

# raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

Issue 175 • Sept 2017

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## PROBLEMS HAPPEN ON THE RAILWAY ... JUST LIKE EVERYWHERE ELSE



**That's why we need DIVERSIONARY RAIL ROUTES**

**Photo (from Twitter) of derailed freight train at Ely West Junction in August 2017.**

Many of the large and small schemes that Railfuture East Anglia campaigns for would help provide much needed resilience to keep both passenger and freight services running when the unexpected occurs, as well as planned engineering works. East West Rail is the obvious opportunity but so are bite-sized enhancements such as reinstating the curve at Newmarket.

### Inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

- Future of electrification
- Seamless integrated travel
- East West Rail
- Greater Anglia's New Trains
- Second Thameslink Consultation
- Railfuture audits Whittlesey
- Greater Norwich Local Plan
- Cambridge Connect tram scheme
- Railfuture public events
- and more...

# Diesel cars: no, diesel trains: yes!

Thoughts from Railfuture East Anglia's Chairman,  
Nick Dibben—[nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk)



The Government announcement that fossil-fuel cars would be banned by 2040 came just a few days after ministers also heralded that diesel trains were fine (!) and that several rail electrification projects would be shelved. The contradiction was noted in some newspapers. But what does it mean for the railway? I think there are both opportunities and threats.

The key question, and one that so far nobody appears to have answered, is what sort of non-fossil-fuel road vehicles will be around in 2040? Petrol/diesel cars are convenient for today's users as it is possible to add fuel for several hundred miles in a matter of minutes. A significant reduction in this would make cars far less attractive. This could result in greater demand for rail travel.

There are other issues regarding battery vehicles to be considered. Firstly, many of the new designs for batteries depend on the use of rare earth minerals. The clue is in the title. Is there sufficient material to supply the billions of vehicles worldwide? Equally, the environmental and energy cost of digging up hundreds of tonnes of earth to extract small amounts of a particular metal cannot be ignored.

A second issue is the availability of electricity to charge the vehicles. The rapid chargers being developed won't plug into a standard 13A socket. A 63A or 125A socket would be required, which exceeds the supply capacity of a home. To upgrade local electrical substations and the cables in the street would be very expensive and disruptive. Thirty million homes at say £2000 per home comes to £60bn and who would pay? With the government losing billions of tax revenue from a steep drop in road fuel sales, from where would they find the money? And to impose such costs on individuals would prove very unpopular.

Uncertainties for road users is not all good news for the railways. If the general public adopt the approach that continued use of fossil fuels is bad, which it is, will they continue to support diesel trains? The recognised environmental benefits of rail could be challenged.

Clearly the cost of electrification must come down. The latest rise came from an Office of Rail & Road (ORR) directive to increase



Charging an electric car at Ely station (photo Jerry Alderson)

overhead-line clearances with the resulting need to raise bridges and other structures. The technical justification for this change is not clear. The annual rail safety report from the Rail Safety Standards Board (RSSB) notes the continued reduction in accidents on the railways with no specific mention of any risk from overhead lines. But it does comment on the growing risk to rail maintenance staff of increased driving to and from worksites!

Finally, does the Department of Transport have a consistent strategy for future energy supplies for transport (let alone the country)? Past experience suggests they do not. ND

# SEAMLESS TRAVEL IN EAST ANGLIA

## TREVOR GARROD REPORTS

Let us assume that you live in Earlham, in the western part of Norwich, and you want to go on business to the Cambridge Science Park. Or you live along Mersea Road, Colchester and you want to visit the Ipswich Transport Museum. In each case you could catch a bus, then a train, then another bus.

If you were Dutch or Danish, such a journey in your country could be done with a smartcard that you touch in and touch out. This may also in due course be the solution in our country or region. At the moment you need to buy two or three tickets for such a journey — or simply get in a car and drive.

There are, however, some multi-modal tickets in our region, but they are not always well known. Were you aware for example, that in East Anglia there are 21 towns or cities that have PlusBus? You buy a train ticket to "Cambridge Buses" or "Ipswich Buses" and that includes your fare on the urban bus to your final destination. This can also be done online; but we are informed that the Greater Anglia app does not (yet) include the facility.

The under-publicised Anglia Plus Day or 3-Day ticket also includes bus travel in certain towns and cities.

Then we have a small number of bus/train tickets which can be used for such journeys as Halesworth - Southwold or Audley End - Saffron Walden.

Between 2015 and 2017, some local buses have been diverted to serve Great Yarmouth rail station, thanks to campaigning by the East Norfolk Transport Users' Association. In the winter you can still buy a ticket from, say, Thetford to Yarmouth Buses, but you have a 10-minute walk from the rail station to Market Gates bus station!

Equally, towns such as Sudbury and Felixstowe, are not in the PlusBus scheme, even though buses call at or close to those stations.

True, bus de-regulation does not encourage such integration; but we should at least make an effort to spread good practice. That also means persuading operators that it is in their interests to co-operate on such multi-modal ticketing schemes.



For example, connections between bus and train at Saxmundham were very poor for passengers going to or from the towns of Leiston and Aldeburgh. Since the bus service was revised at the beginning of July, they have improved. Is this now the time to introduce some through ticketing? *(But it is good at Halesworth for Southwold, as in this picture at the station.*

Railfuture East Anglia has therefore decided to do a survey, initially to find out:

- what multi-modal ticketing already exists?
- if you have used such a ticket recently – and were there any problems?
- how well known the ticket or add-on is - both to potential customers and to the staff?
- how it could be made better known (e.g. Is it mentioned in digital and on paper publicity)?
- Is there scope for additional add-ons?

Please send your replies BY 31 OCTOBER 2017 to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ or email them to [trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk).



