

Welcome to this edition of Rail User Express.

As always, feel free to forward RUEx to a colleague, or to reproduce items in your own newsletter (quoting sources). If you want further details of any of the stories mentioned, look on the relevant website or, failing that, get back to me so I can send you the full text.

For details about group affiliation to Railfuture, please contact the [Membership Secretary](#)

NEW LISTS OF RAIL USER GROUPS AND REOPENING CAMPAIGN GROUPS

I have recently uploaded new lists of rail campaign groups onto the Railfuture website here:

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Key+rail+user+groups>.

The way in to this information from the **Home** page is by clicking on **Links** then **Rail User Groups**.

The new lists are different from Railfuture's previous list in a number of respects...

- 1) I have separated rail user groups (RUGs) and reopening campaign groups (RoCs) into two separate lists. Some groups appear on both!
- 2) I have also separated out "National and Regional Bodies" which don't sit happily in either of the above lists. These are now shown in a separate list.
- 3) I have added columns showing "TOCs" (Train Operating Companies) to the list of RUGs. Railfuture's aim over the next year is to strengthen links between TOCs and their stakeholders, and these extra columns are designed to help our new TOC Liaison officers.
- 4) Previously, I included a double entry for a RUG that covered more than one region. To avoid this, I have now added a second column so I can show up to two regions alongside each RUG entry.
- 5) With extra columns to show, the lists are now presented landscape instead of portrait.

Please take a few moments to look through these lists and let me have any comments. Thanks!

We continue with the usual roundup of news from rail user groups around the UK.

I'm grateful to RUGs that send me their magazines and bulletins.

Note: I'm running a bit behind schedule with this issue, so I've held over one or two RUG writeups for the next issue of Rail User Express.

South East Northumberland Rail User Group – progress at last on ABT reopening

SENUG is delighted to report Northumberland County Council has finally commissioned the all-important GRIP Stages 1 – 3 Study from Network Rail, for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington Blyth & Tyne Line. However, the group has concerns that Network Rail may over-engineer the scheme and make it too expensive; they're also frustrated about the length of time it's taking to complete all the studies.

Ahead of the expected consultations on the next Northern Rail franchise, SENUG has been assembling a list of what it believes should be mandatory commitments. There's debate about how management of the franchise might be devolved to a regional authority - SENUG has decided its focus should be not on who manages the contract but on ensuring that the group's aspirations for the region are fully considered.

After years of campaigning, SENUG is able to claim some of the credit for recent improvements at Morpeth station, including the provision of lifts, new information screens and a car park extension. The group continues to campaign for both train service and station facility improvements at Cramlington, Pegswood and Widdrington.

Ribble Valley Rail – “before and after” photos show benefits of rail reopening

Station volunteers were kept busy in the spring, sprucing up the platforms and benches in preparation for busy weekend traffic and the start of Dalesrail services on 19th May. This year, Dalesrail trains run via the scenic Ribble Valley every Sunday until 8th Sept, leaving Blackpool for Carlisle at 08:36 and returning from Carlisle at 17:41. Two members of RVR are working on new self-guided walks leaflets for visitors to the line, and a new membership leaflet has just been produced - the latter saw a quick response with two new members joining the group.

A memorial seat has been installed at Langho station following a request to RVR from a lady in America; the bench carries a plaque in memory of her late husband who lived nearby and was a regular rail user.

The back page of RVR News has two photos taken at the entrance to Clitheroe Station showing (i) the rampant vegetation and rotting fences that had to be cleared away in preparation for the station's reopening in 1994, and (ii) the stunning wild flower garden that greets rail passengers today. They're worth a thousand words!

Harrogate Line Supporters Group – bid for vital line re-doubling

On 28th May, North Yorkshire County Council agreed to submit a bid to the North Yorkshire Local Transport Board for funding the double-tracking of 10km of railway line between Knaresborough and Cattan.

