

Dear Friend

I hope you are still staying safe.

I invite you to our meeting on **Wednesday 9th April at 19:30 on Zoom**; I am targeting a finish by 20:45; definitely by 21:00.

As regards our subsequent three meetings, they will be:

- **Saturday 17th May 11:00 in Person** at St Paul's Church in St Albans – and followed by lunch at 13:00.
- **Tuesday 17th June at 19:30 on Zoom.**
- **Thursday 17th July at 19:30 on Zoom.**

August will be a “social” outing on a Saturday.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88450315544?pwd=d3krdCtiUHlrMExQcGtMWm1zVU9Qdz09>; alternatively join manually via <https://zoom.us/join>, then Meeting ID: 884 5031 5544 & Passcode: 910342.

If your PC doesn't have a microphone, then use the link above to open (and download, if needed) the software and, once connected, click the up arrow next to the microphone or join audio icon (bottom left) and follow the “switch to phone audio link” If you don't have a PC, tablet or Smartphone available, call one of the 3 numbers below, enter the Meeting ID [then '#'] at the first prompt; at the second prompt just press '#' and at the third prompt, enter the password [then '#']. Phone numbers to dial: 0131 460 1196 | 020 3481 5237 | 020 3481 5240.

Topics for meeting

1. Welcome
2. Branch AGM – Saturday 12 April (more below)
3. Nature of our August “social”
4. Contactless extension (Project ‘Oval’) and fares (more below)
5. National developments (more below)
6. Performance (more below)
7. Weekend service frequencies – more below
8. Just in case
 - ECML December 2025 Timetable
 - Fares (generally)
 - Hadley Wood Toilet
 - Long Blockades
 - Written updates
9. Round table

Newsletter content

Topics for meeting	1
Branch AGM – Saturday 12 April	2
Contactless extension (Project ‘Oval’) and fares	2
National developments: Consultation: A railway fit for Britain's future	2
Universal Studios at Stewartby	3
East West Rail	3
Performance	3
Cancellations over time	3
Cancellations by week / day of the week	4
Commentary	5
GTR's brands and service changes – disruption and planned engineering work	5

Number of services per day	5
Written updates / Topics 'on hold'	6
Engineering blockade publicity	6
Ticket Office closures consultation	6
For the record: Performance measures	6
Can I forward this email to others?	6
Privacy, including GDPR	6
Appendix A / Performance measures	7

Branch AGM – Saturday 12 April

A reminder of this – a meeting in two parts, in the morning Chris Todd, Founder & Director of Transport Action Network on Essex-Kent Superlinks, and Gordon Pratt on KenEx Tram and in the afternoon the formal business of the AGM. It takes place at the same venue we have used for a number of years – Wesley’s Chapel, near Old Street. More on the [website](#).

Contactless extension (Project ‘Oval’) and fares

I am now in delivery mode for this and had a useful session with my MP (Victoria Collins | Harpenden & Berkhamsted) last Saturday and she has agreed to bring issues with contactless pricing to parliament and to the Department for Transport, and I will be continuing to contact anyone I think can influence.

Any specific communications to an interest party now has two pages on the website to help / expand upon the argument – a [summary](#) and a more [detailed explanation](#) (also in [PDF format](#)).

Whilst I’ll happily write to any MP with my “Herts and Beds” or “Fares and Ticketing” hats for Railfuture, it would be good for members to write to their MP with a personalised to your situation request for action.

I’ll also be writing to the media etc, but anything that has a personal touch is for the better.

Critically, I think there are different reasons for the main asks. The Railcard coverage ask is about fairness and proper delivery of a product; weekend fares are about commercial reality and family coverage is also about fairness – but with a longer delivery time as we don’t even have a designed product, let alone an action plan.

If you do write to your MP, please do both copy me in, and offer my name up as someone who will help them understand the situation more if they want a more detailed explanation.

National developments: Consultation: A railway fit for Britain's future

The consultation is underway (until 15 April); see the DfT’s [website](#).

