters', with seating and access to toilets
- Lifts to the footbridge must be able to take bicycles easily; there needs to be a strategy for getting mobility-impaired people to/from the platforms if the lifts are out of order
- Footbridge should be fully covered to protect from the elements and give natural light
- Local information and maps must be *inside* the station building
- Laptop and mobile charging points must be provided (both sides of barriers) with full Wi-Fi coverage (station building and platforms)
- Platforms should have maximum length of canopy i.e. the full length of the longest train
- There must be heated fully-enclosed waiting rooms on both platforms
- Customer information screens must be on the footbridge and along the full length of the platforms
- A Coffee kiosk should be provided on the platform as well as in the station building
- The route from cycle park / bus stop / taxi rank / drop-off point should be as close to the station building as possible; must be covered and well lit (same for car park if possible)
- Signage strategy must be devised to serve both the railway station and the surrounding area with travel time / distance to key destinations
- Charging points for electric vehicles must be available.

When a station opens it needs to be working well from day one. The term 'snagging' should mean a few insignificant things not working as planned. At Cambridge North it shouldn't have meant essential facilities such as ticket machines (TVMs) barely functioning for the first few months, or modern 'intelligent' trains not realising that the station exists requiring the train driver to perform a time-consuming override to release the doors. Or on-board information not showing the new station.

Railfuture is pleased that Cambridge North has improved much in the six months since it opened (and now has 5,000 users a week). We acknowledge that it has caused Greater Anglia (GA) a lot of grief – though rather more to the passengers – and have worked constructively with GA (who are still waiting for a full handover of the station by Network Rail) to identify issues and suggest how they could be resolved. On 1<sup>st</sup> November we spent

an hour with two GA managers walking around the station looking at what wasn't quite right. They took away a list of 10 changes we'd like to see (some as basic as additional, larger and up-to-date signage and stools for the desks in the waiting rooms). Two days after our meeting they told us that the TVMs now sell monthly season tickets, and we immediately publicised this – perhaps prematurely as our mystery shopper experienced difficulty entering his post code and we've now fed that back to GA. Continuous, albeit slow, improvement, through partnership.

However, we are sometimes left bewildered, such as the erection of an NCP sign stating the terms and conditions for car parking. Not only does it rival War and Peace for length, but one needs a magnifying glass to read it, first having to lie flat on the ground, as shown by this photo (right).

Railfuture welcomes the news that the train operators are to be much more involved in the design of **Cambridge South** (to serve Addenbrooke's hospital and the Biomedical campus) and trust that will also be the case with the new Waterbeach station. Ironically the private developers behind the latter may be better able to work with train operators than the seemingly over-bureaucratic and standards-obsessed Network Rail.

STOP PRESS: We are pleased to report that planning permission has been granted to build a hotel next to Cambridge North station building. Permission for an office block across the station square has been rejected because its entrance would be too close to the pedestrian and cycle path.



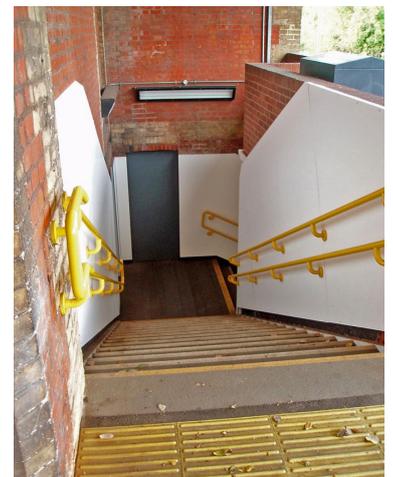
## “THE 49 STEPS” - NEEDHAM MARKET STATION

### IMPROVING ACCESS BY PETER FEENEY

No, not an undiscovered first draft of John Buchan's novel, but a story about serious on-going concern about Needham Market station, which highlights two interlinked issues:

1. unequal treatment of different passengers on the network brought about by infrastructural constraints
2. glacial pace at which official efforts to improve particular situations can seem to move. Via communication locally from MARPA (Mid-Anglia Rail Passenger Association), Railfuture has now become involved in supporting the long-standing campaign to improve matters at Needham Market.

The story so far: Needham Market is an unstaffed station on the Great Eastern main line, situated between Ipswich and Stowmarket. Closed in 1967, it re-opened four years later, with the original station building refurbished in 2000. The station is served by the hourly Ipswich-Cambridge service, with an additional evening peak-time train from Ipswich provided by the Ipswich-Peterborough service. Current annual passenger footfall is estimated by Greater Anglia at approximately 92,000. This is likely to grow as the local population expands through increasing residential development. It is also likely that peak-time passenger numbers will grow as the Mid-Suffolk District Council (MSDC) offices (currently situated in Needham Market) are re-located to Ipswich in the near future. Also, the station is adjacent to the Needham Lakes recreational area, a free attraction drawing upwards of 360,000 visitors a year, with obvious scope for increasing the proportion of visitors accessing the site by train.



