

“Carriages” at Newark Castle is finally open for business, utilising part of the original station building. As illustrated below, it is a cut above the “Pumpkins” we usually have on stations. Local baked bread and meat from a local butcher are features of this splendid enterprise..



From your Chairman

Another issue of *Rail Lincs* and yet again I find myself writing about franchises.

After months of delay, the Department for Transport (DfT) have finally fired the starting gun and consulted stakeholders on our wishes for the next East Midlands franchise. As you might expect we have had plenty to tell the DfT as we explain in this issue.

What concerns me most is the potential for even more delays and Lincolnshire suffering from grossly overcrowded trains, for another three years or more, before anything is done about it. At the DfT consultation meeting in Lincoln, speaker after speaker complained about overcrowding and asked when DfT are going to do something about it. The man from the Ministry however had been well trained in saying plenty but disclosing nothing, so we finished the meeting no wiser than

when it started. You can rest assured that now spare diesel rolling stock is soon going to be available, we will continue to press DfT on this.

As we mention later in this newsletter, there are also now some niggling doubts about the Virgin East Coast (VTEC) franchise which is predicted to lose £84m by 2019. There are some media reports that VTEC might be looking to turn the franchise into a management contract, which does raise doubts, as the last time DfT had any control of the East Coast Main Line (ECML) services, our Lincoln – London trains were cancelled.

On the subject of the DfT, along with the announcement of the start of the East Midlands franchise consultation, came the news that the Midland Main Line electrification north of Kettering has been cancelled and that instead a fleet of bi-modes to replace both the HSTs and

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Meridians. Cancellation of the electrification is a disappointment but not a complete surprise. The Great Western electrification scheme has been plagued with delays and an horrendous cost explosion, so I half expected that the industry would not be in a position to physically do the MML electrification in the timescale proposed even if it was still affordable. That is exactly what has happened. DfT couldn't wait any longer to make a decision on replacing the HST fleet as they won't be disabled compliant from 2020 and it had become clear there was no way the rail industry could electrify the whole MML route before the mid 2020s. There is a very good article on the Railfuture website explaining much more about this at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1758-Why-wiring-went-wrong>

The decision to specify bi-modes is ironic given that around 7 years ago DfT turned down a proposal to buy an extra carriage with a pantograph and transformer so as to turn Meridians and Voyagers into bi-modes.

On a more positive note, the Lincoln transport interchange is expected to be finished soon after Christmas. The area in front of the station entrance is completed already so passengers leaving the station have a much safer walking route into the City Centre. We also finally have a new platform at Hykeham although at the time of writing there are still no waiting shelters.

A date for your diary is the branch AGM on 10th March 2018. We plan to follow the same agenda as in recent years with an AGM in the morning followed by lunch and speakers in the afternoon. I was disappointed to see very few members at the last AGM except for the branch committee. The current format for the AGM is expensive in room hire and it is difficult to justify spending member's subscriptions on something they are not supporting, so if attendance is no better next March, the branch committee will have to consider a more simple format without speakers.

*David Harby
Branch Chairman*



*A new look to
Lincoln station
entrance.*

East Midlands Rail Franchise Public Consultation

On 20 July, the Department for Transport (DfT) finally started the consultation for the next East Midlands franchise. They held a well attended event in Lincoln on 30 August, where the audience voiced a lot of concerns about overcrowding and especially that DfT have no plans to do anything about this overcrowding before the current franchise ends in August 2019 at the earliest.

David Harby has compiled the Railfuture national response on behalf of all branches with an interest and he reports here on the contents:

Railfuture submitted a detailed national response to the consultation extending to 19 pages. This was based on a template produced by East Midlands Councils after extensive previous consultation with stakeholders which has been mentioned in earlier *Rail Lincs*.

For our local services we are asking for:

- At least one train per hour on all routes.
- Extra services, such as Spalding – Peterborough, Lincoln – Sleaford and Nottingham – Grantham, at the peaks.
- A minimum service pattern with services departing before 06:00 and run until at least 22:00, longer if the market demands.
- A full day service on all routes on Sundays reflecting modern leisure, retail and short break markets.
- Proactive planning for events with service strengthening and additional services for events such as Lincoln Christmas Market, Grimsby Armed Forces Day, Market Rasen races.
- All trains to have adequate capacity, free WiFi, toilets.
- Clock face timetabling and standard platforming.

