

SixShiresRail

Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire & Rutland

Newsletter for Railfuture East Midlands
& Lincolnshire branches

railfuture

Number 8 October 2025

ISSN 2976-7946

***Campaigning for Rail in Derbyshire, Leicestershire,
Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire & Rutland***

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(Busy scene at Nottingham. Photo: Steve Jones)



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(Photo: Phil Mason)

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A New EMR Regional Timetable

I am sure that by now most readers are aware that on 14 December East Midlands Railway (EMR) is introducing a substantially revised timetable for Regional services. It's taken a long while to arrive – the writer can remember being part of a delegation that visited DfT in London around 2012 to ask for better rolling stock and improved regional services in the next franchise and this was by no means the first time this request had been made – but is nevertheless very welcome.

This opportunity to revise the timetable has come about as a result of a completely rewritten East Coast Main Line (ECML) timetable where EMR identified the opportunity to finally meet the long desired aspiration of two trains per hour between Lincoln and Nottingham. Planning for this timetable began nearly two years ago and has involved a considerable amount of detailed work by EMR's timetable planners.

The new service pattern is as follows (with some variations in the morning peak):

- ▶ Crewe to Newark is extended to Lincoln every hour.
- ▶ Matlock to Nottingham becomes Matlock to Lincoln with services extended to Cleethorpes in alternate hours.
- ▶ Peterborough to Doncaster via Lincoln is now split into an hourly Peterborough to Lincoln and a separate 5 trains per day service between Lincoln and Doncaster.
- ▶ The Lincoln to Leicester service becomes a self contained all stations shuttle between Nottingham and Leicester.
- ▶ Newark Northgate to Lincoln is reduced to just 4 trains per day.

- ▶ Nottingham to Worksop
- ▶ Nottingham to Skegness
- ▶ Liverpool to Norwich.
- ▶ Barton-on-Humber to Cleethorpes.

This new pattern is expected to provide a more robust timetable with better punctuality and less instances of trains terminated short of destination. However, constraints encountered in fitting in with existing services by other operators and previously short sighted track rationalisation mean the timetable is not all we would wish for. An explanation of some of these is as follows:

Firstly Lincoln to Nottingham is a busy route where patronage is growing at around 10% per year with almost full trains now even in the middle of the day, so a doubling of frequency meets one of our most longstanding aspirations and enables an hourly service at Burton Joyce. From Lincoln it also enables much better connections at Derby into North East to South West Cross Country services. The main performance risk is the flat crossing over the ECML at Newark. There should be no problem if services in the new ECML timetable run as planned, but some commentators have expressed doubts that it is robust enough with too little margin for delays. Only time will tell us the answer to that.

With the Lincoln to Nottingham services being retimed to fit in with paths over the Newark flat crossing, it is no longer possible to find a train path to continue to Leicester. Instead the all stations Nottingham to Leicester will be a self contained shuttle service.

Additional calls have been fitted in at Radcliffe (or Radcliffe on Trent as the locals would like it changed to) on Skegness services. Any more improvement on these services is ▶

◀ constrained by long single track sections east of Sleaford and access to Grantham station.

Similarly the Liverpool to Norwich timetable is basically unchanged because times between Ely and Peterborough and Sheffield to Manchester cannot be changed.

Currently Derby to Crewe services are often delayed over the single track section between Alsager and Crewe. There is only 10 minutes layover at Crewe so any delay to a service from the opposite direction can mean that trains arrive at Crewe almost as soon as (or after) they are due to depart on the return trip, resulting in late running and even more delays on the congested tracks from Derby to Nottingham. The new service has been retimed so it has a 40 minute layover at Crewe though this does mean most services have a 7 minute wait to enter the single track section.

We had hoped that this new timetable would see a much better service at Peartree, but instead the current meagre service of 8 trains a day has been reduced even further to just 6 trains. This has the serious effect of removing Peartree's evening peak service from Nottingham and Derby. It is not just the reduction in the number of train calls that is of concern; it is that one can no longer commute from Peartree to Derby or Nottingham in the new timetable. We have expressed our displeasure and are lobbying for improvements in future timetables. Now the layover time at Crewe has been increased to 40 minutes we do consider that there ought to be a way of adding regular calls at Peartree.

Robin Hood Line services remain as hourly on weekdays with an additional hourly Nottingham to Mansfield Woodhouse service on Saturdays. We had hoped that this Mansfield Woodhouse service would operate on

weekdays and will continue to lobby for this.