There has been local concern for years about passenger access to the station. The platform serving trains westbound for Stowmarket and stations onward to Cambridge is on the 'town' side of the station, reached from the car park via a short ramp. The practical concern here is that the existing ramp is too steep (above the current 1-in-12 gradient maximum demanded by building regulations) for many wheelchair users to use with any confidence. The larger challenge at the station, however, concerns access to/from the Ipswich-bound platform. Currently, it is solely via a subway (see photo, above) that involves 49 steps in total. Whilst this completely precludes access for wheelchair users, it also makes using the station difficult for a wide range of other potential users – including



the elderly and infirm, parents with buggies, cyclists, and anyone with heavy luggage. Thus it's considered impossible or unnecessarily challenging for a significant proportion of potential passengers to travel by train, rather than being forced on to increasingly busy and congested Suffolk roads.

Of course, for wheelchair users and other registered disabled passengers there is the option provided by the network operator of arranging a free taxi to the nearest station with adequate platform access arrangements (in this instance, Stowmarket). Apart from expense, the disabled person needs to see that this facility is available, yet the absence of relevant signage/information at Needham Market has been aired by campaigners. And, of course, for potential passengers from the other groups identified, the operator provides no free alternative.

In efforts to address the situation, exploring practical solutions to the access problem began in 2011, with a feasibility study commissioned jointly by those three tiers of local government. At the time an application for funding from Access for All was made but proved unsuccessful. Since then, other and larger stations on the network have benefited from such funding, so there has been renewed interest in Needham Market working with relevant partners to obtain this money. The likeliest answer is based on what has been achieved at Manningtree, with a lift from each platform down to the existing subway.

Whilst Network Rail, Greater Anglia and relevant council officers have been positive partners in the local alliance of interested parties, most of the running to find a way forward and achieve a practical improvement has been made by energetic civil society activists in the community; residents, local councillors, campaigners for disability rights. A petition to Greater Anglia is currently underway, available both in hard copy and on line. <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/needham-market-train-station-accessible-to-all>

The campaign has attracted interest and gained positive coverage in the local press. In theory, with a strong local alliance in place, the omens for a positive outcome look good. That said, a final agreed and costed plan has yet to be produced and funding commitments for a project with a seven-figure bill attached are yet to be secured. Even with the wind blowing continuously in the right direction, optimistically assuming improvement work gets underway during sometime between 2019 - 2024, it is likely that the present highly unsatisfactory situation will persist for some time yet. Therefore travellers at Needham Market remain disadvantaged and facing the bracing challenge of the 49 steps.

## **RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA AUDIT OF SHELFORD STATION**

Railfuture members have completed a station audit of Shelford station (pictured below) and provided a report to Greater Anglia and local stakeholders including local authorities and the Shelford and Whittlesford Rail User Group (SAWRUG), which Railfuture helped to form.



Photo: Ben Walsh

Shelford station is well used with an annual footfall of 175,000. It is relatively well located serving a local population of 7470. Off peak there is an hourly service in both directions and during the peaks it is half hourly in both directions.

The team found that the station was clean and reasonably maintained with basic facilities. However, they felt that the following suggestions are worthy for consideration by the train operator and local authority:



Shelford level crossing viewed from Cambridge power signal box (photo Jerry Alderson)

- Increase the presence of the station by additional signage within the village and visible from the approach roads.
- Provide additional cycle racks although no obvious space within railway-owned land was identified.
- The platforms are likely to need further extension for the new trains due in 2019/2020.
- Provide additional shelter / customer information screens along the platform. The gap between the back of the platform and railway fence could be used for this.
- Due to journey time uncertainty of reaching the platforms because of frequent closures of the level crossing, consider a footbridge over the railway by the level crossing.
- Consider a separate entrance at the Cambridge end of the platforms and footbridge to reduce walking distance to the station for adjacent housing.

The full report can found at: [www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Stations](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Stations)

## CAMBRIDGE WINS “LARGE STATION OF THE YEAR” 2017

Yes, after passengers suffering a long hard rebuilding obstacle course, the efforts of designers and builders working in and around Cambridge Station has been rewarded. The National Rail Committee led by Mr Chris Green (of Network South East fame) reacted “Wow” when they stepped in to the rebuilt ticket hall and again on stepping outside. “We were amazed at the transformation since last visiting. But it won primarily because the upgrading affected every stage of the passenger’s journey.” Thanks too to IBIS hotel who allowed RAIL EAST editor, Chris Burton, access to take this photograph of the rebuilt forecourt, which is now referred to as the ‘station square’.



# WHITTLESFORD PARKWAY STATION MASTER PLAN?

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

We reported on our Whittlesford station audit in recent editions of RAIL EAST. So it is pleasing to report that Greater Anglia is preparing to install 200 additional cycle stands, in a mix of open and covered stands funded jointly by the DfT and the Greater Cambridge Partnership (formerly known as the Cambridge City Deal). They will be located on Network Rail land behind the London-bound platform access ramp that is currently overgrown (see photo, right).



