

# raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

Issue 190 • June 2021

[www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia)

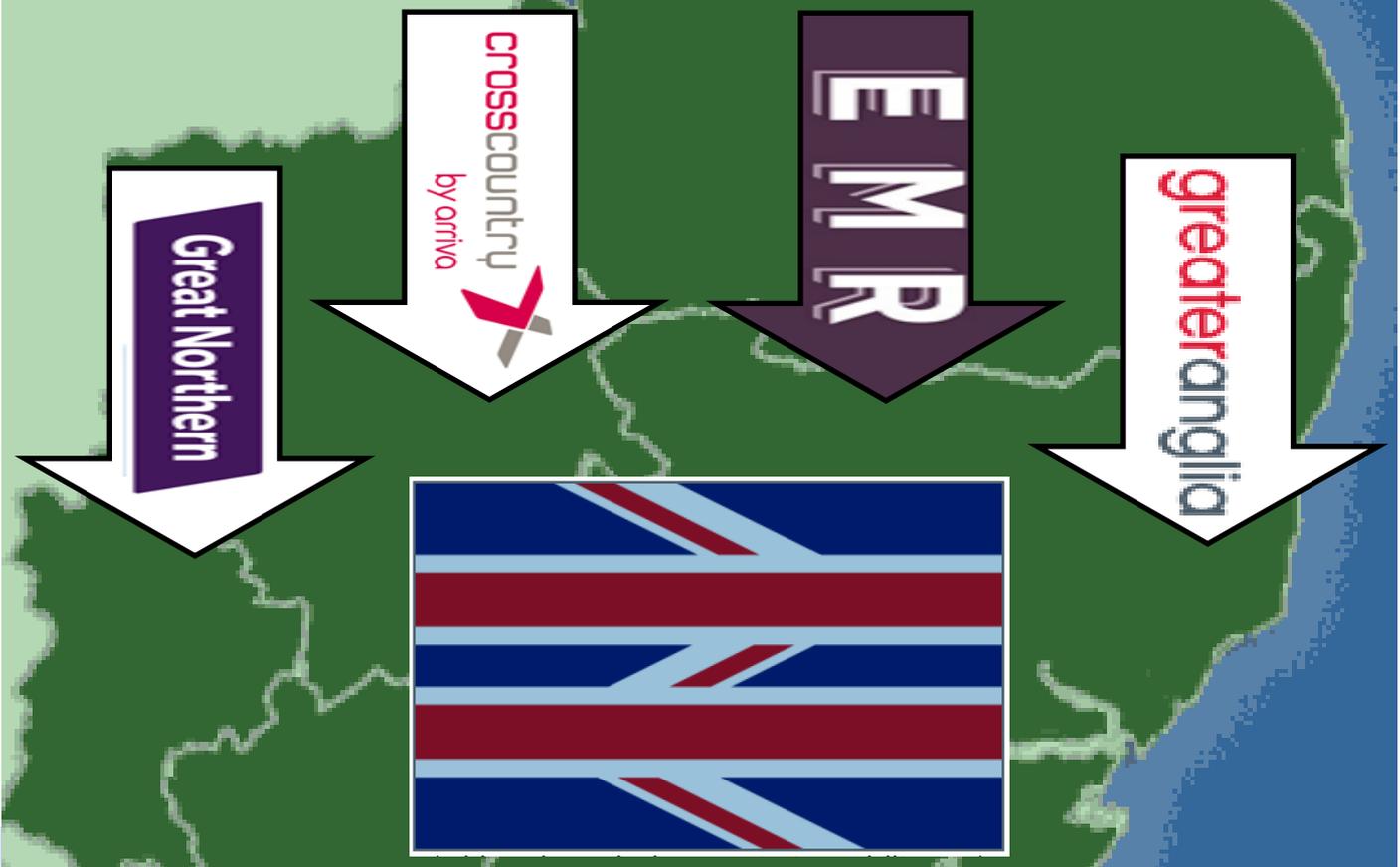
[twitter.com/RailfutureEA](https://twitter.com/RailfutureEA)

**Railfuture campaigns for better services over a bigger railway (passengers + freight)**

**Join us for £20 per year**

[www.railfuture.org.uk/join](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join)

## WILLIAMS-SHAPPS PLAN FOR RAIL FINALLY PUBLISHED



## EAST ANGLIAN OPERATORS BECOME PART OF "GREAT BRITISH RAILWAYS"

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

- What GBR means for rail users and long-term development
- Joining up Norfolk
- Two years of GA's new trains
- Minor station developments
- How election results may affect the region's railway
- Wrong railway priorities?
- Rail-bus integration
- Ipswich rail history

# TOPICS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE OF RAIL EAST

## **Chair's thoughts – p.3**

The arrival of Great British Railways – a new structure benefitting travellers? Plus – what more should be done to make getting to and from stations as safe as possible?

## **Focus on Norwich & its hinterland – p.5**

Outlining the scope – and urgent need – for new & better passenger services to benefit Norwich and improve connectivity with the towns around it

## **Plans for a new bus & rail interchange at Biggleswade – p.10**

A passenger access black spot may be on the way to “step change” improvements

## **Environmentally friendly responsive travel in Suffolk – p.11**

First news about the new Katch project serving Wickham Market – the shape of things to come in rural public transport?

## **Two years in – thoughts on GA's Stadler bi mode fleet – p.12**

On the back of well-deserved plaudits, maybe time for GA to make more use of the available overhead catenary?

## **All change for Cambridge & Peterborough – p.14**

How might changes in who runs the county council and the mayoralty affect rail plans?

## **The post-COVID challenge – getting passengers back on trains – p.17**

The railway needs to focus investment acutely on measures directly benefitting passengers – something not always apparent at present

## **Another significant railway birthday – p.18**

June 1846, 175 years ago – and the railway arrives in Ipswich

## **Recent station developments in Suffolk – p.18**

Refurbishing a commemorative bench – and letting the wildflowers bloom

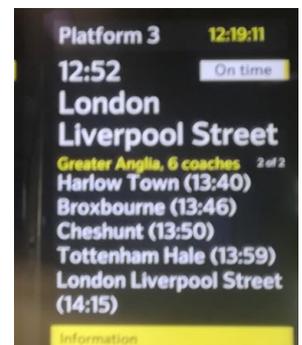
## **Railfuture amidst the movers & shakers... - p.19**

Branch member joins Rail Freight Group as Assistant Policy Manager

## **COVER STORY Railway shake-up – more questions than answers? – p.20**

The railway will need a fundamental re-think on overheads and current practices if meeting the needs of passengers is to become a reality

RAIL EAST issue 189's photo quiz on page 23 showed a customer information screen with a Greater Anglia train to Liverpool Street displayed. The 'obvious' error was that the train supposedly had six coaches. This never occurs, and the only way of achieving it would have been to couple up two three-car bi-mode trains. Screens had been showing this error for several days before it was corrected. There's no photo quiz this time, but can you guess which BBC TV programme inspired the front cover? Please send quiz photos to [raileast@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:raileast@railfuture.org.uk).



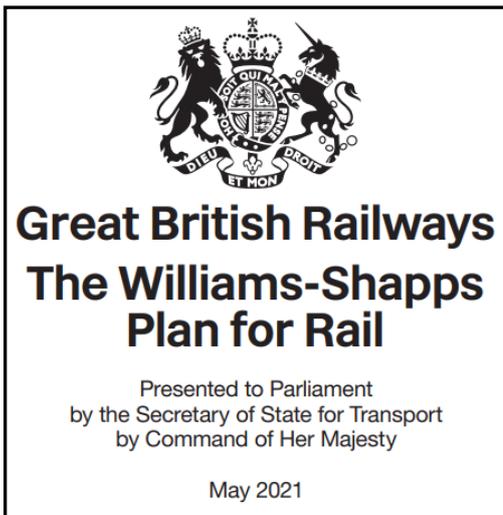
## **RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA MEETING – 25 JULY 2021 – IT'S A SUNDAY!**

Completely breaking with decades of tradition, the next branch meeting will be on a Sunday. We've chosen the first weekend when we're confident (as much as we can be) that COVID-19 restrictions will have been relaxed. Please don't turn up without checking that it will definitely go ahead. Members will be emailed a week before. If you don't have email you can call Nick Dibben (phone number on back page).

See flier at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/meetings/> for map showing how to find the venue. This flier will be updated if there are any changes to the plan.