The full day Sunday service all year round is especially important to Grantham – Skegness and Lincoln – Grimsby who have different service levels

between Summer and the rest of the year. To support our demand, we have given the example of the Bittern Line (Norwich – Sheringham) where a proper Sunday service has been very successful.

In the consultation document, DfT ask for our views on transferring the Birmingham – Nottingham and Birmingham – Stansted services to the East Midlands franchise. We are supporting this as it would then put all our local and inter-urban services under the same Train Operating Company (TOC). We are asking for the return of a Lincoln – Birmingham service and this would be much more likely if all the route was under the control of the same operator.

Not such good news is that DfT have yet again raised their proposal to split the Liverpool – Norwich service and transfer the Liverpool end to the TransPennine Express (TPE) franchise. We had hoped that DfT had given up this idea after they decided not to do it when the TPE franchise was awarded, but DfT seem determined to do it if they can. We have stated our clear opposition to this proposal. If passengers wanted a quicker journey they could now change at Peterborough into a Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) service to Leeds and catch a TPE train to Manchester. The fact that the Liverpool – Norwich service is very busy all along the route is clear evidence that leisure passengers in particular value the ability to travel along the route without having to change trains.

If we do have to accept a service split, we have asked for each end to overlap. Sheffield – Norwich and Peterborough or Nottingham to Liverpool. DfT also ask for our opinion about changing the destinations of the inter-urban services such as Nottingham – Stansted and Birmingham – Norwich. We have

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supported this, subject to rigorous market study, before any change takes place and good connectivity between the two at Peterborough or Ely.

There are a lot of questions about Midland Main Line (MML) services which don't directly concern our branch, except our one daily return service per day to St. Pancras. With the major changes coming to Thameslink services, the timings of many MML services may well change by December 2018 anyway. In short, Thameslink services will get priority and EMT have to make their services fit in among them.

The next stage now is for DfT to look at the responses and issue an Invitation to Tender. This is scheduled for April 2018, but as nothing yet on this refranchising has run to time, we may well find yet another delay. At a recent EMT Station Adopters conference we heard that EMT are actually discussing with DfT a franchise extension to August 2019 but with an option to August 2020, so maybe DfT are just as confident in their ability to keep to time as I am! (DH)

Awards for Poacher Line

The Poacher Line and Ancaster Station were prize winners at the Association of Community Rail Partnership's (ACoRP) Community Rail Awards. Ancaster Station received the bronze award in the most improved station category, and was presented with £250 to reinvest into the station. This was in recognition of the work done to improve the station by Sustrans and Ancaster Primary School.

The Poacher Line was presented with a runner-up prize for best marketing and communications campaign for its partnership with Visit Lincoln to promote travel throughout Lincolnshire. The project included taking five iconic knights from Lincoln's Knight's Trail to Kings Cross Station to promote highlights of the county. (source: *Grantham Journal*)

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Yet another ECML operator has problems

Yet another East Coast Main Line (ECML) operator is failing to meet their revenue projections

First GNER get into financial difficulties and give up their ECML franchise, then their successor National Express do the same, so the reports in the press that Virgin East Coast (VTEC) are not meeting their revenue growth commitments to the DfT and are predicting a £84m loss by 2019, don't come as a surprise to us. However they are worrying.

In their case, VTEC have a lot to contend with that is out of their control. When they bid for the franchise there was a so-called ring-fenced £240m East Coast infrastructure fund. This has now been cut to £197m and it is probably no coincidence that the fourth track reinstatement between Connington and Huntingdon and the platform at Stevenage for Hertford loop services are not going ahead anytime soon.

The extra track in particular was needed for increased capacity, so VTEC will almost certainly not now be able to introduce the AZUMA timetable they have promised for 2019. Especially as the extra power supply north of York is also running late. All bad news for the VTEC balance sheet.