Smartcard readers in Amsterdam (photo Jerry Alderson)

**EAST-WEST RAIL CONSULTANTS  
BACK RAILFUTURE PLANS  
FOR REGION'S RAIL NETWORK  
PHIL SMART REPORTS**



Railfuture East Anglia has long campaigned for improvements to network capacity to allow faster and more frequent services between Cambridge, Norwich and Ipswich. The existing pattern of hourly stopping services does little to encourage modal shift from road to rail.

Our campaign has now received overwhelming endorsement from the Atkins Consultancy engaged by the EWR Consortium to show how service development east of Cambridge will add even greater value to East-West Rail. Comparison with existing services can be summarised in the following table:

Service	Existing			Proposed (Option 1)			Proposed (Option 2)		
	Frequency	Journey Time	Stopping pattern	Frequency	Journey Time	Stopping pattern	Frequency	Journey Time	Stopping pattern
Ipswich to Cambridge	1	78 min	All stations	1	78 min	All Stations	1	78 min	All Stations
				2	55-60 min	Semi fast (Stowmarket Bury & Newmarket)	2	55-60 min	Semi fast
				Total 3 trains per hour			Total 3 trains per hour		
Norwich to Cambridge	1*	80 min	All Stations^	1	80 min	All Stations^	1	80 min	All Stations^
				2 (via Thetford)	55-60 min	Semi fast (Ely, Cambridge Nth & Thetford)	1 via Ely	55-60 min.	Semi fast (Ely etc.)
				Total 3 trains per hour			2 via Bury	50-55 min	Semi fast (Diss & Bury)

\* A second service is available between Cambridge and Norwich by changing at Ely

^ not including Shippea Hill, Lakenheath, Harling Rd, Eccles Rd, & Spooner Row

In addition to the above, Atkins recommend increasing frequencies beyond Norwich to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft from one to three trains per hour and doubling the frequency on the Ipswich-Felixstowe branch to half hourly.

Atkins assessed the potential for long-, medium- and short-distance journey opportunities for passengers and more capacity for freight. They identify a number of reasons for improving the Eastern Section including:

- **Promoting economic growth**
- **Shortening journey times** to improve business connectivity and ensuring Anglia was no longer cut off from key markets west of London
- **Getting the most value out of East West Rail:** Without Eastern Section improvements rail journey times from east of Cambridge to west of Cambridge and vice versa remain poor
- **Reducing over-crowding in London:** Improved connectivity could remove the requirement to travel via London for many east-west journeys
- **Reducing car dependency**
- **Adding freight capacity:** Infrastructure enhancements to enable up to five freight paths per hour between Ipswich and Ely. It could also offer an alternative to the route via Ely by providing a new link via Newmarket and Cambridge
- **Supporting regeneration:** Through improved rail connectivity to the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich, as well as coastal towns of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth, where in some locations there are typically higher levels of deprivation.

Atkins' study states: "The case for an intervention such as the East West Rail Eastern Section is therefore strong, in terms of both catering for existing demand and forecast growth, as well as acting as a catalyst and driver for further development and regeneration."

Infrastructure requirements to deliver these services are a familiar list of Railfuture priorities including:

- Additional platform capacity at Ipswich, Cambridge and Norwich stations
- Possible grade separation at Ely North Junction
- Remodelling at Norwich including doubling of Trowse swing bridge
- Doubling of Haughley Junction (where the cross-country line joins the Great Eastern Mainline) with possible grade separation (if option 1) or north curve (if option 2)
- Reinstating double track between Cambridge and Newmarket
- Double tracking the Felixstowe branch
- Improvements to level crossings, signalling and then line speed, on both Breckland and Mid-Anglia lines
- Additional loops at Bury St Edmunds for Freight.

The East West Rail consortium will examine these findings later this year. Meanwhile Railfuture will campaign to ensure that these improvements are included within the scope of 'East West Rail' and delivered before the Cambridge and Bedford central section is completed. An announcement of the final preferred route for this is expected by the end of 2017.

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## WICKHAM MARKET STATION

### FROM MIKE FARAHAR

In 2012 a group of local community members in Campsea Ashe launched ambitious fundraising plans to enable the East Suffolk village's station house (Wickham Market station) to be brought back in to use as a community hub.



Station House Community Connections (SHCC), a Charitable Community Benefit Society, was formed and after five years, a £730,000 investment, and much toil and effort, the restored house was officially opened by Sir William McAlpine, Chairman of the Railway Heritage Trust, on 1st June 2017, the 158th anniversary of the East Suffolk line's opening, in the presence of local dignitaries, funders and supporters.

The property has been comprehensively and sympathetically restored, including for example detail such as the reinstatement of thirty Lion heads on the guttering (pictured) - an original feature of many East Suffolk line stations designed by Francis Thompson - which were cast for SHCC by Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax. The platform canopy has also been reinstated and the building made fully accessible to all, with level access throughout and a lift to the first floor.

The venue contains a selection of fully-equipped rooms available for hire by business and/or community groups and a selection of leisure learning programmes are planned. There's a café (excellent) that's open daily, and rail users also benefit from real time train information and much improved waiting facilities - the erstwhile bus shelter that was deemed adequate by successive train operators will be removed shortly.

For additional information and ways to support SHCC see their website: [www.stationhousecampseashe.co.uk](http://www.stationhousecampseashe.co.uk) or call 07586 810818.

Wickham Market station also now benefits from a regular, if infrequent, scheduled bus service Mondays-Friday, for the first time for many years. Service 62, operated by PF Travel, sponsored by Suffolk County Council. See [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com).

