

## From your Branch Chairman

I try to make some positive comments in my missives, but as I write this one it is very difficult to find anything to be positive about.

I have been out and about by train and have felt very safe. Trains were quite well filled, but not full enough to prevent social distancing, which was similar to reports I had been receiving from friends who had also been using the train. This was quite positive when we remember that the government had spent weeks telling everyone not to use public transport and even when we were allowed to use it again, any encouragement from them had been distinctly lukewarm.

However, these positive vibes did not last very long. Today the number of Coronavirus cases has risen again by nearly 2,500 and in areas where travel is not restricted, there is a strong likelihood it will be in the very near future. Numbers travelling by rail will inevitably fall back to

levels close to those when we had the original 'lockdown'.

'What happens next?' is the question everyone seems to be asking, but I do not think anyone has any real answer. What we do know is that the earliest anyone is seriously predicting a vaccine might be available for the general public, as opposed to key workers, is next June.

Even then, how long is it going to take before trains are busy again? Currently the commuter market is almost non-existent with many office workers working from home and others choosing to use their car to get to work. Having talked to quite a few of the home workers, I cannot see a lot of them going back to full time in the office, unless their employers insist. Employees might have some extra household expenses, but nowhere near what they are saving in not having to pay for rail fares and not spending time commuting.

Reports are that many employers are also finding that their employees are working more efficiently and that's even without considering the savings that could be made by reducing the amount of office space they are renting. Leisure passengers have come back in bigger numbers than commuters, but

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**A busy lunchtime at Lincoln station on 26 August this year, with trains waiting to depart to Sheffield, Peterborough, London Kings Cross and Grimsby.**

*Photo: David Harby*

nowhere near to pre Covid levels.

If, as seems certain, passenger numbers are not going to be back to pre Covid levels for some years, then the big questions are 'How long is HM Treasury going to be prepared to continue to fund the railways? and what is going to be demanded in return?'

Service reductions and staff cuts to save money? Almost new rolling stock taken off lease? More services where the drivers open and close doors and replace conductors with revenue protection staff at much lower wages? Will we need the planned route upgrades if fewer services are being run?

All these options have already been suggested in the media (including the rail media who are not given to sensationalist thoughts) and that is without the worst option of all – line closures. Railfuture are well aware of these suggestions and you can be assured that we will be doing all

we can to mitigate the effects on our passengers services.

Turning to domestic matters, we have been unable to have any committee meetings where we meet together in a room but we have kept in regular contact by email and telephone, and we have made use of Webex for some online meetings. In addition to our normal committee meetings we have held some short meetings on specific topics which are an innovation that has been so successful we are likely to continue with it even when in-person meetings can resume.

This is normally the issue of *Rail Lincs* where I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. This time my thoughts are with you all and I can only say I hope you keep safe and look forward to seeing many of you on the web, if not in person, at our AGM.

*David Harby, Branch Chairman*

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## Franchises R.I.P.

Even before Covid, some franchises had already collapsed and it was clear that others were in dire straights, so the introduction of Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs), in March, was just delaying the day when franchising would end. The final death knell of rail franchising, after 24 years, came with a government announcement on 21 September.

The TV and newspapers have given the impression that franchises will be replaced by Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements (ERMAs) but this is not true for all franchises. The situation locally is as follows:

LNER and Northern both have direct awards from the government owned Operator of Last Resort so are not under an ERMA.

Abellio owned East Midlands Railway (EMR) has been offered an ERMA to

March 2022 and First Group owned TransPennine Express (TPE) has been offered an ERMA to September 2021. Both these ERMAs come with a management fee of 1.5% but have tougher performance targets than the former EMA. EMR and TPE have until mid December to agree with Department for Transport (DfT) the payments required to terminate the existing franchise contracts. If agreement is not reached the ERMAs will end in January and presumably the Operator of Last Resort will be called in to run the franchise.

Hull Trains is an open access operator so is not part of the agreement. They receive no subsidy so are at the mercy of the market and, if passenger numbers do not recover quickly, for how long is the owners, First Group, prepared to fund them.

