

southeast railaction

London and South East Branch - Campaign Newsletter September 2025

railfuture



Northbound and southbound Gatwick Express at Clapham Junction - but neither stopping

MEETING REMINDERS

The following meetings coming up:

Branch and Metro Meeting

Type: Chiltern Railways presentation

Date: Thursday 18 September, starts 7pm

Venue: Alan Baxter Gallery, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EL

Herts and Beds Division

Type: Campaign meeting

Date: Wednesday 8 October, starts 7.30pm

Online

Kent Division

Type: Campaign meeting

Date: Saturday 15 November, starts 2pm

Online

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NEW LOOK CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the new look campaign newsletter for the London and South East Branch.

Every now and then it's good for a campaign group to reflect on what it wants to achieve, the means of achieving those aims, and the way it communicates its campaigning message.

So what should a campaign newsletter of a membership organisation look like? As a membership organisation it needs to address the concerns of its members. People join Railfuture because they want to support a respected rail campaign group, and feel part of it. Rail user groups join Railfuture because they want to be part of a larger organisation that can, through various means, assist or reflect their campaigning too.

However a crucial audience of a campaign group are the organisations it is trying to influence. All the various stakeholders that shape, in large part or small, the decisions that affect our railways. This includes policy makers and influencers, such as politicians at both central and at local level, and all those that operate the railway in one form or another.

We do hope you enjoy this campaign newsletter, which contains information from our divisions and localities, each of which hold periodic meetings, and all are welcome to come along, members and non-members alike.

Finally we'd like to thank Roger Blake, who had edited our quarterly newsletter "railse" through no less than 61 editions since 2010, and 85 editions of "inter-railse" since 2018, quite an incredible effort.

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IS GATWICK EXPRESS THE RIGHT SOLUTION FOR AN EXPANDED GATWICK AIRPORT?

The vice-chair of the Metro Division, Charlie King, has produced a memorandum on the Gatwick Express, considering whether it should continue in its present form notwithstanding capacity problems on the Brighton Main Line and the intent to expand the airport with a second runway. The full memorandum can be viewed via the following link:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1923-Is-GatEx-right-for-Gatwick>

Train services and ticket prices between London and Gatwick Airport are amongst the most complex and convoluted in the country for such a short journey (less than 30 miles). There are currently 16 trains an hour each way between Gatwick Airport and London, run by three different train operators (all owned by the same parent company), each charging significantly different prices. If three people took a train from Gatwick Airport to London at exactly the same (off-peak) time, they would be charged anything from £10.70 to £24.10 depending largely on what train they took, even though the train itself takes pretty much the same time to get to London. The issue is compounded by a lack of information in particular at Gatwick Airport station.

The very name “Gatwick Express” is something of a misnomer. The so called express gets to Victoria no more than one minute quicker than the cheaper Southern service, and is actually slower than many Thameslink trains take to get to London Bridge.

The memorandum gives information as to services and ticket prices, however put simply, and ignoring fare promotions:

- There are 16 trains an hour each way between Gatwick Airport station and London;
- Two of the trains are operated by Gatwick Express and get to Victoria in 31 minutes (peak and off-peak fare £24.10);
- Six of the trains are operated by Southern and go to Victoria calling only at East Croydon and Clapham Junction usually taking 32 minutes (off-peak fare £21.30 but using Oyster/contactless only £10.70)
- Eight of the trains are operated by Thameslink and go to London Bridge (and onwards) the fastest taking 29 minutes (off-peak fare using Oyster/contactless £10.70).

As the memorandum indicates, there are numerous ticketing possibilities such as Zone 1 tickets and Travelcards. The disparity is no less significant whichever sort of ticket you buy. For example, currently a Gatwick Express Travelcard costs £61.60 (peak) and £45.90 (off-peak). For comparison, a Thameslink Travelcard via London Bridge using Oyster costs £37.10 (peak) and £20.60 (off-peak).

