



December 2018

Welcome to the Rail User Express.

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Annus horribilis! Huge swathes of the rail network were beset with a totally unworkable timetable, and passengers literally did not know if they were coming or going. But lessons were learnt: eagerly awaited new timetables were simply shelved! And to compound the misery, relentless strike action by the RMT union has left two franchises in tatters, but again it is the hapless customer who takes the real hit. Nevertheless, may I wish all my readers a Merry Christmas, and we can but hope for a Happy New Year that does, finally, herald the dawn of a new era.

Roger Smith

We continue with the usual roundup of news items from groups around the UK. Please keep your contributions coming: they are all gratefully received.

Friends of the Far North Line

In the timetable proposed for December 2018 there were many broken connections to/from the FNL at Inverness. Some passengers will have to re-plan their journeys as the connection into a southbound evening train is lost: the 1600 Mondays-Fridays service from Wick arrives in Inverness at 2013, and the Glasgow train departs at 2015; the booking system will not sell tickets using that as a connection. Also, omitting the Beaulieu stop on the 1831 departure to Wick for the time being was seen as the "least worst" option. FoFNL thanks everyone involved for working quickly to make the best compromises possible, but had the timetabling of Scottish routes been devolved, the crisis would probably not have arisen.

LevenMouth Rail Campaign

At its October meeting, Paul McCartney of PBA presented the Levenmouth Sustainable Transport Study commissioned by Transport Scotland (previous STAGs were produced in 2008 and 2016). Much of the evidence was familiar: the economic and social necessity for better public transport to create opportunities and aspirations, and to access key services and facilities; lengthy journey times, the limited choice available, and how unattractive public transport leads to 'unsustainable' travel choices. The response to an online survey by over 1,000 residents was unprecedented evidence of the demand, and a reason why the Study timetable slipped. The business survey had a lower response, but several local businesses indicated it had been poorly promoted. It concluded that the rail link was vital in expanding the horizons and ambitions of the Levenmouth community.

The recent saga of Breich Station in West Lothian belies any claim the Scottish Govt/Transport Scotland can claim to logic, fairness or value for public money in its decision-making. With an average of just

2.6 passengers/week using the station, NR proposed its closure to avoid rebuild costs estimated at £1.4m associated with Shotts line electrification, and a projected Net Present Value of -£3.09m. Yet just 15 months later, the newly rebuilt Breich Station, costing £2.4 million is reopened. There's no indication of any protracted study or concern for the substantial direct and indirect costs, whereas Levenmouth has to jump through interminable hoops, and successive expensive studies to evidence a 'robust business case'.

The Levenmouth Strategic Development Area involves an extensive tract of land between Methil and Buckhaven up to Standing Stane Road (A915); its northern edge almost reaches the site of Cameron Bridge station. 1,650 houses, and mixed commercial and industrial use are envisaged, all served by green travel corridors. But without improved travel links, local and more distant journeys will be a major problem. A decision to reopen the rail line would accelerate this badly needed development in south Levenmouth.

Cumbrian coast Rail Users' Group

There is still no sign of RMT strike action being lifted. By 7 December, the CRUG line had suffered 42 days of strikes, leaving vulnerable people with no public transport, even though the Transport Secretary had assured the local MP that guards would still be used on the Cumbrian coast line. So a seven-day service arrives, only to revert to a six-day one!

An HS2 "exhibition" in Carlisle on 27 November comprised two banners showing the proposed route. It was consulting about the possibility of HS2 trains calling at Carlisle to attach or detach 250m sections, and also whether to have a maintenance depot there. The December CRUG meeting agreed that it wanted to see HS2 trains stopping and dividing in Carlisle, ideally with a depot. The Chairman would feed this back.

Tyne Valley Rail User Group

TVRUG have launched a [petition](#) seeking to make it a legal requirement to have a second safety critical person on trains.

Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester lines (STORM)

When released from the loop at Thorpes Bridge Junction on 12 Nov, the afternoon Drax train yet again delayed the 1559 Manchester Victoria to Selby: 4 mins at Moston, 12m30s at Rochdale, and all the way to Sowerby Bridge. Drax trains should have sufficient power both to run at the timetabled speed, and to accelerate from a standing start, eg from a loop, within the time allowed.

