

## From the Chairman

I hope everyone has recovered from the Christmas and New Year holiday and you were not caught up in the debacle at Kings Cross.

Since our last Rail Lincs we have heard the news that Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) will be taking over the East Coast Main Line (ECML) franchise from 1st March 2015. We are promised extra and quicker services to London from 2019. This is a long time to wait for better services so you can be assured we will be pressing for better connections at Newark Northgate before that. I had a meeting with the East Midlands Direct Award team at DfT offices in London in November and better Lincoln to Newark Northgate services were top of our wish list. At a recent briefing from VTEC, I was told that they do want to get Lincoln another daily direct service sooner than 2019, if they can find more rolling stock.

Historically, improving connections between ECML and local services at Grantham, Newark Northgate and Retford has always been a frustrating experience. Whoever has been running the ECML franchise has always been reluctant to look at changing stopping patterns, or even retiming stops by a minute or so, no doubt because their priority is the long distance passenger who generate their biggest fare income.

East Midlands Trains (EMT) times are frequently dictated by getting paths into, and platform space at, Nottingham, Newark Northgate or Lincoln so the opportunity to retime their services to make connections with the ECML usually only occurs when there are line speed increases on the Skegness or Lincoln routes.

At least now we have ex EMT Managing Director, David Horne, running VTEC, we have someone who is aware of the need for better connections.

Station use figures for 2013-2014 have just been released <http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>. Despite the national increase in passengers, I was expecting that with the Hatfield closure, Nottingham station improvements and Joint Line upgrade we would see some reductions in our area. When we have bus replacement passengers tend to only use them if they have no alternative.

Looking at the figures, reproduced on pages 4 & 5, I must say I am confused. Cleethorpes has recovered well from the Hatfield closure but Grimsby Town and Scunthorpe have not. Why? There has been a steady fall at Skegness which is disappointing but, oddly, Wainfleet has jumped. Again, why? On the Castle Line,

*continued on page 3*

**2015 BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - SATURDAY, 14 MARCH**

**St. Hugh's Church Hall, Monks Road, Lincoln - 10:30**

**DETAILS INSIDE ON PAGE 7**

# ***Railfuture Lincolnshire Branch Committee 2014 to 2015***

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*continued from page 1*

Newark Castle has fallen substantially which is not surprising as the hourly Marshall's Service 91 was faster than the rail replacement bus and some passengers probably carried on using it after the Nottingham blockade.

The recently announced plans for the new Transport Hub with Lincoln station at the centre are exciting. Money is in place so we may actually see it happen this time, after years of having to endure the cold, draughty and wet eyesore that masquerades as Lincoln Bus station. Replacement of the station footbridge is planned. After having to negotiate the existing narrow bridge on crutches for two winters this is also something which, in my opinion, cannot come fast enough. The plans can be found on the City of Lincoln website:

<http://www.lincoln.gov.uk/home/transp-ort-hub/124602.article>

At the time of writing, tendering for the Northern and Trans Pennine franchises is still delayed. Reports in the railway press suggest this is because of uncertainty over the timing of completion of electrification schemes. In the meantime your committee are busy lobbying potential bidders.

I will finish with the usual appeal to as many members as possible to come to our AGM, plus this year a few words about the Railfuture Summer Conference in Newark on 20 June. It is a long time since a national Railfuture event was held locally, so this is your opportunity to hear from an exciting list of speakers whilst only incurring modest travel costs. If you book before 30 April you save £5.

*David Harby, Branch Chairman*

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## Action to combat Grantham Bridge strikes

Grantham's notorious Springfield Road bridge (Bridge No. 240 – 3.6m/11ft 6 ins high), sustained serious damage last August when it was hit by a skip lorry, when, allegedly, the driver was taken ill, rather than attempting to drive a high vehicle under the bridge. The road was closed throughout November and into December whilst repairs were undertaken, together with the installation of collision protection beams either side of the bridge. Further weekend road closures took place in January whilst the actual beams were positioned on to new supporting pillars, having waited until mortar drying and settlement had taken place. In January another high vehicle hit the bridge on a week-day, before the beams had been installed. In 2014 Springfield Road bridge was hit eight times, Harlaxton Road (Bridge No. 243) fifteen times and Barrowby Road (Bridge No.246) twelve

times. Temporary digital warning signs have been placed near Harlaxton Road and Barrowby Road bridges. Because of the extra traffic using these two roads whilst Springfield Road was closed, Network Rail employed staff to act as Bridge Attendants to monitor the bridges daily from 06:00 to midnight. In 2014, bridge strikes in Grantham cost Network Rail £566,000 in compensation alone to train operating companies.