My main internal feedback to those drafting Railfuture’s response has been on two topics:

- On the ORR and the Passenger Standards Authority** (aka the Watchdog) Para 1.24 says that the ORR ‘and remains the consumer law enforcement body for rail.’ All of chapter 2 talks about the PSA and its role in championing the customer, which is also, de-facto consumer law enforcement. To me this quite a dilemma and needs more

	Statutory Advisor	Statutory Advisor with Regulatory Functions
Advisory role	The passenger watchdog is established as a statutory advisory body and is consulted on strategies, plans, funding settlements and the setting of standards for the railway.	
Regulatory role	The passenger watchdog has no direct role in setting regulatory requirements on rail operators but may advise other bodies when these are set.	The passenger watchdog produces guidance on some passenger focused regulatory requirements on rail operators in consultation with the Secretary of State and the ORR (e.g. accessible travel policies, passenger information, complaints processes) which become the baseline operators should meet, demonstrate equivalence to or take reasonable endeavours to meet. The passenger watchdog has a role in approving operators’ plans to meet these requirements.
Monitoring of standards	The passenger watchdog has information-gathering powers which it would use to monitor operators’ delivery of agreed plans and service standards.	passenger watchdog has specific roles in monitoring how operators deliver against requirements set for areas like accessible travel policies, passenger information and complaints processes.
Moderation of complaints	The passenger watchdog takes on the role of moderator on unresolved passenger complaints.	

contemplation. Perhaps the ORR should retain it for freight and OOA vs “the rest”, but for actual passengers it should go to the PSA. Looking at the table in PDF page 23, I think I would keep the task in Red with the ORR and put the one in blue with the PSA.

- On Rail Retailing**, the consultation is really about GBR’s selling its own tickets and the rights of companies like Trainline. There isn’t though anything about on-station ticket sales operated by others, such as retailers and Councils. I am thinking here of small stations where ticket selling is just part of what is going on. I think the legislation should be very distinctly about two themes – the first the existing third parties such as Trainline and secondly small businesses selling tickets – using IT facilities provided by GBR or third party providers such as Trainline. These small third parties aren’t really envisaged in the legislation, nor does there seem to be mechanism that will force GBR or others to create the service they need. And as a way forward for smaller stations, they seem sensible.

Universal Studios at Stewartby

Today’s FT is reporting that this is close to getting the go ahead. Their report comments:

A deal could be announced as early as next week..... The Treasury has been in negotiations with Comcast about a package of incentives — including improvements to local road and rail infrastructure — known in Whitehall as “Project Nectarine”.

East West Rail

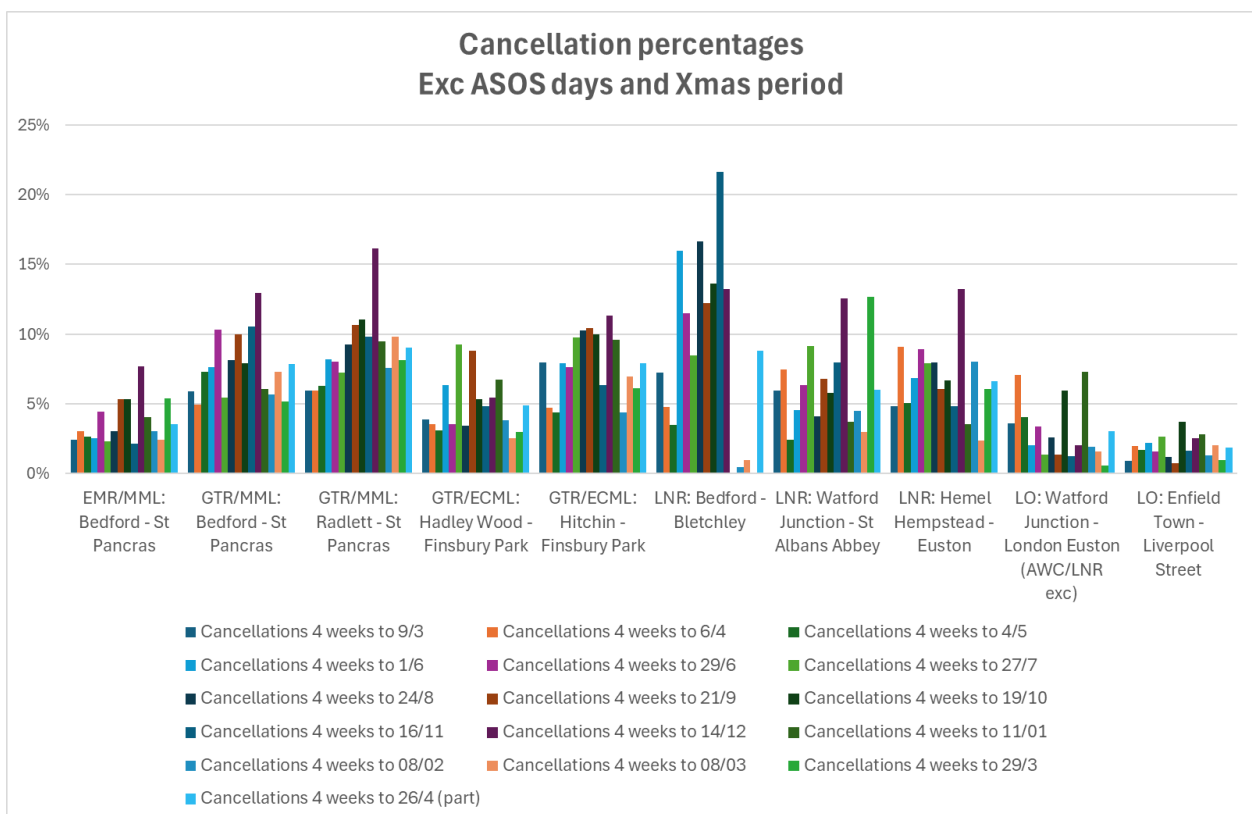
Limited official news recently. Chiltern have been announced as operator for the initial Oxford / Milton Keynes Central service and will be using Class 196 trains sub-leased from West Midlands Trains. The EWR website has a [Press Release](#).