*(David Harby)*

## Railfuture Passenger Group

About three years ago, I was invited by Allison Cosgrove, one of the directors of Railfuture, to join the Passenger Group, one of the sub groups of Railfuture. The aim of the group is to represent passengers on all issues of interest and concern to them. Activities of the group include responding to consultations and campaigning to bring passengers back to rail by working with the rail industry on issues of concern, such as fares, ticketing, punctuality and reliability, and developing links with European rail.

Since becoming a member of the group, I have been involved in working with the secretary, Nick Lewis, on a station survey which is now finalised and is available on the Railfuture web site for all members to use. It was in fact used by me and Mike Savage on our summer tour of the N. Lincs and Doncaster stations.

Meetings have been held virtually this year and we decided that we should focus our campaigning energies on encouraging passengers back to rail travel, focussing on how safe it is, closely aligned with climate change issues, together with lobbying for a national Smartcard. The next meeting is planned for Saturday 14 November. If anyone would like to contribute to any of these campaigns, do let me know and I will try and make sure you are updated with the outcomes of meeting. *(Ann Hindley)*

## LATE NEWS

With Covid infections growing rapidly, it was really no surprise to receive the news that East Midlands Railway (EMR) are introducing a revised timetable from 26 October. At the time of writing (21 October), they have over 70 staff off work, with the majority of these from Nottingham Eastcroft depot, so the reductions are mainly services which are operated by Nottingham crews. These are not all infected with Covid, some will be self isolating due to contact with a confirmed or potential Covid case and some will be maintenance staff rather than train crew.

This new timetable still runs just over 90% of services, so is not as bad as in the Spring. It is said these are to be short term reductions, but, realistically, I do not think we can expect any change until the New Year, unless it has to be reduced again due to train crew shortages in Lincolnshire.

We have yet to hear of any cuts to Northern services, but with Sheffield being, like Nottingham, a high Covid infection area, it is probably only a matter of time before we do hear of some.

In the meantime, if you are intending to travel by train, you should check the timetable a few days in advance and check the ToC website on the day of travel just in case there are any last minute cancellations. *(David Harby)*

## Back on the Tracks



*I recently boarded a train at Great Coates bound for Cleethorpes, my first rail journey since Lockdown. There were several of us on the platform, with a good few other passengers on board. Everyone followed the social distancing restrictions, and the train arrived on time at its destination.* *(Tim Mickleburgh)*

# Grantham Car Parking

Work is underway to increase the number of car parking spaces at Grantham station. The LNER operated car park at the South end of the station is being extended to accommodate a further 115 cars, utilising waste land on its Eastern boundary. The area contained a siding and has been used for storage by Network Rail contractors. In September 2013 it was the site of the Mallard at Grantham event. Presumably the work is part of planned improvements at Grantham made long before Covid-19, as at present, observations at the station reveal numerous empty parking spaces as passenger numbers have dramatically declined. Surprisingly, additional parking is being provided at a time when the two large NCP car parks on Station Road East have not been fully utilised for sometime, even before Covid. The one at the bottom of the road has been locked out of use, except for a Sunday morning car boot sale.

The scheme also includes resurfacing of the Station Approach, improved pedestrian crossings and LED lighting.

When LNER announced the additional parking, local press and councillors speculated on making overall improvements to the area between the town centre and railway station, harking back to a proposal, made some eight years ago, for a Gateway to Grantham project, regenerating the area East of the station with a tree-lined pedestrian walkway to the station, improved bus and taxi parking and even a multi-storey car park. Ambitious plans which have quietly disappeared! (PM)

# Which organisation does what for transport?

*From recent email discussions with members, it is clear that there is confusion as to which organisation is responsible for which task, so here is a brief summary.*

## **Department for Transport (DfT)**

Lets franchises and direct awards and monitors their progress. Oversees Network Rail.

## **Midlands Connect and Northern Powerhouse**

Have a remit to boost economic growth in the midlands and north respectively. Part of this remit is investigating and proposing ways of improving connectivity by road and rail. They can make proposals for road and rail improvements, but the ultimate decision on funding for these schemes is made by DfT.

## **Transport for East Midlands (TfEM) and Transport for the North (TfN) – sub regional transport bodies.**

TfN has remit to develop and deliver strategic transport infrastructure across the North of England though they have no funds to do this. TfEM have recently been set up with an initial remit to monitor the East Midland Railway (EMR) franchise and liaise with stakeholders.