“This is a very significant step towards upgrading services on the existing Harrogate to York line which currently suffers from recurring delays due to two sections of single track,” said Brian Dunsby of the Harrogate Line Supporters' Group. “Reinstating this section of double track will not only save the time taken for the single-line token handover procedure, thus reducing train journey times, it will also reduce the consequential delay that occurs if one train is late.” The group is campaigning for electrifying the whole line between Leeds, Harrogate, Knaresborough and York.

Brian added "this double-tracking is a vital first step in the plans for this busy line. Hopefully it will come ahead of Network Rail's plans for re-signalling this part of the line, as they have recently completed on the Leeds to Harrogate part of the route. Reinstatement of the double track will also make it possible to build a new Flaxby Moor Parkway Station with a large park and ride site, as part of the planned Flaxby Green Business Park."

Brian Dunsby is also the Chief Executive of the Harrogate Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

Support the Oldham-Rochdale-Manchester Line (STORM)

The group was invited to a consultation meeting at which Northern Rail presented their draft timetable for May 2014. They were told that additional TransPennine trains and other new services have made it necessary to recast many of Northern's timetables. There are some benefits for the region north of Manchester; however there are also various “unfortunate” consequences (eg loss of through services) and some serious concerns that STORM argues need to be addressed – most notably the fact that several minor stations will suffer cuts to their peak-hour services to Manchester leading to overcrowding. There's the feeling that local trains are being sacrificed to make room for express services.

The group has presented their views to Transport for Greater Manchester and has also made strong representations to Northern Rail. They are also asking STORM members to explain the changes to local councillors. They've heard that Walsden Rail Users' Group are urging travellers to protest to decision makers, including MPs, about the proposed alterations.

North Cheshire Rail Users' Group – a summer of celebrations!

NCRUG has welcomed a new tenant, a local hairdressers' business, at the refurbished Frodsham station house, saying: "hearing the voices of clients and staff coming from the open windows for the first time was quite a moving experience – the house has come alive!"

Meanwhile at Helsby, they've been busy organising celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the station. The highlight of the event was the unveiling of a celebratory plaque from the slate quarries at Blaenau Ffestiniog from where the original slate roof on the station buildings came. The gardening team at Helsby had their work cut out to get the flower beds looking presentable for the event following the cold, wet spring.

The line from Helsby to Hooton is also 150 years old, so other stations have been joining in the festivities. On 6 July, NCRUG members and friends had the opportunity to make a through journey on a special train from Hooton, via Helsby and Frodsham, to Liverpool South Parkway and Liverpool Lime Street. On the day, they had a **Northern** Class 156 unit running on **Merseyrail** track with **Merseyrail** staff on board and the added bonus of an **Arriva Trains Wales** catering trolley!

The group welcomes plans to improve the car park at Helsby and to provide a "Harrington Hump" on platform 1, making it easier to step on and off the trains. NCRUG recently made a successful bid to Frodsham Town Council for £300 to finance some professional assistance with creating a new website.

Chesham & District Transport Users' Group – connection issues may be resolved

The group continues to campaign for fast off-peak services on the line to London, and is concerned about poor connections between Chiltern Rail services and Chesham trains at Chalfont. However, a report received from the Federation of Metropolitan Line Users' Committee (FOMLUC) suggests that efforts were being made by operators to solve the connections issue. The FOMLUC report also outlined a number of service improvements in the pipeline, such as signalling improvements and faster running.

In order to raise the profile of the group, CDTUG details are now shown in local printed directories and on a noticeboard at Chesham Station. The group's new website (www.cdtug.org) was reported to be up and running.

Cambridge Heath and London Fields Users' Group – standards set to rise

CHLFUG is confidently predicting that standards at their two stations will rise to match those of London Overground once Transport for London takes over services on their line from 2015. The group hopes the change will bring better Sunday services, improved information screens and passenger lifts.

The number of passengers continues to grow at London Fields, according to CHLFUG's passenger count in May - about 400 more passengers per day were recorded compared to a year earlier: "our figures show there are actually more than twice to three times as many passengers than is estimated in the 'official' figures of the Office for Rail Regulation."