The Barton-on-Humber service calls at Grimsby Docks and New Clee are transferred to the Cleethorpes to Matlock service except for 07:51 and 21:56 from Barton and 06:51, 09:10 and 17:10 from Cleethorpes. This extends the layover time at Cleethorpes to typically 13 minutes and hopefully will improve punctuality.

Currently connections from Market Rasen to London at Lincoln are abysmal. By retiming the Cleethorpes to Lincoln there will now be 11 minute connections at Lincoln into the LNER trains to London. As the Lincoln to Peterborough will now be a regular hourly service instead of a mish-mash of roughly every hour but with significant gaps, there will also be reasonable connections to London from this service.

However Lincolnshire residents will be disappointed to hear that there will still be no Sunday services on this route. As this route is used by overnight freight services during the week, the only time that Network Rail can have access to maintain the track is from Saturday evening to Sunday afternoon, so our aspiration for passenger services on a Sunday is likely to remain unsatisfied.

We are disappointed that there are still only 5 trains per day between Lincoln and Doncaster, but the service does have some improvements. There is now an 07:47 departure from Lincoln providing an 08:36 arrival at Doncaster for commuters along with a 17:35 return from Doncaster.

On most routes services will be operated by Class 170 units. Skegness will have Class 158 so additional units can be added for the days when events at Skegness generate demand for more capacity. Liverpool to Norwich will be a mix of '170' and '158'. *David Harby*

LNER's Snake Oil

Fares simplification is urgently needed. LNER is trialling what they call “*fares simplification*”, promising to deliver a “*modern, flexible, and easy-to-navigate fare structure*” which is “*not about raising prices but about making rail ticketing easier to understand for passengers*”.

Let us look at the reality, using weekend travel from London to Newcastle as an example.

Before the Phase 2 trial

- £91.90 Off-Peak Single (valid on any weekend train)
- £27.60 – £88.10 Advance Single (train-specific, cheaper on quieter services)

How the fares were set:

Off-Peak fares are government-regulated.

Phase 2 trial

- £200.80 Anytime (valid on any train)
- £27.60 – £177.60 Advance (train-specific, reduced prices on quieter trains)
- £47.60 – £197.60 “70min Flex” (valid on a designated train, or any train up to 70 minutes earlier or later. In some cases, if the 70-minute option is cheaper than the train you intend to take, you may be forced to buy that instead.) Not a lot of use if you are travelling to/from stations like Lincoln where the LNER service is only 2 hourly!

How the fares are set:

- At least two-thirds of all fixed tickets must be sold at 50% or less of the fully flexible fare.
- A maximum of 10% of fixed tickets can be priced at 80% or more of the fully flexible fare.

The reality

So is the trial “*not about raising prices*”?

Is it “*easier to understand*”? Hardly.

For weekend journeys — when fares

ought to be at their simplest — the trial already delivers higher costs and added complexity. A genuine simplification must be robust across both weekday and weekend travel; otherwise it risks alienating passengers and undermining trust in the entire reform process.

You don't need to be an LNER passenger to be concerned. LNER is government-run, so this trial is clearly intended as a model for nationwide rollout — except in Scotland, which, to the envy of travellers in England, has already simplified its fares by abolishing peak pricing.

Fares simplification is needed — but not at the cost of allowing operators to charge *double* for “turn up and go” travel.

- If your journey is unpredictable, you risk paying twice as much.
- If you plan ahead but your plans change, you could lose all your money.

Equity impacts

Passengers with disabilities are often unable to plan very far ahead because they don't know if they will be fit enough to travel. Carers can again have unpredictable schedules simply because they don't know until just before travel if the person they care for is fit enough to leave (or in my own case recently were given a short notice medical appointment). Or what about a son or daughter who receives a phone call to say their parent has suddenly been admitted to hospital? All these examples either face significantly higher costs or if they plan ahead risk losing the entire value of their ticket if they need to change travel plans.

Railfuture is not the only group who are disturbed about the implications of the LNER fares ‘Simplification’. This link leads to a blog by Roger French, a very well respected transport commentator, who explains how instead of simplifying ►

◀ fares the loss of flexible Off-Peak and Super Off-Peak tickets causes the passenger even more confusion, reduces choice and in his example can increase fares by nearly 100%.