What does this mean? In short:

- (A) Gatwick Express (Gatwick - Victoria) is a price inflated service for no tangible added value.
- (B) As a consequence, some other fares on the Gatwick - Victoria route (currently Southern) are artificially inflated unless using Oyster/contactless. Travelling to London Bridge will always be the least expensive.
- (C) The cheapest way to travel to or from Gatwick Airport is by Thameslink via London Bridge and onwards to stations such as St. Pancras International, or off-peak by Southern to Victoria using Oyster.
- (D) If you're travelling off-peak, using Oyster or contactless will be the cheapest payment method.

Does this matter? Again, in short, yes, for three very important reasons:

Firstly, there is an issue of passengers being misled, a serious matter. There is no manned ticket office at Gatwick Airport so no dedicated place passengers can go to get advice as to the best ticket option.

There are some helpers at the ticket machines, however in our experience their help does not extend to complex ticket advice, which is what many passengers may need. To compound this, there is very little written information around the ticketing concourse that would help the passenger. One is left with the impression, unfortunately, that the Gatwick Express ticket option exists in the hope that the uninitiated will buy an unnecessarily expensive ticket.

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Secondly, as the Gatwick Express is in fact no quicker than other services, its existence can only really be justified if it skips stops (hence “Express”), even if those stops would be useful. For example, Gatwick Express does not stop at Clapham Junction, even though it is a very important station for connectivity, handy for many potential airport users around the south west of London. The train patterns built around the Gatwick Express, and the need for it to be non-stop in the London area to justify its existence, also means there are no direct train services between Brighton (UK’s 24th busiest station) and Clapham Junction (UK’s 18th busiest station), an inconvenience to passengers many of whom may decide not to travel by rail as a consequence.

Thirdly, there are significant capacity problems on the London - Gatwick railway, which comprises part of the London - Brighton Main Line, one of the busiest lines in the country. Those in the know, it seems, avoid the Gatwick Express, and in consequence many of its trains are partially empty. Indeed our own research suggests to us that only around 12% of passengers travelling from Gatwick to London by rail choose the Gatwick Express. This results in passengers standing, due to over-crowding, on the cheaper Southern and Thameslink trains.

To compound matters, Gatwick Airport is now seeking to add a second runway, with the hope of increasing air passenger numbers from around 41 million today to around 75 million by the mid-2030s and 81 million by 2047. Governmental permission for such expansion will be dependent on a number of matters, including it seems a requirement that at least 54% of airport passengers must arrive/ leave the airport by public transport. We believe that figure at the moment is less than 50%, and that is based on the current 41 million passengers. In short, there simply is not capacity on the Gatwick line to carry the number of passengers envisaged when two of those trains per hour are running partially empty.

Our resolution, in summary, is as follows:

1. Line capacity needs to be maximised. At present, there are 18 trains per hour on the busiest parts of the London - Gatwick Airport route from the airport towards Redhill. Two of these are Great Western services between Gatwick Airport and Reading, and there is an aspiration to increase these to three per hour. There is also an aspiration to connect Kent with Gatwick Airport via Tonbridge and Redhill. Railfuture supports both proposals.
2. The Gatwick Express service as currently exists should be absorbed into the Southern service to Victoria, and be priced at Southern (or perhaps Thameslink) rates to ensure they are fully loaded. The brand name may be retained as it has public awareness, and line capacity could be found to increase the number of its trains from 2 to 4 trains per hour.
3. To improve connectivity, two of the said four trains should call additionally at Clapham Junction and continue to Brighton (the other two may terminate at the airport) so connecting Clapham Junction with Gatwick Airport as well as with Brighton.

In our view, the Gatwick Express is no longer serving the best interests of passengers, and indeed is something of a capacity hinderance on what is a very busy main line. Its survival may largely be due to the Department of Transport which ultimately benefits from the premium ticket prices. Pre-covid this premium enabled Gatwick Express to make a profit, but we understand that is no longer the case. In times of austerity passengers are increasingly price conscious, and lightly loaded trains do not make money.