Windsor Lines Passengers' Association – looking back 150 years ... and forwards to Crossrail 2

Transport for London and Network Rail initiated a public consultation in May on Crossrail 2, the scheme to create a new high-frequency rail line running between south west and north east London; the consultation runs until 2 Aug. Initially, the WLPA wrote to the Principal Transport Planner for the project seeking clarification about the future of rail services through Twickenham and how the scheme would interface with a future rail link to Heathrow Airport. Some helpful replies were received and the group is now formulating its full response to the proposals.

Members have been joining in the fun at Teddington Station, where 150th anniversary celebrations were held on 30 June. Elsewhere, we read that the group is getting increasingly angry about the state of Whitton station “probably the worst maintained station on our lines”. It serves a large area of housing and helps relieve the pressure on Twickenham station on match days. “As well as a facelift,” says the WLP, “it deserves better facilities and a better timetable.”

Richmond station and environs have benefitted from a number of improvements recently, although the WLP has cause to query certain aspects of the work including: bus stop not sufficiently conspicuous; taxi access could have been better; train departure screens now show “minutes to wait” rather than actual departure times. The group is keeping a close eye on the redevelopment of Wokingham station.

The Windsor Lines have suffered constant weekend disruptions for engineering works and the WLP is beginning to feel that a total shutdown for a week would be preferable. The group is also pressing South West Trains to introduce more off-peak bargain fares.

Bexhill Rail Action Group – an element of stagnation at Southern

With the re-franchising process restarted, BRAG wonders if stakeholders will be asked again to submit comments, saying “we hold ourselves in readiness.” Meanwhile, BRAG’s newsletter editor feels that there is an element of stagnation locally: “Our station ticket office seems to be closing on a random basis, evening peak services are still not running satisfactorily and even Southern’s renowned marketing of bargain off-peak fares seems to have been toned-down.” BRAG has suggested a slight alteration to the service pattern which would improve evening peak performance; the group is of the view that there is a structural problem with the timetable.

We read that one member is compiling a spreadsheet showing instances of the ticket office at Bexhill opening late or closing early. Another member is looking into ticket machines across the network which sometimes fail to offer the full range of tickets, possibly resulting in passengers being overcharged significantly.

BRAG meets monthly on the second Monday of the month at The Sackville, Bexhill from 19:00.

South Hampshire Rail Users’ Group – Totton’s decline brought to the attention of Transport Minister

SHRUG has used the latest station patronage figures from the Office of Rail Regulation to show how Totton station continues to suffer declining usage despite growth elsewhere on the South West Trains network. The rail service at Totton was downgraded when a new timetable for the South West Main Line was introduced in 2007 (before that, the station was enjoying passenger growth). SHRUG’s evidence has been set out in a letter to Dr Julian Lewis, MP for New Forest East, who in turn has brought the complaint to the attention of Transport Minister Norman Baker.

Avocet Line Rail Users’ Group – overcrowding continues despite extra trains

ALRUG members have been out counting passengers on trains from the start of the new summer Sunday service, which sees extra trains to and from Exmouth funded by Devon County Council. The group reports heavy loadings with some passengers being left behind. They argue that some trains need strengthening to 4-car length as they were in the past, and they’re disappointed that some of the additional services terminate at Exeter Central (although they’ve been assured that all trains will run through to Exeter St David’s in future years).

A section of the group’s newsletter is taken over with consideration of the type of rolling stock needed for their line, with an eye on the diesel units that will become available once the Great Western Main Line is electrified. They say that, by 2016, all Avocet Line trains would need a capacity of at least 250 which could be provided by 4-car Class 150 units, or 3-car Class 165s displaced from

the GWML. “Remembering how unprepared we were for the imposition of the Class 142s in 2007, we need to have our arguments well-marshalled before the next decisions are taken.”