<https://busandtrainuser.com/2025/08/15/lner-are-at-it-again/#more-78736>

(Thanks to Paul Hollinghurst of East Anglia branch for doing the calculations and giving David Harby permission to use his comments in this article)



Nottingham Mini-Conference

Introduction

This event was a half-day joint mini-conference of Railfuture's East Midlands, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Branches. It was hosted by East Midlands in Nottingham, following a very successful event organised by Yorkshire Branch in 2024 in Sheffield. There were three speakers, and the overall theme was the changes in the political environment for rail and the needs and opportunities to develop inter-regional connectivity.

Mayoral Combined Authorities Working to Improve Rail Services

The first speaker was Carew Satchwell, Rail Strategy Lead, East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), which covers the cities and counties of Derby/shire and Nottingham/shire. Since May 2024, he has been working with a Labour Mayor, two Labour City Councils, and two Reform County Councils. The focus is on short-term plans because of the short-term nature of the political cycle. This political environment represents quite a change for Carew, whose career hitherto had been in the rail industry.

The Transport Strategy Team has been in place since August 2024, with staff currently being TUPE'd in from the constituent local authorities including two staff from Nottingham joining by the

end of January 2026. EMCCA has £2billion to spend over six years. This is not all new money, and most is allocated to buses and roads, so rail has to fight for its share. The rail priorities for EMCCA are:

- **Devolution;**

- GB being asked to work with combined authorities, and particularly EMCCA because its HQ is to be in Derby, though the exact location remains to be decided;

- Working closely with the TOCs: including LNER, TPE, EMR;

- Change in the way services will be developed. Regarding rail, combined authorities are more about influence than control. This will require collaboration with other combined authorities, and EMCCA is already building these relationships;

- EMCCA is working with all authorities on a route to ensure that an agreed view is given to Network Rail on timetable specifications;

- In terms of reopenings, EMCCA is looking at the possibilities of using light rail because it is cheaper. Examples are Shirebrook to Ollerton, Buxton to Blackwell Mill, and part of the Ivanhoe Line, all of which need business cases. The Mayor is keen on the Buxton Light Rail proposal;

- Ticketing, which is fiendishly ▶

◀ complex, partly because of the multiple technologies involved. This must be approached carefully, with ticket gates avoided if possible because of their high cost. The Mayor is keen on multi-modal integrated ticketing;

- Stations. These are the shop window of the railway but bring costs and liabilities, and it is impracticable for EMCCA to take them over. How can we make them easy to get to, by all modes? Accessibility is a significant problem in many cases and EMCCA is working with EMR to seek improvements, e.g. at Bingham;

- Making sure EMCCA is on the map where the rail industry is concerned. EMCCA has good contacts in the rail

involving raising bridges or lowering tracks;

- Whether there is a need for more intermodal freight terminals in the region;

- Development of the hydrogen economy, e.g. at High Marnham;

- Encouragement of rail movement of aggregates;

- Stations: signage needs to be more passenger-friendly, and interchange should be improved;

- Railway politics – the EM Mayor is not seen as having as much influence as some mayors, but she is pursuing Midland Main Line electrification. The ‘pausing’ of this has implications for future rolling stock policy;

- Consultation on the EMCCA Local Transport Plan is imminent; Rf needs to respond.

Will GBR be Great?

Railfuture President Christian Wolmar presented the next session by video link from Darlington, where he had been attending a Rail200 event.

Christian had attended a podcast with Peter Hendy, Minister of State for Rail, who is very enthusiastic about GBR.

We may remember that the idea of Great British Railways was introduced in the aftermath of the 2018 timetable debacle. It will be at Parliamentary Bill stage in November and GBR should come into being by Easter 2027. In the meantime, work continues on re-integration of the railway. There will be a proper accounting system, and much is happening behind the scenes.

DfTO (DfT Operator Ltd, ex-OLR) has taken on many DfT staff, but there will ▶



Tram and Train at Nottingham. Photo: Steve Jones

industry and is represented at the sub-national transport bodies Midlands Connect and Transport for the North. There were questions and comments about the following:

- The Chancellor's summer spending announcement and its implications for rail in the region;

- East Midlands Airport access. The Castle Donington line, with a station there, would be a major benefit;

- Freight, including gauge clearance

◀ probably be redundancies as the previous ‘man-marking’ of TOCs ceases and these staff actually become the operators.