STORM's November meeting again expressed dismay at the lack of communication from operators, MPs, the Mayor and most agencies it contacts. It wants to hear from passengers about their experience of public transport in Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. It has contact details for the public bodies responsible to the travelling public for the current lack of 'reasonable' services, and will use reports and responses to requests in its campaign for improvement.

Metrolink contractors are putting penalty charge notices on cars parked at Rochdale station other than in accordance with the recently installed signs. These are in error, as they refer to a "Metrolink Car Park" whereas it is for Metrolink AND rail passengers; there may be grounds for appeal. The excessive provision for disabled drivers is rarely used, as the parking area in front of the station is so much more convenient.

Analysis of recently released government figures by IPPR North shows that, in the four and a half years since George Osborne set the northern powerhouse agenda, spending per head on public transport has gone up more than twice as much in London as in the north of England: £326/person against £146. But according to Railfuture President [Christian Wolmar](#), in the past year, partly because of Crossrail, London benefitted from nearly £2,000/head compared with around £200/head in the three main northern regions.

East Suffolk Travellers' Association

The first of the new Stadler trains arrived in Norwich on 15 November. With its sister units, it will be seen from time to time on lines in East Anglia as they are tested by the manufacturer, and then used to train Greater Anglia's drivers and conductors. When the full fleet of new trains enters service in December 2019, there will also be a new timetable. A public consultation on it will happen early in the new year.

Each year ESTA invites its members and visitors to complete an online questionnaire about one or more local journeys in a given month; both the 2017 and 2018 surveys were conducted in October. 93 journeys were surveyed, divided equally between the Ipswich–Lowestoft, Lowestoft–Norwich, and those beyond

Ipswich to other East Anglian destinations and London Liverpool Street. A full report is available from chairman@eastsoffolktravel.org.uk. At ESTA's autumn meeting, Alan Neville, GA Community & Customer Engagement Manager said that, subject to NR agreement, GA was committed to restoring some through services between Lowestoft and Liverpool Street, avoiding the need to change at Ipswich.

Three ESTA committee members met at Saxmundham station on 2 November, when GA set out its plans for rebuilding the fire-damaged station building to council representatives and Dr Therese Coffey MP. The existing ground floor will be repaired and provided with a slate roof, and the canopy refurbished. The waiting room will be enlarged, and there will be a room for storage purposes. It is GA policy not to maintain toilets at unmanned stations, but every train has one, as does the nearby Council car park. Work is due to start in March and complete by September, so this winter passengers will still have to wait in the cold but, as ESTA suggested, two seats have been moved under the canopy.

ESTA President Rod Lock has analysed car-parking provision at stations along the line, bearing in mind that the new trains due to enter service next year will increase train capacity by 240%. There are currently 459 spaces available: 300 at Lowestoft, but only 4 at Brampton and none at Westerfield; not all have the potential for more. Some local authority car parks are within easy walking distance of stations, but non-rail users may take up these spaces.

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group

At the December meeting, NR examined the down times at Shepreth station level crossing - including one of 17 minutes, which caused traffic chaos. The RUG will revisit this once the new weekday timetable has bedded in. Restoration of the unofficial car park, and a ticket machine on the Barrington side, would alleviate the problem. The meeting also discussed GTR's regrettable failure to spend a DfT grant for cycle parking at Meldreth and Shepreth. The RUG will press for the work to be restarted. It is aware of two very steep and implausible penalty charges at Meldreth and Shepreth stations. One for £170 at Shepreth - a free car park! - is being contested (it did not involve parking in a disabled bay). Unfortunately for the contractor, the penalty was imposed on a barrister!

English Regional Transport Association

ERTA is backing a [petition](#) to relieve the heavily congested A628 road by using the Woodhead Pass for Roll-on-Roll-off trains between Sheffield and Stockport. The haulage industry would save on fuel and wear & tear, and reduce its carbon footprint, thus improving the environment. Reopening the rail line would also create a more direct Transpennine route for passenger services, easing the pressure on other routes. ERTA has also issued a [pamphlet](#) listing no fewer than 33 possible new rail lines, or which could be reopened, many of which are also Railfuture campaigns.