You may also have heard about the Open Access proposal for a Nottingham to Bristol service that would use East West Rail – more on the Rail Magazine [website](#).

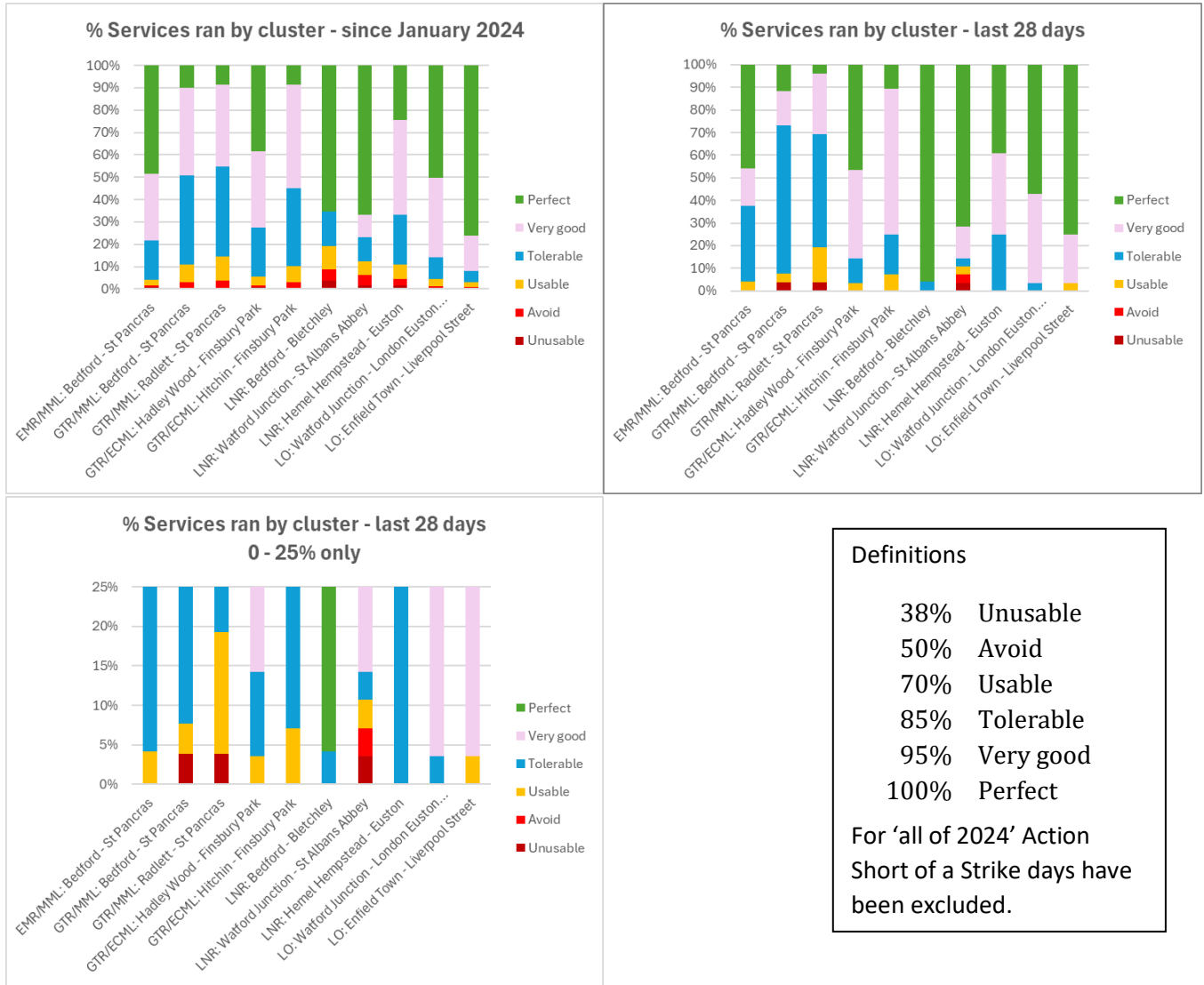
Performance

I have continued to collect the performance data for our main services via Recent Train Times.

Cancellations over time



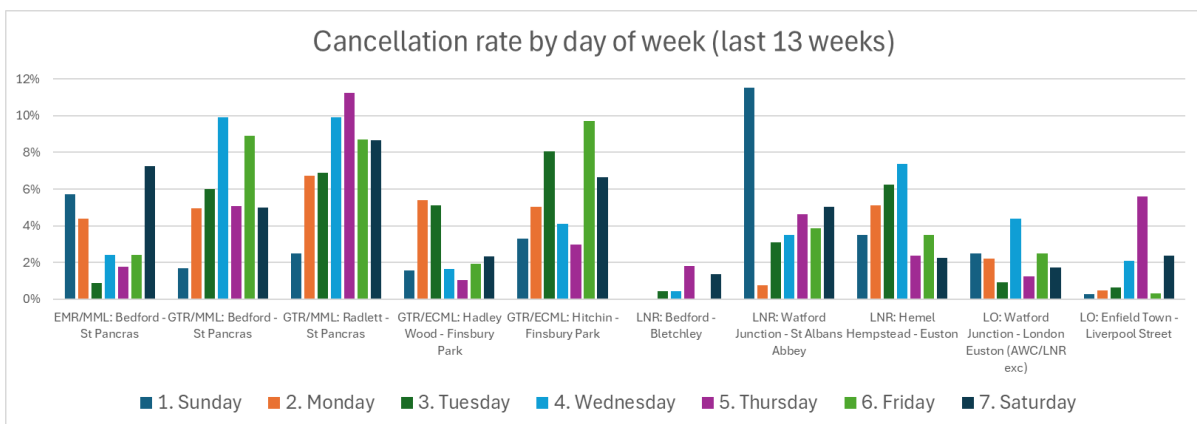
In these next graphs, I explore the spread of cancellations (excluding the Christmas period):