## **Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincs Council and North East Lincs Council**

These are the local authorities with a highways and transport remit locally. They can develop plans for local rail schemes, new stations etc but have very little money of their own to pay for them. Funding has to be found from elsewhere.

## **District Councils**

These have no transport remit but can propose and lobby for new stations, station improvements and sometimes find some funding from non transport budgets. The key role they do have is that they are the planning authority so can assist station improvements by insisting that developers contribute to improvements when they are

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developing large housing or industrial sites such as Persimmon contributing to the Hykeham station upgrade.

### **Network Rail**

Is responsible for the repair and renewal of track and manage some larger stations (none in Lincolnshire). A programme of repairs and renewals is agreed with DfT every 4 years and funded by DfT. Note that renewals are on a like for like basis. Anything above like for like has to come from elsewhere which can be another DfT budget. DfT have another separate fund to pay for major schemes such as digital signalling on ECML and these are agreed and funded on an individual basis.

Last, but definitely not least, is **H.M.Treasury** which ultimately controls how much money is allocated to all the bodies listed above and frequently micro manage how it is spent.

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### **How you could help Railfuture**

Elsewhere in this *Rail Lincs*, there is a formal notice from Don Peacock about the branch committee for next year. This seems an opportune time to remind members of how Railfuture is organised and where there are opportunities for you to help us.

Railfuture is a not for profit company headed by a board of nine directors. Each serves for three years and three are elected each year. The board sets national policy and deals with administrative matters such as insurance. Any member is welcome to put themselves forward for election to the board. Directors have legal responsibilities and so before each election potential candidates are given an opportunity to talk to a panel who will explain what this involves.

The board is advised on policy matters by a Policy Director, who is currently Ian Brown CBE FCILT. He in turn takes advice from three specialist committees: Passenger, Infrastructure and Freight. Any member with a special interest is welcome to put themselves forward for membership of these committees.

In addition, there are roles for a finance

officer, persons who can help with publicity, membership promotion, organising conferences or indeed any specialist skill could be useful.

If you feel you have the qualities necessary to serve as a director or any other role please contact myself and I will give more details.

Below these national roles, our branch structure consists of 14 branches who campaign in their own areas. Committees are elected annually, so now I make my usual annual plea for volunteers.

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## **RAIL CUTBACKS ON THE HORIZON WE NEED YOUR HELP**

Currently the Treasury is paying around three quarters of a billion pounds every month to run near empty trains. They will not continue this indefinitely when there are competing demands for spending from NHS, increased unemployment, education etc etc. In the rail industry we have to accept that cutting costs is going to be forced on us. The question is where they are going to fall. Railfuture are making plans to be in a position to influence priorities, but for the branch to have input into this we need your opinions. What sort of rail service do you want to see? What are your priorities? Reduced frequency, but longer trains? Less early morning and evening services? Delay infrastructure upgrades (will they be needed anyway if less passengers are travelling?) What about fares? Abolish the difference between peak and off peak fares with the inevitable increase in fares?

We plan to discuss this at our next committee meeting on 28 November so please let [david.harby@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:david.harby@railfuture.org.uk) have your responses before then. If there is enough interest we then plan to have web meetings to discuss the 2 topics – fares and ticketing, services after Covid – both 40 minutes long. Again, please let David know if you wish to take part.

## Upgrade to Newark to Lincoln line

Living next to the line from Newark to Lincoln, I have been advised by Network Rail of improvements that they are making to allow the maximum speed for trains to be increased from 50mph, Newark to Collingham and 70mph onward to Lincoln, to 75mph for the whole route. They hope to have this work completed by the end of 2022.

In order to achieve this, Network Rail has to improve the signalling and the level crossings on the route.

The mechanical signal box and signals in the Swinderby area will be replaced by modern L.E.D. signals controlled from Lincoln, and the level crossing next to the station will have full barriers controlled from Lincoln. Three other level crossings, on the main road from Newark to Collingham, Collingham station and Hykeham station, will be converted from automatic half barriers to full barriers controlled from Lincoln and all four crossings will be fitted with obstacle detection technology.