Welcoming the announcement of a new station for the Avocet Line at Newcourt, AVRUG comments that their committee has been involved with the consultation process at all stages, and that there’s a flourishing community association in the new housing area adjoining the station site which will no doubt wish to participate in the line’s Community Rail Partnership.

...news from Railfuture follows...

RAILFUTURE RAIL USER CONFERENCE IN OXFORD – book now to save money

If you want to take advantage of the early-bird discount, you need to think now about booking for Railfuture’s Rail User Conference at the Town Hall, Oxford on Saturday 2nd November 2013. The standard fee is £30 including lunch and conference report, but reduces to £25 for members booking before the end of August.

For further details or to reserve your place please email oxford2013@railfuture.org.uk.

RAILFUTURE RUG AWARDS 2013 – get your entries in!

Railfuture’s second Rail User Group Awards competition remains open for receiving your entries until **30 Sept 2013**. The competition aims to recognise and reward the various achievements of rail user groups over the past year. You can download full details about the competition from the Rail User Group page on Railfuture’s website [here](#). Prizes will be presented at Railfuture’s Rail User Conference at Oxford Town Hall on 2 Nov 2013 (see above).

RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA STEPS UP REOPENING CAMPAIGNS

The Branch has been involved in consultations about the new station planned for Cambridge Science Park; meanwhile, they’re asking councils in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk for a little more urgency over restoring the 18-mile line from Haverhill to Cambridge – the project is currently listed under “aspirations to be achieved over the next 40 years”!

In an extraordinary team effort, Railfuture East Anglia volunteers have delivered a leaflet to every household in Wisbech drawing attention to Cambridgeshire County Council's current feasibility study of the mothballed Wisbech to March railway. They asked residents in and around the town to sign a petition supporting Cambridgeshire's efforts and calling for a through service to Cambridge. Members have also delivered a modified leaflet to houses in Manea and March, outlining the benefits of a dedicated Cambridge-to-Wisbech service to all communities in The Fens. A campaign website has been set up at <http://wisbechrail.org.uk/>

Late news: On 16 July, Peter Wakefield, Chairman of Railfuture East Anglia, presented a 2,907-signature petition for the reopening of the line between Wisbech and March to County Councillors at Shire Hall, where a full council meeting was taking place. A publicity photo of the handover ceremony was taken on the steps of the hall. “Petitions tend to be negative, (‘don't do this, stop that’)”, Peter was quoted as saying. “This however is a positive petition which has received overwhelmingly positive support that can benefit many people and I urge you to support it.”

RAILFUTURE SCOTLAND BACKS NEW STATIONS IN EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE

Railfuture Scotland’s support for stations at **Allander** – between Hillfoot and Milngavie stations, **Westerhill** - between Bishopbriggs and Lenzie stations and **Woodilee** - between Lenzie and Croy stations has been logged with the local authority by Railfuture Scotland’s research officer Ken Sutherland.

He said that the case for Allander station had already been ratified by the 2005 Atkins Consultancy Report and the 2008 Faber Maunsell A81 Corridor Study and should provide up to 500 spaces to meet current and future demands. Sutherland described the station as an 'absolute imperative' not just for the Bearsden/Milngavie communities but also the Stirlingshire settlements of Strathblane; Blanefield; Killearn and Balfron, which now generate increasing volumes of car commuter traffic. He said it is a viable alternative to the worsening A81 road congestion into Glasgow.

'The proposed Westerhill and Woodilee Stations are fully compatible with the revised EGIP electrification plans, based on four (rather than six) Glasgow-Edinburgh trains per hour.' Sutherland added: 'The greater accelerative capability of modern electric trains replacing diesel trains will easily absorb the additional time required for new stops. East Dunbartonshire's rail expansion ambitions represent a 'credible and coherent' modal-shift alternative to unsustainable levels of car commuting.' – *news item in Rail Professional*

RAILFUTURE FERRY SURVEY – a reminder

Don't forget that, if you make a journey by ferry between 1 Oct 2012 and 30 Sept 2013, you can submit details via Railfuture's Ferry Survey. The ferries of interest are those to: the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Continent, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Wight, the Scilly Isles and the Scottish islands. You can access the survey [here](#).