Local residents have also expressed concerns about the bridge strikes and there have been suggestions that height warning devices should be positioned some distance from the bridges so that lorry drivers are given advance warning and the opportunity to take an alternative route. The closure of the Springfield Road bridge caused problems for local businesses and residents who suffered due to the temporary withdrawal of bus services. (PM)

**ANNUAL PASSENGER JOURNEYS FROM ORR DATA**

<b>Station</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>
Althorpe	9,296	8,476	6,404
Ancaster	4,042	7,408	8,878
Bametby	68,636	64,904	61,437
Barrow Haven	1,776	1,744	2,128
Barton-On-Humber	47,698	45,114	42,950
Boston	216,818	213,034	206,994
Brigg	692	794	922
Cleethorpes	264,686	239,802	277,724
Collingham	59,738	54,598	55,356
Crowle	33,864	29,264	23,616
Gainsborough Central	1,348	1,128	1,220
Gainsborough Lea Road	155,048	150,154	137,394
Goxhill	19,820	19,976	17,936
Grantham	1,132,740	1,152,280	1,198,197
Great Coates	9,038	9,370	10,652
Grimsby Docks	4,068	3,994	4,662
Grimsby Town	448,080	438,522	427,367
Habrough	33,252	32,222	30,710
Havenhouse	132	226	278
Healing	11,454	11,604	12,260
Heckington	64,682	66,618	67,388
Hubberts Bridge	692	590	334
Hykeham	34,576	34,244	40,064
Kirton Lindsey	210	186	120
Lincoln	1,656,748	1,609,794	1,585,386
Market Rasen	59,448	61,092	60,572
Metheringham	109,590	102,224	91,088
New Clee	334	290	348
New Holland	21,692	20,672	16,766
Newark Castle	336,398	237,509	240,454
Newark Northgate	1,096,214	1,179,491	1,194,101
Rauceby	1,828	2,350	1,898
Retford	409,408	418,014	431,438
Ruskington	91,832	85,204	76,012
Saxilby	59,030	55,916	48,145
Scunthorpe	395,680	381,094	376,870
Skegness	357,008	335,276	322,796

Sleaford	336,956	311,490	301,349
Spalding	173,090	166,112	171,960
Stallingborough	11,104	11,358	12,434
Stamford	290,290	314,226	324,813
Swinderby	16,814	20,482	21,134
Swineshead	2,260	3,192	3,294
Thornton Abbey	1,350	954	1,298
Thorpe Culvert	340	352	340
Ucelby	7,950	9,410	9,114
Wainfleet	41,580	42,548	56,554

Notes:

Many services into Nottingham station replaced by buses for 6 weeks during 2013.

Line closed between Scunthorpe and Doncaster for 3 months from January 2013 due to Hatfield tip slippage.

Joint Line upgrade during 2012 to 2014. Regular weekend closures and periods of weekday closures for up to 4 weeks.

Tickets from Newark Castle and Northgate are often sold as from Newark stations. Footfall split between stations is suspect.

## Sleaford Uncertainty

Following Tesco's decision not to build a new store in Sleaford and remain at their current site, the question of what happens now is foremost in people's minds. Tesco's involvement with North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) meant a new road over the railway (hotly disputed by many) and Network Rail's intention to close the level crossing at West Box, for safety reasons (again a 'hot potato' for many. Will the closure of the crossing now take place? Indeed, can it happen, as Tesco were to fund the new road bridge (not Network Rail)? Will there be a footbridge with ramps to the final design released the week before Tesco's 'bombshell'? So after years of wrangling, meetings, bitterness between NKDC and Sleaford Town Council plus lots of money spent, the whole project is in a mess. NKDC had no Plan B. So what now? (PBJ)

## NKDC Transport Committee

At their December meeting, the idea of stopping the final train from Grantham to Boston at Rauceby, to allow for commuters from Kings Cross to leave London later than the current 17:30 departure, will be looked at. A means of gaining evidence from people who live in Greylees next to the station and commute to London will be decided on so a case can be made to East Midlands Trains. (PBJ)

## Steam on the Joint Line

The two steam hauled charter trains down the Joint Line to Lincoln on Saturday, 6 December and Tuesday, 30 December saw both Class A4s (Union of South Africa' and 'Bittern') traverse Sleaford avoiding line. Both passed Ruskington early and now the line speed is raised, they appeared to be travelling faster than in previous years.