A report to the Lincs County Council Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee on 18 September says VTEC have confirmed that the 7 trains London-Lincoln and 6 trains Lincoln-London on weekdays and 5 each way at weekends, due to commence in May 2019, are still on track.

We have a VTEC stakeholder meeting in November, which could be more interesting than they usually are! (DH)

Opportunity for members to become involved in membership drive

The branch committee is planning a membership drive both to increase the numbers of members, but also to widen the membership base to include more women and younger people.

Our plan is to hold stalls at model railway exhibitions and agricultural shows, probably in places like Crowle, Epworth and Winterton in North Lincolnshire or in other venues further south such as Boston, Caistor, Stamford, Sleaford or Spalding. We hope to produce some good display and promotional material.

If you would like to help to develop the branch membership while having a good

day out at one of the model railway exhibitions or an agricultural show in your area or beyond, contact Ann Hindley on 01724 710819

or ann@hindley.gn.apc.org. This is a good opportunity to become involved in the work of your local branch, while also have a day out somewhere interesting.

Urgent request – we can have a stall at the Scunthorpe model railway exhibition over the week-end of the 18/19th November. Although this is local to me, I am not available that week-end. Would any member feel able to give some time to staffing a stall? (AH)

A new station near Grantham?

Around the time that the Allington Chord was opened, I attended a meeting at the South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) offices in Grantham to discuss the possibility of opening a station where the Grantham to Boston line runs alongside Gonerby Moor and the Downtown retail outlet. At that time any proposal for a station there would clearly have not met the required criteria and I heard nothing more.

The idea of a station could now be back on the agenda. Some of you may have heard that Oldrids & Downtown have revealed plans to develop their Grantham

site into the 'Downtown Grantham Designer Outlet' with 107 stores. Reports say that this is an investment worth £125 million to the Lincolnshire economy with 1700 new jobs in addition to the existing 700 on the site. The report also says that Oldrids are hopeful for a railway station on the site at a future date.

As members will be well aware, there is a lot of work involved in getting a new station built, but with a large development alongside, easy access to the A1 and potential funding from developers, the idea is at least worth investigating. (DH)

BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The next Branch committee meeting is on 18 November 2017 at Swithin's Community Centre, Baggholm Road, Lincoln LN2 5AX, commencing at 10:45.

All Branch members are welcome to attend and participate in committee meetings. The only restriction being that voting on appropriate issues is limited to elected members of the committee.

Lincolnshire Charters

Compiled by Geoffrey Meanwell

Saturday, 4 November

St. Albans City, Bedford, Leicester, Nottingham, **Newark Castle to Immingham**
Hauled by Class 66. Promoter: UK Railtours.

Thursday, 23 November

Ealing Broadway, West Hampstead, Hitchin. Huntingdon, **Peterborough to York**
Steam hauled by 46233 & 60009. Promoter: Railway Touring Company

Saturday, 2 December

Norwich, Diss, Ipswich, Stowmarket, Bury St. Edmunds, Ely, March, **Peterborough to Newcastle**. Hauled by Class 47/57. Promoter NENTA

Saturday, 2 December

Kings Cross, Potters Bar, Stevenage, **Peterborough to Durham**
Hauled by Class 57/68. Northern Belle

Sunday, 3 December

Kings Cross, Potters Bar, Welwyn Garden City, Stevenage, Stamford, Lincoln
Circular non-stop return via Joint Line. Hauled by Class 57/68. Promoter: Northern Belle

Thursday, 7 December

Norwich, Wymondham, Attleborough, Thetford, Brandon, March, **Peterborough to York**
Steam haulage by 60009.
York to **Peterborough** Steam haulage by 46233. Promoter: Railway Touring Company

Friday, 8 December

London Victoria to **Lincoln**. Hauled by Class 67. Promoter: Belmond

Friday, 8 December

Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Drem, Berwick upon Tweed, Alnmouth, Morpeth, Newcastle,
Durham to **Lincoln**
Hauled by Class 47/57. Promoter: Scottish Railway Preservation Society

Saturday, 9 December

Kings Cross, Potters Bar, Stevenage, **Peterborough to Lincoln**
Steam haulage by 46233. Promoter: Railway Touring Company