If filling out a paper version of the Ferry Survey form, please post it to: Peter Walker, 26 Devon Crescent, Billingham, Tees-side

...and now the rest of the news...

LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

On 16 July, Transport Minister Norman Baker made a written statement to Parliament setting out funding allocations for major transport projects to local transport bodies. The full story with list of allocations is [here](#).

The statement continues: "Later this month, local transport bodies are expected to publish details of their prioritised schemes to be taken forward from 2015. We would expect that those LEP areas that make a good case for further transport investment through their strategic economic plans will receive additional funding from the competitive elements of the Local Growth Fund. Decisions on that will be made following Growth Deal negotiations with the government." – *gov.uk*

RAIL REPLACEMENT BUSES NO LONGER ELIGIBLE FOR SUBSIDY

Reforms to the Bus Service Operators Grant will close a loophole which up until now allowed bus companies to claim extra subsidy to run rail replacement services rather than those which provide vital local services. BSOG is designed to help bus companies keep fares down on regular local bus services, but has been claimed by some firms to run rail replacement services when engineering work is carried out on the network. Under the new arrangements, this will no longer be possible, which will send a clear signal to train companies that when people buy a train ticket, they want to use a train. – *from a DfT press release dated 5 July.*

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PROMOTERS OF LIGHT RAIL SCHEMES

In his speech to the UK Light Rail Conference in May, Transport Minister Norman Baker set out the Government's position on light rail:

"As you know, the Department for Transport is focused on building a modern and sustainable transport system that will connect our communities, support our economy and protect our environment. It is still my firm belief that light rail has a key role to play in meeting these objectives.

“I have taken the opportunity to see light rail in action overseas. Earlier this year I visited Lyon at the invitation of Keolis and it was fascinating to see this successful system in operation and how it interacts with the other transport modes within the city. There are definitely some areas that we can learn from our overseas counterparts.

“I do hope that light rail promoters have now started to make the case to the LEP/local transport body for light rail schemes within their areas. If you haven’t, you need to.” – *extracts from the speech, as published on the gov.uk website in June 2013*

DPTAC REPRIEVED

A ministerial announcement in June confirmed that the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee is to be retained to advise on accessibility issues relating to disabled people. The government’s review of non-departmental public bodies in 2010 had recommended that DPTAC should be abolished. A public consultation was held in the summer of 2012 on whether the organisation should be abolished and, if so, on possible alternative arrangements. The response from Railfuture to the consultation was basically that DPTAC should not be abolished as none of the proposed options for replacing it was considered adequate.

SPRING 2013 NATIONAL PASSENGER SURVEY PUBLISHED

Passenger Focus published their [Spring 2013 National Passenger Survey](#) (NPS) on 19 June 2013. The views of over 60,000 passengers inform these twice-yearly ratings for overall journey satisfaction. For the first time, PF has also produced at-a-glance guides to the headline results and recent trends for (i) Great Britain, (ii) Scotland and (iii) Wales.

Passenger Focus chief executive, Anthony Smith, said: “Passengers are now the main overall funder of Great Britain’s railway, so it is vital that their key needs are met. Given that performance is the key factor that underpins most passengers’ general view of the railway, train companies and Network Rail must keep striving to get more trains on time.”

Key findings include:

- while satisfaction for many operators remains steady, a number of larger operators, particularly in London and the South East, have seen dips – especially in performance
- overall satisfaction is 82 per cent (down from 83 per cent in spring 2012)
- value for money on individual routes varies from 17 to 76 per cent
- satisfaction with sufficient room to sit and stand varies on individual routes from 44 to 95 per cent.

Passenger Focus advise that, as of 3 June 2013, their Freepost address for the travelling public is:
RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ, Passenger Focus, PO Box 5594, Southend on Sea, SS1 9PZ.