There is a huge amount of rather piecemeal planning going on around the station. Railfuture would like all these ideas to be coordinated via a Master Plan. So we call on the Parish Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Cambridgeshire Combined Authority, the Imperial War Museum Duxford and SAWRUG (the user group) to get together with Greater Anglia.

The nearby 14th-century listed Duxford Chapel, the railway station and the 13th century Red Lion pub must be at the centre of the plan. With the other substantial economic developments taking place nearby, this is the time to create a unique rural quarter embracing a superior transport hub serving a wide area.

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# COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP GOES COMMERCIAL!

BY SUSAN VAN DE VEN

After many months' work, the Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership is ready to kick off a new phase, enjoying the oversight of a newly-formed Community Interest Company, which will provide legal and financial accountability. This reconstituted MSF CRP aims to expand its range of community projects, and will be supported by a new part-time paid post. The area is characterised by a preponderance of businesses and schools, providing rich opportunities for community liaison and development. Appropriately, a signing meeting took place at Shepreth Wildlife Park – the first local business to work with the CRP and the Train Operating Company, resulting in greater take-up of rail transport for visitors to the park.



ACORP has provided much useful advice and support, and South Cambridgeshire District Council has led the way on the formation of the Community Interest Company. Railfuture, Govia Thameslink Railway and Cambridgeshire County Council too have lent continuous support. Huge thanks to all, says **Susan van de Ven** (pictured centre left), who established the user group in 2010.

Meanwhile many local volunteers across the three stations have

ensured that new ACORP-funded weather-proof flower tubs have been filled for the new season, marking the completion of Cambridge-bound platform extensions at Shepreth and Foxton (pictured, right) by Network Rail. All in all, a great moment to welcome the advent of new eight-car trains to these stopping stations, ahead of the 2018 timetable that will double the frequency of service.



# MEETING THE NEEDS OF PASSENGERS

## POINTS FROM NORTH-EAST ESSEX (TENDRING DISTRICT)

### TONY BAXTER PROVIDES A DETAILED UPDATE

**Ticket offices:** No direct communication has been received from Greater Anglia or Transport Focus but, despite the latter's critical report, we have heard from staff/RMT that most ticket offices in Tendring will close in December 2017 just before Christmas. Stations involved are Harwich International, Dovercourt, Walton-on-the-Naze, Thorpe-le-Soken, Great Bentley and Alresford.

**Station Buildings:** Despite community interest, a way forward could not be found to renovate the main buildings at **Kirby Cross** and these were demolished during August. A basic 'bus shelter' has been recently installed; this is not quite the enclosed shelter originally proposed by Greater Anglia and their comments are awaited. Photographs below show the now demolished station building in 1982, when the ticket office was open, and the replacement 'bus shelter' on the same site.



**Weeley** station building awaits demolition but at **Great Bentley** the unannounced demolition of the small waiting room building on the up platform commenced. However, as this is situated in a conservation area, planning permission is required before any alterations can take place; thus demolition has been halted. A meeting was observed taking place on the platform on 1st November which appeared to involve the Parish Council. It is believed that this building was renovated and brought back into use by earlier franchisee, First Great Eastern. At **Alresford**, there has been long-term community interest in using the station building and this has been returned to Network Rail.

**Staff shortages:** A number of train service cancellations occurred recently owing to a reported shortage of train crews. On Friday 3rd November, one return working between Colchester and Walton-on-the-Naze together with two peak-hour evening return workings between Walton and Thorpe-le-Soken were cancelled; it was reported that between Thorpe-le-Soken and Walton these were replaced by a bus, while Clacton – Liverpool Street services covered intermediate stations to Colchester. Cancellations have also affected other Great Eastern main line services.

**Comfort of train seating:** There has been much adverse comment in the rail press recently concerning declining comfort of modern trains and a recent journey between Frinton and Colchester highlighted how much harder is the seating in the refurbished class 321s compared to the original. The visit, in August 2017, of the steam locomotive *Tornado* hauling a rake of Mk I coaches raised a considerable number of comments locally about how much more comfortable trains used to be: the Mk I coaches are virtually identical with the class 309 Clacton lass Walton emus prior to their refurbishment in the mid-1980s.

# NOT QUITE THE TICKET...YET!

## PAUL HOLLINGHURST ON NOT-SO-SMART TICKETING

In autumn 2017 the Department for Transport announced £80 million "to introduce smart ticketing across England and Wales by the end of 2018". **Paul Hollinghurst**, who has a smartcard, isn't impressed. He says the only commitment is that "every passenger will have the choice of travelling without a paper ticket" and mobile barcode ticketing and ticketing on mobile phones will be rolled out.

So far, something useful but nothing which could be described as particularly "Smart" - simply alternatives to paper tickets.

However, the DfT continue; "...pay-as-you-go travel is being rolled-out extensively across the rail network. The KeyGo system allows passengers to use their card to tap in and tap out across virtually the entire Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) networks, from Cambridge to Brighton, and automatically be charged the most appropriate fare for their journey."