# THE RAILWAY WHITE PAPER...

BY NICK DIBBEN, CHAIR, EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

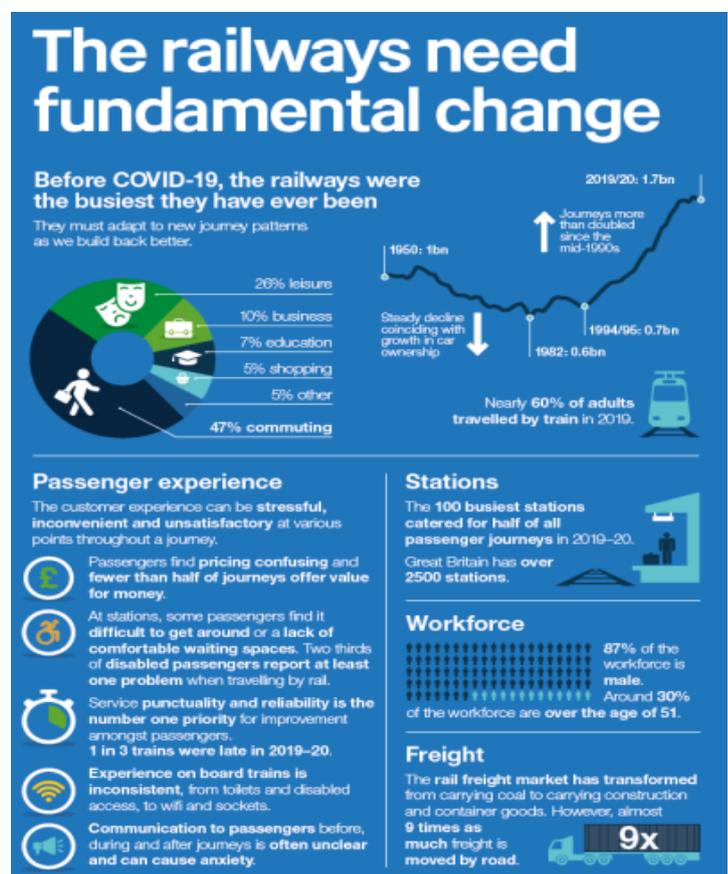


The government has issued its long-awaited White Paper on the future of the railway network. As expected, the document proposes the creation of a new national body, Great British Railways (GBR) to act as the controlling mind for the railways. It will maintain the tracks, set the timetable, run the stations and collect the fares. The train operators will continue but will just run the trains. Although the operators will carry some financial risk, the main revenue risk is transferred to GBR. The report recognises the role of the railway in helping to grow the economy and in helping to tackle climate change. So far so good. But what is the benefit for passengers and when will they start to notice?

The vast majority of people are not bothered who actually runs the trains or how complex the contracts. The key priorities for many passengers are: getting to the station, buying a ticket, a comfortable seat, frequent and punctual trains, good information and connections. So, will the new White Paper deliver on these items?

Certainly there are plans to simplify the ticketing system and ensure a more consistent product across the network. The announcement of new flexible season tickets will help many who in future may only commute two or three times a week (and do so at peak time). There is talk about more local input into timetable specifications and getting better connections at key interchange stations and ensuring better spacing of services along a particular route. On the downside, the government record of providing comfortable seating is not good at all and it will be interesting to see if it will be a case of passengers first or budget first. Although the government's commitment to climate change will require an overall reduction in the number of journeys people make, a shift away from cars and onto public transport is essential. Good seating is needed, and sensible fares are required to achieve this.

One local example that we may use to assess the impact is the design of the proposed Cambridge South station. Although the plans for East West Rail are based on serving Cambridge South station with four trains per hour in each direction, the current plans don't factor this in, and Network Rail says it can't consider East West because the rules don't allow it. This is likely to result in either an inadequate station or some major rebuilding of a station that has just been opened. IF the new GBR can sort that out, we can have confidence in a great future for the rail network.



A page from chapter one of the 112-page Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail report.

The image on the right, from the Williams-Shapps Plan, shows what passengers require from the railway.

Increasing attention is being given in station design to factoring in the personal safety of travellers. Feeling safe and comfortable is a key aspect in getting people to use public transport. This needs to cover the entire journey – door to door. Although train operators have carried out improvements at stations so that the majority meet the industry standards for secure stations, passengers still have to get to and from the station. Studies show that whilst 73% of men feel safe walking home at night, the figure drops to just 49% for women. This statistic is taken from a timely new report called *Get Home Safe*, written by a team of female transport planners to highlight the concerns faced by women when walking at night and provides a tool kit for transport operators and local authorities on how to make improvements.



Most of the recommendations are simple common sense such as wide paths with clear sightlines, train and bus shelters with clear glazing to reduce fear of concealed persons, routes with good lighting and CCTV, places free from litter and graffiti. One of the suggestions in the government’s Railway White Paper is to make better use of unused spaces at stations. Exploiting these spaces for community use in the evenings can help create secure environments for passengers by contributing to the feeling of “eyes on the street”. The 16-page report can be found here: <https://careers.snclavalin.com/blogs/2021-5/getting-home-safely>

Railfuture’s Policy Director, Ian Brown, has written a comprehensive analysis of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, which can be read on the Railfuture website - see <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1882-Great-British-Railways>.

## RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH MEETING (INCL. AGM)

Because of COVID-19, Railfuture East Anglia has not held a public meeting since our AGM in February 2020. This issue of RAIL EAST has been completed on the evening of the Prime Minister’s announcement about easing of lockdown on 19 July, so we will hold our Branch meeting in **Ipswich** (the usual St Mary’s at Stoke venue) on **Sunday 25 July 2021** (a month later than planned) from **14:00**. We will confirm this by email/website/Twitter a week before the meeting. See page 2.

We’ve decided not to invite a speaker this time, as we want it to be as informal as possible. There is plenty to catch up on and many will simply want to chat with other Railfuture members whom they haven’t seen for some time. The meeting will be our AGM, and will include reports from the Chair and Treasurer along with the election of the branch committee. We hope to see you on Sunday 25 July.

# JOINING UP NORFOLK – HOW WELL DOES THE RAILWAY SERVE NORWICH & ITS HINTERLAND TODAY?

BY IAN COUZENS & PETER WAKEFIELD

Map from Norfolk Chambers of Commerce website

## Introduction: why cities matter

Over the last two RAIL EAST issues we have started an overview look at how the national railway network serves our major East Anglian “cities”. Is it time to challenge the way the network works for us?

We need to bear in mind that the geography of each town’s site is crucial to its historic development and how its railway has developed over the last 200 years. As the effects of climate change become more apparent, we enter a crucial future phase in our economic and social development – so we must ask how might the railway serve its communities better, to help make transport more sustainable. Business as usual may not be sustainable.



(In the East Anglia context our cities are Peterborough, Colchester, Norwich, Ipswich and Cambridge. So far in this series we have looked at Peterborough and Colchester).

This quote from the Conservative former minister David Gauke, published in a May 2021 issue of *The New Statesman* seems appropriate: “The hard truth is that the absence of scale means that towns are only going to be successful on a sustainable basis if they are well-connected to vibrant cities; towns benefit from proximity to a big, dynamic city.....rather than denigrating London we should seek to emulate it. Put cities at the heart of levelling up.... Cities cannot operate in isolation: All cities operate in an inter-connected network, relying on relationships with other areas whether as sources of labour, better quality of life or leisure activities. Cities need to recognise how they link with other areas and to develop complementary economic strategies where possible. This is particularly important for medium-sized cities, which should seek to work closely with a large city if they are in a city-region, or potentially to work with other medium-sized cities if they are not in a city-region.”

## The geography of Norwich has determined the development of the railway... and created a problem.

Onto our third overview as we glance at Norwich, the largest settlement in East Anglia, where currently about 145,000 people live

Norfolk settlements by population size (blue if station exists) from 2011 Census. Source: Wikipedia.

1	Norwich/Thorpe St Andrew	186,682
2	King's Lynn	46,093
3	Great Yarmouth	38,693
4	Thetford	24,833
5	Gorleston-on-Sea	24,741
6	Dereham	20,651
7	Taverham	15,631
8	Wymondham	13,587
9	North Walsham	12,463
10	Downham Market	10,884
11	Attleborough	10,549
12	Diss	9,829
13	Caister-on-Sea	8,901
14	Hunstanton	8,704
15	Watton	8,417
16	Fakenham	8,285
17	Cromer	7,949
18	Sheringham	7,367
19	Swaffham	7,258
20	Aylsham	6,016
21	Hemsby	5,522
22	Hethersett	5,520
23	Poringland	5,132
24	Dersingham	4,640
25	Belton	4,520

within its boundaries with another 75,000 close by, making an extended urban settlement of over 200,000 people. In terms of transport links one of the most isolated cities in the UK, its railways are a vital but strangely undervalued resource.