Barking-Gospel Oak Rail User Group

Rail replacement buses will run every weekend on Route J (Highgate Road - Seven Sisters via Finsbury Park) and Route T (Barking - Walthamstow Central via Harrow Green) until 23 December, and then every day (except 25/26 December) until further notice. All six diesel trains are due off sublease on 31 December, and West Midlands Trains needs them in January, as they all require 'C6' heavy overhauls and universal toilets. However, TfL claim that they are still in negotiations with WMT to extend the sublease.

At the moment, Arriva Rail London has yet to take delivery of a single new train, so the bus services are likely to continue into February. Meanwhile, to protect the weekday service, TfL have withdrawn two units from weekend service for additional maintenance time, with half-hourly "supplementary bus services" replacing the cancelled trains. TfL say they are negotiating a temporary weekend timetable with a regular 20-minute frequency, to replace the irregular service intervals.

Chesham Transport Users Group

Pay as you go single fares on all TfL services will remain frozen until 2020. The £1.50 Hopper fare allows unlimited journeys within one hour of first touching in.

Plans for Step-Free Access at Amersham Station were submitted to the planning authority on 1 October. There will be a new bridge at the north end of the platform, between the cycle racks and Belly Busters. The elevation facing Hill Avenue will be in the same style as the existing station. Harrow-on-the-Hill has planning permission for 4 lifts (ie excluding the Lowland Road entrance) and work on site is progressing.

Windsor Lines Passengers Association

Rail User Express congratulates WLP, initially the Hounslow Line Users Group, on the 100th edition of South Western Roundabout. Brendan Gash, who edited almost all the first 55, looks back to when it was literally a cut'n'paste job. Issues then concerned another change of local manager; driver only trains; above inflation fare increases; the new class 456 2-car units diverted to services from Victoria; Chertsey branch woes, and a plan for southern rail access to Heathrow Airport. Sound familiar?

WLP welcomes the Holden report, and hopes that its recommendations will be acted upon. At a recent meeting in Richmond, South Western Railway (SWR) assured WLP that it would do its best to implement the report, which also relies on NR doing its share. Punctuality is not good at the moment; WLP receives many instances of problems, and passenger information regarding skip-stopping is becoming an issue.

On strike days, often exacerbated by engineering work, the rail service has been calamitous. SWR hopes that new trains will solve many problems. But that leaves the website, the unfair fares structure, the never-ending rail improvement works, and the lack of a replacement for the diesel sets (extending the third rail would be better than battery hybrid trains). NR moving its control to Basingstoke whilst most of SWR is at Waterloo, the obvious place for any control function, hasn't helped either.

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

GWR had intended to introduce bi-mode IET trains on the Bedwyn stopping service in January. However, this will be delayed to allow modification of the cameras necessary for the doors on driver only trains to be closed safely at stations that are unmanned at the time of dispatch. Turbo trains will therefore continue on this route for longer than planned. IET through services that call at Bedwyn are not affected.

West Sussex Rail Users Association

There are no significant changes in the December timetable other than the implementation of the full May 2018 Thameslink service, with four additional services to and from Horsham.

Problems with the hand driers in the Class 377 toilets have been resolved, and they are being refitted. A mid-life refurbishment includes new carpets, seats, LED lighting and power points to all seats. Wifi will also be extended to the Class 313 Coastway units. WSRUA queried the continued use of these 40-year-old trains with no toilets on Brighton-Portsmouth services, especially as some Class 377 units displaced by Thameslink have gone to SouthEastern.

NR is renewing the track at Battersea Pier Junction to improve reliability around the Victoria. There will be no Gatwick Express service; most trains will divert to and from London Bridge, and airport services will run to and from there and from Blackfriars. Buses will replace trains between Clapham Junction and Victoria, but are expected to be very busy, so do try to avoid peak hours.