Northern Powerhouse Rail: the anticipated announcement at the 2025 Labour Party Conference ended up being overtaken by Andy Burnham’s bid to be Labour leader and by Andrew Gilligan’s Policy Exchange report about whether a high-speed line between Liverpool and Manchester is really needed. What we really need is better services within the North.

The best option to replace HS2 is improvements to the West Coast Main Line, especially around Stockport and Stafford.

On fares, there is no overarching policy, but Hendy is keen on the LNER ‘simplification’.

To replace the current Network Rail Control periods, there will be a rolling five-year programme, renewed every year. GBR accounts will be divided up by Routes, which could lead to internal competition for investment funding. Questions followed, with topics covered including:

- Open Access. Lumo and Grand Central have just placed big orders with Hitachi, so clearly have confidence that they will still exist, although no new OA operators are likely to be allowed on the West Coast Main Line for capacity reasons. GBR (rather than ORR or its successor) will, however, determine the timetable;

- Whether the Train Operating Companies are still operating in silos and not sharing resources. Peter Hendy says that the whole aim is to save money by reducing duplication and external payments, and increasing efficiency;

- Integration of track and train where TOCs cross numerous Network Rail routes. We wait and see how this will work.

- Multiple TOCs operating in the same centres, and the different staff working conditions, which could lead to industrial disputes. It has to be acknowledged that bringing in standard Terms and Conditions across GBR is going to increase costs. Reconnecting revenue with costs, such as the allocation of the huge fixed costs of railways between Routes, will have to be based on assumptions, but this could distort decision-making. Railfuture has a possible role here, in campaigning for a more holistic view of investment.

Improving Cross-Boundary Rail Connectivity Between the East Midlands and Yorkshire: ‘Towards an Opportunity Escalator’

Stephen Chaytow, Committee member of East Midlands Branch, introduced a proposal responding to EMCCA Mayor Ward’s demands for a better public transport system. That demand arose from the recent East Midlands Inclusive Growth Commission report, and the proposal is a Railfuture East Midlands and Yorkshire cross-boundary team initiative. The focus was East Midlands and Yorkshire, though Lincolnshire should not be ignored.

He set the scene by challenging the audience to understand the politics and which way the political wind is blowing. The EM Mayor has coined the term ‘Opportunity Escalator’, whereby good career opportunities depend on good transport to connect people with jobs and careers. This picks up on Sir John Armitt’s comment as Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission that rail is at its best when carrying large numbers of passengers either internally across large conurbations or at speed between them. Similarly, the OECD has identified that the resulting benefits flow outwards to surrounding areas. The West ▶

◀ Midlands and Manchester Mayors have published their own post-HS2 vision of rail connectivity between their regions; a similar plan for the East Midlands and Yorkshire is needed.

Stephen introduced Chris Bell from the Don Valley Railway Campaign, which is looking at reopening the line from Deepcar and Stocksbridge via Sheffield Victoria station, with possible through services to Chesterfield via a reopened Barrow Hill line. This could also include services to Cleethorpes and the Barton line, and includes Gainsborough Central to Brigg and onwards. It would require collaboration between the East Midlands and South Yorkshire Mayors, and Lincolnshire for the possible extensions.

A question to be considered is whether Sheffield Midland station is a rail thoroughfare or a blocker. Is it used to best effect?

There followed a lively interactive discussion about various topics, including but not limited to:

- Service options for the Don Valley Line, including whether a tram extension or other form of light rail to Deepcar might be a viable option, plus the need to serve Meadowhall for workers there. Another view was the need to reopen beyond Stocksbridge to Penistone, thus enabling faster Huddersfield – Sheffield services;

- Service options generally, including the need and potential for express services between the East Midlands and numerous Yorkshire conurbations such as Leeds, York and Wakefield. Pontefract is an interesting example, where passenger numbers to York and Sheffield are suppressed by a poorer service compared with Leeds and

Wakefield. Onward projection of EMR Sheffield services to York could address this.

- Similarly, a Leeds – Doncaster – Lincoln service, with new stations at Bessacarr (near Doncaster) and at Fillingley for the airport site;

- Local connectivity on the East Coast Main Line, such as for the intermediate stations between Peterborough and York;

- Track and station infrastructure constraints, and whether joining and splitting trains may go some way toward alleviating these without costly infrastructure investment;

- Rolling stock: Northern has insufficient rolling stock. Until it gets more, there is no scope for new or improved services. New rolling stock should enter service from 2032; in the meantime, cascaded Class 150 and 158 dmus are required;

- Reopened lines and reopened or new stations for the emerging ‘Clean Energy Supercluster’ to be based at the former power station sites at West Burton, Cottam, and High Marnham.