Saturday, 9 December

Lincoln, Sleaford, Spalding, Peterborough, Huntingdon, St. Neots to **Canterbury West**
Hauled by Class 47/57. Promoter: West Coast Railway Company

Saturday, 9 December

Finsbury Park, Potters Bar, Stevenage, **Peterborough to York**
Hauled by Class 59. Promoter: UK Railtours

Saturday, 16 December

Stevenage, St. Neots, Huntingdon, **Peterborough, Grantham, Newark North Gate, Retford**, Doncaster to **Edinburgh**
Hauled by Class 47/57. Promoter: West Coast Railway Company

Wednesday, 20 December

Cambridge, Ely, March, **Peterborough to York**. Steam hauled by 60009
York to **Peterborough**. Steam hauled by 46233. Promoter: Railway Touring Company

Saturday, 24 February 2018

Cambridge, Ely, March, **Peterborough, Newark North Gate**, Doncaster to **Carlisle**
Steam haulage by 60163 Tornado for part of journey only. Promoter: UK Railtours

Transport for the North

I recently attended an event organised by Transport for the North which has been set up by a Northern Partnership Board representing civic and business leaders from all eleven Local Enterprise Partnerships across the North, working with both road and rail bodies. Their remit is to focus on movement between cities and key economic centres to support a more productive and integrated Northern economy.

The event consisted of a display of their Strategic Transport Plan staffed by people whose job it was to explain the plan and answer questions. (I should add that this took place before the announcement to cancel rail electrification in the north!.) I came away with a pack of printed material and a USB stick containing the display. The plan was multi modal and aimed at complementing Strategic Economic Plans, Single Transport Plans and Local Transport Plans. The aim is for 'strategic transport improvements that can support transformational economic growth' and assumes sustained investment.

A complicated computer generated

diagram is superimposed on a map of the north of England, indicating 'strategic development corridors'. One of these corridors covered the Southern Pennines and one of the pink arrows appeared to sweep along the south of the Humber. The writing, however, referred to better access to Doncaster airport and 'strengthening this key multi modal logistics corridor especially to the ports in Liverpool and the Humber'. This was the only reference I could see to the important economic region in northern Lincolnshire. I did raise the issue of links to Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and the staff member I spoke to acknowledged the importance of 'the visitor economy' but I could see little reference to it in the documents.

Northern Lincolnshire, once again, seems to be in a no-one's land between Yorkshire and Greater Lincolnshire, barely recognised. With the development of the Northern Transport summit, we need to make sure that not only is the north not marginalised but neither is northern Lincolnshire marginalised within the north. *(Ann Hindley)*

No trains at Grantham on weekends in October and November

Due to extensive engineering work on the East Coast Main Line in the Grantham area, trains will not call at Grantham on Saturday 28 October until 12:00 on Sunday 29 October. The work will continue on weekends during November, with a revised timetable affecting services on the first weekend in December.

East Midlands Trains Skegness – Nottingham services will use the direct line from Ancaster to Bottesford with replacement buses running between Bottesford and Grantham. Norwich – Liverpool services will be diverted via Loughborough.

All East Coast Main Line services will be diverted via the Joint Line between Peterborough and Doncaster with replacement buses running between Newark North Gate and Peterborough, calling at Grantham.

This will give the enthusiasts plenty of opportunities to see Virgin East Coast, Hull Trains and Grand Central services passing unusual locations. Most VTEC services are likely to be worked by HSTs, perhaps with the occasional IC225 electrics being diesel hauled. For more information go to www.realtimetrails.co.uk

East Midlands Franchise and the Barton Line

Responses by Friends of the Barton Line to the Department for Transport's (DfT's) questionnaire concerning the East Midlands franchise public consultation. In the main, the issues are particularly relevant to the Barton Line. (The numbers in the brackets refer to the question numbers in the questionnaire)

[1] The creation of a reporting procedure for concerns and requests and the opportunity for discussion at meetings with staff. (I don't think that Railfuture's response answers the question).