A Fire Engine from Sleaford was in attendance, in case a water stop was required by 'Bittern'. (PBJ)

## Notes on the Joint Line

- The Joint Line became fully operational again after the introduction of the Winter Timetable, with only tidying up jobs remaining to be done.

- At Ruskington, additional signs and information boards are still awaited, plus a second Customer Information Screen on Platform 1.

- Line speed is now 75mph, but East Midlands Trains timings remain as per the pre-upgrade.

- Initially, during the week there are seven freight paths per day over both directions, but all may not be used every day. Some night-time workings are booked. Some freight trains observed are very long as operators take advantage of the extra power available from the later versions of Class 66 locomotives. Earlier in the year a Class 70 locomotive was observed on driver route learning workings between Peterborough and Lincoln.

- A number of very minor level crossings remain as User Operated Crossings, not changed to Automatic Half Barrier. One at Leasingham Moor 1½ miles South of Ruskington has full user operated gates for the road and special wide pedestrian gates at the side, as there is a bridleway. Additional safety features are provided including large red and green lights denoting whether or not it is safe to use.

- The changes at Ruskington are up and running with the foot crossing to access

Platform 1 closed. Complaints from some residents about noisy trains and from users about the inconvenience of using the ramp to access Platform 1 have settled down, although there has been some trespass across the tracks where the foot crossing was sited.

- Until the new December timetable, the first Sleaford to Lincoln/Leicester departure was formed by a unit which had worked as empty stock from Boston. As a consequence of the new flexibility on the Joint Line, this unit is no longer stabled overnight at Boston, but comes 'in service' from Lincoln at 06:17 to Sleaford, the route now being a 24 hour railway signalled from Lincoln.

- The foot crossing at Spalding station has been closed. This affects disabled people and wheelchair users gaining access to northbound trains using Platform 2. The track layout at Spalding is such that trains can cross from the Down line to the Up line and stop at platform 1. Northbound trains are able to re-join the Down line north of the station. Six of the eight northbound trains now use Platform 1. However, this is not possible around 09:00 and at lunchtime when East Midlands Trains (EMT) services are timed to 'cross' at Spalding, so Platform 2 is used. A solution will no doubt have to be found, as freight traffic on the line builds up and could conflict with northbound EMT services crossing to Platform 1. Perhaps the installation of lifts will have to be considered. (PBJ)

## Supporting Charters

Whilst it appears that Skegness is not currently a popular draw as a destination for charter train operators, apart from being part of a 'runabout' route for enthusiasts' specials, the opposite is not the case from the East Lincolnshire area. Skegness locals, Wainfleet, Boston and Sleaford residents provide massive support for West Coast Railway's charters from the area to various UK destinations.

Following on from trains on 14 February to the Settle and Carlisle line, and 9 May to Stratford on Avon (steam hauled outward and diesel return), details have been released of two more charters originating at Skegness on 16 September to Whitby and 5 December to Manchester for the European Christmas Market. (PBJ)

## BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dear Member,

The Annual General Meeting of the branch will take place on Saturday, 14 March 2015 at the St. Hugh's Church Hall, Monks Road, Lincoln

The timetable this year is as follows:

10:30 Assemble – Complimentary coffee or tea available

11:00 AGM (Agenda below)

12:00 Lunch break (see back page for buffet information)

13:00 Afternoon session open to the public

1) A speaker for the afternoon session was arranged last November, but unfortunately had to withdraw at short-notice. At the time of 'going to press' we are endeavouring to find a replacement speaker.

2) A Review of Franchise Renewals – what the Branch has been doing.