Removing the Gatwick Express premium service may arguably have a positive financial effect. Its removal will enable more and better loaded trains to run, albeit, at standard fares, so although the premium will be lost, that may be compensated by the carriage of more passengers.

This does indeed seem like the right time to remodel Gatwick Airport rail services.

A Railfuture team, led by Charlie King, is now campaigning on this matter and those interested in Gatwick services are urged to read his memorandum on this matter.

Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire Division (prepared by Neil Middleton)

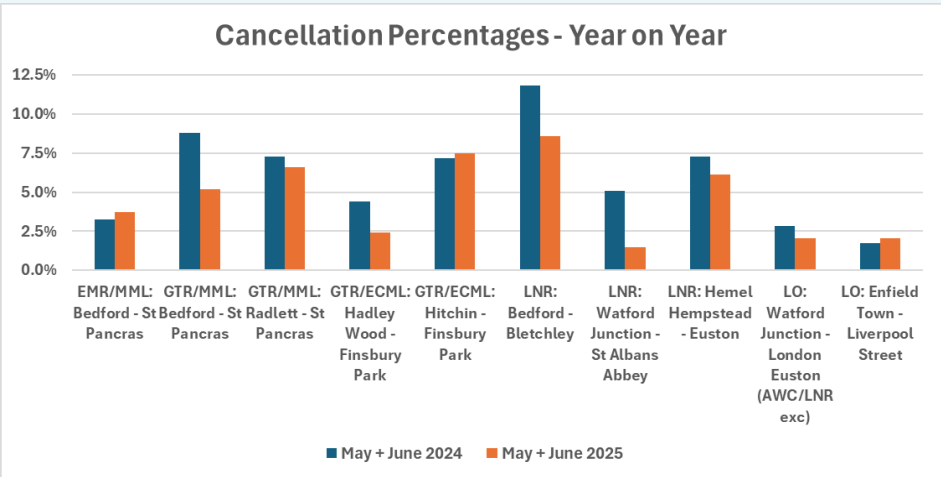
We have plenty to keep ourselves occupied at present, ranging from the UK Government’s headlines to small improvements that don’t trouble the headline writers.

For the headlines, we have East West Rail (EWR) and the Universal Studios development near Bedford, and for us these are quite intertwined. Our current focus is on three things:

- 1. We want the Bedford Midland station development to include a new platform for use by East Midlands Railway long distance services - these do not currently call, but demand increases from EWR and Universal can justify these stops - assuming there is not too much of a time penalty.
- 2. Championing early delivery of the new Universal (previously the Wixams) station, for the benefit of local residents and those involved in building the Park.
- 3. The nature of the stopping service on the line, so the train service is the most usable for those working at the Park.

On this we have managed to meet and lobby both the MP for the constituency that will contain Universal and the Bedford MP.

On smaller improvements, one that is a very slow slog is the issue of getting toilets open more often. Usual rail industry practice is that toilets are open when stations are staffed. This is different to (most typically) local authorities, who have unattended toilets. We’re seeking to persuade the industry that the risks of having them open are less than the benefits - particularly to those with medical conditions that make access that much more important. At present the focus is on encouraging a national standard that allows this - persuading a train operator to make changes will much easier if there is a defined combination of improvements that can be made.



Another key focus for us is performance, particularly the need to avoid clusters of cancellations. Two cancellations six hours apart are much more tolerable than the cancellation of two consecutive services. We maintain daily performance data for the services in our area which we find useful to understand whether things are getting better or worse and if so, what are the pain points. For instance the graph above gives some empirical evidence that things are getting better, but also tells us where the pain is currently being suffered most.

Kent (prepared by Richard Bowry)

Currently, Eurostar trains do not make scheduled stops at Ebbsfleet International or Ashford International, an issue on which Railfuture campaigns. However a number of open access operators, including Virgin and Gemini, have set out plans to launch high speed train services through the Channel Tunnel that might stop at a Kent destination. Cross channel services have not stopped in Kent since covid, and although the suspension was meant to be temporary, it has been anything but.