Norwich city has had a very long period of continuous development. Like most of our major settlements, it has strong connections with the Roman imperial takeover of most of Britain, evidenced at nearby Caister St Edmunds / Venta Icenorum on the River Tas. After the collapse of the Roman occupation, the centre of local economic activity gradually moved a little to the north to a more protected site between the River Yare and its tributary, the River Wensum. The Wensum joins the Yare just east of Norwich at Whitlingham and flows some 20 miles further on to the sea at Great Yarmouth. Until recently Norwich was able to receive ocean going shipping by way of the Yare and Wensum, reminding us that the city has prospered over many years partly because of its close and easy trading links to the near continent.

It is the land within the River Wensum's last great meander loop that has become built over to form the stunning historic centre of the city with its cathedral, dominating castle, the market, shops. The modern city now marches away to the north of the Wensum and to the west along its valley sides. The Yare with its marshy wide valley still forms the city's southern boundary.

(Oddly the Wensum is classed as the tributary of the Yare even though the latter's upstream course is the shorter.)

## Economy

For many years during the Middle Ages, Norwich's economy was second only to that of London. It became England's second city. Its huge wealth was based on the wool trade. Eventually the original industry failed as it did not innovate. Norwich, however, remained by far the most important regional centre in East Anglia and over time other industries came (and went) such as shoemaking, food-processing and later engineering. Nowadays insurance, finance and above all the knowledge-based industries are in ascendency. The latter have been greatly helped by the establishment of the University of East Anglia (UEA) in the 1960s. This now world-class institution sees many of its graduates staying on in the city creating their own companies. The UEA has enabled the city to attract many young skilled people from elsewhere as well as directly providing a source of research for biomedical and environmental sciences industries. The Norwich Research Park is now a significant employer.

The wool trade has given the city a rich architectural heritage which nowadays is the basis of an important tourist industry but is also the basis of making it an attractive place to work and live. Norwich has always been a major regional centre and still is, serving a wide network of market towns and villages. It is now home to about 117,000 jobs and more than 8,000 businesses. It is one of the largest centres of employment in Southeast England.

(Information about the economic context summarised above has been taken from the document *Enabling Norwich in the Knowledge Economy* produced for Norwich City Council by the Work Foundation.)



RSPB / National Express  
leaflet from 2008 promoting  
Sunday trains on the Wherry  
Lines

## Norwich Railway development....the Yare Valley

As noted above, its modern urban development has taken the city away to the north and west, away from the original city site whose southern edge is bounded by the broad marshy valley of the Yare. The railway network first entered the city from the east up the Yare valley from Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and later via Whitlingham from North Norfolk and from London, Cambridge, Ely, Thetford, Dereham, Swaffham and King's Lynn down the Yare valley from the west. All these lines concentrated on a terminal station at Thorpe, convenient for the historic centre. What is now the main line from London via Chelmsford, Colchester, Ipswich and south Norfolk arrived near the city high above the Yare Valley at Lakenham, crossing it on the magnificent viaduct before dropping steeply down to the valley bottom to join the lines coming in from the west, terminating at the current station. All the railways entering the city today terminate on its southern edge.

The map below illustrates the emphasis of the railway to the south of the city. Note also the dismantled railway that came directly into the city from the north to the former City terminal station from a network serving north and west Norfolk. This used the lower Wensum valley to enter the city.



Map shows current and former rail lines serving Norwich. A new station at Long Stratton is proposed by Railfuture as a railhead for South Norfolk – primarily to serve Norwich.

### There are six key service groups serving Norwich:

- Great Yarmouth via Acle or Reedham: 1 tph all day; 2 tph peaks
- Lowestoft: 1 tph all day
- London Liverpool St - Chelmsford - Colchester - Ipswich - Stowmarket - Diss: 2tph all day
- Stansted Airport - Cambridge - Ely - Thetford – Wymondham: 1tph
- Manchester – Sheffield - Nottingham - Peterborough - Ely - Thetford - Wymondham: 1tph
- Sheringham - Cromer - North Walsham - Wroxham: 1tph

## **Norwich Railway Station....a problem to be solved? Or, how to reconnect the station to most suburbs?**

The map on the previous page makes it clear that Norwich station is increasingly isolated as the city grows away from it. It is in a good position for the historic centre; for its tourism, retail, much office work, the night economy. The latter is particularly well situated by the station. However, the station serves the resident population in its wider catchment much less well.

The majority of bus services do not pass the station (photo, right, from TripAdvisor.com) so this is a problem in itself. It would probably not be feasible to divert many more services via the station but this means the connection to / from the bus corridor at Castle Meadow needs to be seamless. The 25/26 UEA/Norfolk & Norwich Hospital route would ideally be Light Rapid Transit, perhaps also routed to the northwest. But are other solutions needed to link the station to the further



reaches of the city where many new major centres of employment are very distant from the station? Most residents in the city are fairly remote from the station. The road network has frequently and expensively been expanded and without reference to the railway. Little thought has been given by the County and City Councils about how to evolve an active travel network away from a travel network that is even now increasingly road based other than by park-and-ride. Decarbonisation must be first and foremost in planning, with new travel hub railway stations built around the city at key road/ rail intersections to enable residents to better access the railway. These have already been identified: for the Northeast Quadrant at Broadland Business Park and for the Southwest Quadrant in the Hethersett/Thickthorn area.

### **The existing train services – are they adequate?**

All services are now basic hourly but is this service level becoming increasingly just a “token service” when we urgently need to decarbonise, to make the railway work harder for modal transfer to rail and for a sustainable economy?

### **Railfuture believes all services should become at least half hourly together with some carefully thought out linking of services across the city’s station.**

We know that the terminal station has limited capacity but

1. **Should the Nottingham - Peterborough - Norwich service continue to Yarmouth** to add value to the resort’s railway, encouraging tourists from the East Midlands to use the train without change and those working on the energy coast around Yarmouth to use rail to Peterborough for East Coast Mainline connections? **By doing this the Norwich - Yarmouth service would become half-hourly all day, providing a better service for local users and encouraging more of them rail. And levelling up for Yarmouth.**
2. Should the via Peterborough service become much more “intercity” in character, with longer trains, all round better on-board experience on a par with the London service? Good journey time reductions? **We think it should.**
3. Should we make more use of the invaluable asset of the many underused village stations by turning all or some into local travel hubs? We say yes.
4. So, what about a cross-Norwich all stations service every hour from North Walsham to Thetford to serve them? This would give a half hourly service in from North Walsham and a new service to Thetford, allowing the longer distance service to be speeded up calling only at Wymondham, Thetford and Brandon. Yes, we think this should proceed with.

Other important changes are urgently needed. The service to Cambridge must run half hourly and be faster! Implement now ready for East West Rail! And should it too "cross Norwich" and continue to Lowestoft?

Then there is the anachronistic situation on the southern route out to Diss and Ipswich, as the map demonstrates. The frequent intercity services are vital to the regional economy and even better services to London are an imperative. **But what an underused wasted asset this railway is. Parallel to it is the very busy A140 commuter road bringing thousands into Norwich everyday but for the 20 miles of railway between Diss and Norwich there is nowhere to join trains.**

Railfuture has advocated a new travel hub station for Long Stratton but local political reception has been lukewarm, an apt phrase when all around us a climate change crisis is developing. The cost of the station is minimal when compared to the massive road building schemes around the city that we all know are temporary sticking plasters on a problem that is incurable – unless we transfer to rail. Norfolk must play its part in combatting the climate emergency.

## **Investment**

To make all these improvements happen there must be infrastructure enhancements that reverse the disastrous decisions of the 1980s to single line the Trowse Swing Bridge and rationalise Ely North Junction. Railfuture urges all Norfolk Members of Parliament to work together to obtain this vital investment.

## **Gaps towards the northwest**

There is an obvious gap in this network towards the northwest of the city. The former service group from Norwich via Wymondham towards Dereham - Fakenham - Wells / Swaffham and King's Lynn is missing, having been closed in stages between 1964 and 1968. However, nearly 18 miles of the route from Wymondham escaped being dismantled owing to the efforts of its current owners, the Mid-Norfolk Railway. It has tracks as far as County School station, six miles north of Dereham and seven miles short of Fakenham. "Heritage" style trains are regularly operated over the 11 miles between Wymondham and Dereham, bringing a very large tourist benefit to the area.

The 23 miles of railway from Dereham to King's Lynn via Swaffham is dismantled, with just over three miles remaining for the nationally important mineral traffic from Middleton via King's Lynn to the north of England. This route, the missing link between two large towns, is increasingly an urgent omission. The population of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough (District) Council is about 150,000 with King's Lynn itself being 50,000. The population of Swaffham is about 11,000, whilst Dereham is about 20,000 – significant urban populations without direct access to the railway.