Their main passenger contact phone number and email address remain the same, ie:

0300 123 2350 advice@passengerfocus.org.uk

*A new report setting out what passengers want from **smart ticketing** was published by Passenger Focus on 8 July. Read it [here](#).*

GOVERNMENT FORMALLY ACCEPTS “BROWN REVIEW” RECOMMENDATIONS

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin presented the Government’s Response to the Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme to Parliament on 11 July. The review made a number of important detailed recommendations for improving the way franchises are specified, competed for and managed. Details [here](#).

The government’s response broadly accepts those recommendations. It records the significant progress made over the last six months in implementing them - including restarting the franchise programme, publishing a full revised franchising programme and Prior Information Notice on 26

March and a franchise competition guide on 25 June, and strengthening the capability and governance of the department's franchising organisation. – *gov.uk*

“COMPLACENT” REPORT CHALLENGED BY TRAVELWATCH NORTHWEST

TravelWatch NorthWest has been in correspondence with the Office of Rail Regulation following the publication of a report on the subject of the Quality of Passenger Information at railway stations; they argued that the report was rather complacent and pointed to a number of examples in the North West where there were serious shortcomings with passenger information. – *item in TWNW's conference report*

DRAFT DETERMINATION OF NETWORK RAIL'S OUTPUTS AND FUNDING FOR 2014-19

On 12 June, the Office of Rail Regulation published its 'draft determination' for the Periodic Review 2013 (PR13), a document that has major implications for the funding and planning of the railway between 2014 and 2019.

See <http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/pr13/consultations/draft-determination.php>

This is a consultation document - the deadline for comments is 4 Sept 2013. If you would like to contribute, the contact at ORR for responses is:

Valentina Licata, Office of Rail Regulation, 1 Kemble Street, London WC2B 4AN

email: draft.determination@orr.gsi.gov.uk

ORR will confirm its decisions in the final determination to be published on 31 Oct 2013. It will then begin the process of implementing the determination for 1 April 2014.

NEW RAIL SERVICES FOR LANCASHIRE

Community Rail Lancashire is pleased to announce that two new rail services will start in Lancashire over the next twelve months. On winter Sundays from Sept 2013, "Ribble Valley Connect" trains will run between Blackpool North and Hellifield. Then from May 2014, a daily service between Blackburn and Manchester via Burnley and Todmorden will commence, using the reinstated Todmorden Curve.

The Ribble Valley Connect service (connecting with trains over the Settle-Carlisle line at Hellifield) is aimed at encouraging new passengers from both ends of the route to travel by train on a journey to destinations not normally available on winter Sundays. The trains are timetabled to allow sufficient time for sightseeing, shopping, walking or just to relax and have drink or meal. For full details of this service, go to <http://ribblevalleyconnect.wordpress.com>.

The new service to Manchester is being introduced in partnership with Burnley Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, Northern Rail and Network Rail and part funded by a grant from the Regional Growth Fund. Coupled with the redevelopment of Burnley Manchester Road station, the introduction of a direct service between Burnley and Manchester is seen as a positive boost to the social and economic development of Burnley and will cut commuting journey times to Manchester down to around 50 minutes and cut out the change of trains at Hebden Bridge or Blackburn.

– from an article in Ribble Valley Rail News.

MINE COMPANY PLEDGES £1.5M INVESTMENT FOR RAIL SERVICES

Extra train services will be put on in Whitby - on the condition that the potash mine is given the go-ahead. York Potash, the firm behind the controversial mine earmarked for development at Sneatonthorpe, has pledged to plough £1.5 million worth of funding into putting on four extra return train services per day. They would be on the timetable all year round and run on the Esk Valley railway line from Middlesbrough to Whitby. Existing services would not be affected and the new services would coincide with shift change times at the proposed mine at 6am, 2pm and 10pm.