It was clear from the discussion that there is a lot to delve into and discuss here. Anyone wanting to get involved is invited to contact Stephen.

Close of event

East Midlands Branch Chair Phil Thomas closed the event with thanks to all the speakers for their thought-provoking insights and ideas. We look forward to a continuing discussion, and campaign proposals for the improvements of the regional services, which were discussed too briefly today. There is much to be gained by combining our efforts to improve services across our Branch boundaries.

Steve Jones

Your contribution to the next edition of SixShiresRail will be greatly appreciated. An article or letter to the Editor with your views and opinions of rail topics will reach a wide audience in the East Midlands and Lincolnshire branches.

Visit to Nottingham Express Transit Depot and Control Centre

Words and pictures by Steve Jones and Jerry Alderson

On the same morning as the joint Branches mini-conference in Nottingham, 4 October (*see page 5*), a visit was arranged to the Nottingham Express Transit (NET) tram depot and control centre at Wilkinson Street. Numbers for this were strictly limited, so a small group of members of the three Branches gathered at the depot entrance for 10:30am.

We were greeted by Paul Heslop, Training & Competency Manager, who showed us the main workshop where the trams are maintained and repaired. Three trams were in the building, two receiving attention to their wheels and bogies, and one receiving damage repairs. NET operates trams of two types, both being leased: 15 Bombardier Incentros built in 2002-03 at Derby Litchurch Lane for the original lines running north from Station Street to Hucknall and Phoenix Park. These were supplemented by 22 Alstom Citadis trams delivered in 2013-14 to accompany the significant expansion of the network on the two southern branches to Toton Lane and Clifton South. Having trams from two different builders used to cause complications in terms of spare parts and associated workshop tools. However, Alstom later took over Bombardier, which has resolved this. Nonetheless, the depot's stores room is substantial and holds a full set of spare parts. The two fleets are not fully compatible, so operations have been standardised. For example, maximum operating speed has been reduced from 80 to 70kph to match the lower top speed of the Citadis trams and allow flexibility in deployment. The trams can cope with fluctuations in the

overhead line voltage, which can vary with regenerative braking (increasing it) and more trams in service (draining it). The 750V dc can drop to 700V dc and rise to 1000V dc.

All the trams are named after Nottingham local worthies. Interestingly, because of their owner's stipulations, the Citadis trams do not carry external advertising, while the older Incentros are often given all-over advertising wraps.

The blustery weather brought by Storm Amy meant that we did not look around outside, where the depot has extensive stabling sidings. There is no room for further expansion, so a second depot would be required to accommodate a larger fleet. We did see the drive-through tram-wash, however, and the building used for storing infrastructure equipment. The depot and control centre buildings have roof-top solar panels that power the entire building, though not the trams.

Then it was time for a visit to the Control Centre, housed upstairs in the main depot building. This has two rows of workstations, with a large bank of CCTV screens on the wall; these cover the whole network. Five people typically work in the Control Centre, which deals with incidents as well as maintaining a general overview of operations. Planning of schedules also takes place in the Control Centre. For example, on the day of the visit, the famous Nottingham Goose Fair was taking place on the park next to The Forest tram stop; services will be supplemented at the busiest times. NET only has about four hours each night when trams are not running. When icebreaker trams are needed, to clear the overhead wires of ice that can form ►



overnight, they run two, one per route. There is not enough time for one to do both routes before the first service tram in the morning.

Though the Hucknall route shares the Network Rail Robin Hood Line trackbed from just north of Wilkinson Street, the two systems are entirely separate. The only common point is level crossings, barriers on which are lowered by the approach of either trams or trains.

NET is a great asset to Nottingham and deserves success. It has faced scepticism from some local politicians but the areas it serves benefit greatly from its presence. We in Railfuture support its continuing development and further expansion.

We are grateful to Trevor Stocker, Head of Operations and Safety at NET, for making the arrangements for the visit, and to Paul Heslop for showing us around and being so willing to answer questions.