Cross Lane level crossing at

Collingham will be closed and a new road built to connect to Swinderby Road level crossing, which will be renewed. The remaining automatic half barrier crossings on the route will have either signalling or telecommunications upgrades to make them safer. The closure of Cross Lane will enable trains in the Lincoln direction, which stop at Collingham, to leave at a higher speed.

Foot crossings will be upgraded to have red light warning systems for users and a banner repeater signal will be installed on the Newark side of Hykeham level crossing, to allow trains towards Lincoln, not stopping, at Hykeham, to run at a higher speed, as the current signal protecting Doddington Road level crossing cannot be seen until the train has passed Hykeham station.

These changes should enable stopping trains to be speeded up by 2 to 3 minutes and non-stop trains by 4 to 5 minutes.

At present, the speed limit from Newark to Nottingham will remain at 60mph but Network Rail have told me that they are looking to increase that if at all possible.

*(Chris Brown)*

## Strengthening Grantham Bridges

Network Rail is carrying out a £2.7million project to strengthen two bridges in Grantham, which are notorious for being struck high vehicles: Barrowby Road Bridge (No. 246) and Springfield Road Bridge (No. 240).

The work is taking place on one bridge at a time to reduce disruption to traffic in the town, and involves repairs to the steel and brickwork, re-waterproofing the bridges and re-painting sections of them.

Barrowby Road bridge is closed from 1 September until 4 December, causing severe disruption to traffic as it is on the route of the major A52 road through the town.

Once Barrowby Road reopens, work begins on Springfield Road bridge in January, which will remain closed until completion in March 2021.

Both roads need to close for one weekend, on 28 & 29 November, as work takes place to improve the drainage on both bridges. This part of the project will also impact on train services, as the line will be closed to allow the work to take place.

Fortunately, despite both bridges having to be closed to road traffic, pedestrians will still be able to use them.

*(PM)*

# Werrington Grade Separation

The Werrington Grade Separation Project just North of Peterborough will have an important impact on services on the Great Northern Great Eastern (GNGE) Joint Line into Lincolnshire. The project is part of the wider East Coast Upgrade Programme planned to increase passenger capacity on the East Coast Main Line (ECML).

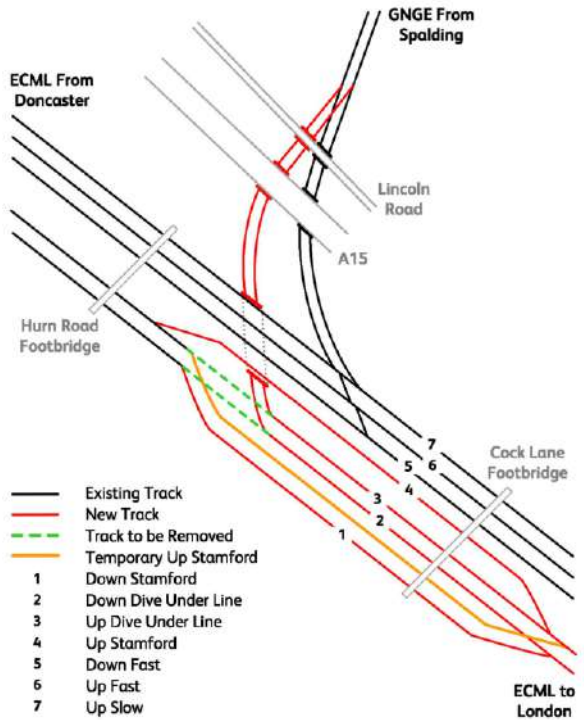
The new line will remove constraints to the timetable caused by slower freight trains on the GNGE route crossing over the high-speed East Coast lines at Werrington Junction.

The majority of freight trains using the Joint Line are workings between Felixstowe and freight hubs at Doncaster, Teesport, Wakefield and Leeds. Trains from and to these Northern locations have to cross the ECML from the East side of Peterborough to the West side of the station in order to access the line to March, Ely and points East.

A new dive under will provide an alternative route by enabling the new two track railway to run underneath the ECML, separating it from high speed passenger traffic.

The work is well underway. In January, the Peterborough to Stamford line was slewed to provide space for ramps to the new tunnel. Recently, work has been underway on the actual tunnel boring. Firstly with the construction of two three and a half metre diameter, 168 metre long guide tunnels prior to installation of a Tunnel Boring Machine to tunnel under the ECML whilst trains continue to run at 125 mph. Finally a curved box, constructed on site, will be pushed under the ECML, forming the actual tunnel.