# EXPANDING EAST ANGLIA'S RAIL NETWORK

## SECOND THAMESLINK TIMETABLE CONSULTATION

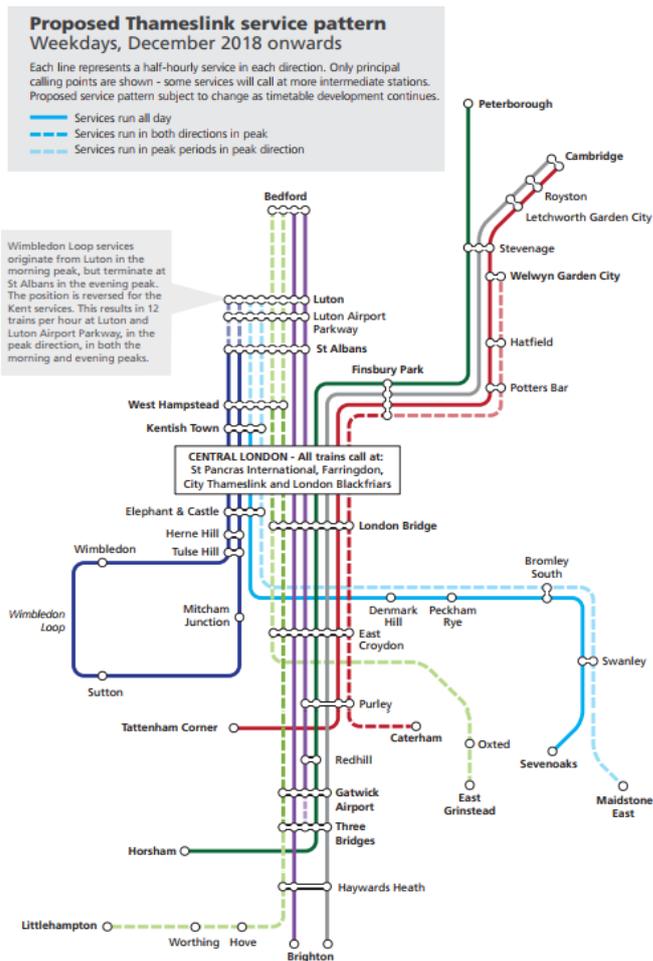
**Peter Wakefield** reports that Railfuture East Anglia has replied to the consultation giving it general approval. He also reminds us that this proposed new timetable is a complex and fundamental change to the current four overlapping timetables of Great Northern services through North Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and West Norfolk. This will be after many years of essentially the same timetable plus numerous additions and tweaks.

The four overlapping Service Groups (SG) of this new timetable offer the following basic service level:

- SG 1. King's Lynn all stations to Cambridge then non-stop to London King's Cross. 2 trains per hour all day.
- SG2a. Cambridge-Royston-Baldock-Letchworth-Hitchin-Stevenage-Finsbury Park-London St Pancras-Farringdon-City Thameslink-Blackfriars-London Bridge-East Croydon-Gatwick Airport-Brighton. 2 trains per hour all day long.
- SG2b. Peterborough-Huntingdon-St Neots-Sandy-Biggleswade-Arley-Hitchin-Stevenage-Finsbury Park-London St Pancras-Farringdon-City Thameslink-Blackfriars-London Bridge-East Croydon-Redhill-Gatwick Airport-Three Bridges-Crawley-Horsham. 2 trains per hour all day long.
- *Services 2a/b provide a service of 4 fast trains an hour from Hitchin/Stevenage to London.*
- SG3. Cambridge-Foxton-Shepreth-Meldreth-Royston-Ashwell&Morden-Baldock-Letchworth-Hitchin-Stevenage-Knebworth-Welwyn North-Welwyn Garden City-Hatfield-Potters Bar-Finsbury Park-London St Pancras-Farringdon-City Thameslink-Blackfriars-London Bridge then fast to Maidstone.
- SG4. Welwyn Garden City-all stations via Finsbury Park to Moorgate.

In essence the proposed basic timetable delivers more services and greater capacity; not just towards London but as importantly, to Cambridge.

- All trains in SG1 will be 8 coaches minimum throughout the day, though sometimes 12.
- All trains in SG2a will be of 12 coaches running half hourly instead of hourly as now.
- All trains in SG2b will be of 12 coaches running half hourly, and fast south of Stevenage as now.
- All trains in SG3 will be of 8 coaches running half hourly all day instead of hourly as now.
- Royston will have at least four trains per hour to and from Cambridge, plus later night services from Cambridge too.
- Royston will have at least half hourly fast services all day long to Hitchin-Stevenage-London St Pancras-and onward to Gatwick Airport and Brighton.
- Foxton-Shepreth-Meldreth will have two trains per hour to and from Cambridge all day including later services at night from Cambridge.
- Foxton-Shepreth-Meldreth will have two trains an hour all day to London. A change at Hitchin will achieve a faster journey to London if required.



## ***In the peak hours***

Cambridge-King's Cross fasts will call at Royston as now and during the return evening peak. Additional services are proposed from Baldock-Letchworth-Hitchin-Stevenage to/from London as are hourly semi-fast services from Peterborough-Huntingdon-St Neots-Biggleswade to/from London - both in the up morning peak and then in down evening peak

## ***Not so good north of Cambridge***

Sadly, the timetable north of Cambridge is more complex and the proposals not wholly satisfactory.

The plan is for a basic service of 2 trains an hour calling at all-stations-all-day, Cambridge-King's Lynn including Cambridge North. However, pending completion of the reconfiguration of Ely North Junction, the off peak service will be hourly north of Ely. Trains will be of eight carriages for all services, happily, as platform lengthening at Waterbeach and Littleport will be complete. Whilst this is laudable, journey times north of Cambridge are being extended by up to eight minutes. This is apparently to make the timetable more robust for trains to negotiating the two single-line sections north of Ely. The present passing place, Downham Market, will become Littleport, where some services will wait. This slowing of Fenline services is most disappointing, especially as latitude in the current timetable for joining and splitting portions at Cambridge, will no longer be generally necessary.