*Complimentary tea or coffee during afternoon break*

16:00 Meeting closes

### AGM AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2014 meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report by David Harby
5. Hon. Secretary's Report by Dr Don Peacock
6. Financial Report by Colin Lingard
7. Election of Officers:
  - a) Chairman
  - b) Vice Chairman
  - c) Hon Secretary
  - d) Hon Treasurer
  - e) other committee members
8. Any other urgent business (notice of items appreciated by Hon Secretary before meeting commences or telephone 01652 688549)

Yours sincerely,

Don Peacock, Hon Secretary

*Nominations for Branch Officers consisting of a written declaration of willingness to stand for election, supported by a signed letter of support from another paid-up branch member, should be sent to the Hon Secretary, in accordance with the Branch Constitution accompanied by a 100 word manifesto to arrive by 28 February. All current Committee members have indicated their willingness to continue. If any other member wishes to serve on the Committee, please contact the Hon Secretary before commencement of the AGM.*

*Dr Don Peacock, Hon Secretary*

## *Chairman's Report to be presented at the 2015 AGM*

Looking back over 2014, this report is probably the most positive Chairman's report from the 20+ years I have been involved with Railfuture. Some issues are still unsatisfactory, not least the amount of overcrowding local passengers have to endure, but we have had two major successes this year and a major infrastructure project is almost completed.

To start with the successes. The announcement that received the most publicity was when we heard on 27 November that the new East Coast operators, running under the Virgin Trains East Coast brand, plan to introduce extra services to Lincoln in 2019. We must all hope that, unlike the last time extra services were promised/ these actually materialise. In the meantime, we continue to campaign for an earlier introduction of better connections between Lincoln and Newark Northgate.

Another most welcome success announced in the autumn, was the much improved Lincoln to Nottingham timetable. From May 2015 journey times will be reduced, Hykeham will have 11 extra stops every day and Lincoln will get an extra morning peak train to Nottingham. The London services have received the most publicity, but personally I think this will bring the most benefits to Lincoln rail users. It may come as a surprise to our local media and politicians but not everything revolves around London and not everyone wants to go to London. Many more travel to Nottingham and beyond.

Throughout the year we have seen the Joint Line upgrade continue. Work is now nearing completion ready for the additional freight trains.

Not everything is positive however. Passengers are still enduring severe overcrowding, not just at peak times. This is just one of the issues I raised with DfT when I met them to set out our wish list for the East Midlands Direct Award. Also raised was Lincoln to Newark Northgate, as already mentioned, and working towards an hourly service between Lincoln and Grimsby.

For the Joint Line we pointed out that now the resignalling is completed there is no operating reason why we should not have some evening services between Lincoln and Peterborough. We also wish to see shorter journey times now the line speeds have been increased.

For Skegness we pointed out that the holiday market is now all year round so there should be Sunday morning departures all year round and not just for a handful of summer Sundays as now.

Whilst on the subject of franchise renewals, the Trans Pennine Express and Northern processes have started. The branch have a wish list and are starting to meet the bidders.

Moving on to domestic matters, the branch committee met five times during the year. We have also continued our liaison with East Midlands branch and had a very successful stand at the Grantham Rail Show.

Your Chairman has been interviewed by BBC Radio Lincolnshire and Nottingham, Lincs FM and quoted in the Lincolnshire Echo.

I must mention the Friends of the Brigg and Lincoln Lines and the Gainsborough Rail and Bus Group who have worked tirelessly for improvements to their local stations and services. Their efforts were rewarded by being commended in the 2014 Railfuture Rail User Group Awards.

Our other User Groups, Friends of Barton Line (FoBL) and Market Rasen Rail User Group (MR RUG) have also been busy during the year. Lack of space prevents me going into detail but it is interesting to note that their concerns during 2014 have been very similar – lack of provision of additional rolling stock for special events (eg Cleethorpes Air Show and Market Rasen races) and unreliability.

I will finish with a word of thanks to all the branch committee. There would be a great deal less Railfuture activity in Lincolnshire were it not for the large amount of voluntary time that



committee members devote to Railfuture. The continued success of Railfuture depends on us this voluntary input continuing. Age catches up with all of us and we do have to slow down and be replaced by new members with the enthusiasm of the next generation. I therefore urge you all to go out and recruit a new member.