York Potash says it would allow another route for potential workers in the Esk Valley and beyond to travel to access the company's park and ride service and get to the mine. The move would provide a benefit to the town by allowing more services to Middlesbrough via James Cook Hospital and could benefit the night time economy by having a late night service from Whitby.

The funding of the services is part of a 'unilateral undertaking' which forms part of the company's section 106 agreement. This is a financial undertaking whereby developers are required as part of their planning permission to give something back to the community. – *Whitby Gazette*

TIMETABLES HARD TO FIND

Station adopters on the South West Trains network report that the Company is no longer delivering supplies of timetable leaflets to tourist information offices, libraries and similar outlets – it seems that the only place to be sure to find them is at staffed stations (when staffed!).

Are train operators no longer interested in marketing their product? Reports of similar penny-pinching measures from around Britain gratefully received!

A NEW STATION FOR KENILWORTH

Plans for a new railway £11 million station in Kenilworth were given a major boost in June as Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced that he was minded to fund the new station, with the department providing up to £5 million towards the project (the biggest single allocation of investment from the government's New Stations Fund).

The station will be located on the Coventry to Leamington Spa Line and will include two 100m platforms capable of being used by 4 car trains, with passive provision for these to be lengthened in the future. Network Rail is now carrying out work to integrate the plans for Kenilworth Station with the extensive improvements, including greater capacity and electrification, planned for the line between 2014 and 2019. Subject to Network Rail demonstrating that the two projects are compatible, scheme sponsor Warwickshire County Council will work with Network Rail to finalise the station plans. – *from a DfT press release*

STATION REOPENINGS PUT FORWARD BY NEW WILTSHIRE TRANSPORT BOARD

Of the ten transport schemes recommended for prioritisation by the new Swindon and Wiltshire Local Transport Board, four are rail-related: an additional platform for Westbury station, and new stations for Corsham, Royal Wootton Bassett and Wilton.

Members of the SWLTB include Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, the Highways Agency, Network Rail and the Local Enterprise Partnership; the body has been allocated £16.9m for the period 2015 to 2019. Steve Richards of the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP said "there may be more funding in the future and we want to be in a position where we have shovel-ready schemes that stack up economically that can be put forward and progressed. The Government is very clear – it needs to be projects that can be delivered, not people's wish-lists."

Around 20 years ago, Railfuture Wessex Branch mounted a leafleting campaign to draw attention to the possibilities of reopening a station at Wilton (population just under 4,000) – the project remains a campaign aim for the group. A new station at Corsham is supported by the Corsham Station Campaign group.

A TOTAL OF 41 NEW STATIONS IN TEN YEARS

Between January 2003 and May 2013, 41 railway stations have been opened or reopened across the British rail network, including nine in both Scotland and Wales, and 12 in London. The data was given in a Commons Written Answer on June 19 by Transport Minister Simon Burns. – *Rail magazine*

HELP WANTED WITH ACCOMMODATION DIRECTORY

Martin Hill, who runs the excellent [Dorset Transport website](#), asks for our help with a new project.

"I'm compiling a Web Directory of quality accommodation near railway stations in the UK. As far as I'm aware there is no such directory in existence on the internet. Accommodation will be classified as A - adjacent to a station, or B - within 15 minutes normal walking with luggage. I would be grateful for any suggestions you may have of any such b&bs and hotels. Whether it's a big city or a tiny country station they will all be shown." Please reply direct to Martin via martin.hill@gmx.com.

NEW CRP MAP

A new map of Community Rail Partnership lines around the UK has been produced for the Association of Community Rail Partnerships by Abellio. You can view the map online [here](#).

It looks very useful - maybe we should have something similar for Rail User Groups!

EVENTS

National & regional rail events are highlighted in **yellow**. Community & environmental events are in **purple**. Railfuture events are in **green** – rail user group reps are welcome to attend!

27 & 28 Jul Mid Cheshire Line's Railway Weekend at the Weaver Hall, Northwich. Model railways and more. Details [here](#).