There is currently an online petition urging that the route be considered for restoration. The petition says:

"The roads in Norfolk are getting ever more crowded leading to long delays for commuters, frequent traffic jams, increasing air pollution and road traffic accidents. A regular train service will help reduce motorised road traffic, and therefore reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution; it will enable more people to use bicycles at either end of their train commute, which in turn will improve health and well-being, reduce stress levels and result in greater productivity by enabling working en route and reduced travel time. A train line will improve connectivity between Norwich and towns in Norfolk such as Dereham, Swaffham, Downham Market and King's Lynn, making it accessible to many more people, not just to those with cars – giving a much-needed boost to the region's economy."

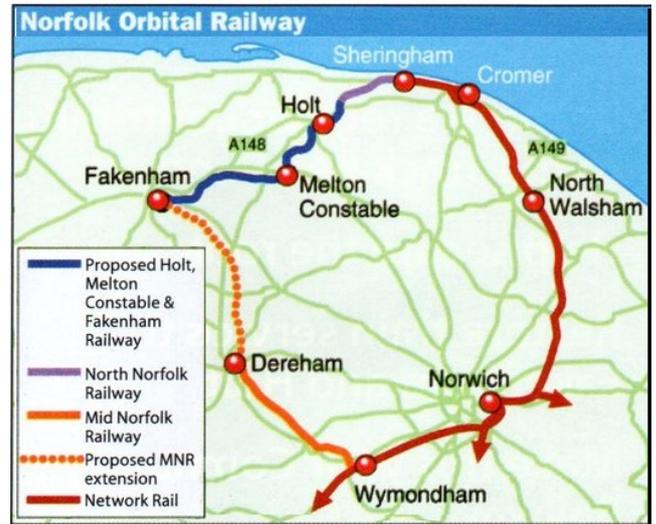
You can sign it at: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/reinstate-the-train-connection-from-kings-lynn-to-norwich/>

## The Norfolk Orbital Railway

The Holt, Melton Constable & Fakenham Railway is working to link the lines of the Mid-Norfolk Railway at County School and the North Norfolk Railway at Holt by restoring the 22 miles of dismantled railway via Fakenham and Melton Constable. As the map (right, from Colonel Stephen Society website) shows, this would become the Norfolk Orbital Railway. An intriguing future Norwich to Norwich route?

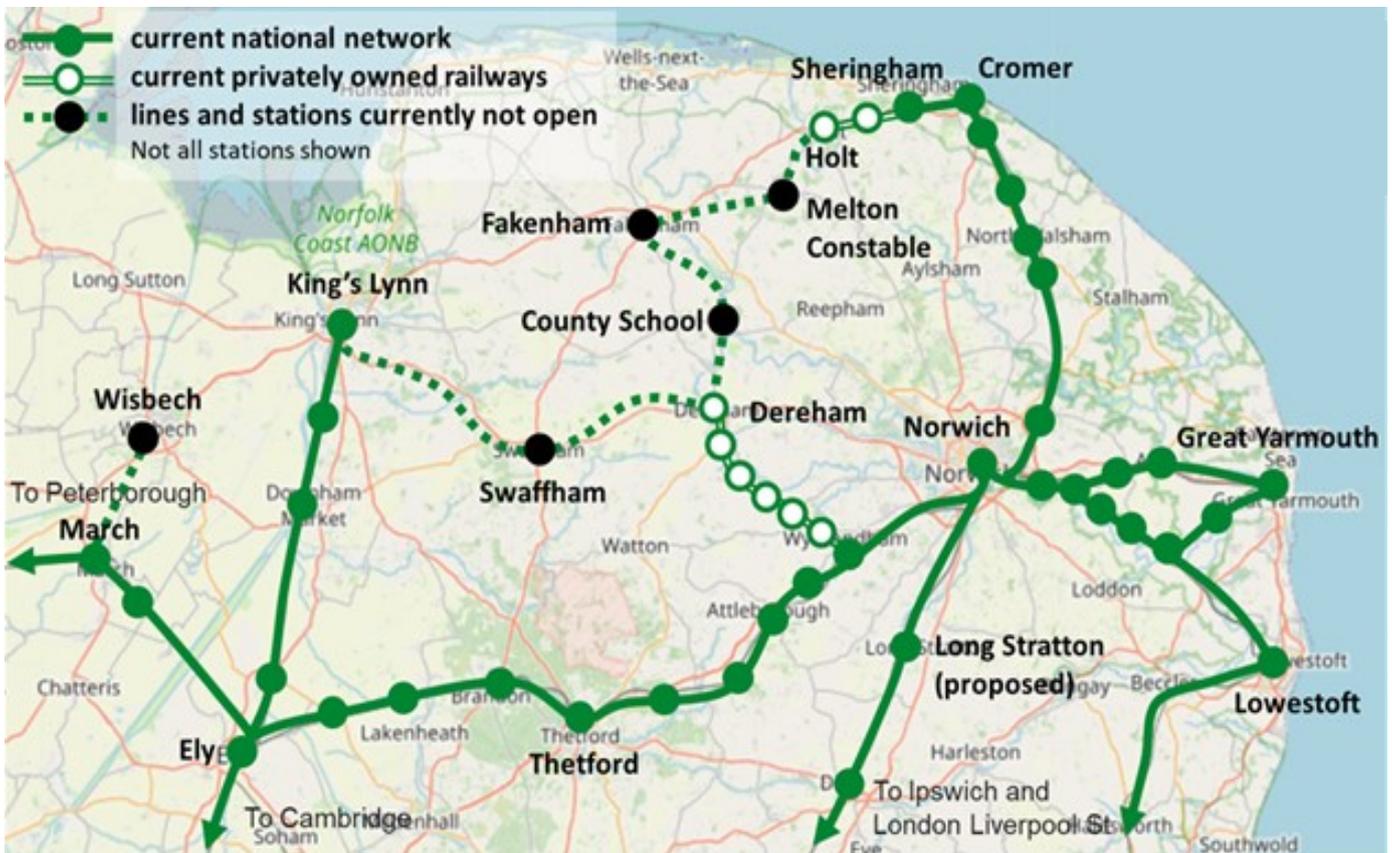
Travel Hubs are a concept developed by Cambridge based Smarter Cambridge Transport. More details at this link:

<https://www.smartertransport.uk/travel-hubs/>



Another website very relevant to the issues discussed in this article:

<http://www.hunstantonrail.org.uk/reopening-railways-transport-revolution/>



The railways of Norfolk, above (note: much of Wisbech is in Norfolk). More use of the village stations...are they natural travel hubs?

## BUS SERVICES FROM RAILWAY STATIONS

### BIGGLESWADE RAIL BUS INTERCHANGE PLANS – BY NICK DIBBEN

Central Bedfordshire Council has submitted plans for a new bus interchange at Biggleswade Station on the Great Northern route. The plans include space for three bus stands, drop off and pick up parking area, taxi rank and additional cycle parking. New bus/rail information systems and a new accessible toilet are also planned. The works are designed to complement plans to provide step free access to the station by installing lifts from the footbridge to the two island platforms.

Biggleswade Station was noted in the Railfuture "Easy Stations" Report issued in 2019 (see [Railfuture website](#)) as being one of the few stations in the East Anglia region with no step-free access at all, so the improvements are most welcome. However, concern has been expressed by Biggleswade Town Council about the lack of suitable shelter at some of the bus stops.

Plan showing the new Biggleswade Interchange area, right.



## A NEW FACILITY FOR WICKHAM MARKET STATION IN THE SPRING – A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME? BY TREVOR GARROD (EAST SUFFOLK TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION)

"Katch" is the brand name for a new demand-responsive bus service at Wickham Market station, which finally started operation on 17 May 2021 after delays caused by the COVID situation. Two 8-seater electric minibuses are now available from 06.30 to 22.30 six days a week, and from 09.00 to 19.00 on Sundays, to take passengers between the station (which is in the village of Campsea Ashe) into Wickham Market town and then on up the valley to Framlingham. The vehicles have been leased by Suffolk County Council for five years and for the first year a subsidy has also been agreed. The Rural Mobility Fund of the Department for Transport has also contributed to the project.

The journey has to be booked in advance and each vehicle can carry 8 passengers. The single fare is £4 (for a trip of some 7 miles) and £7 return. A passenger can phone up to request a "Katch" vehicle to meet a particular train from Ipswich or Lowestoft at Wickham Market station. In fact, I used it on 17 May to go to Framlingham, without pre-booking; but as the service becomes better known, it is strongly advisable to log on to [www.katchlift.com](http://www.katchlift.com) or phone 01728 55 44 55.

The image is an advertisement for the "Katch" lift service. It features a white van with green "Katch" branding and a signpost that reads "Katch www.katchlift.com". The text on the advertisement includes:
 

- Katch** logo and website: [www.katchlift.com](http://www.katchlift.com)
- Service description: "On-demand transport between Framlingham - Wickham Market - Wickham Market Railway Station"
- Booking instructions: "Download the app or call 01728 55 44 55", "Book your journey", and "Katch a lift".
- Logos for Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Passenger Transport.