Really? This is a complete fantasy. In practice the only product which works across most of the TSGN Network is the season ticket, perhaps the simplest product of all to implement. Even this can't be used at Cambridge as GTR (TSGN's owner) and Greater Anglia have not yet sorted out cross company compatibility with the barriers.

Passengers are very keen to get Smart Ticketing, but even TSGN are at a very embryonic stage with this and passengers are wondering when they will actually see major progress in areas such as pay as you go and part-time season tickets. This needs to be backed up by a simplified fares system otherwise "pay as you go" will become a confusing lottery.



Smartcard reader at Waterbeach station (photo Jerry Alderson)

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## SEAMLESS TRAVEL - PROGRESS WITH OUR PROJECT

### BY TREVOR GARROD

In the September 2017 issue of RAIL EAST I unveiled the Railfuture East Anglia project on Seamless Travel, particularly through ticketing between train and bus.

Thank you to members who have provided feedback - reporting, for example, that not all bus drivers are aware of PlusBus.

Twenty-one stations in our region are in the PlusBus scheme so that - for example - if you book a ticket to "King's Lynn Buses" or "Great Yarmouth Buses", then your fare includes onward bus travel to your final destination in the town or city. Sometimes it includes nearby villages, with "Huntingdon Buses" also taking you to Godmanchester and Brampton.

But have you experienced any difficulty in buying such a ticket? Please let us know.

When you arrive at the destination station, how easy is it to find and walk to the bus stop?

Norwich is one of the best examples, with the ample bus shelter clearly visible on the right as you come out of the station. At King's Lynn the bus station is a few minutes' walk from the rail station. If you arrive at Bury St Edmunds with your PlusBus ticket, the bus station is ten minutes' walk away up a hill. Where are the nearest bus stops? At Dovercourt the bus stop is up in the main street, a few minutes' walk away. You may find it easier to stay on the train a couple of minutes and use your PlusBus from Harwich Town instead. (*And Cambridge is near yet too far!! Ed.*)

Please let me have details of how easy or difficult it is; or contact me if you are willing to do some checking up at a station which you use. At this stage I am especially interested in PlusBus stations. These are marked by a small symbol in the Greater Anglia timetables. The next stage in the project will turn to towns such as Felixstowe, March, Sudbury and Thetford, which are not in the PlusBus scheme. Contact me at:

15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ or [trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk)

# A BIGGER AND BETTER RAILWAY — EAST WEST RAIL

## GUEST SPEAKER: PETER AUSTIN OF THE 'EAST WEST RAIL COMPANY'

Our next meeting will be addressed by **Peter Austin**, the Delivery Director of the '**East West Rail Company**'. He has been in the rail industry since 2002, starting with the Strategic Rail Authority. In 2007 he joined London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL) as Finance Director and in 2013 became Managing Director. Before joining LOROL he was Finance Manager at Laing Rail, which used to own Chiltern Railways, where he managed all financial aspects of major projects. This would have included early proposals for the direct Marylebone to Oxford rail service.



**Phil Smart** writes: Although we understand that this Company has yet to be formally 'Incorporated', its establishment has been justified on the following grounds:

1. To access private capital denied to Network Rail by its renationalisation
2. To introduce a measure of 'contestability' on project costs. (Projects currently cost what Network Rail say they will)
3. To integrate 'wheel and rail'. The company is tasked with delivering the project (i.e. design/construction) and running the services that will use it under a separate franchise
4. To speed up delivery of the central section to ensure it is available during the 2020s rather than the 2030s.

Although many of these aspirations may appear attractive, important questions remain:

- What legal construct will permit the establishment of an "arm's-length" company that allows it to access capital that is not currently available to state-owned Network Rail?
- If the stated purpose of the company is to 'design, finance, build and operate' (DFBO), then what incentive will it have to deliver a railway:
  - For long-distance services running over Network Rail lines (e.g. Bristol-Norwich or Oxford-Ipswich)?
  - Capable of handling freight?
  - That will be electrified (if the benefits of this are not realised immediately)?
- Could the new company be tasked with delivering improvements on Network Rail lines either side of the central section (e.g. junctions at Ely and Haughley, Trowse swing bridge, track doubling between Chippenham Junction and Cambridge and additional platform capacity at Ipswich, Norwich and Cambridge stations)? In other words, to make the eastern section 'central section ready'.

One possibility is that such enhancements might permit additional services to run on the central section and thus earn the company additional access charges from other operators. Another is that the new company might itself be able to offer services to a wider choice of destinations.

There might also be an argument that by getting the new company to contribute to works that, although already in the Network Rail programme, have been deferred (e.g. Haughley Junction) the company could earn a proportion of the access charges that would accrue to Network Rail as a result of the additional capacity. In the case of freight this could be significant since freight bears all its access charges.

We hope to find out more at this **2nd December 2017** meeting in Cambridge, at the **Tamburlaine Hotel** (entrance is pictured right), 27-29 Station Road, CB1 2FB, starting at 14:00. The hotel ([www.thetamburlaine.co.uk](http://www.thetamburlaine.co.uk)) is just two minutes' walk from the front entrance of the station – walk straight across the square, beyond the first set of buildings, and it is on your right. We look forward to seeing you. Refreshments will be available at the hotel.