*David Harby, Branch Chairman*

## *Hon Secretary's Report to be presented at the 2015 AGM*

From the Chairman's Report you can see that once again the committee has had a busy and varied year.

This may be a good point to ask if there are members out there who could support the committee with some of their spare time.

There have been no notifications from members wishing to stand for the executive posts and the present Chairman, Vice Chairman, Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary have indicated that they are all willing to continue in post so there will not be an election. The present committee are also willing to continue.

The Branch contributed to the consultation on the Northern and Trans Pennine franchises submitted on Railfuture's behalf by the Yorkshire Branch. We also provided a local response from "SHRU" (South Humberside Rail Users) along with some individual responses. We are now holding meetings with the prospective franchisees' representatives to discuss what improvements we should like to see in the new franchise.

Finally I would like to repeat the Chairman's thanks to the committee for all its hard work. The Lincolnshire Branch 30th Anniversary proved difficult to arrange as it did not prove possible to find sufficient members of the original group to have a meaningful celebration.

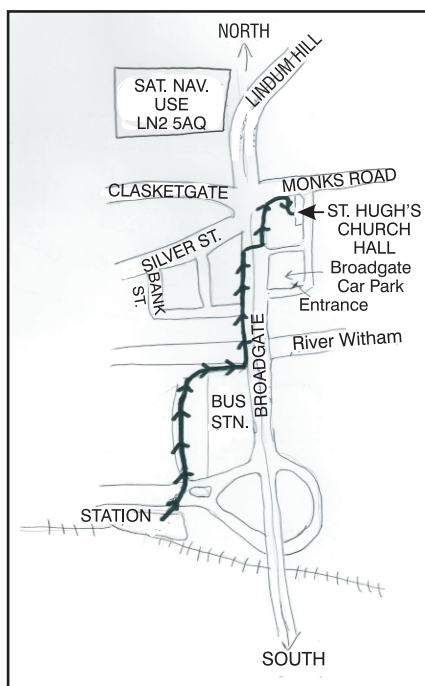
*Dr Don Peacock Hon Secretary*

## *Getting to the AGM venue*

St Hugh's Church Hall is on Monks Road about 25 yards from the junction with Broadgate. About 5 minutes walk from Lincoln station. From the station cross over towards the bus station and walk along Sincil Street until you reach the river. Turn right and walk to Broadgate. Turn left and walk uphill until you reach the pedestrian lights by the Duke of Wellington. Cross over and carry on walking uphill to Monks Road. The Church Hall is about 25 yards along on your left.

Sat Nav users please note that the post code refers to the St. Hugh's Vicarage which is situated on Broad Gate, whereas the church hall is on Monks Road. Be aware that there is NO RIGHT TURN from Broad Gate into Monks Road.

Motorists should also be aware of major roadworks in the Canwick Hill area affecting traffic passing through the City.



**RAILFUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

	<b>2014</b>		<b>2013</b>	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>				
Branch Funding	500.00		200.00	
Donations	96.20		123.19	
Branch Sales	26.50		7.50	
Membership	14.00		63.00	
Bank Interest Received	0.12		0.12	
		<u>636.82</u>		<u>393.81</u>
<b>Less Expenditure :-</b>				
Rail Lincs	278.50		152.00	
AGM Expenses 2013	0.00		114.13	
AGM Expenses 2014	-6.20		86.00	
Mayors Charity Fund	0.00		50.00	
Branch Purchases	15.45		4.75	
Campaigning and Lobbying	221.76		117.62	
		<u>509.51</u>		<u>524.50</u>
<b>NET INCOME/ (EXPENDITURE)</b>		<u><u>127.31</u></u>		<u><u>-130.69</u></u>

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014**

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash at Bank and in Hand	739.94	612.63
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>739.94</u>	<u>612.63</u>
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>		
Balance at 1 January 2014	612.63	743.32
Excess of Income over Expenditure	127.31	-130.69
	<u>739.94</u>	<u>612.63</u>

## Lincoln Christmas Market

On Lincoln's Christmas Market Saturday, East Midlands Trains (EMT) provided two extra trains from Sleaford to Lincoln and return, timed to be suitable for passengers going to the festivities. The morning train from Sleaford started at Peterborough and called at Spalding. It then returned as 'empty stock' (ECS) from Lincoln to Sleaford to provide an extra lunchtime service into Lincoln. There was then an additional mid afternoon service from Lincoln to Sleaford which returned ECS to Lincoln to provide an early evening additional service to Peterborough. It is not clear whether or not these additional services were provided by stabling overnight on the Friday/Saturday at Lincoln or worked ECS to Peterborough from Nottingham via Oakham.

