

Branch Update – Issue 3 – 1st September 2021

Welcome aboard!

The latest round-up of bits and pieces from Railfuture East Midlands Branch (Rf EM). This is the first 'Update' issued as a pdf document; previously, they were sent as direct emails. However, with the move to using the Railfuture membership database as the circulation list for Branch emails, this is the easiest way to collate these Updates. (This one is 'Issue 3' because the previous two were direct emails using the database.)

My thanks again to Jerry Alderson, Rf's Director of Finance and IT, for his considerable help in setting up the new distribution process.

EMR presentation to East Midlands Branch meeting 28th July

Those who were able to join us on Zoom on 28th July will have heard a useful presentation by Laura Etheridge, Stakeholder Manager at EMR. She illustrated her presentation with a set of PowerPoint slides. If you would like a copy of the slides, please email me at steve.jones@railfuture.org.uk.

East Midlands Branch AGM – Saturday 25th September 2021 from 12:30, on Zoom

Just a reminder that the Branch AGM, postponed from 2021, will now be on Zoom. We had planned to use the Midland Hotel in Derby, but they have since told us that the hotel will be closed for repairs. The AGM, which is for members only, will still have the same agenda; details will be circulated soon, by email where we have a valid email address, by post otherwise. For the open part of the meeting, starting at 14:00, we have a speaker from CrossCountry Trains, who will give us an update on the business.



A CrossCountry HST waiting at Derby on a slightly damp Saturday 21st August 2021 with the 10:44 to Plymouth. Because of engineering work at Water Orton, long-distance CrossCountry services were being diverted between Burton-upon-Trent and Lichfield Trent Valley (High Level) via the 'Arboretum Line'. This currently freight-only route is a good prospect for reopening, including, we hope, an intermediate station at Alrewas for the National Memorial Arboretum.

Photo: Steve Jones

The Midland Hotel booking has been provisionally carried forward to spring 2022 for next year's AGM, in the hope that, by then, we can at last have a physical meeting.

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Branch activities - reminder

A reminder of what we are up to in the Branch, and how you can take part:

- **Leicester Local Transport Plan consultation**, <https://news.leicester.gov.uk/news-articles/2021/june/consultation-launched-on-leicester-transport-plan/>. I have had quite a few comments on the draft Branch response, for which, thank you. Though the consultation itself closes on 17th September, I needed to complete it by the end of August, so by the time you read this, it should have been submitted. If you live, work or play in Leicester, you may like to submit your own response to the consultation, though not in Railfuture's name, please!
- **Easy Stations Awards survey**. You should have received a copy of the Easy Stations checklist with the joint EM + Lincolnshire Branch *RailLincs* newsletter in June. If you have not already done so, please send the completed survey checklist for your chosen station, to Chris Brown, 22 Cupola Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 9ZP, or email a scanned copy to eastmidlands@railfuture.org.uk.

The checklist can also be downloaded from the EM Branch webpage at: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/East-Midlands-Branch>.

See the Branch webpage (<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/East-Midlands-Branch>) for details of all forthcoming Branch events.

Accessibility Audit at all stations

It is pleasing to see that the DfT has commissioned consultants Atkins to undertake an accessibility audit of all UK national rail stations. See this for more: <https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/atkins-appointed-to-carry-out-accessibility-audit-for-all-uk-rail-stations/>

This does not replace our Easy Stations Awards survey, of course, which goes beyond accessibility issues and is focused on the stations in the combined EM and Lincolnshire Branch areas.

Branch member Harry Burr

Our EM Branch colleague Harry Burr is building quite a name for himself in rail circles! Partly through Rf contacts, he has recently completed a work experience placement at SLC Rail, a leading consultancy firm that is a specialist in design work for new stations. For more, see this on SLC's website: <https://slcrail.com/slc-hosts-young-rail-campaigner-for-work-placement/>. He also features in the September edition of *Modern Railways* magazine (on page 92) with his campaign for a Daventry Parkway station on the WCML. My congratulations to Harry on these first steps on a potentially very promising career in the rail industry!

Long-term investment plan needed for UK's railways

My thanks to Terry Holt for this link to an article on the Institution of Mechanical Engineers website: https://www.imeche.org/news/news-article/long-term-investment-plan-needed-for-uk-s-railways#msdyntrid=3RoPQgDuRucOmBrdczQ_puNWGtbu6N1hlCvjaN9KxHg

It makes the very valid point that we need a proper investment plan for the railways, ending the stop-go approach of the past as we seek better value for money as well as decarbonisation.

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'Short-sighted rail companies shooting themselves in the foot'

You may have seen this press release from Railfuture nationally, criticising plans to cut rail services to save money: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Press-release-26th-August-2021?platform=hootsuite>.

Though it is obvious that the railway has suffered a massive loss of business during the pandemic, and needs to cut its net costs, simple timetable cutbacks are not the best answer. Winning the business back, albeit recognising that the traditional weekday peak has almost certainly gone forever, is much the better way. Let's not forget that as the pandemic eventually eases, climate change will resume its place at the top of the political agenda. Rail is well placed to help the country to tackle that. Worth a letter to your MP?

And finally - electrified motorways?

The DfT has awarded £20m for research into 'zero emission road freight'. Part of this is the 'Electric Road System' trial, led by Costain Ltd, for possible overhead wiring for a 30km stretch of the M180 motorway near Scunthorpe. I know that isn't within our Branch area, but I still thought it worth a mention.

<https://www.costain.com/news/news-releases/green-light-for-path-to-uk-s-first-electric-motorway/>

Trolleybuses carrying goods! Given that the proposed test installation is in North Lincolnshire, did they get the idea from the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft <https://www.sandtoft.org.uk/>? I would imagine that, with pantographs rather than trolley poles, a twin-wire system as depicted would require some extremely accurate lane discipline...

While there may be value in doing such things (well, possibly...), I would suggest overhead-wiring of the railways is rather more tried and tested. Coupled with modal shift, it would achieve vastly more in terms of transport decarbonisation.

I hope this is interesting but if you would like to be taken off the circulation list for these updates, please either let me know or amend your preferences in the Members area on the Rf website: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/selfcare>.

Steve Jones

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Railfuture – Campaigning for better services over a bigger rail network

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These Updates are sent by email to all current members of Railfuture who have identified East Midlands ('EMI') as their preferred or secondary Branch and have given a valid email address plus GDPR consent to receiving email communications from Railfuture. These preferences can be amended at any time via the Members area of the Railfuture website: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/selfcare>.