***An important Railfuture East Anglia campaign will focus on the restoration of part or all of these single-line sections to double track, as they are becoming a real constraint on the local economy.***

In the meantime two trains an hour will run King's Lynn-Ely in the morning and return evening peaks. A new timetable is also in production for GA services and until conflicts with the Thameslink timetable are ironed out, Great Northern will not finally commit to services in Group 2a starting/terminating at Cambridge North.

Overall the service levels will be much improved, with many extra through destinations available south of the Thames. Thus any user who finds their new journey a little longer may feel this mitigated by not having to change stations in London. This is a major Once-in-a-Generation change and will bestow huge benefits on most future users and thereby the general economy of the region. Of course, not every journey can be quicker and some users will inevitably be unhappy. Pleasing all the people all the time was inevitably never a realistic option.

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## **WISBECHRAIL UPDATE**

The funding of the next stage of the GRIP (Network Rail's Governance for Railway Improvements) process has been announced by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. The re-establishment of the railway at Wisbech is being developed in conjunction with a scheme to build a up to a 12,000 homes, Garden Town expansion of the town. This along with the funding already announced to plan the best option for enlarging capacity in and around nearby Ely brings the total to nigh on £12m for these consultations.

At the official opening of Cambridge North station by transport minister Chris Grayling, he three times alluded positively to the Wisbech railway scheme, saying the project was an essential part of the plans to furnish Cambridgeshire with a transport network that allows ease of movement around the county.

It is noteworthy that the Transport and Works Act Order for the Barking Riverside rail link in London to provide access for a new build of 10,000 homes has recently been approved by the Inspector. Without that new rail link, the building of the homes could not go ahead.

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## **PROGRESS FOR RAIL REOPENING SCHEME**

*Melton Constable Trust and Norfolk Orbital Railway (NOR) win £59k Heritage Lottery Grant*

Though understandably elated by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £59,800 to help it buy bridge 1714, which is mid-way between the Ryburgh and Fakenham stations, the NOR is emphatic that they and the 'Fund "clearly understood that the overall aim is to return public

rail services to Fakenham,” even though the HLF emphasises history and education considerations in its award. That the NOR had already raised £24,000 through their own supporters was critical to the success of this application. Their money bought the bridges and track bed concerned in the grant application.

Essentially this grant plus some local contributions provides £63,600 to implement repairs to two bridges at Pudding Norton, Fakenham. To this will be added “initiatives that will help draw the community into our project...”. Engineering supervision is under the eye of consultant Bob Wright (also civil engineer to and a Director of the North Norfolk Railway). Work on the bridges has already started suggesting vigour, efficiency and commitment are already in hand-in-hand. Railfuture East Anglia certainly wishes them congratulations and success. For more coverage go to: <http://norfolk-orbital-railway.co.uk/latest-news/>.



Photo of bridge 1714 before and after clearance taken from the Norfolk Orbital Railway website.

There is also a Railfuture article—see <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1547-Norfolk-Orbital-Railway>

## IMPROVING EAST ANGLIA'S RAILWAY STATIONS

### RAILFUTURE'S AUDIT OF WHITTLESEY STATION

With the agreement of Greater Anglia, a small group of Railfuture members carried out an audit of Whittlesey station in early July. We aim to audit two or three East Anglia stations a year.

In summary what was found is a station has been degraded over many years and is now quite a difficult one to use. The main problem is that the entrance to the isolated up platform is a four-minute walk along a road shared with HGVs that is bordered by unkempt vegetation along most of one side and partially along the other...and with poor lighting. (See photo on right by Peter Wakefield.) Definitely not safe.

Users trying to access the down platform face the problem that the level crossing is often and randomly closed against them for the passage of fast passenger and long freight trains. Leaving Whittlesey on the desired train can be frustratingly thwarted by the gates at the last minute as there is no footbridge.

Railfuture learnt that the Hereward CRP has some exciting plans that will overcome these problems and bring the station back into being an important part of the 16,000 people who live in



the town. This station audit, as well as the others in Cambridgeshire recently completed, will be sent to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor to enable the findings be considered in the transport plans being drawn up.

The Railfuture audit can be read on the website at [www.railfuture.org.uk/east/docs/Railfuture-East-Anglia-2017-07-13-Whittlesea-Station-Audit-Report.pdf](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/docs/Railfuture-East-Anglia-2017-07-13-Whittlesea-Station-Audit-Report.pdf)

## MANEA STATION IMPROVEMENTS ON THE WAY

**The Hereward Community Rail Partnership** has also some great plans for improving Manea station, which is on the other side of March from Whittlesey. You may recall this station recently receiving an enhanced timetable, with departures every two hours. Well a parish councillor told us that this service has already enabled at least 12 unemployed village residents, without access to a car, to find employment in nearby towns. Life changing, eh? PW.

## SHELFORD & WHITTLESFORD PARKWAY STATIONS RAIL USER GROUP

**Shelford & Whittlesford Rail User Group** has been successfully established with a strong committee of local people. Already many imaginative ideas are being developed. It is aided by Railfuture members and has also welcomed a lot of positive encouragement from the Greater Anglia management team at Cambridge. The Group has adopted the acronym SAWRUG nodding firmly towards the largest nearby settlement, Sawston.