Two electric vehicle charging points have been installed at the station for the "Katch" vehicles; and two more are due to be added for electric car owners, for whom there will be a charge. Wickham Market station serves a wide rural area, for which park-and-ride is important. Framlingham, with its large mediaeval castle, is an important tourist attraction and the new "Katch" service should be ideal for the tourist season. The [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) website will give full details.

Two electric vehicle charging points have been installed at the station for the "Katch" vehicles; and two more are due to be added for electric car owners, for whom there will be a charge. Wickham Market station serves a wide rural area, for which park-and-ride is important. Framlingham, with its large mediaeval castle, is an important tourist attraction and the new "Katch" service should be ideal for the tourist season. The [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) website will give full details.

Finally - Wickham Market was one of the four stations which won awards in Railfuture's "Easy Stations" project in 2019. It now has yet another string to its bow.

# TWO YEARS OF GREATER ANGLIA'S NEW TRAINS

BY JERRY ALDERSON

It's now two years since Greater Anglia (GA) started to introduce into public service its brand-new Class 755 bi-mode trains (seen passing at Cambridge station in the photo below) and it took less than a year to replace all of the diesel-only trains (dmus). Their Stadler Class 745 electric-only sister fleet is also fully in service and the Alstom Class 720s are running to the east coast and will eventually reach the West Anglia mainline and up the Fen Line. Although built by two manufacturers, the outside appearance is the same to the casual observer. The interiors have a lot in common, including the same passenger screen interface, although to walk through the 720s you may need to lose weight as the aisles are very narrow indeed. Don't bother trying to pass if 'large' passengers are sitting on both aisle seats.

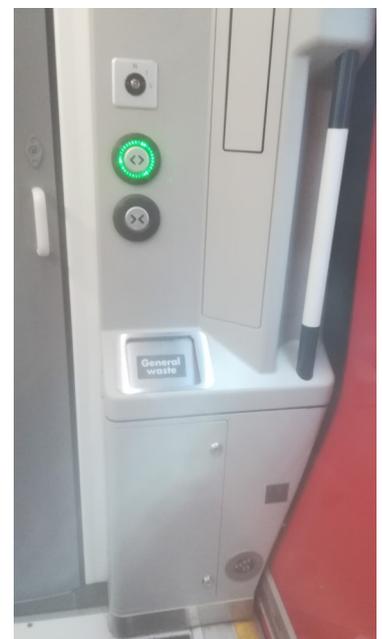


The bi-modes were a real step change from the 1980s 'Sprinter' dmus. One can easily forgive the initial unreliability issues (though not a near-fatal level crossing accident in Norfolk when crossing barriers raised before the train had passed, partly caused by all trains on the line being brand new with perfect wheel profiles) and the inability to call at stations with short platforms until automatic selective door operation (ASDO) was operating (see RAIL EAST issue 185 article on how it works).

The trains were reviewed in detail in issue 183 (September 2019), so no need to repeat the compliments here. Observing passengers over two years, it is clear that they like the seats around tables as they are always the first to be taken; the wide (almost square) windows are popular apart from where the outward PIS limits the view; however, no-one seems to use the jacket hangers. There are lots of CCTV cameras providing good coverage and conductors previously confined to the rear cab found these very useful to spot passengers not wearing face coverings, for example.

A list of 'niggles' would include the personal inability to use the train properly, not just once but repeatedly, such as falling off the step when rising from the raised seating and opening the accessible toilet door rather than the train door (photo, right, which also shows the rather small litter bin).

The manufacturer, Stadler, can't be blamed for stupid users,



but there are a few little things that could have been designed a little better:

- When pressing the door opening button nothing seems to happen until the retractable step has moved, so passengers press it again and again – the light should change colour or flash to signify that the request has been registered. If the train was as advanced as trams in Austria, one could press the button before the train even reached the station and it would 'remember' to open the door
- The harsh lights beside the overhead PIS reflect on the screen (also an issue at CIS screens at stations)
- No close button on doors – particularly useful on cold winter days
- Could have wireless charging pads at table seats rather than under-seat chargers.

So far, Railfuture's fear that having just one door per carriage would lead to delays has not been realised, but that may change when the timetable is tightened in December 2021 to make use of the trains' better acceleration.

There have also been some reliability issues that annoy passengers, such as the doors to the (noisy) power pack segment of the train often being stuck open for the duration of the journey.

As mentioned in RAIL EAST 189, the PIS is occasionally not in use or is stuck on a page, and that article along with the one in issue 188, gives ideas on how the information shown could be better presented. On too many occasions the Wi-Fi has not been working. In winter 2020/21 the heating often appeared to be switched off – was this deliberate to dissuade people from using the train during lockdown?

On Saturday 20 March 2021 emergency engineering works between Cambridge and Stansted required the power lines to be turned off but trains could still run. GA acted swiftly to avoid rail replacement buses by replacing its emus with bi-modes, and they ran between Cambridge North (bay platform) calling at all stations to Stansted. Well done, GA, for making a quick change to benefit passengers.

With decarbonisation high on the agenda, the overhead wires should be used to their maximum. CrossCountry's diesel train service could be replaced by GA on trains to Cambridge/Stansted from Ely or even back to Peterborough, so that wires can be used south of Ely, and the new contractual arrangements should make this easier.

GA frequently promotes its environmental credentials (such as water fountains to refill plastic bottles) but for around **100,000km per year** its bi-mode trains use diesel when they could use electricity. The trains can raise and lower their pantograph on the move, and this has been trialled on the Great Eastern Mainline.

Each of the following has around 2km of wires before the first station:

- Ely North Junction to Ely station (services starting from Peterborough and Norwich)
- Haughley Junction to Stowmarket station (services starting from Peterborough and Cambridge)
- East Suffolk Junction to Ipswich station (services starting from Lowestoft and Felixstowe)
- Trowse Lower Junction to Norwich station (services starting from London Liverpool Street and Stansted Airport)

To this, one could add the short stretch of wires to Norwich on services starting from Sheringham, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

Taking this as a pessimistic 10km per hour, 15 hours a day and 360 days a year exceeds 50,000 kilometres and that's just in the direction to an electrified station, where the driver could manually raise the pantograph. If the train automatically lowered the pantograph as it approached the end of the wires (whether through GPS or a balise in the track) that figure would be doubled.

**How about using the wires, Greater Anglia?**

# HOW MAY POLITICAL CHANGES AFFECT RAIL PROJECTS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND ACROSS EAST ANGLIA?

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

RAIL EAST does not usually mention political developments but the recent changes in Cambridgeshire do affect many railway projects that Railfuture is supporting throughout East Anglia, so here's a little analysis.

The main driver of transport change in Cambridgeshire nowadays is the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). In its short life it has a good track record of planning and delivering rail projects, as it is

- progressing the delivery of the restored railway from Wisbech to March with services running on through the Fens to Cambridge
- supporting and part funding the planning works for the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement programme
- pushing ahead with the planning and delivery of Soham station to serve that important market town. Also future planning of links to the restoration of the Newmarket West Curve and the restoration of through trains from Ely to Soham, Newmarket and Cambridge
- supporting the early delivery of Cambridge South station, bringing forward its delivery to 2025, earlier than the predicted arrival of East West Rail in 2028/9. Of course, it strongly supports the delivery of the whole of East West Rail
- funding improvements at Manea, March and Whittlesey stations, as well as train service improvements along the Cambridge to Peterborough line.

**All the above Railfuture fully backs and campaigns for.**

The CPCA had other ambitious plans including the development of the Cambridge Autonomous Metro, or "CAM". This started off as a "first mile last mile" network based on Cambridge station. Railfuture hoped it would be a light-rail network but it evolved into an autonomous rubber-tyre road-based network that grew and grew until in some areas it seemed to compete with railway development. We have serious doubts about it.



The Authority also developed plans for dualling the Ely-Cambridge A10 trunk road and again we had concerns, as it appeared to undermine use of the parallel railway that already carried nearly 50% of traffic between the towns and seemed at odds with the imperative to reduce carbon and other emissions.

**After the 6 May 2021 elections the leadership and structure of the Combined Authority changed, as the ruling Conservative Group lost seats at County and District level. The County is now led by a coalition of Lib Dem, Labour and Independents.**

The Conservative mayor of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, James Palmer lost his position to the Labour candidate, Nik Johnson.