The Railfuture group in the main NET workshop. Tram 237 receives attention to its running gear alongside. The near end of the tram is on the depot's wheel lathe.

NET Route Map © NET Support



The Perils of Railway Travel

I recently attended two conferences, one at Eastwood Hall near Nottingham, and the other at Greystoke Castle near Penrith. I departed Lincoln on the 13:35 to Nottingham. The journey to Nottingham was without incident, but I later realised that while our railways are fine for commuters it is a different story for occasional travellers.

Although my conference at Eastwood Hall was due to end at around 17:00 on Sunday 31, I left early in order to journey from Nottingham to Penrith which is about a four hour journey. The purpose of my rail journey was to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Edgar Rice Burroughs on 1 September at Greystoke Castle. I was waiting at platform 4 to travel to Manchester Oxford Road where I changed trains. I did not realise that platform 4A was on a different platform to platform 4. To add to the confusion a train arrived at platform 4 disgorging its passengers. When I boarded the train I found that there was no-one else on it, so I left quickly when the doors were closing. No-one on the platform knew anything about it and there was no-one from the railway to ask. I then made my way to platform 4A having been told its location, by which time the train had left but there were now railway staff to ask. The next train was from platform 7. Although I was not in a hurry it is annoying to be given misleading information. Surely the platforms need to be renumbered.

Manchester Oxford Road was fine with a comprehensive indicator board. The dispatcher had a full time job with trains coming and going every few minutes. I witnessed trains from four different railway companies: East Midlands Railway, Northern, TransPennine Express and Transport for Wales.

My journey back from Penrith to

Lincoln involved joining the Avanti Trains express, with two colleagues travelling to London, at 11:14 on 2 September. The train had originated from Glasgow. I had to change trains at Crewe with 10 minutes to spare. Unlike Manchester Oxford Road the indicator boards at Crewe, which is a huge station, were inadequate with only sparse information. Fortunately I saw a railway official who told me when I asked about the Nottingham train: "I think it is platform 2". I think it was on this train journey that there were two people who had got on the wrong train and were told that they needed to travel to London to get back to their right destination.

When I arrived at Nottingham I had about 40 minutes to spare for my connection. Again, I discovered passengers who had travelled on the wrong train. The family told me that, like Nottingham, there are two platforms at Sheffield with the same number although I was not clear if this was the cause of their current distress.

About 5 minutes before the 15:34 train was due to leave Nottingham for Lincoln, the announcer realised that she had been given the wrong platform number so I had to rush to the end of platform 1 to get my train.

In view of the above it is hardly surprising that some people give up on the railways and use their cars.

Tom Rookes

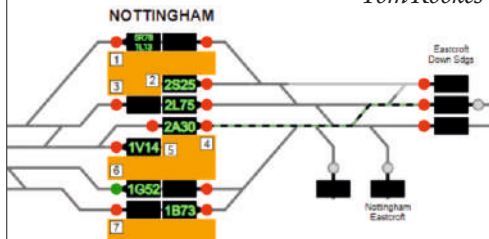


Diagram showing platform numbers at Nottingham from the Traksys website providing real-time train information with train identity headcodes at signal berths.

Friends of the Barton Line

● On 15 April, several members of Friends of the Barton Line (FoBL) attended the unveiling of a mural by local artist Nikita Spires at Cleethorpes station. The first of a series of artworks at stations along the line as part of the Railway 200 celebrations.

● On 21 May volunteers from various organisations took part in a Community Action Day at Goxhill station. Projects included painting fences, planting-up raised beds with herbs and attaching 'bug hotels' to attract pollinators to the garden.

● East Midlands Railway (EMR) has informed FoBL that a short-term Rest Day Working arrangement has been agreed with ASLEF with immediate effect to enable negotiations to continue to run to a conclusion, which will enable the best possible service on the Line.

● Following a request from the group, TransPennine Express and EMR have joined forces in offering considerable savings on a range of new advance purchase fares for journeys between Barton line and TPE stations. Examples: Barton–Liverpool £21.60, Barton–Manchester £22.20, Barton–Sheffield 12.10, Thornton Abbey–Preston £22.70, Thornton Abbey–Doncaster £10.40.

EDITOR'S MAIL

Comparing station usage figures

Of course, we don't want to see 4.5 pages of *Six Shires Rail* being taken up with station usage figures (*SSR*: 7). But I think you do wrong to compare Grimsby's omission with that of Oakham, as my town has a population of 85,911 whereas just 12,149 live in Rutland's County town – that's 7 times as many folk.