There are two major initial activities underway...making sure the undoubted access problems for users at both Shelford and Whittlesford stations are firmly on the radar of Greater Anglia, the local authorities, district, county and now Combined Authority. The second is how to establish a fixed bus link from Whittlesford station with The Imperial War Museum at Duxford Airfield. This is a major tourist site of international importance but without public transport access! PW

## OTHER RAIL NEWS

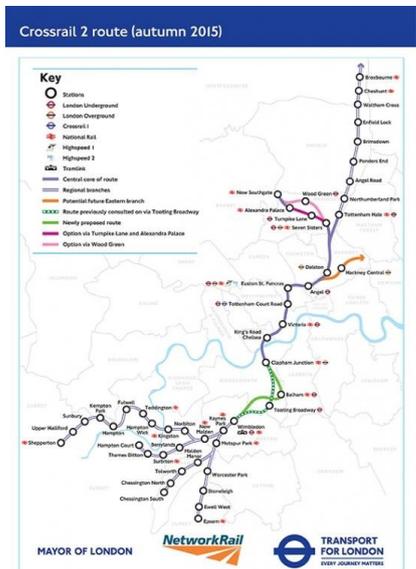
### THE HANSFORD REVIEW

Summer 2017 saw the publication of this very important report looks into the way Network Rail (NR) handles third party projects such as Wisbech rail reinstatement. Amongst a lot more, it highlights the tendency for NR to inhibit these third-party projects with a pricy business case through a tendency to "gold plate", too often inappropriately. NR has accepted much of the report's findings, announcing this autumn an East Anglian project with third-party investment with less onerous NR requirements. Railfuture provided evidence to the review, with its then Director of Policy, Ian Brown, being interviewed.

## CROSSRAIL 2 INCLUDING STANSTED AIRPORT

Railfuture East Anglia welcomes the recent government support given to the scheme that may lead to the eventual building of Crossrail 2. This scheme plans to link Wimbledon with Tottenham Hale and New Southgate This will have enormous benefits to western East Anglia principally because of the prospect of four tracking the West Anglia mainline along the Lea Valley to Broxbourne. This will allow extra capacity towards Stansted Airport and Cambridge. Apart from giving us a more robust railway, it will allow for the development of more services between Harlow and Cambridge and Cambridge to Stansted Airport.

The big constraint at Stansted Airport is the single-line tunnel into the airport station platforms. This must be doubled to allow the proper development of rail services into the Airport from all its northern hinterland. In our view, further development of the Airport should not go ahead until the tunnel problem is addressed. PW



## RAILFUTURE PROVIDES SUPPORT TO CAMBRIDGE CONNECT

Railfuture East Anglia has continued to work with Cambridge Connect, which is developing plans for a network of light rail lines around the city, and has offered funding for a publicity leaflet, in addition to support for materials produced earlier, such as this map:



The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor, James Palmer, has made a manifesto pledge to develop the network and to garner momentum for the project. He recently organised a meeting at the House of Commons with Members of Parliament from South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk, members and officers from South Cambs, East Cambs, Forest Heath, Uttlesford, Huntingdonshire district councils plus Railfuture and Cambridge Connect. Colin Harris, the originator of the scheme (who spoke at the Railfuture meeting in February 2017) gave an excellent presentation on the project, which was very positively received. The result was a commitment to work towards the establishment of a light-rail network which would initially stretch from Haverhill, Linton, Granta Park, Sawston, Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Cambridge Central station, Cambridge City Centre, West Cambridge, Cambourne to St Neots. Early days! PW

## NEXT RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA MEETING - NORWICH

### SATURDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 14.00, AT THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE



Our speaker at Norwich will be Mr **Chris Starkie** (pictured left), Chief Executive of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. Railfuture has worked closely with Chris on occasion over the years principally on the important document that the LEP produced called *A Prospective for East Anglia Railways*. Chris will report progress made to date on the aspirations within the document and talk about what is to be done in the future. Projects that we would like to put forward are: redoubling the King's Lynn line, a station to serve South Norfolk, possibly at Forncett/Long Stratton; and the renewed activity concerning re-establishing the Hunstanton line. It will be a very interesting afternoon. **Do come along!**

# GREATER ANGLIA NEW ROLLING STOCK UPDATE

## REPORT BY PHIL SMART

All photos by Phil Smart unless otherwise stated.

Members of Railfuture were invited to view the mock-ups of the new trains at Greater Anglia's Crown Point depot in Norwich in June 2017 and are pleased to report that some changes had been made to their design following earlier representations that we had made.



The GA-supplied photo above shows two interior mock-ups of the Stadler FLIRT bi-modes.

The bi-modes, which will operate on partially-electrified longer routes such as Norwich to Stansted Airport, as well as the entirely non-electrified ones, such as the branches emanating from Norwich, will now have two toilets each including a Universal Access Toilet. This is an improvement on the original that had no redundancy in the event of failure, an important consideration for through trains from Lowestoft to London!

Although Greater Anglia have released lots of the photos of bi-modes, both interior and external, one really needs to try out the trains. Peter Wakefield has been to the Netherlands, where similar trains (known as Spurts) are already in service, to look at them

and see for himself how comfortable the ride is. The photo below, which he provided, shows the windowless short walk-through section in which the diesel 'packs' will be housed. If, as we hope, routes are electrified in the future then the packs can be removed to create more space for passengers.

His overall view was: "Ride well, big windows. Diesel pod is neat...easy walk through. Certainly some vibration and engine noise in nearby coaches; it booms a bit and sounds like a class 88 locomotive. Nice trains though."



## Inter-city 12-car sets

Although our concern that only five toilets are provided remains, these are now distributed more evenly through the train and each has its own supply and retention tanks so there is no risk of them failing in pairs! The retention tanks have three days' capacity but will be emptied on a daily basis.

The buffet counter is no longer next to one of the entrance vestibules but is positioned next to the inter-car connecting corridor. This was a weakness in the original layout that would have given rise to potential conflict between the buffet queue and people boarding or alighting trains

## The Bombardier 'Aventra' trains

Greater Anglia invited us to the Bombardier factory at Derby to view a mock-up of the Aventra trains that replace the Class 321, 380 and 379 trains on 'outer suburban' services. These will come in two variants, 22 x 10-car and 89 x five-car trains. Each car will be over 23m in length so 10 cars will be the same length as 12 x '321' or '360' cars.



The photo above clearly shows the 3+2 seating — a requirement from the Department for transport in order to achieve capacity levels — that will not be popular with passengers.