We mention there are on-going discussions as to whether the Kent Division should be absorbed by the Branch, which would itself hold periodic meetings in Kent, and a determination on that issue is to be imminently decided.

London Metro and Eastern Division (prepared by Richard Bowry)

Merger

In July 2025, the London Metro Division and the Eastern Division of the London & South East branch merged to form a new "London Metro & Eastern Division" ("Metro" for short). The boundaries of the branch have not changed. Howard Thomas, who has run the Eastern Division as convenor for many years, is now a committee member of the enlarged Metro Division.

Spending Settlement

Transport for London (TfL) has been granted a four-year spending settlement of £2.2bn. It's welcome news, both in terms of the sum (we would always have liked more) as well as the fact that it covers four years. Recent settlements have been annual. Not knowing how much government funding TfL would get beyond a year made planning next to impossible. TfL commissioner Andy Lord said having that four years of cash guaranteed meant TfL could now complete the introduction of new trains on the Piccadilly line and Docklands Light Railway, and complete new signalling on 40% of the Tube.

DLR Extension To Thamesmead

Positive news is emerging regarding the extension of the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) from Gallions Reach/ Beckton, under the Thames, to Thamesmead. The Spending Review did not specifically mention the extension, however a letter from DfT to the London Mayor did, recognising the potential for housing and economic growth that could be stimulated by extending the DLR to Thamesmead and encouraging a full business case and funding plan by Autumn 2025.

New Piccadilly Line Trains Delayed

Originally expected to be in passenger service in 2024, then delayed to late 2025, the new Piccadilly Line trains are now not expected to be in passenger service until the second half of 2026.

Four Lines Modification

The Four Lines Modification is of course a major upgrade for the Circle, District, Hammersmith & City, and Metropolitan lines on the London Underground, with amongst other matters an entirely new signalling system. The Four Lines Modification reached a milestone during the first days of June when the switchover to the new signalling system took place. Although now operational, there are a few final phases yet to be completed, principally from Preston Road towards Uxbridge and Amersham on the Metropolitan, and at the Wimbledon and Richmond ends of the District line.

Fare Dodging

TfL are alert to an increasing form of fare dodging where passengers avoid paying for journeys by using a genuine concession card that belongs to and registered to someone else. By such means, discounted travel is possible, even free travel. This type of fare dodging can of course be readily stopped by regular ticket inspections!

South Essex

Chelmsford's new station (Beaulieu Park) is scheduled to open in late October. The station is part of a wider regeneration of the Beaulieu Park area of Chelmsford, with 14,000 new homes planned. The intended train service is not yet clear, but there will be direct trains to London Liverpool Street as well as further into East Anglia such as Ipswich.

Work at Basildon station commenced at the end of July to reinstate the full length of its platform two, so that 12 car trains can be accommodated again. Similar work is happening at Rainham.

On 20 July 2025, c2c was the latest train operating company to be effectively nationalised and brought into public ownership under DFTO. So what many still call the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway is now back in public ownership.

Read the "Metro Campaign" Newsletter: Want fuller details as to what is happening in London and South Essex? Metro Division issues its own digital campaign newsletter every two months. All members and our contacts in the London Metropolitan and Eastern area should be receiving a copy by email. If you are not and you want to be on our list, please contact richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk

Surrey (prepared by Stephen Rolph)

Our Surrey members will notice that the London and South East Branch newsletter has taken a new format, with each division now having its own allocated section for matters specific to that division.

Surrey now has its own space, and as convenor I encourage all Railfuture members in our county to take the opportunity to share your thoughts on Surrey related rail matters. Do you have particular concerns you wish to see addressed? Is there something in Surrey you feel Railfuture should be campaigning on? If so, you now have the opportunity to share those thoughts by writing to the newsletter editor (contact on last page) and I encourage you to do so.