The new flexibility of Joint Line signalling was apparent on Christmas Market Sunday when EMT ran an early morning service from Peterborough to Lincoln and a service from Peterborough to Lincoln with a couple of suitable return services from Lincoln to Peterborough later on Sunday.

All the Saturday and Sunday additional services were well used and advertised by station posters, as well as on-line, but not in the press. The additional services called at all intermediate stations. Interestingly, the Sunday morning service which called at Sleaford at 10:00 would have necessitated opening Sleaford East and West signal boxes for this one train, as the Winter shift starts about Noon on Sundays. Over the weekend, most services through to Lincoln consisted of 3-cars and on Sunday 4-car units were observed at Ruskington (PBJ)

## Station Adopters

A new idea: Adopters and other stakeholders have received a newsletter updating East Midlands Trains progress and events; also thanking Adopters for their efforts. It is intended the newsletter will come from EMT's Sarah Turner at regular intervals and is a welcome idea to improve communication. (PBJ)

## Friends of the Barton Line

The Friends of the Barton Line have been surprised and delighted to see that lighting has been installed at New Clee station, an issue the group has been campaigning for since its inception.

- The Chairman and Secretary have been busy promoting the Line to bidders for the new franchise; meetings have been held with Stagecoach and First Group. Stagecoach have no intention of reducing staff levels, but conductor priorities would be shifted from collection of fares to customer service: ensuring punctual running and assisting with enquiries and the disabled. This is not wholly applicable to the Barton Line because fares cannot be sold at most stations.

- Platform extensions are to be constructed at Ulceby and New Holland to enable two-car units to be used whenever required without having to apply for special authority.

- The Line continues to suffer from unreliability. On Wednesday, 7 January the 07:58 ex-Barton train broke down with engine failure at Great Coates station, blocking the Down line for an hour and a half until it was towed into Cleethorpes by a unit brought from Sheffield. The Barton Line service resumed with the 12:55 departure from Cleethorpes. (AASB)

## Level Crossing Closures

Network Rail is conducting a feasibility study to explore options for the closure of level crossings at various locations along the East Coast Main Line. The following crossings between Peterborough and Grantham are being considered for closure: Woodcroft, Helpston, Maxey, Helpston Footpath, Lolham, Tallington, Casewick and Greatford. In some cases, such as at Tallington, the crossing will be replaced with a bridge. The closures will affect road traffic routes around these locations and will impact on businesses. During January, public exhibitions relating to the closures were held at Helpston, Bainton and Tallington.

In many cases, opposition to level crossing closures, particularly to user operated crossings, comes from those opposing the withdrawal of a local amenity, rather than from actual users. Local users tend to use the most convenient and quickest routes.

## Refreshments at the AGM

At the AGM on 14 March, there will be complimentary tea and coffee available on arrival and during the afternoon session.

A buffet at £4.00 per person, will be available during the lunch break (12:00 – 13:00) and tickets will be on sale during the morning session. If you require a buffet, please ensure you are at the venue by 12:00.

To assist with catering arrangements, please email or telephone Phil Mason (phil.mason@trackprint.net or 01476 407569) to reserve your buffet.

**Members will be sad to hear that our Emeritus Chairman, Brian Hastings died on 17 February around 01:00 in Greenacres Care Home, Crowle. The funeral will take place on Thursday, 5 March at Scunthorpe Crematorium (Woodlands, off Brumby Wood Lane) at 11:20, followed by a Thanksgiving Service at St Oswald's Church, Crowle at 12:30, and then Crowle Community Hall at 13:30 for refreshments. Everyone welcome to attend whichever parts they wish.**

*A full obituary will be published in Rail Lincs 72.*



**Follow the Branch on Twitter @RailfutureLincs**

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Rail Lincs 72 will be published in June. Please let the Editor have copy by 9 May.

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*Refer to page 2 for contact details of branch officers mentioned in Rail Lincs.*