As the area around the dive-under is fairly flat, questions, from the layman's point of view, were asked, at last Autumn's LNER Stakeholder Conference, querying if a fly-over bridge would be more suitable, but to do this would necessitate longer approach ramps from Peterborough station and a higher bridge to span not only over the ECML, but also the A15 road and Lincoln Road. These two roads are to have new bridges spanning the new railway lines as part of the project. Another question was whether a connection from the Up East Coast lines on to the dive-under had been considered, as this would benefit the Liverpool Lime Street to Norwich passenger service, as well as some freight workings. Again, it was pointed out that to achieve this would require a much longer ramp and take-up a lot more land to connect with the dive-under.



(PM)

# Poacher Line Allotment Project

## Platform 1 – Sleaford Station

*Joanne Andrews, Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership*

The Partnership took the opportunity to work with local allotment blogger Kirsty Ward to turn a disused and overgrown piece of land on Platform 1 of Sleaford station into a community allotment. Kirsty from My Little Allotment started her allotment garden after being diagnosed with PTSD after a traumatic pregnancy and birth of her second daughter. After looking for ways to deal with her stress she turned to gardening as a therapeutic way to alleviate her symptoms; and has never looked back. The partnership was keen to create a space which would be beneficial to the local community and highlight the issues of those suffering from mental health.

Work was delayed due to Covid but finally started in July 2020 which consisted of clearing years of growth and rubbish, followed by an action day in August whereby volunteers from East Midlands Railway and Network Rail helped to build a shed and raised planter beds. The intention is to invite a local charity called Rainbow Stars, who help children and adults with disabilities, into the allotment to start planting. The resulting produce will then be distributed to food banks and other charities in the area.

Jo Andrews, Community Rail Officer for the Poacher Line said “We are thrilled to have the opportunity to create an amazing space where the local community can come and spend some time to reflect. Gardening has proven physical and mental health benefits and we hope the people of Sleaford will enjoy it for years to come”.



*Top left: facing the challenge – the site with years of growth and rubbish.*

*Top right and bottom: taking shape on Action Days.*



# EDITOR'S MAIL

*Like many rail lovers, the loosening of the lock-down measures has made me eager to do a Portillo and take to the tracks. Yet we're still warned about using public transport, and have to wear some kind of face covering. Meanwhile, the capacity on trains has been reduced because of social distancing.*

*I believe much of this is due to the situation on the London Underground, and the pictures we saw of crowded vehicles where passengers face one another. But elsewhere non-tabled seating either faces or reverses the direction of travel, and is high enough so that passengers can't breathe on their fellows. We need to get this message across so capacity can be increased and travellers can resume their journeying once again.*

*I don't think cheap advanced tickets are what is needed to attract customers, but something like the old Awaydays that allow for spontaneous travel if the weather is good. Similarly I'm concerned about ToCs encouraging passengers to purchase tickets by electronic means, "preferably by loading it onto your mobile" (Rail Lincs 87). For not everyone has a mobile, let alone one of the smart variety that does more than letting you make calls on the move.*

*So we need organisations like Railfuture to fight for rail users at these difficult times.*

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby

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## Friends of the Barton Line

● Social distancing regulations had impacted on the first and last trains of each day to Barton, the timetable has been increased to two hourly throughout the day, more trains were now formed of six-car units and reliability has been more robust during the lock-down. The delays have also been less severe than usual, due to the knock-on effect of reduced TransPennine services.

● In June, members of the Group made a start on repainting the running-in boards at Thornton Abbey station. As the boards are situated just outside the perimeter of the station, they are FoBL's responsibility, not Northern Trains. More remedial work than was anticipated was required to the front of the

two boards, so only the backs were prepared and painted in weatherproof marine white. Various funding options are to be investigated to cover some of the extra cost of the work.

● From September, the two Class 153 units on the Barton Line were to be East Midlands Railway (EMR) branded and from this December will be replaced by a Class 156 unit, subject to drivers being trained in time.