As previously reported, the Brighton Main Line will close for 9 days from 16-24 February 2019 - half-term week, when passenger numbers are lower, as some people may choose to take holiday. Arun Valley trains have been slightly retimed, joining and splitting at Barnham rather than Horsham. This has freed the "fast" paths normally used by the Southampton/Portsmouth portions for use by a half-hourly service from Brighton and Worthing via Littlehampton to Victoria, so Horsham now has 4 fast trains to Victoria, not 2.

Pilning Station Group

Usage of the "Cinderella" station at Pilning more than doubled during 2017/18, according to [ORR's latest figures](#), despite the station having a skeletal "service" of just two trains a week in one direction only! This is all the more remarkable as using the station has been made virtually impossible. Since 2006, it has had only a Saturday service, and in 2016 its footbridge was controversially demolished to allow electrification, so only Bristol-bound trains are able to call. To get back from Bristol, you have to go into Wales to return via Newport, adding the best part of an hour to what should be a 20-minute journey.

Group Chair Olga Taylor said: "This shows that more and more people want to travel to and from Pilning station, and are determined to do so despite the obstacles in their way. GWR flatly refuses to make even modest improvements, like reinstating the Saturday lunchtime train withdrawn in January 2018. We call upon them to stop being so negative, and to revisit this for the May timetable change. But most of all we want our footbridge back, so we can catch trains in either direction."

Minehead Rail Link Group

[MRLG](#) aspires to reinstate a regular service linking Minehead to the main rail network at Taunton. West Somerset Railway currently operates the section as far as Bishops Lydeard as a heritage line. It is currently seeking funding for a 60-day trial next summer for a connection from there to Taunton. Such a service would have the support of the 20,000 people who live down the line, the 70,000 people who live at the ends, and thousands more across the country who could finally get to Minehead by train. The Group sees the trial as a 'useful first step' towards the through service. About 140 people attended the October meeting, although the room had only 60 seats; many speakers were met with applause. MRLG Secretary Councillor Benet Allen described it as an overwhelming success.

RAILFUTURE

Railfuture welcomes new members, both individual and groups: the more we are, the more effective our campaigns. Join Railfuture [here](#). From the "Membership Types" menu top right, select either the appropriate category of individual or, to affiliate, select "RUG or similar". Read the latest from Railfuture and its Campaigns by clicking on [News and views](#), [Press releases](#), [Railfuture in the news](#), and [Railfuture consultation responses](#).

Correction: in last month's issue, the Railfuture article on the 2018 Rail Review was incorrectly ascribed to Ian Bolton. It should, of course, have been Ian Brown CBE FCILT; sincere apologies for any confusion - Ed.

Still searching for a late Christmas present, possibly for yourself? Have a look at the [Railfuture Shop](#) page. A new addition is "Remote Stations" by Peter Caton, which describes the author's journeys to 40 of the most remote railway stations around Britain, mostly still open but a few closed. Written for the railway enthusiast, but also for anyone who enjoys travel books, it is illustrated with more than 150 colour and black & white photos, both recent and historical. His travels take him to all four corners of the country, to the top of a snowy mountain, to moors, hills and marshes, and even a mile out to sea.

Trevor Garrod has updated his Going Abroad leaflet. He has a few paper copies that can be obtained by emailing him at trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk.

PASSENGER GROUP

Postponing the Cross Country Trains (XC) refranchising pending the outcome of the Rail Review could delay improvements to the franchise, which suffers from overcrowding due to too few trains. However, capacity could be increased without timetable changes through the introduction of new or cascaded trains, so the Group's XC liaison officer will discuss possible ways forward, and also ask who the XC contact is at DfT.

As suggested by a Chelmsford RUG member, members of the public at 3 GA stations with different levels of facilities and types of user have trialled a paper to determine the minimum acceptable level of station facilities. Where passengers have to make connections, facilities such as waiting rooms were not always open, particularly in the afternoons, evenings or on Sundays; they should be available from first to last train. The paper would also be trialled in Wales, Scotland and South-east England.

Head of the Group, Alison Cosgrove, was very impressed by the quality and condition of the toilets at Carlisle station, and how important these were to passengers. She suggested a Railfuture award in the form of a certificate for the station with the best toilets. It ought to recognise the efforts of station staff and station adopters to maintain such facilities in good order, rather than investment to modernise them. Railfuture Branches would be asked to nominate their best station toilets.