# RAIL UPGRADES IN EAST ANGLIA

## NORWICH-YARMOUTH/LOWESTOFT 'WHERRY LINES' RESIGNALLING

On 27th September two representatives of the Railfuture East Anglia branch, including Peter Wakefield, who reports here, attended the Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership Meeting in Norwich to hear Network Rail officials give an overview of Norwich-Great Yarmouth-Lowestoft re-signalling project. The stated aim is to provide a 24/7 railway at completion when control will transfer to a new panel in Colchester Power (Signal) Box. Double-track sections will remain as will current single line with passing loops. Some 3.5 miles of the track will be duly renewed.

**The iconic swing bridges** at Reedham (pictured below, viewed from the signal box walkway) and Somerleyton will continue to be controlled locally but the protecting signals will be controlled from Colchester. The metalwork of the bridge superstructure is currently under repair and all of it is to be repainted.



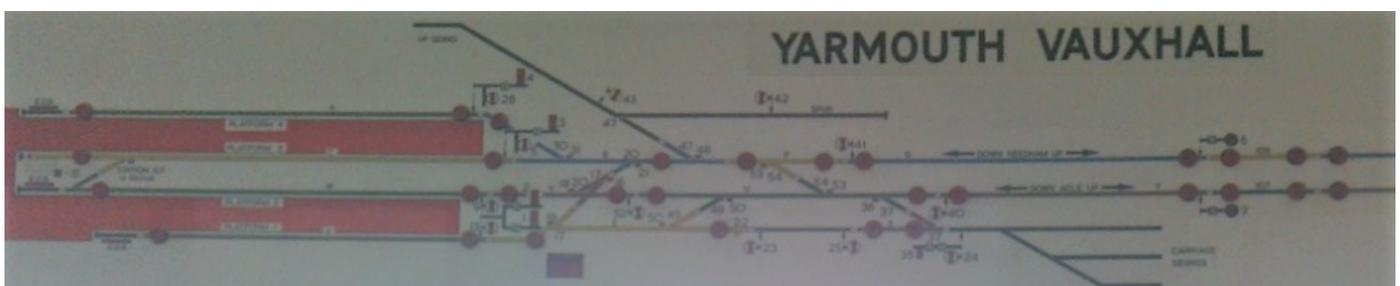
Photo: Jerry Alderson

### Capacity Maintained

In answer to a question about capacity we were assured that the new signalling will provide for more services if required, with three trains per hour (tph) to both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft being possible. Pro-rata we assumed eight tph between Whitlingham Junction (where the Sheringham branch diverges) and Norwich, plus the occasional freight service would also be possible.

The freight facilities at Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth will be maintained with repaired, remodelled sidings and all point-operation motorised. Those at Lowestoft Yard will be upgraded with DB Cargo and West Coast Railway operations in mind, and those at Great Yarmouth for possible freight use. Of these Great Yarmouth sidings, three are owned by Greater Anglia (GA) and three by Norfolk County Council. Train builder Stadler with GA will use the refurbished sidings at Great Yarmouth to commission their new trains. Work is already underway. Diagram below from wall on Yarmouth signal box (Photo: Jerry Alderson)

**Speed Improvements:** The Network Rail team said that there would be minor speed improvements and within the current line speed limits, ALL lower permanent speed restrictions and temporary speed restrictions will be removed. This will add timing benefits to those of the improved acceleration offered by the new fleet. This new era of signalling will coincide in 2019 with the introduction of these new Stadler trains.



## HUNSTANTON RAILWAY REINSTATEMENT – BY PETER WAKEFIELD

Many readers will know that the loss of the King's Lynn to Hunstanton Railway in 1969 is still keenly felt in West Norfolk. Indeed, the sense of loss seemed to be growing to even greater height in 2017. On 19th October I was invited to a meeting of the newly formed **King's Lynn to Hunstanton Railway Steering Group** to brief local councillors who wish to reinstate the railway between the two towns. Based on the cost per mile of the Borders Railway, reinstatement will be roundly £155m. (Which shows the wilful disregard in the 1960s of what a priceless asset was being destroyed!)

The new campaign is being very ably led by Georgina Turner. We will have a full description of the project in the February 2018 issue of Rail East. In the meantime:

**Sign the change.org petition** <http://bit.ly/2qAvUpU> [2,500 in mid-November 2017]

<https://www.facebook.com/Kings-Lynn-to-Hunstanton-Railway-131169204112033/>

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## UPDATE ON MARCH-WISBECH LINE REOPENING

As reported in the RAIL EAST September 2017 issue the reinstatement of the railway to Wisbech continues to be supported by national politicians. The recent Wisbech 20:20 conference held at Fenland District Council, revealed the great support for railway reinstatement: 94% of Wisbech residents questioned thought the rail link *the* top priority in relation to the proposed new town. On all counts 75% thought it was a top priority anyway: so both number one spots in priority lists. The Combined Authority Mayor, James Palmer, has reiterated that is a top priority for the Authority.