The prototype vehicle demonstrates the difficulty in designing a multi-market train. These will mainly be employed on medium-distance 'outer suburban' commuter services although one in three trains from Norwich to London will be an 'Aventra'. With Crossrail opening the central tunnel section to Stratford around the same time as these trains go into service there will also be a potential increase in leisure travel to the west end and Heathrow.

Among the comments made to our hosts were:

- Concern that the 10-car units have been provided with just three toilets for a train seating 915 passengers and a theoretical capacity of over 1700 if full and standing!
- Although seat-back tables are provided there were no tables in the bays. We suggested 'half-width' tables, similar to those on some 321s
- There appeared to be no provision for litter bins or dedicated luggage space

There are many positive features, however:

- Seats were well profiled and comfortable
- There is a generous provision of USB and power sockets
- The connection gangways are the same wide design as on London Overground trains
- They will also offer a 'Broadband Spine' to strengthen Wi-Fi connection and bandwidth

Naturally the trains will meet all requirements for persons of reduced mobility, and cater for parents, as the following photo of baby-changing facilities shows:



There is also a plan to accommodate cycles, strictly off peak. These will have a pull-out 'pocket' into which users can slot one of the pedals prior to securing their bike with a seat belt type strap. These will be located in the 'tip-up' seats area so making dual use of the space. Up to four bikes could thus be accommodated. I don't know if this is 'per train' or 'per five cars worth' of train (i.e. will you get eight bikes in a 10-car unit?) The cycle space mock-up was just a timber frame at the time of our visit and not available for evaluation. At the official opening of Cambridge North station, Greater Anglia MD, Jamie Burles, stated that the bi-mode train, after extensive testing in mainland Europe, will be further tested on our East Anglian routes. Any modifications required will be implemented on the remaining fleet before shipping to Britain.

The 'Design freeze' is November 2017 and we thanked our hosts, whom we felt had made a genuine attempt at stakeholder involvement.

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## **FREIGHT RETURNS TO BRANDON**

The Ely-Norwich line is becoming quite a busy freight artery once again. Flows of aggregates run during each week to Eccles Road, Trowse and Norwich Yard. Trowse sees three services: two aggregate inward and one out, of sand to Wellingborough. These have now been joined by a service from the Buxton area to a refurbished terminal at Brandon; and from Neath in South Wales to Ely, with materials for the new Ely southern road bypass.

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## **EAST WEST RAIL AT DECEMBER RAILFUTURE MEETING**

Further into the future....a date for your diary! Saturday 2 December 2017, 14.00 at the Tamburlaine Hotel, which is very close to Cambridge Station. Speaker: Will Gallagher from the East West Railway Company will talking about this scheme, so dear to our hearts. PW

# GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN

## REPORT BY IAN COUZENS

With nearly 50,000 new homes planned for Greater Norwich over the next 20 years, what role will rail play in providing the transport infrastructure needed? Railfuture will be making a case for local rail services playing a much bigger role when we submit our response to the draft plan proposals in October 2017.

We will be looking for all local services to be half hourly, including Norwich to Cambridge, the Wherry Lines and the Bittern line as far as North Walsham. Services also need to be speeded up.

We will look to further progress by the local authorities in developing new station proposals at Dussindale/Broadland Business Park on the Bittern Line (south of Salhouse).

Is there a case for providing further new stations? We believe there might be. Long Stratton is a growth point south of Norwich with a population that will approach 10,000 with the new homes being planned. A new parkway station at or near the site of the old Fornsett station (former platform pictured) on the Great Eastern Mainline would mean a much-reduced two-mile trip for Long Stratton residents to their nearest station compared to the 10 miles they have to make now.



To the south west of Norwich many new homes are being planned along the A11/ Ely rail corridor with at least 3,500 planned for the fringe villages of Hethersett and Cringleford. A new parkway station located near the southern bypass would open up new travel options for local residents living in that part of Greater Norwich.

We will also be commenting on the Final Mile, aiming for better integration between rail and bus services within Norwich.

We look forward to seeing you at the September meeting in Norwich and hearing your views. With Chris Starkie, Managing Director of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership our guest speaker, there is an excellent opportunity for us to discuss the future of rail in the Norwich area.

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## BRANCH MEETING IN IPSWICH JUNE 2017

### A TRIP OVER THE BORDER - REPORT BY NICK DIBBEN

In East Anglia our big ambition is reopening the East West Rail Link from Oxford to Cambridge. Railfuture Scotland's equivalent scheme is probably the Borders Railway. The branch welcomed Railfuture Vice-chair Allison Cosgrove, who is also the chair of Railfuture Scotland, to our Ipswich meeting. Allison was deeply involved in the successful campaign to re-open the Borders Railway and provided an insight on the first 18 months of operation since the line was opened by the Queen in September 2015.

At 31 miles (50 km) the line is one of the longest re-openings in Britain and runs from Edinburgh to Tweedbank. A half-hourly service is provided Monday-Saturday with trains from 05.45 to 23.45. An hourly service is provided on Sundays. Usage (especially in terms of passenger kilometres) has greatly exceeded predictions with up to nine times the number of passengers at some stations. This figure is significant as had the numbers been more accurate, the case for additional investment in extra passing loops and sections of double track on the generally single-track line could have been made. As it is, the line is being used close to full capacity meaning there are no train paths for special trains or freight.

Surveys of residents have shown that nearly 60% many have switched from the car and the much slower bus service. New residents to the area cite the railway as a significant factor in choosing where to live. The railway has had an influence on visitors with nearly a quarter saying they would not have come to the area if the railway had not been there.

The campaigning had not stopped with the re-opening and continues to get the line extended southwards with the aim of reaching Carlisle. Such a line would improve transport links to a large part of southern Scotland as well as providing an alternative strategic link between England and Scotland.

# TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

## REPORT BY SUSAN VAN DE VEN

As the Thameslink roll-out appears on the horizon, the Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership is doing as much as possible to attract interest from the Powers That Be to augment the transport interchange potential of our stations. The fact that service capacity will quadruple from 2018 means that bus links, drop-off points, cycle parking, pedestrian routes and other features of station access need serious upgrading.

We're encouraging the City Deal (now rebranded as the Greater Cambridge Partnership), who have already indicated support for a station travel planning exercise as the basis for informed work on developing transport interchanges. That needs to be activated.

Out of necessity, work is also taking place to find a provider for a link service from surrounding villages to these stations. First off has been a run to Meldreth Station from the village of Bassingbourn, due to the withdrawal of the last commercial bus services to Cambridge, where 16-18-year-olds need to get to for education and training. The question is, who will provide the link service? Without commercial operator interest, and with diminishing council bus subsidies, we've turned to community transport – but new Department for Transport guidance on community transport licence regulations may make this type of service impossible. Hopefully someone in the DfT will take on oversight of this conundrum and find a way of enabling multi-modal transport, to allow the fullest possible access to a gold standard rail service. Seems a no-brainer!



Susan van de Ven, who supplied the photo, and other members of the RUG at Shepreth station.

Finally, station gardening will take on new dimensions, literally, when platform lengthening is complete at Foxton and Shepreth. A grant from ACORP for new weather proof tubs at all three stations will be the excuse for a suitably enjoyable and quirky Lengthened Platform Station Garden Party on 28 October 11:00 - see [meldrethsheprethfoxtonrail.org.uk](http://meldrethsheprethfoxtonrail.org.uk). This will also be the formal launch of our upgraded Community Rail Partnership.

## WHITHER EAST COAST TRAINS?

### CHRIS BURTON

Well no, but in the doldrums certainly. Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) is not meeting its revenue growth commitments to the Department for Transport (DfT), hence its predicted slide into a £84m loss by 2019. This suggests that those fewer-than-expected VTEC travellers may well finish up paying rather more than expected to help fill that DfT 'income stream'. Which in other places might be called a tax! And nor does the immediate future offer life-enhancing optimism to the VTEC franchise either.

First they have to contend with nationalised Network Rail hitting the financial buffers of Treasury spending limits. The so-called ring-fenced £240m East Coast infrastructure fund has shrunk to £197m under the scrutiny of NR boss Sir Peter Hendy's review. The missing money funded, we believe,



fourth track reinstatement between Connington and Huntingdon and the dedicated Hertford services platform at Stevenage. These will not happen any time soon. This is serious stuff and Railfuture, affected branches and nationally, will be contesting it with ministers, MPs, and other opinion formers.

Such constraints affect operational efficiency, thence capacity and therefore what a future timetable might offer. That same 2019 timetable, the first one to introduce the brand new Virgin fleet of Hitachi Class 800 trains (AZUMA as they are called, meaning East!), will have overhead-power-supply issues north of York by 2021 from sharing with, by then, bi-mode Trans-Pennine Express to Newcastle and First Group's new Open-Access Anglo-Scottish service. Which is why 2021, rather than 2019, is seen increasingly as the earliest date for the full Class 800-based VTEC timetable. This is more bad news for VTEC's balance sheet.

Happily the route south of York to London is virtually 'Amps-Ready' furnishing all that VTEC, Thameslink and Govia Great Northern are likely to crave in available electricity. And this includes the money spinning routes to Wakefield, Leeds, York, and Cambridge (King's Lynn). Thank heavens!

But will VTEC through services to Aberdeen and Inverness continue if Hitachi's allegedly underpowered Class 800 Bi-Modes are compromised trying to maintain existing schedules north of Edinburgh? Or will we East Anglians, having already changed trains at Peterborough and York, have to do so again at Edinburgh? (The next timetable might well reinstate a Peterborough stop for these longest distance VTEC expresses, of course.) It should be added that the Inverness service will enjoy straight overhead power to Dunblane, which will greatly help. After that, some seriously unfriendly gradients.

Scotrail, however, is taking on board ex-Great Western IC125s (HSTs) cutting them down to four- or five-coach sets but retaining the two power cars. The result: high accelerative capacity which will probably outstrip Hitachi's new kit. So maybe quick interchange (!) at Edinburgh might actually prove a speedier bet. And that's regardless of whether the Class 800 time-gains south of Edinburgh will cancel out their *time loss* north of that venerable city. Yet not running north of Edinburgh would certainly save VTEC significant money. So plenty of relevant questions, as Peterborough is very much the gateway for so many East Anglian travellers to the north and Scotland; regardless of HS2! On the positive side though, the testing of these new VTEC trains continues apace with an Azuma set reaching Scotland's capital for the first time on 7 September 2017 as this picture of it crossing the Berwick-upon-Tweed border rail bridge shows (nicely tying in the with earlier article about the Borders Railway!).



# RAIL ACCIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT

## REPORT BY CHRIS BURTON

The Rail Safety Standards Board (RSSB) has published its annual report on rail safety, which shows that for the tenth year running that there were no passenger or staff fatalities caused by a collision or derailment. These figures make Britain's railways the safest of the major rail networks in Europe. The figures indicate that rail is around 20 times safer than travelling by car and around seven times safer than travelling by bus.

There were, however, five passengers and 33 members of the public killed and around 300 major injuries in other incidents. Of the passengers, one was killed getting on a train, the first such case in 10 years, the others related to falling off a platform (photo from Peter Wakefield of a warning sign at a station in the Netherlands) or sticking their head out of a moving train window. The vast majority of the members of the public killed (27) were as a result of trespassing on the railway, the others were involved in level-crossing incidents. Based on these numbers, the efforts by Network Rail to close level crossings and improve fencing alongside the railway make sense.