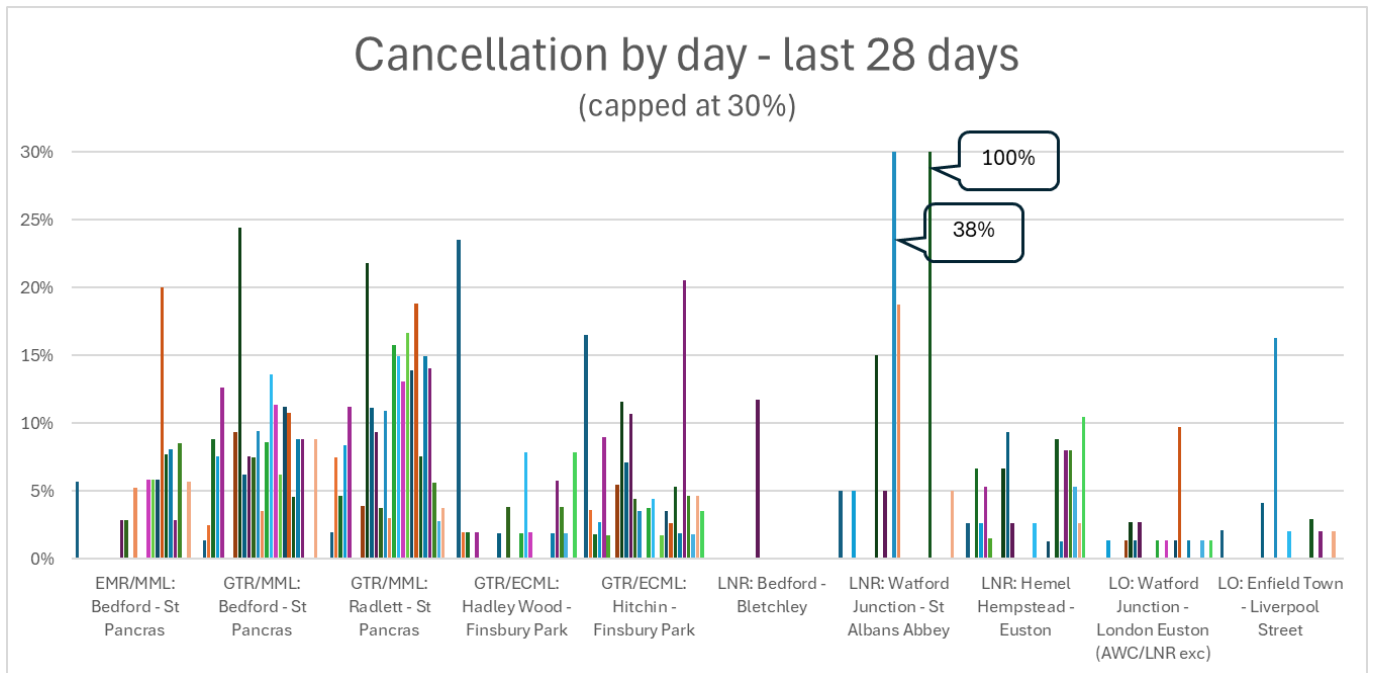


Because I am measuring this statistic across at the “whole of day” level, I do not detect long gaps within the day.

Cancellations by week / day of the week

In these graphs, I am trying to see if we can increase our understanding of the volatility of cancellations. Both graphs are quite granular, and the objective is much less to look at week X and understand the rate there and much more to understand does it change a lot. The first graph looks at cancellations by week over thirteen weeks, the second at cancellation by day of the week over the last thirteen weeks and the third