Please see the informative slides produced by the various presenters at the conference at the link below: <http://www.wisbech2020vision.co.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=14303&p=0>

Railfuture remains concerned, however, by the increasing cost. Now at about £117m it is felt that Network Rail has loaded extraneous cost onto the project, such as a share of the Ely upgrade. Inevitably this is reducing the hitherto excellent rate of return (BCR). We hope that the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, during an interview at the Parliamentary Select Committee for Transport, that the Ely Area Capacity Works will be funded, thereby reducing Wisbech project costs. PW

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## LEVEL CROSSINGS: NICK DIBBEN REPORTS FROM WEST OF REGION

The Department of Transport has approved the Transport and Works Act application by Network Rail to close Abbots Ripton level crossing, to the north of Huntingdon on the East Coast Main Line. Alternative access arrangements will be provided using a new path via an existing underpass 400m away. Granting the order will allow Network Rail to progress with the reinstatement of the fourth track along this section of the route. Railfuture supported the application.

The extra track will enable two additional long-distance high-speed services to run in each direction per hour as well as improving the reliability of commuter and freight services. The provision of a new station north of Huntingdon to serve the new Alconbury Weald development comprising 5000 new homes and 150ha of new employment land is also dependent on the extra track. We are pleased to learn that the latter is merely a deferred project, not an abandoned one.

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## REPORT FROM RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA MEETING - NORWICH



Our speaker at Norwich on 30 September 2017 was Mr **Chris Starkie** (pictured left), Chief Executive of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. Nick Dibben and Chris Burton report on his presentation.

There are 38 LEPs in England, set up by the Government to help develop the local economies they oversee. They help create jobs by developing skills and providing support for local firms, they can also provide help to develop new infrastructure such as broadband telecommunications. The New Anglia LEP covers Norfolk and Suffolk and works closely with the LEPs in adjacent areas. Its membership is drawn from local authorities, business and the education sector.

The LEP was the driving force behind the Rail Prospectus for East Anglia, a document containing some Railfuture input, which set out a vision of developing the railway in the region and showing the economic benefits that investment and improved rail services would bring. That work continues, with the Great Eastern main-line task force's latest research indicating that improvements to the route would have a benefit to cost ratio of 9:1. The LEP is currently helping to fund development work to ease the rail bottlenecks, especially Ely North Junction. In that context, Chris intriguingly stated that Felixstowe imports/exports more goods to northern England than all the other UK container ports put together. More grist to the Ipswich-Peterborough/Cambridge railway upgrade menu.

During the discussion, Mr Starkie raised the prospect of a new regional transport authority that could help run future rail franchises. That view sparked some lively debate both for and against. Mr Starkie has hinted that Railfuture could be invited to future LEP meetings when transport was being discussed.

As a change from our usual rail industry speakers, the meeting allowed for a more general discussion on how rail interfaces with other aspects of our society.

Chris was presented with a copy of Railfuture's new book Britain's Growing Railway (on sale on our website for £9.95) by Nick Dibben (left).



## SUFFOLK & ESSEX RAIL CONFERENCE HELD AT IPSWICH TOWN FC GROUND 10TH NOVEMBER 2017

### REPORT BY PHIL SMART

What follows is an edited version of Phil Smart's more extensive report. The event followed a similar format to the Suffolk Rail Conference of previous years but with the significant difference that it was a joint conference with the county of Essex and to reflect the broader geographical coverage, held in a larger room!

The first speaker was **Meliha Duymaz**, Network Rail Route Managing Director (East). She described how £3bn spending in the region in Control Period 5 (2014-19) divided roughly into thirds with £1bn each going to maintenance, renewals and enhancements. The latter mainly works preparing for Crossrail but also referenced Cambridge North.

By December 2018 we would have an idea of how much of the £48bn funding for CP6 (2016-2024) would be coming to East Anglia. She grouped priorities into three areas:

1. Great Eastern Mainline where the priorities were
  - a) Haughley Junction
  - b) Trowse Bridge
  - c) Longer loops at Witham to accommodate freight as well as passenger trains
  - d) Signalling to the 'Digital Railway' standard south of Chelmsford
  - e) Increased capacity at Liverpool Street
2. Cross Country
  - A) Felixstowe Branch (where works are to start in spring 2018 to increase capacity)
  - b) Haughley junction (again!)
  - c) Improving signalling headway at Bury St Edmunds
  - d) Ely-Soham doubling
  - e) Ely Junctions – where LEP funding had helped extract a commitment from the Secretary of State that this would be done in CP6
3. West Anglia where she referred to the coming of 'East West Rail' as a 'Key Enabler' for economic growth.

There were several other Speakers who included:

**Alistair Southgate**, Transport Strategy Manager at Essex County Council, was tasked with talking about the Great Eastern Mainline. He referred to the establishment of the Task Force but said that much remained to be done to cope with the anticipated 75% growth to 2040, not least the issue of Stratford, which will need a major makeover.