RAILFUTURE NORTH EAST BRANCH

A strong theme that emerges from media coverage of rail these past six months is the need for the industry to be placed under strategic direction - preferably of experienced rail professionals rather than politicians. The Rail Review Panel Enquiry chaired by Keith Williams may endorse this suggestion. The future of the franchise system is another matter urgently requiring his wisdom.

Tests of the Hitachi Inter-City Express Trains (IET's) on the ECML north of Doncaster revealed an incompatibility between some of their electronic systems and items of lineside signalling equipment.

The first LNER Azumas were due to enter passenger service in December, but according to the November edition of “Railnews”, the launch has been postponed “indefinitely”.

A joint input with South East Northumberland RUG, Railfuture’s response to the Cross-Country (XC) franchise consultation mooted re-routing one of the twice hourly trains between York and Newcastle through Eaglescliffe to Middlesbrough or Stockton, and then via the Coast Line to Newcastle, rather than terminating it at York as DfT suggested. It also addressed the recurring, and vexed, issue of station calling patterns between Newcastle and Berwick. The breadth of knowledge in compiling the response was remarkable. Although the consultation was then frozen pending outcomes from the Williams enquiry, the DfT will hold submissions on record, and consider them when/if a new draft XC franchise is issued.

RFNE is organising the 2019 Railfuture national “summer” conference on 22 June in Darlington on the theme of “Rebirth of the Railways” (see Events). So far Hitachi Rail Europe, Esk Valley Rail Partnership, NEXUS and Port of Sunderland have accepted invitations to participate. Ben Houchen, the elected Mayor of Tees Valley, will welcome attendees and deliver the keynote address.

Railfuture campaigns attract new people, so RFNE is targeting 8 rail “projects” in the NE:

- Stillington (freight only) line Stockton – Ferryhill – upgrade to passenger capability
- New station at Ferryhill
- Leamside line - Tursdale/Ferryhill to Pelaw reinstatement
- New ECML station at Team Valley
- Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line – upgrade to passenger capability
- New station at Gilsland on Tyne Valley Line
- A local service north of Morpeth
- New rolling stock for all local (Northern) services.

See the refreshed Branch website for further details of each of the projects.

RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA

RFEA welcomes the opening of Ely Southern Bypass. Closing the level crossing and restricting Britain’s most bashed bridge to pedestrians, cyclists and limited road traffic will be a step towards half-hourly trains from Cambridge to King’s Lynn and to Norwich, an hourly Peterborough - Ipswich/Colchester service, and more freight trains on the Felixstowe - Nuneaton route.

RFEA congratulates all who helped Ipswich win Large Station of the Year at the National Rail Awards. A £2 million refurbishment saw its main foyer and ticket hall completely revamped. Cambridge station won the same award in 2017, so what could happen there? Beneath the Ibis hotel there is now a second pub, named the Old Ticket Office. Other underused parts of the station are also being refurbished and given a useful purpose. Like Chelmsford and Ipswich, it now has a fountain to top up water containers, reducing the need for single-use plastic bottles. GA has earmarked £4m for further improvements, so RFEA is pushing an open door. There is no shortage of ideas.

The five-year extension of the XC franchise means no additional services to ease overcrowding. Stansted Airport, Cambridge and Peterborough all need earlier and later trains, and XC should also serve Cambridge North. The only hope is that, as and when the cascade of diesel units from Scotland finally happens, some will be made available to lengthen XC trains. However, the other factor that could substantially improve Stansted - Birmingham travel times - track and signalling - is in NR hands. So much needs to be done, primarily as far as Leicester, that a business case would be very expensive, and NR holds the purse strings. See also Steve Wright’s [article](#) in the October issue of RAILWATCH.

Thameslink has finally introduced the weekday component of the May timetable, but its aim for May 2019 is merely to restore the weekend service to its pre-May 2018 level. This is a poor outcome, as Saturday services are very busy, and the one fast train per hour between Cambridge and King’s Cross is not coping.