In a separate report, the RSSB has looked at the issue of driver-controlled operation, by reviewing accident records for the last six years. When looking at safety and accidents, the rail industry uses a method called Fatalities and Weighted Injuries (FWI). In this system, 10 serious injuries or 200 minor injuries are equivalent to a fatality. The overall risk to passengers is 132 FWI per year. Of this, the risk due to getting on and off trains is given as 1.78. The RSSB has also compared the risk to passengers at staffed / unstaffed stations and from trains with or without a conductor/guard, by looking at station usage data and the type of train used on each service. The report concludes that there is no significant difference in the risk to passengers when boarding and alighting. The table below shows the results.

**Figure 3: Number of fatal and major incidents involving passengers and public per billion passengers boarding or alighting**



The study only looks at accidents and does not consider the impact of having a second member of staff on a train or platform staff on passenger satisfaction or other matters. Copies of the reports can be found here:

<https://www.rssb.co.uk/Library/risk-analysis-and-safety-reporting/2017-07-report-annual-safety-performance-report.pdf>

# RAILFUTURE GETTING DIRECT IMPROVEMENTS FOR PASSENGERS

BY JERRY ALDERSON

Much of what Railfuture does is strategic — we think about the long-term: what is needed for the railway to serve and grow the economy to enrich the lives of everyone in Britain. Many of those schemes are large ones, none larger than the East West Rail Link. Ambition is not something we're short of. However, the little things matter to passengers as well.

## Railfuture East Anglia achieves success for passengers at CAMBRIDGE NORTH

We've been campaigning for Cambridge North for 30 years. We got it, finally, as RAIL EAST issue 174 showed, but the station needs to be run for the benefit of the passengers, rather than the convenience of the rail industry. It should be **PASSENGERS FIRST!** and that's the title of a new national campaign that Railfuture will be launching. It will also be one of the three key topics that we will raise when we next meet the rail minister.

Cambridge North was an ambitious station project, with a £50 million price tag. We didn't expect things to be perfect from day one. Railfuture works positively behind the scenes with the operator(s) to get change. Our key concern was the lack of functionality (frankly, almost any functionality whatsoever) on the ticket vending machines. The technical issues have been resolved and the vast majority of tickets and fares are now available. We'll be pressing for the gaps to be filled and things like smartcards to be worth having.

But some things were not technical. They were just rules and practices that worked against the (paying, let's not forget) customers. Why did every train stop at the far end of the bay platform (no. 3), as far away from the stairs, lifts and canopies as was practically possible?

With four-car trains, in particular, it was a big inconvenience to passengers, having to walk further. They had to arrive at the station earlier to catch their train. What if it is raining, or they have luggage, are elderly, unable to walk far or are wheelchair users?

Railfuture spoke to several drivers to understand the issue.

We spoke face to-face with Jamie Burles, Greater Anglia's Managing Director, at the station and we also contacted GA's Stakeholder Representative. We have been informed that our pressure helped persuade Network Rail to allow train drivers to stop the trains at a more passenger-friendly position along the platform. Trains in the bay platform (departing for Liverpool Street or King's Cross) are now parked beside the stairs and lifts, alongside the whole of the short canopy, as the photo below (taken by Nick Dibben) shows.



## CLOSING THOUGHTS...

Sometimes Railfuture has to persuade the rail industry to see things the same way. It was good to read a 'tweet' from Cross Country Trains that makes the same point as the cover photo on this issue of RAIL EAST, showing that we really are on the same side...



**CrossCountry trains**

@CrossCountryUK

UPDATE: Here's the derailed freight train causing all lines to be blocked to our services between [#Ely](#) and [#Peterborough](#).



Time to express appreciative thanks to all contributors to this edition. Text and illustrations (please!) for Edition 176 to me, please, by Tuesday 14 November 2017, but preferably before. Chris Burton, editor.

Join us in **NORWICH** at the Friends' Meeting House, Upper Goat Lane, NR2 1EW on **Saturday 30 September 2017 from 14:00**. Our guest speaker will be Chris Starkie, Managing Director of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

On **Saturday 2 December 2017**, also from 14:00, Will Gallagher of the East West Rail Company will be our guest speaker in **CAMBRIDGE** at a new venue for us — the prestigious Tamburlaine hotel, which is very close to the station.

Railfuture's National Autumn Conference at the Curve Theatre, LEICESTER LE1 1SB is Saturday 4 November 2017, 10.45-17.00. More info (and book online) at [www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences)

We hope to see you at our branch AGM in Bury St Edmunds on Saturday 24 February 2018. Who knows, you might even make it to the national AGM in Edinburgh on 12 May 2018, taking the East Coast Mainline, of course. We hosted the AGM this year; next year it's the turn of Railfuture Scotland.

# **railfuture** East Anglia

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## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

**Chairman: Nick Dibben**

24 Bure Close, St Ives PE27 3FE

Tel: 01480 495101

[nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk)

**Vice-Chairman/RAIL EAST Editor: Chris Burton**

2 Stone Terrace, Cambridge CB1 2PN

Tel: 01223 352327 / 07780 856212

[cfb79ten@gmail.com](mailto:cfb79ten@gmail.com)

**Peter Wakefield**

Tel: 01223 352364 / 07738 085307

[peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk)

## **OTHER CONTACTS**

**Secretary: Paul Hollinghurst**

110 Catharine Street, Cambridge CB1 3AR

[paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk)

**East Anglia Membership Secretary: Peter Bayless**

3 Queens St, Spooner Row, Wymondham NR18 9JU

[petlinbay@btinternet.com](mailto:petlinbay@btinternet.com)

## **MEETING DATES AND VENUES**

**SATURDAY 30 SEPT 2017**

Friends Meeting House  
Upper Goat Lane

**NORWICH NR2 1EW**

**SATURDAY 2 DEC 2017**

Tamburlaine Hotel  
27-29 Station Road

**CAMBRIDGE CB1 2FB**

**SATURDAY 24 FEB 2018**

**BURY ST EDMUNDS**  
Venue to be confirmed

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