cancellations by day over the last 28 days. This last graph is particularly prone to “dodgy data” at the level of granularity in place.





Please note a slight change in approach for the graph above for this month – I am now excluding days with just a handful of planned services- eg those running just after midnight Friday on a weekend of engineering works

Commentary

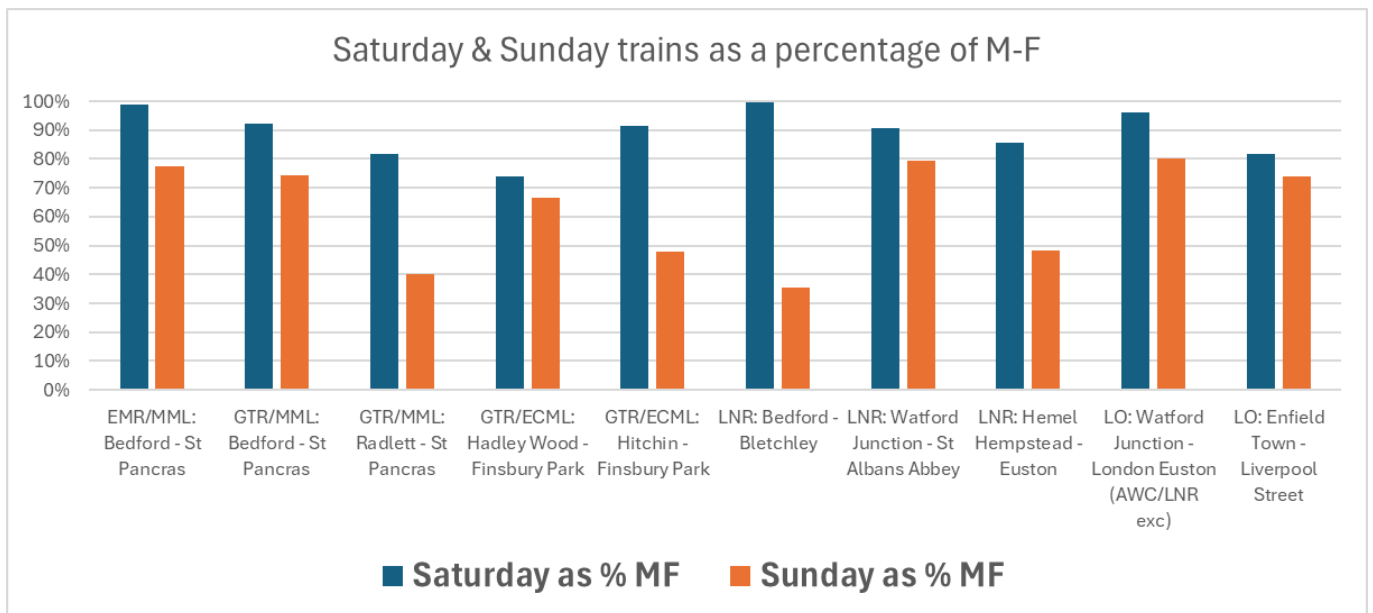
My main view has to be “not getting much better – but at least not getting worse either. A point that I have noticed is that the Marston Vale seems to have passed a ‘nice’ fulcrum – from unreliable to reliable