[2] Community: Through regular meetings, the provision of rent-free accommodation for these meetings and funding for projects undertaken on behalf of the operator, and the setting-up of a station adoption scheme. Rail User Groups also have an important role to play from their different perspective and should be treated with the same level of attention and respect as Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs).

Heritage: By the provision of through fares and the promotion of the heritage railway in the franchise operator's publicity.

[3] The environment is everyone's responsibility. While we appreciate the environmental reasons behind replacing old rolling stock with new we do not consider it environmentally friendly to retire and scrap stock which still has much useful life left in it.

Provide rail cards for every type of group. Communities should feel that their station belongs to them. Where feasible, make the railway station the hub of the community through the provision of local information and services.

[8] Electronic displays in the carriage would be helpful in confirming route and station calls.

Improve the seat spacing on Class 153 units, it is too cramped; one pair on each

side should be removed and the remainder adjusted accordingly.

[9] Peak/off peak: It would be more convenient for commuters if the 16:55 departure from Cleethorpes to Barton be timed to leave say twenty minutes later. Likewise it would attract more custom if Saturday calls at New Clew be made attractive for fans travelling to and from Grimsby Town's football ground. It may, of course, become necessary to re-cast the whole timetable to accommodate these changes. Early mornings: It would be more convenient for day trippers if the Sunday timetable were brought forward by an hour, that is to depart Barton at around 10:00am rather than 11:00am and to depart Cleethorpes at around 17:00 rather than 18:00. This change would not require an additional shift of the line's signallers.

The duration of the Sunday service is too restricted for the very popular destinations of Grimsby for shopping and Cleethorpes for the sea. The service currently runs from May to September which excludes the Easter holidays and the October half term. We feel that it would be worth re-introducing an all-year service, at least as a pilot. Services should be strengthened on the Barton Line for special event days such as Armed Forces Weekend at Cleethorpes, Bike Night and Beer Festival at Barton. The stopping patterns of trains at Habrough is such that connections between services is far from satisfactory. This could be much improved by having the services from Barton follow rather than precede the TransPennine (TPE) trains and having all TPE trains call at the station rather than just alternate services. It should be borne in mind that Habrough is not only an interchange station but also the railhead for Immingham and Killingholme.

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[10] The re-introduction of a direct service between Barton and Lincoln or Barton–Sheffield via Brigg on Saturdays but, unless an additional track crossover be installed, these would have to omit Ulceby.

[14] It would help to provide a base for a taxi service at Barnetby (and perhaps Habrough) stations (or a connecting Villager bus service) to link with Humberside airport.

[18] It might be worth bringing both the Brigg Line service and the stopping service between Scunthorpe and Lincoln via Sheffield into the East Midlands franchise so as to create a unified local network. Suggestions made in other quarters for rerouting the Brigg Line service to Nottingham (via the Robin Hood Line) instead of Sheffield is of particular interest.

[19] Within Lincoln city, road users have alternative routes available to them and in rural locations waiting times at crossings are not excessive.

[20] The Class 153 units currently in use on the Barton line suit the service well but are prone to faults which put them out of service quite frequently. We would like to see them serviced better or replaced by more reliable stock. Also, Hull is a popular and important destination for travellers in northern Lincolnshire and the link between train and bus at Barton interchange is the only convenient route for most of the communities along the line. Some of the connections are not convenient or are even lacking and one has the impression that the train and bus operators do not communicate with each other. We would like to see bus-train co-operation written into the franchise agreement, especially as the Humberlink bus service was specifically conceived back in 1981 as a connecting service for the trains. Furthermore, the journey would be made more seamless by the re-

introduction of through ticketing between trains and buses to/from Hull at Barton interchange. Through ticketing to/from Louth at Grimsby would also be desirable.

[21] Facilities: Barton station is located on National Cycle Route No. 1 and therefore it would be highly desirable to have secure cycle lockers installed there. Also, while Grimsby Town enjoys first rate cycle facilities, Cleethorpes station could benefit from some lockers. There should be seats within station shelters.

[22] Community: Free or reduced-rate meeting rooms for CRP and RUG use. The provision of retail units which can supply train information and tickets.