● Nine imported body shells for Hitachi AT300 125mph trains have arrived by road from Southampton, for storage at a depot on Humber Road, prior to onward delivery to Hitachi's Newton Aycliffe plant. They are destined to run for Avanti on the West Coast Main Line.

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## LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH CORRESPONDING MEMBERS:

### **Anthony Berridge**

#### **Friends of the Barton Line Representative**

47 Eastfield Road, Barton on Humber DN18 6AW  
01652 633804 secretary@bartonrail.org.uk

### **Ralph Coulson**

24 Willingham Road, Market Rasen LN8 3DR  
01673 842177 r.coulson450@btinternet.com

### **Peter Honniball**

#### **Branch Budget Holder**

pjhonniball@hotmail.co.uk

### **Colin Lingard**

33 Lady Frances Drive,  
Market Rasen, Lincolnshire LN8 3JJ  
01673 843510  
colin.lingard@railfuture.org.uk

### **Tim Mickleburgh, NE Lincs Councillor**

11 Boulevard Avenue, Grimsby DN31 2JP  
Tim.Mickleburgh@nelincs.gov.uk

### **Nigel Morley**

52-58 High Street, Heckington, Lincolnshire  
NG34 9QT nigelpmorley@aol.com

### **Stuart Parker**

129, Broughton Gardens, Lincoln LN5 8SR  
01522 534655

### **Mike Savage**

260 Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes, DN35 7ET  
01472 235721 michael.savage73@ntlworld.com

### **Carolyn Sharp**

33 Firbeck Ave., Skegness, Lincs PE25 3LA  
01754 766581 carolyn5@hotmail.co.uk

# RAILFUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH COMMITTEE 2019 – 2020:



**Chris Brown**  
**Branch Representative on North  
Kesteven District Council's Transport  
Partnership**  
22 Cupola Close, North Hykeham  
Lincoln LN6 9PZ  
01522 696309 07766496466  
cmb-24@outlook.com



**Susan Dovey - Sales & Catering**  
Hykeham  
susandovey@ntlworld.com



**Christabel Edwards**  
**Branch Communications Officer**  
christabel.edwards@railfuture.  
org.uk  
(Sleaford area)



**David Harby - Branch Chairman,  
Acting National Finance Officer,  
and Media Spokesman,**  
6 Carral Close, Brant Road,  
Lincoln LN5 9BD 01522 874513  
david.harby@railfuture.org.uk



**Ms Ann Hindley**  
**Branch Data Control Officer**  
Orchard House, 11, Commonsides,  
Crowle, Scunthorpe, DN17 4EX  
01724 710819  
ann@hindley.gn.apc.org



**Francis Wallace Lee**  
14 Thirlmere Close,  
North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8ES  
01522 686592.  
francis.lee1@ntlworld.com



**Graham Lilley**  
99 Northfield Road,  
Ruskington NG34 9NP  
07544 695977



**Phil Mason - Rail Lincs Editor  
Branch Vice-Chairman  
Branch Data Protection Officer**  
10 Cottesmore Close, Grantham  
NG31 9JL 01476 407569  
phil.mason@trackprint.net

**Stephen Moir**  
shmoir@btinternet.com.



**Geoffrey Meanwell**  
39 Alexandra Road,  
Woodhall Spa LN10 6RE  
01526 352389



**Don Peacock**  
**Hon Branch Secretary**  
**National Passenger Group**  
1 Queens Road,  
Barnetby le Wold, N Lincs  
DN38 6JH 01652 688549  
don.peacock@railfuture.org.uk



**Tom Rookes - Minutes Secretary**  
77 Ruskin Avenue,  
St. Giles, Lincoln LN2 4DE  
01522 540513  
thomasrookes@btinternet.com

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**See page 10  
for Corresponding Committee Members.**

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***Remember:  
Articles,  
Letters,  
Photographs,  
always welcome for  
YOUR  
newsletter.***

# Future Timetable Plans

Timetable plans from all our local operators have changed since our last *Rail Lincs*. This is mainly delayed implementation of the original plans rather than major changes. A summary of the position as at 26 October is:

## **Northern**

From December 2020 Northern have a modest uplift over their September timetable, taking them to 89% of the pre Covid timetable. The emphasis is on protecting reliability and punctuality and is subject to resources being available to operate all planned services. Among other things, this is dependant on driver training going as planned, with no unexpected Covid problems intervening. In our area, the only extra services we will see is the reintroduction of the peak services to and from Gainsborough Central. If resources permit, we could see more Gainsborough Central services gradually reintroduced before next May.