As you will be aware, our railway system is in the process of considerable change. We are seeing the re-nationalisation of passenger services and the creation of a new body, Great British Railways, which will be managing and operating services and hopefully bringing the fragmented rail industry back together again, subject to government policy and departments (Secretary of State for Transport and of course HM Treasury).

In addition, the nation's local government system is going through a radical change. We are seeing county and district councils being replaced by enlarged unitary authorities. What this means for Surrey is unclear, however Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSA) should have a population of 1.5 million, so with Surrey population at around 1.2 million it seems Surrey will have to combine in some form with a neighbouring area to form a MSA. Mayors under the MSA system will have considerably greater public transport powers than county councils (take the London Mayor and TfL as an example) and the passing of public transport from Surrey County Council to a MSA could be to Surrey's benefit.

Surrey's Railways

Surrey's railways are fairly complex for a single county, with three main operators (noting of course that SWR has now been nationalised and the others will follow) such that its railways can loosely be categorised as follows.

In east Surrey the principal operator is Govia Thameslink Railway which operates under its Gatwick Express, Southern and Thameslink brands. Its principal route south of the Thames is the Brighton Main line from Victoria and London Bridge with services to the south coast, which run through Surrey, and there are also a number of branches such as the Caterham and Tattenham Corner routes, services through Surrey to East Grinstead and Uckfield, plus some metro services.

There are two east - west routes in Surrey. One is the North Downs Line from Reading to Gatwick Airport calling at the Surrey towns of Guildford, Reigate and Redhill. The other is the Tonbridge - Redhill route operated by Southern. Many in Kent have suggested this service be extended further into Kent to attract passengers from deeper inside the county to Gatwick Airport.

There are quite a few mid-Surrey routes. These include services along the Woking, Epsom & Effingham Junction routes provided by SWR and Southern's services serving Horsham, Dorking, Epsom and Mitcham Junction routes. Services beyond Surrey borders reach down to Portsmouth (via Guildford), and Exeter and Weymouth (via Woking).

West Surrey has the Reading and Windsor services to London via the Surrey town of Staines, and there are also services to Shepperton, services through the Surrey Hills, and on the Chertsey - Weybridge branch. Many west Surrey services form part of the complex metro services of south west London, with trains ultimately to Clapham Junction and Waterloo.

Sussex and Coastway (prepared by Richard Bowry)

You could not have missed our campaign regarding the Gatwick Express as mentioned in our lead article. The inadequacy of the service affects Brighton in a number of ways, but particularly as there are currently no direct services between Brighton and Clapham Junction, the latter of course being a major gateway to south west London. As a consequence a change of train is necessary, such as at Haywards Heath, or in some cases to go into Victoria and back out again. Highly unsatisfactory.

The capacity constraints on the Brighton Main Line are resulting in unreliable services. An obvious solution, and one supported by Railfuture, would be to reopen the Lewes to Uckfield line which would provide a valuable second route to London.

We mention there are on-going discussions as to whether the Sussex Division should be absorbed by the Branch, which would itself hold periodic meetings in Sussex, and a determination on that issue is to be imminently decided.

AFFILIATED RAIL USER GROUPS

Railfuture affiliated Rail User Groups within the London & South East Branch comprise:

Herts & Beds

Abbey Flyer User's Group
Association of Public Transport Users (Thameslink North)
Bedford Commuters' Association
Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association
Hatfield Association of Rail Travellers
Watford Rail Users Group

Kent

Marsh Link Action Group
Sevenoaks Rail Travellers' Association
Tonbridge Line Commuters

London Metro & Eastern

Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users' Group
Chesham & District Transport Users Group
Chingford Line Users' Association
East Surrey Transport Committee (includes London Boroughs of Croydon and parts of Sutton)
Hadley Wood Rail User Group
Plumstead Rail Users'

Surrey

East Surrey Transport Committee (includes north east Surrey)
Reigate, Redhill & District Rail Users' Association

Sussex & Coastway

Cooksbridge Station Partnership
Lewes Rail Users' Group
Marsh Link Action Group (see also Kent)
Ore Transport Group

We maintain regular contacts with our affiliated rail user groups, attending some of their meetings and assessing how we may aid their campaigns. Many of them also attend our regular meetings.