The needs of the **West Anglia Main Line** were covered in an address by **Sir Alan Hazelhurst** who drew attention to the expansion at Addenbrookes and Gt. Chesterford. Since his retirement as an MP however, he seemed to have got a bit out of touch with recent developments and made few friends with his description of East-West Rail as a 'romantic distraction'!

**Paul Davey** of Hutchison Ports gave the case for Freight reminding us that rail produced only a quarter of the carbon of road transport. He showed us that Felixstowe Port is the largest container port in the UK handling 4.1m TEU (twenty-foot container equivalents) per year, twice the volume of the second-largest port (Southampton). About 30% of the UK bound containers they handled went by Rail. Their rail terminal alone handled over 1m TEU but had capacity for 1.8m. His priority for freight was to have a cohesive network and repeated the call for improvements to Haughley and Ely junctions.

Following an interesting presentation by **Aaron Taffera** about the work of **Community Rail Partnerships** and the dramatic increase in use of the East Suffolk line since the Beccles loop the conference was closed by Kevin Bentley who referred to the imminent establishment of **Regional Transport Boards**. These would be comprised of representatives of both tiers of local government with '**Transport East**' likely to cover the area of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire. Watch this space!

## **MIND THE GAP: CELEBRATING THE HIDDEN HISTORIES OF WOMEN AND MID-ANGLIA RAILWAYS**



**Bury St Edmunds Art Gallery Trust Ltd** trading as Smiths Row has just received a National Lottery grant of £34,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a series of exhibitions and events in Bury St Edmunds called **Mind the Gap**. Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the project celebrates the hidden histories of the women and families whose lives were shaped by the railway in Bury St Edmunds through a series of events and two exhibitions. The exhibition at Moyses Hall opens on 15th December and run until the end of 24th February 2018 to enable Railfuture members to visit whilst attending the meeting in Bury.

The exhibition at Moyses's Hall Museum will include original posters, artwork and historic railway artefacts, many on public display for the first time. At Bury St Edmunds Railway station illustrated panels will reveal the hidden lives and memories of passengers and workers forged at the station in particular the women who worked in the refreshment room, the Railway Mission and the East Anglian artists whose designs epitomise the Golden Age of rail travel. This is exemplified by the life and work of the renowned railway poster designer, Sybil Andrews (1898-1992). She was a daughter of Bury St Edmunds and the 25th anniversary of her death coincides with the 170th anniversary of the station. A new school in the town was named in her honour in January 2017 and her vibrant prints and posters have become highly collectable as her reputation has grown.

It is all the more timely to uncover these histories as this country celebrates the centenary of women's suffrage in 2018.

Bury Station Supporters and Greater Anglia are kindly giving in-kind support to the project and we are keen to involve the wider railway community in the project so if you have stories and artefacts related to Bury St Edmunds Station we would be very interested in hearing from you. Please contact Alison Plumridge on 07505 746477 or email: [Alison.plumridge@smithsrow.org](mailto:Alison.plumridge@smithsrow.org)

The exhibition has been curated by Smiths Row and has been generously funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Cllr Julia Wakelam of St Edmundsbury Borough Council. We are also indebted to Greater Anglia, Moyses's Hall Museum and Sybil Andrews Academy for their support.

To join in or find out more follow Moyses Hall and Smiths Row on Facebook or Twitter.

**RAIL EAST 176 — NOVEMBER 2017 Railfuture East Anglia [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)**

# RAIL USER GROUPS — GET READY FOR CHANGE

BY JERRY ALDERSON

There are hundreds of Rail User Groups in Britain, many started with the assistance and encouragement of Railfuture. It's great that so many have chosen to become affiliate members, and we welcome more groups. To join please visit [www.railfuture.org.uk/join](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join).

Over the next few months Railfuture, like many organisations, will face a challenge from a new law, and it's going to affect Rail User Groups (RUGs) as well. Start preparing now.

It doesn't matter how large or small an organisation is, nor whether it is incorporated. But the fines for not following the law can be huge.

Britain introduced the Data Protection Act in 1984. Initially it only applied to personal data stored on a computer system. These days, of course, everything under the sun is stored on computers, but returning to pen and paper — or tablets of stone — is no escape from GDP: the **General Data Protection Regulation**, which takes effect from **25th May 2018**.

For years every organisation that has held personal information has had to ensure that they only store as much information as is actually needed, only for as long as it is needed, is up to-date, is held securely, and is accessible only by authorised people who use it only for the reasons stated. Railfuture has always abided by the law and we are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. With thousands of members nationally it was right to do so. Rail campaigning and representative organisations that have membership databases will need to put in place processes to give ownership of that data to the individuals concerned.

Individuals will have the right to determine whether their contact details can be used. They will also have the 'right to be forgotten', able to demand that data about them is destroyed.