What's more though the complete statistics may be available online, you must realise that not everyone has internet access. Indeed, I can't go online at home and have to go to a public site to use the internet.

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby

Direct service to London

At a recent meeting of North East Lincolnshire Council's Economy and Tourism Scrutiny Panel, I managed to get a resolution through to cabinet. It noted that in view of the fact only 3% of visitors to Cleethorpes came by train, further efforts should be made to have a direct train service between the resort and London.

Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby

Railfuture out and about

Three Lincolnshire Branch committee members manned a Railfuture stall over the weekend of 18/19 October at the Caistor model railway exhibition. The annual event provides a useful platform to publicise the activities of Railfuture and chat to visitors about their thoughts and aspirations about the local railways. A large version of the map used in our leaflet "A growing railway for a growing region" was used as a centrepiece and

prompted interesting comments from the attendees living mainly in the north of the County. A recurring complaint was the lack of a direct service from Cleethorpes to London, but when discussed further, few had considered using a direct service, preferring to travel via Doncaster, and did not appreciate the difficulty of justifying a business case to provide a viable through service.

Phil Mason

Nottingham Bridge Restrictions Revised

The hours of access from the centre footbridge at Nottingham station to the station platforms are to be changed to combat fare evasion and improve safety.

From Monday, 18 August, restrictions will be in place for access to the platforms from the footbridge between 7 pm and 6 am each day. The changes are being implemented to reduce fare evasion, improve safety, and to deter vandalism.

Ahead of the changes, East Midlands Railway (EMR) has improved signage and wayfinding at the station, and provided guidance for access to nearby taxis and services. The right of way across the footbridge between Station Street and Queen's Road, including connections to the tram network, will continue.

The changes will see access to the station platforms from the footbridge restricted between 7 pm and 6 am each day replacing the current 11 pm to 5 am window,

During these hours, access to the platforms will only be available through the main station concourse and ticket gates. To ensure operational flexibility, the gates may be opened outside restricted hours during major events, at times of crowding, or in response to emergencies.

The changes follow a previous pilot scheme that tackled fare evasion, where the footbridge was used to avoid ticket checks. That pilot scheme showed that forcing passengers to use the ticket gates helped to protect railway revenue, and improved safety, station security, and the overall customer experience.

The pilot also showed the station, the busiest in the East Midlands, could face an annual potential revenue loss of around £1.1 million because of fare evasion, but during the restricted hours there were measurable enhancements in

customer satisfaction and the overall environment.

A significant finding from the pilot data showed that 62% of violent and antisocial behaviour at the station occurs between 7 pm and 6 am.

EMR originally planned that the pilot trial would become permanent from 22 February this year, but deferred the closure for further consultation.

“Our primary responsibility is to ensure Nottingham station remains a safe, accessible, and welcoming place for all passengers. By refining access during these hours, we are not only tackling fare evasion and reducing costs for taxpayers but also creating a more secure and pleasant environment for customers and colleagues alike.”

Philippa Cresswell, Customer Experience Director at East Midlands Railway

Crossing the Tracks at Melton Mowbray

In *SixShiresRail No. 7*, I included a piece about the repainting of Melton Mowbray station in traditional Midland Railway colours and bemoaned the fact that to be fully disability compliant, the station still needs an improved bridge with lifts.

Recently, I have had the opportunity to take a closer look at the station and, to be fair to Network Rail, I must point out that passengers with mobility issues can access both platforms by gates at the eastern end of the station which provide access to a foot-crossing over the two tracks. Using a telephone connected to the signal box, the signaller can advise it is safe to cross the tracks and release a magnetic lock on the gate. When the passenger reaches the other side, a switch is pressed to release the gate and access the platform.

Phil Mason

Skegness Line Track Upgrade

A weekend of engineering work to install new track and sleepers will affect journeys between the East Midlands and Skegness.

Passengers are advised that rail replacement buses will operate between Nottingham/Grantham and Sleaford. Network Rail will carry out two projects on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 November to improve the condition of the railway.

There will be 1.6km of new track installed at Ancaster in Lincolnshire to provide passengers with more reliable journeys. This £1.3 million investment will see jointed rail dating from the 1950s replaced with continuous welded rail – making for a smoother ride and needing less future maintenance.