**So where does this leave railway transport? Let's look at the party manifestos.**



Ex-Mayor Palmer (left) and Nik Johnson (right)

The manifesto of the **Lib Dem candidate for the mayoralty, Adrian van de Weyer** (pictured below), stated:

Rail will be the backbone of our future low carbon transport system, with a far greater role than now. Rail provides excellent local connections as well as a sustainable transport mode for long-distance journeys and for moving goods.



The use of the railway in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be boosted by a number of investments across the region. As Mayor, I will incorporate them into my own plans and policies, and I will press for government and other partners to support them. These rail projects include:

- Electrification of the whole rail network, including East West Rail, so that diesel trains can be banned entirely from the railway in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- Construction of the central section of East West Rail from Bedford to Cambridge serving St Neots - Tempsford and Cambourne
- Agreement with government that the eastern sections of East West Rail need to be upgraded and integrated with the other sections
- Construction of Cambridge South station
- Progress plans for a Peterborough South station
- Increase capacity of the Cambridge to Newmarket line, doubling the track where necessary, allowing more frequent trains and possible reopening of stations
- Completion of Soham Station
- Reinstatement of the Snailwell rail link allowing Soham - Cambridge direct trains
- Improvements to Ely North
- Continued progress of work on the March - Wisbech line
- An assessment of options for reopening the Cambridge - Haverhill line
- Looking again at the case for new stations north of Peterborough and Alconbury Weald.

**On mass transit, Mr van de Weyer expresses doubts about CAM** (our highlighting), saying: "A new and expanding system of mass rapid transit needs to meet some fundamental objectives. It needs to **be attractive** enough to get people out of their cars. It needs to be **reliable and frequent**. It needs **to have permanence to allow people and business to plan** in the longer term. It must be affordable. It needs to **be well integrated with other forms of transport** so that people not directly served by the mass rapid transit are able to benefit from it. It must not cause pollution or harm air quality.

"It also **needs to be low risk**. The current plans for a new transport system have many features that introduce huge risks. It relies heavily on autonomous technology and on other untested solutions; it can only function properly when the whole of the central tunnelled section is completed in a decade's time. The consequences of spiralling costs, of unreliable technology, of delays or even of failure would be huge. We need a system that can deliver benefits quickly..."



The word "Metro" is commonly associated with trains, and the CAM logo makes the vehicles look more like trains than buses—but it was always intended to be a rubber-tyre system.

Embarrassingly, when reporting its demise, *RAIL* magazine described it as a "light-rail system" - falling victim to the 'deception'.

## The Labour Party manifesto for Cambridgeshire County Council identifies the following transport priorities:

- Improve bus travel and connectivity across the county, working with the Combined Authority Mayor to secure bus-franchising and creation of a reliable bus network, with Bus Priority lanes on key routes
- Ensure bus operators upgrade to all electric bus fleets
- Press for a Fair Fares policy on bus/rail to encourage a shift from private car use
- Support the introduction of more park-and-ride sites and expand Travel Hubs across the county.

With a push to continue investment in high-quality strategic cycle routes across the county, Labour may have considered heading to an “off the shelf transit system” and away from the bespoke CAM system that has been under development. Is this heading towards light rail?

- Segregate wherever possible
- Enable more active travel on foot and by bike to become a realistic option by investing more in urban and rural footway and cycle lane repair and maintenance.
- Expand the School Streets “no car zone” initiatives and ensure permanent funding of school Bikeability training schemes
- Expand the number of Residents’ Parking Schemes across Cambridge city
- Press for the adoption of powers to make pavement parking an offence and investigate the potential for restricting verge parking across the county
- Campaign for more rail investment, including completion of the Wisbech - March rail link and East West Rail, with full consultation on Cambridge South rail station.

Dr Nik Johnson, Labour’s candidate to be Cambridgeshire’s mayor, did not release an official manifesto, but set out his vision for the role, saying when speaking to the *Cambridge News* that he will be open to others’ ideas too. On transport, he said he wants to implement a “fully integrated, greener transport system”. As with the other two candidates, Dr Johnson said he is in favour of bus franchising. He said such a system would improve service frequency, help reach under-served parts of the county and better link up timetables with other services. He said he will provide free bus travel for 16 to 18-year-olds, and a means-tested subsidy to under-25s. He also said he would explore the possibility of introducing a busway into the Fens, and ask the Greater Cambridge Partnership to “reconsider” its proposed Cambridge South East Transport busway route.

On the question of a metro for the Cambridge area and beyond, he said he opposed the former mayor James Palmer’s proposals, which he says are based on “untried technology”. And he added that it would “not be a priority for me to do in the first four years” – saying bus franchising and linking other projects such as East West Rail into the current system would take priority.

Neither the Conservative Party nor the Conservative candidate for Combined Authority issued a manifesto, but we assume they will back all the policies set in motion by Mr Palmer’s administration outlined at the beginning of this piece.

**Between all the parties, it would seem that work on and support for Wisbech rail, Ely EACE, Soham station, Newmarket West Curve, Cambridge South, East West Rail Central and Eastern Sections, will continue. Because the Lib Dems are now dominant on the county council, Haverhill rail gets support too.**

**What definitely will not happen is the Cambridge Autonomous Metro.**

**And nobody has anything to say about the A10 upgrade.**

# GETTING RAIL OUT OF A CRISIS — WRONG PRIORITIES?

BY JERRY ALDERSON

Once COVID-19 is behind us and there are more reasons to travel again, many passengers will return to the railway – but will it be enough?

Rail companies have focused on *reassurance*, which unfortunately can come across as “the railway is a death-trap and we’re desperately trying to make it safe.” Few will dare say it, but air-conditioned trains pose little risk (according to research) and the railway has gone over the top in creating fear. If people see trains as a breeding ground for every illness and disease imaginable, the railway will be in trouble.

The entire industry must pull together to make people *want* to use trains because it is the *best* and *most enjoyable* way to travel. That needs good marketing but also an improved product. Hopefully, the Williams-Shapps plan for rail (pages 3-4 and 20-22) has bought time before the Treasury tries to cut funding, but it’s a race so let’s all make the priority enticing people (young and old, rich and poor) onto trains.

Lots of infrastructure work has been performed during COVID-19 to benefit passengers for generations to come, not least on the East Coast Mainline. But some expenditure ‘investment’ will not gain a single extra passenger or carry any more goods, which is the desire of Railfuture, rail user groups and other advocates for rail, and the demand of the Treasury. That is a luxury we really cannot afford right now.

At Waterbeach station, work has commenced on providing a firm walkway for trackworkers, something the railway has managed without here for 170 years. Why? Well, it marks out an obvious safe route that is clear of passing trains (but it’s far from the rail lines so hardly necessary), there is less risk of falling and perhaps breaking an ankle and they might even become more productive by walking faster.

Trains will not run more frequently or faster. Possessions will not be avoided and temporary speed limits will not be reduced. Where’s the benefit to customers?



This walkway, it seems, has been constructed at the drop of a hat. No GRIP process required. Passengers waited decades for the new station at Cambridge North, and will have waited as long when Cambridge South, Beaulieu, Soham and others finally open. It will be the end of the 2020s before more trains can run through Ely, Wisbech has reopened and the East West Railway to Cambridge has been built. In the meantime, presumably passengers will see even more lineside infrastructure that provides no benefits for them.

If the railway has money to spend on safety, it would be better for passengers (though not grow patronage) to move the noticeboards at Newmarket station closer to the fence so that people do not have to stand in the road to read them. Few drivers are daft enough to pay Greater Anglia £3 a day when there is plenty of free parking on the road, but enough cars drop off and collect passengers during the day, as do taxis, and none seem to obey the 5mph limit.



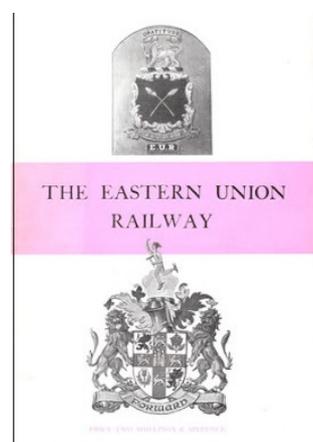
# THE EASTERN UNION – IPSWICH’S OWN RAILWAY

## BY PHIL SMART

In recent editions of RAIL EAST we have looked at the birth of the rail network in the east and described its various sections as their 175<sup>th</sup> anniversaries occur. In the September 2020 issue (RAIL EAST 187) we described how the line from London to Norwich via Cambridge was constructed by three companies who combined their efforts to open a through line on the same day in 1845. It was this achievement however, that spelled near disaster for the line we know today as the Great Eastern Main Line which overcame bitter rivalry rather than co-operation before it opened throughout in 1849.