Mon 5 Aug [Ribble Valley Rail](#) meeting at the New Inn, Clitheroe from 19:30

Mon 12 Aug [BRAG](#) meet at The Sackville, Bexhill from 19:00.

Sat 17 Aug [Railfuture Kent](#) meet at 14:00.

Wed 28 Aug [East Norfolk Transport Users Association](#) AGM and public meeting at St Paul's Church Hall, corner of Salisbury Rd/ Caister Road in Great Yarmouth from 19:30.

Mon 2 Sep [Ribble Valley Rail](#) meeting at the New Inn, Clitheroe from 19:30

Thu 5 Sep [Railfuture Sussex & Coastway](#) meeting at Hampden Park from 18:00.

Fri 6 Sep Ashchurch, Tewkesbury & District Rail Promotion Group meet at Tewkesbury Library from 19:30. Guest speaker: Mike Curran from Gloucester LEP.

Mon 9 Sep [SELRAP](#) open meeting at St Bartholomew's Church, Colne from 19:00.

Mon 9 Sep [BRAG](#) meet at The Sackville, Bexhill from 19:00.

Tue 10 Sep Aylesbury Vale TUG meet at Buckingham Town Council Chamber, Buck'm from 14:00.

Wed 11 Sep [Friends of the Barton Line](#) meet at the Sloop Inn, Barton from 20:00.

Wed 11 Sep Railfuture London & SE (Eastern division) meet at Stratford from 18:30.

Wed 11 Sep MCRUA's scenic [railtour](#) via Settle & Carlisle and Cumbrian Coast. Book now!

Mon 16 Sep [GLAM TRaC](#) AGM. Venue tba.

Sat 21 Sep [Railfuture Yorkshire](#) meet at Halifax central library.

Sun 22 Sep [Car Free Day](#). Highlight the positive effects of car free travel.

Fri 27 Sep [ACoRP](#) Community Rail Awards 2013, Llandudno.

Sat 28 Sep [ACoRP](#) Community Rail Festival, Llandudno and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Mon 30 Sep Closing date for [Railfuture's RUG Awards competition](#).

Tue 1 Oct Railway Development Society (aka Railfuture) 35th anniversary.

Thu 3 Oct [Railfuture Sussex & Coastway](#) meeting from 18:00.

Mon 7 Oct [Ribble Valley Rail](#) meeting at the New Inn, Clitheroe from 19:30

Sat 12 Oct [ESTA](#) meet at St Marks Church Hall, Oulton Broad South.

Mon 14 Oct [BRAG](#) meet at The Sackville, Bexhill from 19:00.
Sat 19 Oct Trans Wilts Rail Partnership meeting at The Laverton, Westbury.
Mon 21 Oct [ALRUG](#) AGM at Topsham (tbc) from 19:00.
Sat 2 Nov [Railfuture](#) conference, at the Town Hall, Oxford. Fee only £30.
Mon 4 Nov [Ribble Valley Rail](#) meeting at the New Inn, Clitheroe from 19:30.
Thu 7 Nov [Railfuture Sussex & Coastway](#) meeting from 18:00.
Mon 11 Nov [BRAG](#) meet at The Sackville, Bexhill from 19:00.
Wed 13 Nov [Friends of the Barton Line](#) meet at the Sloop Inn, Barton from 20:00.
Wed 13 Nov Railfuture London & SE (Eastern division) meet at Stratford from 18:30.
Sat 16 Nov Railfuture London & SE (Kent division) meeting from 14:00.
Sun 8 Dec National rail timetable change.
Mon 9 Dec [BRAG](#) meeting with Christmas meal at The Sackville, Bexhill from 19:00.
Mon 16 Dec [ALRUG](#) Christmas Social at The Globe, Lymestone (tbc) from 19:00.

More events on the Railfuture and ACoRP websites.

Please say if you no longer want to receive Rail User Express, or if someone else in your organisation wishes to be included on the circulation list.

This bulletin has been sent all the way from Dorset by

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