Call to Affiliated Groups: Should any of our affiliated rail users group wish to discuss rail issues with us, please contact either the relevant division (see contact emails in penultimate page) or our chair (richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk)

Not Affiliated to Railfuture? WHY NOT?

Please contact us and let's chat to see how we can work together.

About half of all rail user groups in the UK are affiliated to Railfuture. Why not join us?

Interested in Rail User Groups?

Take a look at Railfuture's monthly magazine, 'Rail User Express' dedicated to rail user groups.

<https://railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Express>

NEXT BRANCH PRESENTATION MEETING

Joshua van Haaren, Stakeholder Manager, Chiltern Railways

Thursday 18 September 2025, starts 7pm

Basement Room, Alan Baxter Gallery, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EL



Changing of the guard? As it is now - a Class 68 with mark 3 coaches seen departing Warwick Station

(Commons creative license- Vanmany)

**Are you a regular passenger on Chiltern Railways?
Do you have questions to put to a representative of Chiltern Railways?**

Now is your chance. The Metro Division in conjunction with the London & South East Branch has invited Joshua van Haaren, Stakeholder Manager of Chiltern Railways to talk to us. The agenda includes:

- Rolling stock replacement and stock seating
- Additional long distance services and Metro area services
- Additional stops at West or South Ruislip on longer distance services to connect with the Central Line
- Ticketing (Project Oval), boundary zone tickets from ATMs and the possibility or otherwise of linking London and West Midlands on smart cards/bank cards
- Any questions you may have.

DON'T MISS IT

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YOUR POINT OF VIEW

Would you like to express your opinion and have it published in our branch newsletter?

We would like to hear from our members, rail user groups and our supporters what your thoughts are about the railways in our region, with the intention of including a selection of those thoughts in this newsletter.

You can express these views in a number of ways, such as:

- a letter to our editor, by way of email or if you prefer by post
- an article written by you

By way of example, the article on the next page was written by a concerned passenger as to the simplification of ticketing and his belief of the likelihood of that resulting in more expensive fares. If you would like to contact our editor with your own thoughts, please send them to: LSEEditor@railfuture.org.uk

LET'S GET SOCIAL

Many campaigning societies, and indeed most rail related societies, have a social aspect. Would you like to see the London and South East Branch of Railfuture have social events, and what would you like to see us do?

Here are some suggestions:

- pub lunch linked to a railway theme, visit or walk
- walk along former railways
- travel along and exploration of a currently operating line
- attending a heritage railway gala event (e.g., Bluebell, Spa Valley, Ongar)
- observation days / photography days (or half days) at key rail locations
- visiting a railway depot or facility

Two types of event our editor has undertaken for another society are (i) walks along old railway lines (such as Finsbury Park - Alexander Palace, the Forest Way, the Worth Way, the Cuckoo Trail) and (ii) exploration of given lines (for example, the South Eastern main line, exploring LB&SC Railway side and SER side of London Bridge station, that part of the viaduct that was the original London and Greenwich Railway viaduct from London Bridge Station, taking train and stopping at St. Johns to discuss the Lewisham railway disaster understanding what happened and why modern signalling prevents a repetition, moving on to Petts Wood to visit the Chislehurst curves complex of lines, created upon merger of the South Eastern Railway and the London, Chatham and Dover Railway). Or perhaps you have another idea? Please email our editor with any thoughts you may have.

COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIPS

The following are Community Rail Partnerships are within our branch area:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| - Abbey Line CRP | - | Watford Junction to St. Albans Abbey branch |
| - Beds & Herts CRP | - | Bedford to St Albans City on Midland Main Line |
| - Creative Isle CRP | - | Seven stations in Thanet from Birchington-on-Sea to Westgate-on-Sea |
| - Darent Valley CRP | - | Six stations in Kent from Swanley to Sevenoaks |
| - Essex & South Suffolk CRP | - | Three of six lines in Essex |
| - Hills to Harbour CRP | - | Guildford to Haslemere (and Portsmouth) |
| - Kent CRP | - | Medway Valley Line/ Swale Rail Line/ Kent Downs Line |
| - Marston Vale CRP | - | Bletchley to Bedford branch |
| - New River Line CRP | - | Broxbourne to Hertford East branch |
| - Southeast CRP | - | Ten lines across Sussex, Kent, Surrey and Berkshire |
| - White Cliffs CRP | - | Stations from Westenhanger to Dover and Sandwich |

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HAVE YOUR SAY

In this edition of our newsletter we are reproducing an article sent to us by a concerned passenger relating to the simplification of rail fares, and whether such a process may actually lead to fare increases.

I'd like to share my thoughts on the current push for fares-and-ticketing simplification, and fares-and-ticketing reform, across Great Britain's public-transport network, especially given recent developments like the Simpler Fares pilot extended in October of 2024, and considerations around the upcoming Railways Bill.

I'm not convinced that simplification is actually the right way to go, and I've got serious concerns about single-leg pricing and abolishing returns. I think that these changes - already seen on LNER and c2c - have been pretty rough for passengers, making travel more expensive, and less convenient.

The complexity in our current fares system is usually painted as the bad guy, but, ironically, that complexity often hides the best-value options for people. If you flatten everything out, you just end up taking away those hidden deals, and adding hassle.

It feels like a lot of the support for simplification is driven by the word itself - it sounds nice, but the reality is that most people aren't put off by complexity, they're put off by high prices. Nobody is skipping a seaside day-out because train fares are complicated; they're staying at home because tickets cost too much.

The rollout of single-leg pricing in particular means a loss of flexibility and convenience for travellers - turning a simple round-trip into two transactions, (or two ticket-choosing processes); eliminating the convenience of open returns, and often bumping up the cost in the process.

The huge reduction of options like return fares, super off-peak, day singles, day returns, boundary-zone fares, and in the practicality of actually availing oneself of railcard discounts is a step backwards for the average person who wants options, flexibility and value.

When I look at what's happening on LNER and c2c, I worry that this is what the rest of the network could look like if things keep moving this way, especially with the Government's recent implementations - and with the Railways Bill in the pipeline, there's a real risk that these detrimental changes are about to become entrenched.

There's also a misconception floating around that making singles half of the price of returns requires abolishing returns entirely. It just doesn't. You could easily just cut single prices, and keep returns, still giving people the flexibility which they currently have, rather than forcing everything into a more rigid system.

I urge you to look really carefully at what's actually being achieved here; who's benefitting, and who's losing out. These changes need a lot more scrutiny of the minutiae, to check that specific proposals, as opposed to general aims, are sound (as the old adage professes to us: 'the devil is in the detail'). Better outcomes for everyone will come from focusing on affordability, not just simplification. Do not be seduced by the word 'simplification'.

Editor: Concerned Passenger: Thank you for sharing your thoughts on ticketing and fares, a subject which we consistently hear is one of the most important issues affecting rail passengers. We agree, simplification can easily result in the loss of the cheapest fare, and this is certainly true for LNER where the lowest price flexible ticket disappears in their "Simpler Fares" offer - at times that was previously valid, you may have to pay more and will have restricted travel times. We think all fares are already too high, and we campaign relentlessly to keep them within reach of the general public. We all need to be aware of the risk of fare increases occurring by stealth or indirect means.

I find it interesting that Greater Anglia (who are probably the top performing train operator) has just launched "The Weekender" - sold as a return ticket - and offering flexible travel times.