The original plan was for the Eastern Counties Railway (ECR) to construct the whole line to Norwich via Ipswich under a single Act of Parliament. The ECR however controlled the companies that had secured the Cambridge route to Norwich and were beginning to lose interest in the Ipswich route where their engineer, John Braithwaite, had included a large viaduct over the Stour Valley near Manningtree to avoid gradients. The likely cost of this structure was the excuse the shareholders (mainly from Liverpool) needed to abandon the line having reached Colchester.

Local investors were outnumbered but one of them, John Chevallier Cobbold, was determined that Ipswich, which in 1843 had opened the then largest enclosed dock in Britain, should have its railway. He called a meeting that year, chaired by the town’s Mayor, to form his own railway company, The Eastern Union (EUR), to continue the line as far as Ipswich. The company appointed a young engineer, Peter Bruff (see RAIL EAST 183 article about plaque in his honour), who had approached Cobbold with a cheaper plan to cross the Stour on the route we know today. The line opened on 11 June 1846.



At first, the two companies were at loggerheads. The EUR built a branch to Hadleigh to block any attempt by the ECR to construct a parallel route. The ECR for its part constructed its timetable to make connections with the EUR at Colchester as awkward as possible, but eventually common sense prevailed. The two companies eventually merged to become the Great Eastern in 1860.

---

## RECENT STATION DEVELOPMENTS IN SUFFOLK

Despite the pandemic restricting access, a series of minor improvements have been made to East Anglia railway stations in Suffolk, these include:

### Refurbishment at Halesworth

The Ian Carter memorial seat at Halesworth station (photo right by Chris Fletcher) was erected two decades ago and in recent months has been completely refurbished by four volunteers, with paint and varnish donated by the Community Rail Partnership.



Ian Carter lived in Halesworth, was a founder member of ESTA and the original Chairman, and later Treasurer, of the East Anglian Branch of what is now Railfuture, when it was formed in 1972. He died in 2001.

## Wildflower project in Ipswich

The images show a new wildflower area that has been provided, thanks to volunteer effort, at **Derby Road** station in Ipswich.

As you can see from the display board (right) it is a joint effort between the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership and local members of Friends of the Earth. It has been supported by Greater Anglia and Ipswich Borough Council and includes a



public information message about the value of such areas for pollinators. Photo of volunteers working from CRP website (with Phil Smart in the background). Other photos by Phil Smart.

See: <https://eastsuffolklines.co.uk/wildflower-area-created-at-derby-road-station>

## PHIL SMART JOINS THE RAIL FREIGHT GROUP

Congratulations to Railfuture East Anglia branch committee member, and author of many RAIL EAST articles, Phil Smart, who has joined the Rail Freight Group (RFG) as its new Assistant Policy Manager. On his appointment in April 2021, Phil said: "I am delighted to be joining the RFG team at an exciting time for the sector. With the growing emphasis on decarbonisation, there is an increasing role for rail freight in the UK supply chains and a greater need for local and national policies to support this objective." He will remain active within Railfuture, both in the East Anglia branch and at national level.



## TREK TO AMAZON



**It's not just the railway that could be more helpful to customers...hi-tech giants too!**

When Paul Hollinghurst ordered from Amazon he was told to collect it "outside Cambridge station next to Old Ticket office". He eventually found the blue collection point in the middle of the car park. Totally wrong. A map would have been clearer.

BY JERRY ALDERSON

The freight railway, having been freed of state control to focus on its customers, has managed to avoid the headlines but barely a day has gone by without criticism of the passenger railway, some of it justified and some just politically motivated.

We've waited long enough for the Williams Review, finally published as the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, and the railway has seemed to be wastefully treading water in the meantime. By attaching his name to it, the Secretary of State has shown a commitment to implement it, providing he is kept in post long enough. Less good is the name Great British Railways (GBR), when the railway is devolved in Scotland and Wales and the former may become independent by 2025, but let's look beyond it (as we did with the laughable 'one railway').

In his column, Nick Dibben has rightly focused on what passengers will experience in the future, and what Railfuture should campaign for. But there are numerous questions and many obstacles that need to be overcome.

### Decision making and leadership

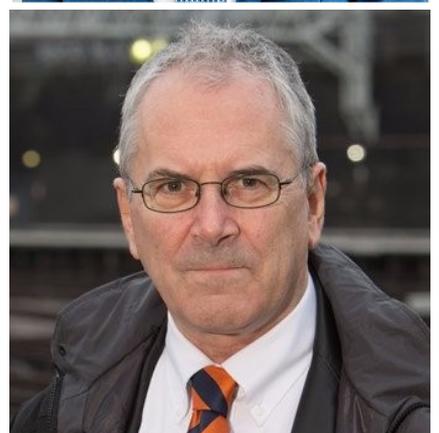
Railfuture has submitted responses to hundreds of consultations in the last decade, many about matters affecting East Anglia – all can be found on the [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk) website. The rail industry recipients have been Network Rail (with one team often having little, or no, knowledge of related work being planned by another team), Department for Transport, Office of Rail and Road, Rail Delivery Group, and every train operator. There's also been county and district councils, combined authorities and partnerships, all treading on each other's toes with varying degrees of interest in the railway, and more than a little passing the buck. One may be forgiven for believing that in the days of British Rail (BR) it was the only organisation that you had to talk to.

It's true that BR could be persuaded to change a service, run a new service or open a new station without involving other organisations, but since Network Rail's creation and government micro-management of TOCs, effecting change has seemed almost as difficult as getting blood out of a stone, not least because everything went through a mountainous approval process including expensive and time-consuming backside-covering studies to prove the "bleeding obvious" as Basil Fawley said.

Many rail campaigners would be happy if there were fewer consultations, providing that the railway knew what to do and just got on with it, but that requires trust, and because of a perceived 'what passengers actually want isn't important' attitude across the industry there hasn't been a lot of that in recent years. However, having to deal with fewer organisations will be welcomed.

If there is one thing that the changes must bring, it is agility: *decide* and *do*.

Those who know them well say that key elements of the Williams-Shapps plan could have been (and perhaps were) written by Andrew Haines and Sir Peter Hendy, Chief Executive and Chairman respectively of Network Rail. Haines has taken part in many recent railway Zoom events and it is clear from every response that he thinks about the railway as a unit, not just the silo that employs him. That's the attitude that the railway so desperately needs.



Andrew Haines (top) and Sir Peter Hendy (bottom), are not credited with writing the 'Plan for Rail' but they will be crucial in delivering it.

## **A single railway for passengers**

By 2023, apart from open-access operators, passengers may see only one brand, GBR. They'll get information and buy tickets (and claim Delay Repay) from one website/app, rather than a choice of 20+ government-appointed ones, which should save the rail industry a substantial sum. This doesn't preclude independent retailers, nor innovators who can build superior apps (and websites such as Real Time Trains) providing information, since the data will continue to be provided free of charge.

Passengers purchasing from GBR will deal with only one company (at any station in Britain) regardless of where they travel — a massive bonus to customers who were told "sorry, we can't do that, you'll have to go back to where you bought it from".

Of course, national retailing could have been retained at privatisation, and easily created at any time since. The claimed entrepreneurial flair that private companies bring to rail was largely about marketing, fares and on-board customer service. As any operator could sell any ticket, and the customer service was the same everywhere, there was no need for each TOC to employ ticket office staff. The Rail Delivery Group could, and arguably should, have taken this over years ago.

## **The railway under the bonnet**

British Rail was one organisation, but the new railway structure will not be. For a start, private companies will still be involved in running trains. Many will say this is an ideological decision by a Conservative government, putting private profit first, whilst others will claim governments no longer have the confidence, knowledge or skills to be responsible for such things: they can *decide* but not *do*.

Train ownership will not change – Rolling Stock Companies will still purchase and lease them to operators, who will largely remain as monopolies on most routes, and they will continue to directly employ on-board train staff and, unless maintenance is contracted out to the train manufacturer, engineers at the train depots.

The government wants multiple private train operating companies (TOCs) involved, apparently because it demands competitive bids, although it is unclear how bids would substantially differ given the significant reduction in both risks and rewards. If so, it should also look at whether the current geographic split between TOCs is right.

The franchise areas were generally created for financial viability – essentially cross subsidy. With operators bearing no revenue risk in future, they should be organised for maximum efficiency, particularly around rolling stock and staff utilisation. Currently each TOC has a large number of contingency staff to cater for holidays, illness and network disruption. Because each operator's contingency level is rounded up, the excess contingency is potentially quite considerable. One TOC doesn't dynamically hire out staff to another TOC although this may often be possible (especially where driver route knowledge allows it, and as driver-controlled operation becomes commonplace route knowledge of conductors is less important).