GTR’s brands and service changes – disruption and planned engineering work

Nothing to report on this, but a topic I will return to.

Number of services per day

A regular discussion point is reductions in weekend services. Using my data I have attempted to quantify this; it is only an approximation:



An advantage – and a disadvantage in one sense is that is based on planned services, so it does take account of frequency reductions from engineering works. Take the GTR Bedford St Pancras service:

- On Saturday, the standard timetable is basically the same as Monday to Friday less the extra peak services; there is a reduction by 8%; whilst I haven't analysed it, I think that is reflective of occasional engineering work led reductions.
- On Sunday, vs Saturday, it is much the same timetable, less a much later start. But at 80% of Saturday, I think that engineering work has a significant impact.

I think this data gives us indications of when pressing for more services might be useful.

Written updates / Topics 'on hold'

- **inter-railse** [archive](#) (the branch's two page e-newsletter). We recently added many more members to the list of recipients; if you are not already receiving it in your inbox, [email Roger Blake](#). Give your choice from receiving a web link or as a PDF attachment.

Engineering blockade publicity

The next step is to "convert" the Railwatch article into a position paper. In the article I majored on multi day impacts on commuters, but a common theme of conversations has been that sometimes we organise our lives a lot longer ahead than the railway's typical 12 week timeframe – and sometimes have choices of dates (will I go to the Panto on the 7th or the 14th?) and this should be bought into play as a key factor.

Ticket Office closures consultation

No news to report.

For the record: Performance measures

See Appendix A.

Can I forward this email to others?

Definitely. If you have received this email via someone forwarding it, to be added to the Herts & Beds mailing list, please send me an email. You will be able to unsubscribe at any time.

Privacy, including GDPR

You are receiving this email because you meet one or more of these criteria:

1. You are a Raifuture member who lives in the area, has provided an email address.
2. You have previously attended one of our meetings (or actively declined a previous invite) and I believe you have given us clear permission to keep you updated about future meetings.
3. You have specifically given us permission to keep you updated about future meetings.

If you want to be taken off this email list either reply to this email to that effect or follow the unsubscribe link at the foot of the email. If you are a Raifuture member, to update your general Raifuture communication preferences, follow the process set out in the member area on the website or in the address flyer for Railwatch.

Stay Safe.

Neil

Neil Middleton

Director (with responsibility for Communications) | **Convener, Raifuture Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire** |
TOC Liaison Representative for GTR | Committee Member, London & South East Branch
e-mail: neil.middleton@raifuture.org.uk | phone: 07887 628367
our websites: www.raifuture.org.uk | www.raifuture.org.uk/Herts+and+Beds | www.railwatch.org.uk
follow us on Twitter: [@Raifuture](https://twitter.com/Raifuture) | [@RaifutureLSE](https://twitter.com/RaifutureLSE) | [@Railwatch](https://twitter.com/Railwatch)

Raifuture Ltd is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 05011634.
Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only)
All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU

NOTICE AND DISCLAIMER

This email (including attachments) is confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, notify the sender immediately, delete this email from your system and do not disclose or use for any purpose.

Appendix A / Performance measures

1. Lack of notice (when a likely shortage of resources in the near future is reasonably predictable in advance). Two 'test' points:
 - a. Shortly before going to the station / in time to get the previous train (our definition: 1 hour before)
 - b. In time to rearrange journeys, appointments etc (our definition: early evening the day before)
2. Loss of first or last train of the day (with the loss of the last train being worse than the first)
3. Gaps of more than 1 hour or cancellation of 2 consecutive services
4. inequity in allocation of lost services – ie better some impact on most service clusters than some service clusters taking most of the impact.
5. Cancellation via skip stopping of the first train post disruption and gaps as per #2 above.