## **TransPennine Express (TPE)**

Continue to operate an hourly Cleethorpes–Manchester Piccadilly service. All trains are planned to be six car formations throughout the operating day. TPE will maintain the first and last services of the day running through to Manchester Airport. We are unlikely to see any more services running through to Manchester Airport whilst social distancing remains in place, as the time allowed for the turnback at Manchester Piccadilly is not long enough for passengers to leave and join the train safely.

## **East Midlands Railway (EMR)**

The changes planned for December 2020 had already been put back until May 2021 due to Covid related delays in completing Midland Main Line (MML) electrification to Corby and transfer of Class 360 EMUs from Greater Anglia to operate the Corby service. This means

the changes to Leicester to Lincoln services are now also put back to May 2021. From then we will have 2 direct services to St Pancras in the morning, with both trains calling at Hykeham and Collingham. There will also be two return trains in the evening. One stops at Collingham and Hykeham and the other just at Collingham, with a connection to Hykeham from Collingham a few minutes later. Every other hour, the Leicester to Lincoln service will continue to Grimsby. There are some changes to the Newark Northgate – Lincoln shuttles so they no longer run close to the LNER Lincoln – Kings Cross train. Within Lincolnshire, there is a franchise requirement to provide additional services in each direction between Doncaster and Lincoln, including a provision for evening services between Peterborough and Lincoln, but we do not yet have any more detail. All these come with a caveat that extra train crew need to be trained to operate the extra services so all could, like with Northern, be delayed by Covid related training difficulties.

We are due to see some major changes to the Regional services from December 2021 which should see a further uplift to our local services. No details available yet, but we have been promised a public consultation on the changes (probably early next year).

## **LNER**

The major revamp of ECML services due in December 2021 has been put back to May 2022. This is due to Covid related delays to the infrastructure work installing the dive under at Werrington and extra tracks through the tunnels into Kings Cross.

*(David Harby)*

## RAILFUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH AGM

Hopefully, the 2021 AGM will be held in March 2021, but because of the current Covid-19 restrictions, it has not been possible to arrange a date. Depending on current restrictions applying nearer the time, further details will have to be notified later. Branch Officers' reports will be in the next *Rail Lincs*.

The purpose of this notice is to remind members that the posts of Hon. Chairman, Hon Vice Chairman, Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary are open to all fully paid up members of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture.

In accordance with the Branch procedures, members wishing to stand for these posts are invited to inform the Hon Secretary in writing before 31 December 2020.

Any person wishing to stand should provide the Hon Secretary with a signed written declaration of willingness to stand along with a 100 word manifesto which will be published in the next *Rail Lincs*. The declaration must be supported in writing by another fully paid up member of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture.

No canvassing for votes is permitted other than the manifesto published in *Rail Lincs* and the question and answer session at the AGM.

Similarly fully paid up members of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture wishing to join the Branch Committee should provide a signed declaration of willingness to stand with signed support by another fully paid up member of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture to the Hon Secretary by 31 December 2020. No manifesto is required for Committee membership.

If there is only one candidate for each of the four executive posts then there will be no election and the meeting will be asked to ratify the selection. In this case the manifestos will not be published.

*Dr Don Peacock Hon Secretary.*

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## Welcome to our Committee

Graham Lilley joined the branch committee at the 2019 AGM. Aged 68 and now retired after a career mainly in horticulture, he has been an avid enthusiast for rail since childhood and has a keen interest in railway modelling.

Graham is committed to environmental issues and the promotion of an integrated public transport system, to lessen the impact on the natural world.

As a member of Railfuture he would like to see action taken to increase membership.

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**[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)**

**Direct link to Branch News visit:**

**<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Lincolnshire+Branch>**



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*Rail Lincs* 89 will be published in February 2021.

Please let the Editor Phil Mason, 10 Cottesmore Close, Grantham NG31 9JL, [phil.mason@trackprint.net](mailto:phil.mason@trackprint.net) have copy by 23 January.

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Registered Office:- Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only). All other correspondence to 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingsstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND

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