Perhaps a better solution is for TOCs not to employ on-board staff directly, but to sub-contract to multiple permanent driver- and conductor-companies with multi-skilled staff possessing route knowledge over wide areas. As well as reducing the risk of staff shortages, sometimes through poaching, the great advantage of this is that TOCs would not reduce training new staff just before their contract ended – GTR took years to recover after First Capital Connect stopped recruitment and training in its final months.

It's not just excess contingency that adds to staffing costs, but also duplication of certain activities by each TOC. If in future the public will be unaware of the TOC's identity, just as few know the company operating their bus in London, then the need for public relations (essentially to paint their owning company in a good light) reduces. It would be the GBR representative that would face the media, not the

TOC. However, whilst PR departments could be pruned, it is important that local understanding is not lost – Network Rail has now recognised the loss of traffic knowledge when moving signalling to Rail Operating Centres.

## Incentivising operators to satisfy passengers and grow the railway



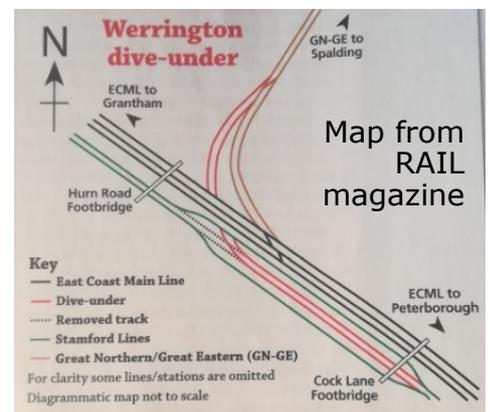
The concession TOCs will be rewarded for meeting key performance indicators (as opposed to punishing the former franchised operators for failing to meet them) and 'cost control' although the remit of that is unclear. Hopefully, the customer service requirements and KPIs will ensure that it doesn't diminish the service or passenger experience. But what of the incentive to grow business? Railways exist to move people and goods, not to generate revenue, so any reward must be based on the number of passengers and/or distance they travel. It is illogical to base it on revenue: if the government raises fares the operator shouldn't get more money for doing nothing, and conversely, if fares are lowered the operator shouldn't lose out.

## Seeing the big picture

Probably the most annoying problem with the railway at the moment is the attitude to future growth, developing lowest cost silo-based improvements now that will constrain capacity and cost large sums to overcome in future. The DfT/Treasury is largely behind it but the rail industry's reaction is lacklustre - Nick Dibben mentioned Cambridge South station plans do not adequately cater for East West Rail (page 3).

As well as short-termism there's a tendency only to solve the immediate problem without looking at the network-wide and business benefits. For example, Network Rail decided to construct the Werrington dive-under but looked *only* at removing freight trains off a short stretch of the ECML, to achieve a commitment for more intercity trains, rather than looking at any benefits for rail freight, which presumably BR would have done (as it ran the freight business).

Since the vast majority of freight trains using the dive-under will be going to/from East Anglia, an alternative solution would have been a March-Spalding route (avoiding HMP Whitemoor built on the former track-bed). This would have been much greater work, and therefore a higher cost plus a longer time (though not as disruptive) to deliver, but it would have benefited freight operators through a shorter route with a) saving on fuel and wear on locos/wagons and b) shorter journey times so better utilisation of locos/wagons (possibly driver hours as well) and more competitive against road for time-sensitive clients.



The problem is that the freight operators would have realised the financial benefit over a long period and could not have financed the additional cost.

NR/DfT didn't factor in the network benefits (diversionary route) or environmental benefits of shorter train journeys before deciding. Will GBR? Now that's a question!

## GA'S CLASS 720 TRAINS ON TEST IN THE WEST

As mentioned in the article on Greater Anglia's new trains (pages 12-13), the much-delayed Class 720 commuter trains from Alstom (formerly Bombardier) are already in service in the east of the region. They have done several test trips in the west to Cambridge and ventured up to Ely and King's Lynn, all without any passengers on board.



The photo, right, from Chris Burton was taken at Cambridge North on 24 May 2021, just three days after the station's fourth anniversary.

## EAST WEST RAIL—READ RAILFUTURE SUBMISSION

The latest public consultation from the East West Rail Company ended on 9 June 2021. Railfuture submitted a carefully considered response, having discussed it with all branches along the route and local rail user groups. As mentioned in RAIL EAST issue 189, a southern route, via Cambridge South, to enter Cambridge is essential. Response at: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display2717>.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FOR RAIL EAST

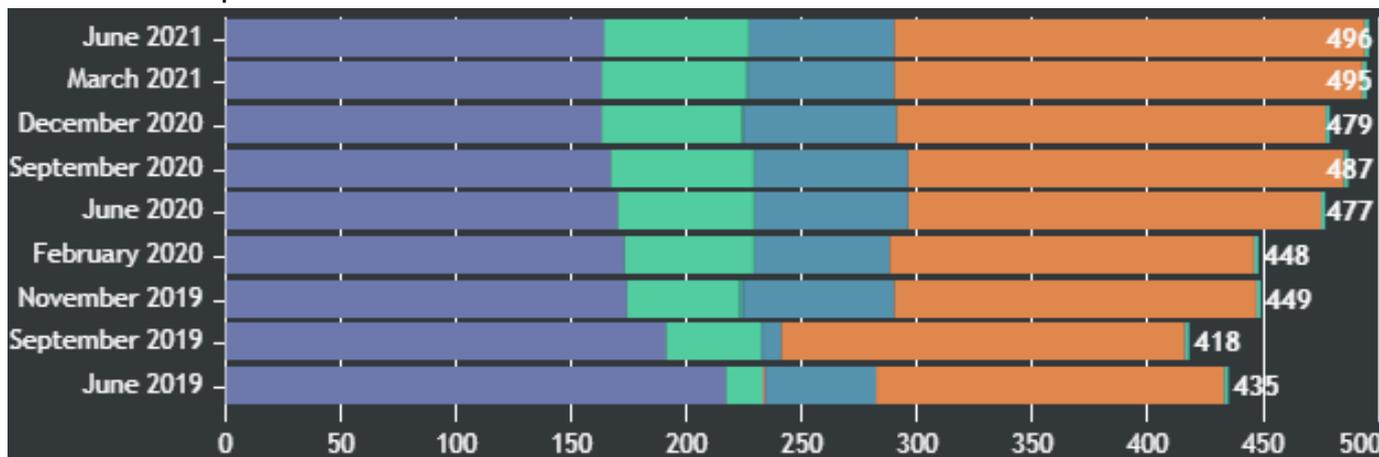
Please send articles for possible inclusion in RAIL EAST to Peter Feeney (see back page), who collates all submissions and prepares them for the newsletter. Good quality photos are appreciated and essential to make RAIL EAST visually attractive.

All submissions by **27 August 2021**, please, but articles covering late news will be considered just before sending to the printer two weeks later.

RAIL EAST is formatted by Jerry Alderson.

## RECEIVING RAIL EAST BY POST OR ELECTRONICALLY?

The graph below (recipients split by members [post, email] and free list [post, email]) shows that we're emailing or posting to more people and organisations with each issue. We're happy to email it to people working in the rail industry and local authorities—please contact Peter Wakefield to be added to the email list.



Thank you to Railfuture members who have agreed to receive RAIL EAST by email. This helps to keep Railfuture's costs down and so spend funds on rail campaigning. You can be emailed a copy of RAIL EAST on the same day that it goes to the printer, so you will receive it more than a week before other people. To switch to receiving it by email, please contact Lloyd Butler, who manages our database, at [renewals@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:renewals@railfuture.org.uk). Your co-operation will be appreciated.

# **railfuture** East Anglia

## **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: Chris Burton**

Tel: 01223 352327 / 07780 856212

[chris.burton@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:chris.burton@railfuture.org.uk)

**Vice-Chairman: 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)

**Contributions for RAIL EAST: Peter Feeney**

[raileast@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:raileast@railfuture.org.uk)

**East Anglia Membership Secretary: Peter Bayless**

3 Queens St, Spooner Row, Wymondham NR18 9JU

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

Also see <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Contacts>

A flyer for our meetings is always at: [www.railfuture.org.uk/east/meetings](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/meetings).  
This includes a map of the venue and directions from the station.

## **MEETING DATES AND VENUES**

**SUNDAY 25 JULY 2021**

St Mary's at Stoke  
Church Hall, Stoke Street,  
**IPSWICH** IP2 8DA

**REVISED DATE**

**SATURDAY 25 SEPT 2021**

Friends Meeting House,  
5 Upper Goat Lane  
**NORWICH**  
NR2 1EW

**Meetings subject to  
confirmation.**

**COVID-19  
DEPENDENT**

Follow Railfuture East Anglia on Twitter <https://twitter.com/RailfutureEA>

Railfuture 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 (non-branch) correspondence to 14 Ghent Field Circle, Thurston, Suffolk IP31 3UP