New railway sleepers, which support the rails and hold them in place, will be installed at Scarrington Lane level crossing, Nottinghamshire.

The work means buses will replace

trains between Nottingham/Grantham and Sleaford on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 November:

Saturday: East Midlands Railway (EMR) services between Nottingham and Skegness will operate between Nottingham and Grantham, and between Sleaford and Skegness only. Connecting rail replacement buses will run between Grantham and Sleaford.

Sunday: EMR services between Nottingham and Skegness will operate between Sleaford and Skegness only. Rail replacement buses will run between Nottingham and Sleaford. There will also be a revised timetable on Liverpool

Lime Street to Norwich services. Trains will not call at Grantham, which will be served by rail replacement buses from Nottingham.

Source:

East Midlands Railway / Network Rail



First Refurbished Class 158 Unveiled

East Midlands Railway (EMR) has unveiled its first refurbished Class 158 train marking the next major milestone in its £60 million project to improve its regional fleet.

The project will deliver a cleaner, more modern on-board experience and ensure the trains continue to provide a reliable and comfortable service for years to come.



(Source: East Midlands Railway)



Getting There Greener

To improve biodiversity at East Midlands Parkway Station, a project has been launched by East Midlands Railway (EMR) to help transform the area.

EMR has worked with experts at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, EMR's Community Rail team, and local partners to develop the project, and its aims will form part of the Getting There Greener Biodiversity Strategy and Nature Recovery Plan.

The site has 6.3 hectares of land that will be transformed to create new habitats using log piles and rock trenches for amphibians and reptiles, bird boxes to help declining birds, alongside bug hotels and wildflower planting.



Photograph: Robin Stewart Smith on Flickr

Planting and the creation of new habitats will see volunteers and community groups play a central role in its improvement.

“With some hard work and careful planning we can turn our stations into important spaces for wildlife as well as people.

“By working with local experts and the community, we’re ensuring this site

continues to thrive – providing homes for birds, reptiles, a n d pollinators while also creating a greener, more welcoming environment for customers.

“We’re

proud to be investing in nature recovery and look forward to seeing the site flourish. We would like to thank the staff from East Midlands Airport who gave up their time and did such a great job.”

Kaye Robinson, Community Engagement Manager at East Midlands Railway

Poacher Line Debut for Aurora



The Class 810 at West Street Junction crossing, Boston. Photo: RailwayWorld.net

Thursday, 17 July 2025, saw the first ever visit of an East Midlands Railway (EMR) Class 810 Aurora unit to the Poacher Line. Working from the Old Dalby Test Track near Melton Mowbray to Skegness, when inspections and clearance tests were conducted between Grantham and Skegness.

The fleet of thirty-three bi-modal 5-car Class 810 units are now approved to operate on the whole of the EMR network. It is expected that the first unit will enter service on the Midland Main Line during December 2025.

RAILFUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH AGM

The 2026 AGM will be held on 21 March, further details will be notified later. Branch Officers' reports will be in the next *SixShiresRail*.

The purpose of this notice is to remind members that the posts of Hon. Chairman, Hon Vice Chairman, 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 2025.

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 *SixShiresRail*. 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 *SixShiresRail* 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 2025. 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, Lincolnshire Branch

EAST MIDLANDS BRANCH

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Vice-Chair: *Terry Holt*

Secretary: *Steve Jones* steve.jones@railfuture.org.uk

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EM Branch Twitter handle: [@RailfutureEMids](https://twitter.com/RailfutureEMids) <https://twitter.com/RailfutureEMids>

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Secretary: *Don Peacock* – don.peacock@railfuture.org.uk

Lincolnshire Branch's Twitter handle: [@RailfutureLincs](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLincs)

Direct link to Branch News: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Lincolnshire+Branch>

FUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Wednesday, 14 January, 22 April, 15 July and 14 October 2026. Venues to be arranged.

Non committee members are welcome to attend as observers.

www.railfuture.org.uk

Direct link to Branch News visit:

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

Follow the Branch on  (Formerly Twitter)
@RailfutureLincs

SixShiresRail 9 will be published in February 2026.

Please let the Editor, Phil Mason, 10 Cottesmore Close, Grantham NG31 9JL,

phil.mason@railfuture.org.uk **have copy by 30 January.**

The views and comments expressed in Rail Lincs are not necessarily those of Railfuture.

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