[23] On frequent stopping services such as on the Barton Line many fares remain unpaid at busy times and during special events. Additional revenue collection staff should be provided to assist the conductor on these occasions. The installation of ticket machines at unmanned stations should also be considered.

[24] A rover fare, arranged in cooperation with TPE and Northern, for the network bounded by Cleethorpes, Barton, Doncaster, Retford and Newark would attract leisure custom. Failing that, then at least have Barton Line stations included in the area covered by the Lincolnshire Day Ranger ticket. Also, special fares from Barton Line stations to destinations further afield (e.g. Lincoln, Meadowhall, Manchester, London) should be marketed.

[25] Information: If a train has not arrived on time then it would be useful to know whether it was delayed (and by how much) or cancelled. Real-time Customer Information Screens incorporating Long Line Public Address, in addition to Help Points, should be installed at all unmanned stations along the line. The facility is currently only provided at Habrough, Stallingborough and Healing.

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Railfuture Lincolnshire Branch Committee 2017 to 2018



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[26] Stations should be announced on the trains as they are approached. This has not been the practice to date. Likewise, explanations given for delays and cancellations help diffuse customer vexation. Again, this is not current practice. Also, a common cause of cancellations is the lack of staff to man the trains. This is usually due to the late running of incoming TPE services at Cleethorpes. We would, therefore, like to see adequate levels of staffing to cater for sick days, holidays and delayed incoming TPE services to Cleethorpes.

[28] CCTV should be installed at the unmanned stations along the Barton line. Grimsby Docks especially is particularly prone to vandalism.

[29] The holding line at Grimsby Docks notwithstanding, the single track

between Grimsby Town and Cleethorpes imposes a severe restraint on the timekeeping of the trains. Whilst we appreciate that track-work is not a franchise issue we feel that it should be incumbent on the franchisee to press Network Rail to re-instate the double track, at least in part.

[30] No benefits have arisen from the Barton Line's official designation as a Community Route and Service. Two concessions which we feel would greatly benefit users of the service are: (1) Removing the 09:00 threshold for off-peak fares as the early services always have spare capacity, and (2) Shifting the up-line timing point from Oxmarsh to Ulceby to allow increased leeway for trains to wait for delayed incoming buses at Barton. (AB)



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Lincoln bridge replaced



Photograph: Stuart Parker

During August, the railway bridge near to Stamp End lock in Lincoln was replaced with a new bridge spanning the River Witham, Waterside South and Spa Road. A large crane lifted the new bridge sections from a yard in the former Lincoln power station site.

The bridge has been in a poor state of repair for a long time and is considered life expired hence its replacement.

The railway line was closed until Monday 14 August with a rail replacement bus service in operation.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE – RAILFUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH AGM

The Committee has set the AGM for Saturday 10 March 2018 at Lincoln in St Swithin's Community Centre, Baggholme Road. Further details including the Agenda and Branch Officers' reports will be in the next *Rail Lincs*.

The purpose of this notice is to remind members that the posts of Hon. Chairman, Hon Vice Chairman, Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary are open to all fully paid up members of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture.

In accordance with the Branch procedures, members wishing to stand for these posts are invited to inform the Hon Secretary in writing before 31 December 2017.

Any person wishing to stand should provide the Hon Secretary with a signed written declaration of willingness to stand along with a 100 word manifesto which will be published in the next *Rail Lincs*. The declaration must be supported in writing by another fully paid up member of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture.

No canvassing for votes is permitted other than the manifesto published in *Rail Lincs* and the question and answer session at the AGM.

Similarly fully paid up members of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture wishing to join the Branch Committee should provide a signed declaration of willingness to stand with signed support by another fully paid up member of the Lincolnshire Branch of Railfuture to the Hon Secretary by 31 December 2017. No manifesto is required for Committee membership.

If there is only one candidate for each of the four executive posts then there will be no election and the meeting will be asked to ratify the selection. In this case the manifestos will not be published.

Dr Don Peacock Hon Secretary.

**Please can YOU
contribute an
article for the
next Rail Lincs?
It's YOUR newsletter**



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www.railfuture.org.uk

Refer to pages 10 & 11 for contact details of branch officers mentioned in *Rail Lincs*.