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS

In November, Rail Minister Andrew Jones launched the DfT’s [Community Rail Development Strategy](#) at Millom Station, Cumbria. As community rail’s umbrella body, ACoRP enthusiastically welcomes the strategy, which sets out how the growing community rail movement is playing a vital role in helping people to access

employment, education and social opportunities via sustainable travel. The DfT is now working with the Welsh Government, [ACoRP](#), train operators, NR and a group of CRPs to develop a new accreditation scheme next year, to replace designation. CRPs will be able to apply from next spring, and book a planning slot with ACoRP. Details of how this will work are yet to be confirmed.

The DfT's Designated Community Rail Development Fund for 2018-19, administered by ACoRP, is open for applications. This year £320,000 is available to English CRPs with designated routes, with a maximum grant for projects of £25,000. Also, the limit for small grants has been raised this year: ACoRP affiliated CRPs in England can apply for up to £2,500, and station adoption groups for up to £1,000.

A Hampshire-wide CRP will form on 1 April to provide an independent, legal framework for community rail in Hampshire, while enhancing financial accountability and transparency and as an entity with inherent longevity, regardless of individual appointments. It will raise the profile of Community Rail in the South of England in strategic planning and funding terms, and act as an umbrella group for more station adoption groups, especially those outside current CRP geographic boundaries. The East Hampshire CRP will continue to operate as it does now.

CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT

Do you despair of disjointed public transport? On a good day you can drive from Luton to Milton Keynes in half an hour. Choose public transport and you're looking at up to an hour and a half, potentially via London! However, a new rail station with a coach interchange, and connections to local bus networks and to the guided bus could transform travel in congested Luton.

Last month CBT asked what transport improvement would do most to ease loneliness in the community; no fewer than 743 people responded, 57% of whom cited improved bus services. A long-standing community bus driver in rural Suffolk said that, for many passengers, his arrival was the first time they had been out of the house in months due to winter weather or lack of public transport.

TRANSPORT FOCUS

9 December saw major changes to the rail timetable across Scotland, with yet more planned for May and December 2019, with faster journeys, more seats, and additional services. Improvements include additional services between Elgin and Inverness, and 1500 extra seats per day on North Berwick to Edinburgh services. But not everyone will be happy. Some daily journeys, for example Polmont and Linlithgow to Stirling, will be less convenient.

TF welcomes the establishment of a Rail Ombudsman. The ability to impose binding decisions to resolve complaints – and charge train companies fees for doing so – creates a clear incentive for train operators to transform the lacklustre way many of them handle passenger complaints. TF expects that the new scheme will also help drive wider efforts to improve rail services overall, so that fewer consumers have cause for complaint in the first place.

...and now the rest of the news ...

ORR, the rail regulator, has launched three [consultations](#): on support for disabled passengers, how it holds NR to account, and the quality of its stakeholder engagement in CP6 (see below). It is also conducting a Market Review into Delay Repay claims companies. Comments may be sent to competition@orr.gov.uk.

A lineside management review recommends that the DfT sets out its expectations, and NR revamps its operations and focuses on valuing nature and the environment, as well as improving communication with communities. During a visit to the first British railway hedge planting trial at Hadley Wood, Hertfordshire, with John Varley, author of the independent [Vegetation Management Review](#), the Tree Council and the Hadley Wood Association and RUG, Rail Minister Andrew Jones said that at the core of the review was a careful balance between ensuring passenger safety, reliability and protecting lineside wildlife and trees.

RTM reports that after almost a year of strikes, in a momentous decision that could bring an end to strike action and settle the long-running dispute between the TOC and the RMT union, the DfT and Transport for the North (TfN) have committed to keep a second person on-board Northern trains.

The RAIB is investigating how an Aberdeen to London King's Cross service went through the Sandy South Junction in Bedfordshire on 19 October at 120mph, when track maintenance staff had imposed an emergency speed restriction of 20mph after finding a crack in the crossing. Marker boards and automatic warning system magnets were in place, but the train driver had not had prior notification of the restriction [*Shouldn't the multi-aspect signal have been set to a single yellow? Ed.*]

Govia is warning that buses will replace trains on all routes via Lewes for four days from 7-10 March 2019, as signalling on the line between Lewes and ^[SEP]Seaford is replaced by modern, more reliable technology. The final switchover and testing can only be safely completed with line closure in the ^[SEP]Lewes area. The Brighton Main Line will not be affected, but there will be no trains west of Eastbourne via ^[SEP]Lewes as far as Brighton, Seaford and Haywards Heath.

...and finally

At an auction in Pershore, an original Flying Scotsman nameplate sold for £64,500 + 18% Buyer's Premium.

CONSULTATIONS

- Gatwick Airport: [Draft Master Plan](#), closes 10 January.
- City of London Corporation: [Draft Transport Strategy](#), closes Sunday 13 January.
- ORR: [Changes to guidance for train and station operators on Disabled People's Protection Policy \(DPPP\)](#), closes 18 January.
- ORR: [Holding NR to account policy](#), closes 25 January.
- ORR: [Approach to assessing the quality of NR's stakeholder engagement in CP6](#), closes 25 January.
- City of London Corporation: [draft City Plan 2036](#), closes 28 February.

Please advise [Roger Blake](#) of any other consultation, eg that of a local Transport Authority.

EVENTS

Do please keep your events coming, both to me and to [Roger Blake \(Railfuture\)](#), who maintains the Railfuture [List of Events](#) to attend, and now a [List of Key Dates](#) for consultations, franchise changes, CP6 planning, service alterations for major rail projects etc. As a Calendar of Events embedded in a document may be discarded, and that is a problem if the venue changes from month to month, a stand-alone copy would be very helpful.

Blob colour indicates the various types of event:

- Railfuture events (RUGs are cordially invited).
- National & regional rail events.
- Local Group events.

December

- Thursday 20. Magor Action Group On Rail, Golden Lion, **Magor**, 1930 (and the 3rd Thursday every month).

January 2019

- Tuesday 8. Chesham Transport User Group, Town Hall, **Chesham**, 1930 (Also 19 February, 2 April, 14 May, 18 June, 6 August, 17 September, 22 October, 10 December).
- Saturday 12. Cumbrian coast Rail Users' Group, Methodist church hall, **Seascale**, 1305 (Also 9 February).
- Wednesday 16. Railfuture North East Branch, **Newcastle** (venue TBN).
- Monday 28. Skipton East Lancs Rail Action Partnership, **Earby** (Also 11 March, AGM at The Lesser Municipal Hall, Albert Road, Colne).
- Tuesday 29. Levenmouth Rail Campaign, Fife College, Methilhaven Road, **Buckhaven**, KY8 1EA, 1830 (also last Tuesday of every month except December and July).

February

- Tuesday 5. Cheshire Best Kept Stations Awards, The Grange Theatre, Bradburns Lane, Hartford, **Northwich**, 1900.
- Saturday 9. East Suffolk Travellers Association, Station House, **Beccles**, 1400 (Also, 18 May AGM, Saxmungham; 5 October, Lowestoft Station).
- Tuesday 12. Felixstowe Travel Watch, Salvation Army Church, Cobbold Road, **Felixstowe**, 1430 (also 7 May (AGM)).
- Saturday 23. English Regional Transport Association Rugby Forum, Rupert Brooke, 8-10 Castle St, **Rugby**, CV21 2TP, 1400.

Further Ahead

- 9 March. English Regional Transport Association Olney Forum, The Bull, 9 Market Place, **Olney**, MK46 4EA, 1400.
- 16 March. Railfuture North East Branch AGM, Newcastle Art Centre, Westgate Road, **Newcastle**, 1400.
- 23 March. English Regional Transport Association, The Bell, 40 Market Square, **Aylesbury**, HP20 1TX, 1400.
- 18 May. Friends of Settle-Carlisle Line AGM, Victoria Hall, Kirkgate, **Settle**, BD24 9DZ, 1200.
- 22 June. Railfuture national “summer” conference, Dolphin Centre, **Darlington**.

Disclaimer: unless otherwise indicated, views expressed in Rail User Express are those of the contributing organization, and not necessarily shared by Railfuture.

Contact Roger Smith by e-mail: ruglink@railfuture.org.uk, or phone: 01462 815992.

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