Herts and Beds Division

Convenor: Neil Middleton

Meetings: We hold meetings monthly both on-line and in person. **Our next meeting is on Wednesday 8 October 2025, on-line starting 7.30pm.**

Principal Campaigns: Our current campaigns include but are not limited to the following:

- East - West Rail as it effects Bedfordshire
- Watford - Croxley rail link
- New station at Wixams between Bedford and Flitwick

Contact Email: neil.middleton@railfuture.org.uk

Kent

Currently organised as a division with convenor: Chris Fribbins

Meetings: We hold meetings quarterly, primarily on-line. We also have an informal meeting in Faversham in May and a summer social event.
Our next meeting is on Saturday 15 November 2025, on-line starting 2pm.

Principal Campaigns: Our current campaigns include but are not limited to the following:

- Cross Channel trains stopping at Ebbsfleet International and Ashford International
- Hoo Peninsula: Upgrading the freight-only branch line to restore passenger services to Hoo St. Werburgh
- Kent and Gatwick: Improving connections from Kent to Gatwick Airport via Tonbridge
- Kenex tram and Lower Thames Crossing, rail Dartford to Thurrock

Contact Email: chris.fribbins@railfuture.org.uk

London Metro and Eastern Division

Chair: Richard Bowry. Vice-Chair: Charlie King. Committee member: Howard Thomas

Meetings: We hold six meetings per year on alternate months, at Basement Room, Alan Baxter Gallery, 75 Cowcross St, London EC1M 6EL .
Our next meeting is on Thursday 18 September 2025, starts 7pm. Guest presentation by Joshua van Haaren of Chiltern Railways.

Principal Campaigns: Our current campaigns include but are not limited to the following:

- Docklands Light Railway extension to Thamesmead
- West Orbital Route, south west to north west London
- Bakerloo Line extension to Lewisham
- Crossrail 2

Contact Email: richard.bowry@railfuture.org.uk

Surrey

Currently organised as a division with convenor: Stephen Rolph

Meetings: We are working on recommencing meetings, details to be released shortly.

Principal Campaigns: Our current campaigns include but are not limited to the following:

- Gatwick Airport - London services: Capacity issues due to expanding airport and anticipated need for additional train services
- North Downs Line: Improving the service between Reading, Guildford and Gatwick Airport
- Southern rail link to Heathrow airport

Contact Email: snrolph@goolemail.com

Sussex & Coastway

Currently organised as a division with convenor: John Black. Secretary: Robert Cheesman

Meetings: We hold six meetings per year on alternate months, at a number of locations, primarily Brighton and Haywards Heath with some on-line.

Principal Campaigns: Our current campaigns include but are not limited to the following:

- Uckfield - Lewes: Reinstating a rail link to bridge the gap between Uckfield and Lewes
- More and faster West Coastway services
- Improvements to Marshlink Line, Ashford to Hastings

Contact Email: jcbblack@yahoo.co.uk

Our websites: www.railfuture.org.uk | www.railfuture.org.uk/London-and-South-East | www.railwatch.org.uk
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All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU

We are a national campaign group And a local campaign group too!



Our Branches

Railfuture has 14 branches: so there's one near you!

Devon and Cornwall
East Anglia
East Midlands
Lincolnshire
London and South East
North East
North West
Severnside
Thames Valley
Wessex
West Midlands
Yorkshire
Scotland
Wales

London & South East Branch comprises five territories:

- Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire
- Kent
- London Metro & Eastern
- Surrey
- Sussex & Coastway

We campaign for a bigger, better railway.

A Better Railway is a railway which:

- Is fully accessible for all people, from street to platform and platform to train
- Is reliable, with fewer delays and cancellations, and has frequent services
- Is affordable, with ticket prices not rising above inflation
- Is clean, safe and comfortable without overcrowding
- Is welcoming with modern facilities and good customer service
- Is transparent and understandable in terms of ticketing, with comprehensive and appropriate use of technology, enabling passengers to always buy the ticket that is most suitable for them

A Bigger Railway is a railway which:

- Opens new lines, such as the Elizabeth Line and extensions such as to Barking Riverside
- Opens new stations, such as Lea Bridge and Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford

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Membership from just £10

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Contact Our Editor: LSEEditor@railfuture.org.uk



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