The major change is that in order to contact any individual — whether by post, email, phone or text message — any organisation will need to have proof of consent by that person to be contacted, and for each medium. Individuals do not opt-out they opt-in. If they have not given consent then the default is no consent. Every organisation that has members will need to contact them and ask for permission. All correspondence about this must be neutral—it cannot default to 'yes'. Nor can it default to 'continue as present'. It must be explicit.

In theory, after 25th May, a RUG will not be allowed to contact any member who has not given them permission to do so. It must be stressed that Railfuture is still investigating what GDPR will mean, and cannot offer advice, but we can reveal what Railfuture will be doing.

Every member will be contacted and asked to give consent to receive correspondence by each of the (currently) four possible means (post, email, phone and text message). To keep costs down we will contact members by email first, following up with letters by post. To make it as easy as possible for members to give consent we will set-up a facility on our website to give consent, and also to check that the contact details are correct. This will mean a lot of IT changes so we will be phasing in the facilities over the next few months.

Railfuture is a national organisation with 14 branches. If a member decides to withdraw consent—or just resigns—then it is vital that the branch becomes aware of that change as soon as practicable. This means that branches will no longer hold lists of local members but will obtain an up-to-date list from the national database when they need a list, and will destroy it after it has been used. We will all have to be much more disciplined.

But it's not just about members. If a non-member books a conference online we get their email and postal address. We can use it to fulfill their purchase but once the conference is over, perhaps allowing for sending a feedback form, we must destroy their contact details unless they have allowed us to retain them.

If we hold a public meeting can we pass round an attendance list? What can we ask people to put on the list? What can we do with that list afterwards?

Frankly, we're as much in the dark as everyone else, at the moment. Things will become clear over time. There are good reasons for introducing the new regulations but for those of us who just want to campaign for a bigger and better railway it sure is a big distraction!

## AT THE TERMINUS

After around ten years of compiling this quarterly magazine, I've decided to take a rest so contributions for next edition of RAIL EAST should go to Peter Wakefield to collate, no later than Saturday 27 January 2018. Formatting will be done by Jerry Alderson. It will be in very good hands of that I'm sure so keep those contributions sailing in PLUS your relevant pictures. There is obviously no RAIL EAST without them. And the biggest of thank-you's to each and every one who has responded so willingly, so often, to my tedious clarion calls for material.

The past decade has certainly seen an immense degree of improvement in our local network, with much still to do. May the next ten years be at least as exciting: Wisbech reopening and maybe, real physical progress on East-West from Bedford to Cambridge for starters. I shall be despondent, however, if Ely North Junction and Trowse Swing Bridge rebuilding have still not been completed by 2028. Indeed, a Network Rail senior manager recently claimed that she would "be ashamed of her industry" if the former was not completed before 2024.

I also hope to literally feel a real improvement in seat quality over the coming period: we are regularly told current designs are led by anti-fire considerations, yet train weight is surely at least as strong a consideration if candour was to the fore. I also am apprehensive about Network Rail's increasing lack of cash for maintenance. Just recently ancient jointed bullhead track at Somerleyton was replaced with new, jointed bullhead track, would you believe? Not in any way a good sign, as welded track is always cheaper to maintain.

This reminded me of a story related in Richard Marsh's autobiography when he vehemently objected to like-for-like replacement because HM Treasury viewed welded track as new capital investment! Happily, the then Minister of Transport, John Peyton, overruled the civil servant's rationale. That was back in the 1970s. But will Chris Grayling do the same if objections are raised?

Meantime, when we get there, a very best wishes for Christmas and New Year.

**CHRIS BURTON**

As well as the retirement of the editor, after 10 years, it is also the end of the "Railway Development Society" name after almost 40 years, having merged with the Railway Development Association and Railway Invigoration Society back in 1978. From 1st January 2018 the company will be renamed **Railfuture Limited**, to reflect the campaigning name that we've been using since 2001.

Join us in **CAMBRIDGE** at the Tamburlaine Hotel on Station Road on **Saturday 2 December 2017 from 14:00**. Guest speaker will be Peter Austin, Delivery Director of the 'East West Rail Company'.

We hope that a Network Rail senior manager will be guest speaker at our branch AGM in Bury St Edmunds on 24 February 2018.

The ambitious travellers amongst you may wish to venture north of the border to Edinburgh for the Railfuture national AGM at the prestigious Holyrood Hotel on Saturday 12 May 2018.

The national summer conference will be in Carlisle on 23 June 2018.

Please do follow Railfuture East Anglia on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/RailfutureEA>

# **railfuture** East Anglia

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## **MEETING DATES AND VENUES**

**SATURDAY 2 DEC 2017**

Tamburlaine Hotel  
27-29 Station Road

**CAMBRIDGE**

CB1 2FB

**SATURDAY 24 FEB 2018**

Friends Meeting House  
St John's Street

**BURY ST EDMUNDS**

IP33 1SJ

**SATURDAY 16 JUN 2018**

St Mary's at Stoke  
Church Hall, Stoke Street

**IPSWICH**

IP2 8DA

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*is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee.*

*Registered in England and Wales No. 5011634.*

*Registered Office:- 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND*