

railfuture in London and the South East

quarterly Branch Newsletter

campaigning by the Railway Development Society in London and the Home Counties - Kent, Surrey, Sussex, south Hertfordshire, south Essex, Bedfordshire, and Greater London

the independent campaign for a better passenger and freight rail network

Welcome to the third re-branded newsletter for our regional Branch.

Notice of Branch AGM 2011

The next Annual General Meeting of the London and South East Branch of **railfuture** [the Railway Development Society Ltd.] will be held in London in April 2011. It will be held before the Easter weekend, at a venue and on one of the first three Saturdays to be confirmed in the next Branch newsletter no.111, commencing at 14.00. A Branch members' meeting with a speaker is planned for the morning.

Nominations are now invited for Branch Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, and up to 6 other Branch Committee members. Nomination forms are available from Branch Secretary Ian McDonald. Candidates must be duly proposed and seconded with their nominations signed by both, and sent together with signed confirmation of acceptance by the nominee; all three who must be paid-up **railfuture** members must state their membership numbers. Nominations must be accompanied by a candidate CV and Election Statement, each of no more than 100 words, and sent to Branch Electoral Returning Officer Paul Krebs at 24 Bartok House, 30 Lansdowne Walk, London, W11 3LT, to arrive no later than Saturday 22nd January 2011. When accepting nomination for any of the four Branch Officer posts, all candidates must declare, in case they are not successful in a subsequent ballot for that Officer post, whether or not they would accept a non-Officer position on the Branch Committee.

In accordance with an amended Motion passed at the 2007 Branch AGM, Motions for debate and possible amendment at the 2011 Branch AGM are also now invited. This arrangement is intended to enable the whole Branch membership to be aware of Motions for debate at their AGM in advance of the meeting, so

widening the opportunity for participation. This provision will not prevent the acceptance of emergency Motions by those present at the AGM and at the discretion of the Chairman in circumstances judged not reasonably foreseeable at the time of the deadline for the receipt of normal Motions, which is also Saturday 22nd January 2011. Motions, on Branch organisation, policy or strategy, should be brief and to the point, must indicate clearly to whom each is addressed for action, and must be duly proposed, seconded and signed by both, who must be paid-up members of **railfuture**, [again quoting membership numbers] and sent to Branch Chairman Keith Dyll.

The next issue of the Branch newsletter no.111 will in the event of a ballot include a numbered ballot paper together with voting instructions [which will include provision for supplying membership number as well as postcode, which only the Electoral Returning Officer will see], together with the candidate CVs and their Election Statements. The ballot paper must then be returned to the Electoral Returning Officer, to be received by him no later than a stipulated date, likely to be in late-March/early-April 2011. The next Branch newsletter will also include details of submitted Motions duly proposed and seconded. Any proposed amendments should then be notified to Branch Chairman Keith Dyll no later than ten working days before the AGM.

In accordance with Standing Order 16, the Branch Committee hereby gives notice that it proposes the adoption of the revisions to Standing Order 10 which were proposed to the inquorate EGM held on 18th September 2010.

Rail Users' Groups

After the previous issue's brief look at this, let's focus in a bit more detail on those which are affiliated to our Society; most have websites, and some straddle our boundaries with neighbouring Thames Valley and Wessex Branches.

Alton Line Users Association [also Wessex Branch] - <http://www.altonlineusers.com/> - founded in 1974 to promote the interests of passengers using stations between Alton and Ash Vale inclusive.

Association of Public Transport Users (Bedford-London Line Committee) - <http://www.aptu.org.uk/> - the local travellers' group representing the interests of First Capital Connect's Thameslink passengers at stations between Harlington and West Hampstead inclusive.

Bedford Commuters' Association - <http://www.bedfordcommuters.org.uk/> - established in 1973, representing commuters at Bedford and Flitwick.

Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association [also Thames Valley Branch] - <http://www.tauruspr.co.uk/bbrua/> - formed in 1980 to help promote and thus help secure a future for the often-threatened rail service through the Marston Vale.

Cambridge Heath & London Fields Rail Users' Group - <http://www.railwatch.org.uk/chlfug.html> - formed in the mid-'90s to champion the cause of these then 'limited service' [ie weekday peaks only] inner-London stations.

Edenbridge & District Rail Travellers' Association - http://www.edenbridgetown.com/local/clubs/rail_travellers.shtml - their objectives include electrification and double-tracking of the Uckfield line, and reinstatement of the railway line between Uckfield, Lewes and the South Coast.

Marsh Link Action Group - <http://www.mlag.org.uk/> - formed in 2002 to maximise the use of the train service across Romney Marsh between Ashford and Hastings, serving the local communities around the stations at Ham Street, Appledore, Rye, Winchelsea, Three Oaks, and Doleham.

Marylebone Travellers' Association [also Thames Valley Branch] - <http://www.bucksinfo.net/mta/> - set up to fight the

proposed closure of Marylebone station in the early '70s! How things change.

Tonbridge & District Railway Travellers' Association - <http://www.tonbridgecommuters.org.uk/> - inaugurated in 1959 and still representing the travelling public in Tonbridge, Hildenborough and Paddock Wood.

Watford Rail Users' Group - email wrug2@hotmail.co.uk - link in to the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership and London Overground's Passenger Board, for example.

A reminder that '**Rail User Express**' is available from Tony Smale, *raifuture's* Rail User Group Liaison Officer.
Postal address: 63 Church Lane, Wool, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 6DD. Email address: ruglink@raifuture.org.uk

and now on to **Network Rail**

whose **London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy** is expected to be published for consultation very soon. It is one of their 'second-generation' RUSs, taking a longer term view [up to 30 years] and not being geographically defined. For guidance see the Scoping Document under 'Generation2' on the Network Rail website at <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/4449.aspx> The Branch will take the lead in framing a response on behalf of the Society and our four neighbouring Branches – East Anglia, East Midlands, Thames Valley, and Wessex – with whom your Committee will liaise, and in close collaboration with our own Branch Divisions.

..... and **Network raifuture**

With the spread of electronic communication comes the opportunity to e-communicate with fellow members. The Society has a national 'bulletin board' to ease dialogue amongst members. To learn more about the group and for general member-to-member postings please visit <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/raifuture> to join.

..... and **Network railfuture** **London & South East**

This newsgroup exists to facilitate the dispersal of topical news to members of the London & South East Branch of **railfuture**. Meetings, current consultations and local campaigning are our priorities. Please visit http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/Railfuture_LondonandSE/ and join in.

..... which lead to a **Regional RUGs** **Gathering** proposed for Spring 2011

London & South East Branch plan to hold this event as part of the regional consultations on Network Rail's London & South East RUS. It will not be confined to **railfuture** affiliates. Please register your initial interest with Branch Chairman Keith Dyall and/or Branch Secretary Ian McDonald.

Comprehensive Spending **Review – but spending on what?**

In our Branch area outside London, not a lot, it would seem. Inside the capital most headline attention went to the commitment to Crossrail, now planned to be open in 2018. By the time you read this there should have been a further DfT announcement about Thameslink Programme, electrification, Inter-City Express Project, and additional rolling stock.

Elsewhere, the Spending Review gave the green light to 24 schemes. Of those, 14 are major road schemes across the country, including in our region the A23 Handcross to Warninglid and two M25 'hard shoulder running' schemes. Of the other 10 schemes, in the 'supported group', just 4 are public transport related, and none of them are closer to us than Ipswich.

In the 'development group' of 22 local authority projects competing for a share of a £600 million fund, with about half a dozen with a public transport element, there's just one scheme in our region - the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road! Nice though to see mention of 'Leeds Rail Growth Package' and 'Sheffield Supertram additional vehicles'. Then in the 'pre-qualification group' of 34 schemes, let's hear it for our Croyley Rail Link, one of just 4 in our region, with 'Coventry-

Nuneaton Rail Upgrade' being the only other explicitly rail scheme.

Meanwhile the Highways Agency has 18 other major road schemes in development, on 14 of which work will continue including the A21 Tonbridge-Pembury and an M25 junction; the other 4, which include junctions on the M3, M4 and M20, are being reviewed to ensure best possible design and better ways to sequence the work.

Community Rail Awards 2010

ACoRP – the **Association of Community Rail Partnerships** – held its Gala Dinner at the end of September at Westcliff-on-Sea. The 2010 Awards were presented by **railfuture** member Chris Austin OBE, and featured many projects around our region.

The only Awards which did NOT feature London and South East region were the Best Station Garden or Floral Display, Best Community Rail Image, and Local Station Environment Award!

Involving Young People sponsored by Network Rail saw the Abbey Line CRP shortlisted for their Garston Community Art Project.

Community Art Schemes sponsored by Grand Central saw the Kent CRP and Holmesdale Technology College Snodland shortlisted for their Snodland Station Artwork, and Abbey Line CRP again.

Local Transport Integration sponsored by Lancashire County Council saw South West Trains and Brompton Bikes take 3rd prize for the Brompton Bike Hire Scheme [based at London Waterloo], with Southern Railway and West Sussex County Council shortlisted for their Arun Valley Cycle Racks Project.

Best Station or Train Retail Outlet sponsored by First TransPennine Express saw Wrexham & Shropshire Railway's on-train buffet take 1st prize, and Seeta Rajani [working with Southern Railway and Bioregional] take 2nd prize for the Hackbridge Veg Van!

Station Development sponsored by Railway Heritage Trust and Network Rail saw Southeastern/Network Rail/Kent CRP take 2nd prize for Refurbishment of Maidstone West, and Uckfield Station Development take 3rd prize.

Best Marketing Publication sponsored by First Great Western saw Sussex CRP and Southern Railway shortlisted for Station Adoption promotion material, and Kent CRP for Station Information leaflets.

Best Community Rail Event sponsored by Go-Ahead saw Southern Railway shortlisted for Billingshurst School Sponsored Walk trains, and Marston Vale CRP for Marston Vale Line Santa Specials.

Department for Transport 'Passengers Matter' Award was won by Kirsty Monk for the Southern Railway Priority Seat Project, and saw Wrexham & Shropshire Railways shortlisted for the London-Wrexham service.

Best Station Adoption Group sponsored by Northern Rail saw Liz Shoebridge and Sarah Ross of adopt a Station based at The Aldingbourne Trust take 2nd prize for their floral displays at 22 Southern stations.

Outstanding Volunteer Contribution sponsored by First Great Western was won by a volunteer with Wrexham & Shropshire Railways, with one from Essex and South Suffolk CRP in 3rd place.

Outstanding Staff Contribution sponsored by Network Rail was won by Southern Railway's East Coastway manager, nominated by Sussex CRP, with 2nd place also going to Southern for their station manager in the Streatham Hill area of south London.

Community Rail – Special Recognition Award went to two people, one being Network Rail's Community Rail Executive Mike Franklin who set up and runs Network Rail's Community Scheme and is known for example to the Friends of Homerton Station on the North London Line for help with their wildflower meadow on the station embankments.

Now from **East Coastway**

where, 'in response to passenger requests' [and no mean amount of lobbying from *railfuture*-affiliated Marsh Link Action Group, the Branch's Coastway Division, the Winchelsea Station Adoption Group, the Sussex Community Rail Partnership, and many others] Southern's MarshLink services now call at Three Oaks and Winchelsea stations alternately every two hours Mondays-Saturdays from the mid-December timetable change. This translates to a standard seven additional services at each station in each direction on each of the six days, plus a few extras.

For Three Oaks: 0618 ex-Brighton Mondays-Fridays/0553 ex-Eastbourne Saturdays then 0732 ex-Brighton to Ashford International alternate hours to 1932; 0832 ex-Ashford International to Brighton then alternate hours to 2032.

For Winchelsea: 0618 Mondays-Fridays/06.32 Saturdays then 0832 ex-Brighton to Ashford International alternate hours to 1832: 0732 Saturdays-only then 0932 ex-Ashford International to Brighton then alternate hours to 2132.

These service restorations come exactly five years after the introduction of the through Brighton-Ashford service but at the price of dramatic service cuts for these intermediate stations. Forty years since the Marsh Link line won a reprieve from the threat of complete closure [by a certain Richard Marsh, no less!], the remaining legacies still to reverse are the 30-year-old singling of the line between Appledore and Ore [except through Rye station], and the 25-year-long abandonment of plans to electrify this diesel 'island'. See <http://www.mlag.org.uk/> for further background; their Annual General Meeting is usually held in Rye early in the New Year.

..... through **East Anglia**

where the December 2010 timetable sees the demise of diesel trains under the wires to and from Liverpool Street. The 3-car Class 170 trains cascaded to the Norwich-Cambridge route from the through services for Lowestoft and Peterborough have their paths taken by multiples of 4-car Class 321 trains, cascaded from London Midland. The 2-car Class 170 trains serving the two university cities transfer to strengthen Ipswich-Cambridge services.

Meanwhile a 3-month consultation on the May and December 2011 timetables for the West Anglia routes runs to mid-February, prompted by the introduction during next year of 30 new 4-car Class 379 Stansted Express trains. Some of them could also serve Cambridge. The released Class 317 units will be used mainly to lengthen existing West Anglia trains. The Branch's Eastern Division will lead our response, in close liaison with East Anglia Branch.

..... to **East Coast**

where a recent consultation on capacity issues prompted this response from *railfuture*

Network Rail East Coast Main Line 2016 Capacity Review Draft for Consultation

Question 1

Does the approach used provide an understanding of the demand for paths after 2016?

- 1 The study initiative to enhance the capacity of the route to meet the aspirations of stakeholders to increase service provision and serve new destinations from 2016 onwards is a welcome reflection of the need to grow the national rail network.
- 2 Whilst 'London' may numerically dominate passenger and freight traffic flows, there is an established need to enhance the provision for services to Scotland from stations across the national rail network, and between intermediate places.
- 3 Capacity enhancements are needed now and progressively in the future to meet the demand forecasts for passenger and freight traffic nationally and across the North of England, for example, in the Consultation Draft of the Northern Route Utilisation Strategy (Northern RUS).
- 4 Whilst the need to preserve some commercial confidentiality is appreciated, it is not clear that the aspirations considered in Section 2 (Paragraph 1.2.3 identifies the aspirants) are the same as those considered in Section 3 (Paragraph 3.4.1). Specifically, it is not known whether the constraints identified in Section 2 have been influenced by Network Rail's imaginary aspirations included in Section 3 (Paragraph 3.4.1) and hence whether the conclusions of the respective Sections are consistent and compatible.
- 5 Capacity enhancements such as the reopening of the Leamside Line would deliver new business as well as expanding the capacity of the ECML route and providing for increased freight traffic. Equally, in-fill electrification between York and Leeds is likely to release suppressed demand; this link will be of particular importance as preparations for High Speed Rail 2 and its impact on the conventional rail network are developed.
- 6 There are some new uncertainties that may affect the conclusions drawn in the document:
 - The impact of the emerging consequences of the government spending review on the CP4 programme.
 - Much of the work is based on increments to the ECML timetable proposed for introduction in May 2011. However, the iteration of the timetable used in the study is not stated; the service patterns most recently indicated appear to differ from those stated in the consultation document.

Key issues remain the operator chosen to provide the Edinburgh/Motherwell/Glasgow extensions to the ECML service and the confirmation by ORR of the track access requirements for the East Coast plan to operate a Kings Cross/Newark service.

- The InterCity Express Programme (IEP) has been put on hold and any new train programme seems unlikely to match the originally intended IEP provision (Footnote Page 7).
- 7 It is commonly observed that in continental Europe, major stations seem to have more platform capacity, less intensively used, with a resultant predictability of platform availability and reduction in delays. Paradoxically, sweating the railway assets in Britain in the interests of efficiency has resulted in reduced flexibility, poorer performance and apparently higher costs.
 - 8 It should be a key facet of any decisions ultimately taken about the delivery of capacity for the 2016 timetable, that it will provide a 'platform' to facilitate future enhancements to meet the long-term need identified in the Northern RUS and implicit in the High Speed Rail 2 proposals.
 - 9 The Scenario approach is considered to be helpful, albeit there are no doubt strongly divergent views on the acceptability of some of the trade-offs identified, such as LDHS journey time penalties to accommodate increased capacity. That said, railfuture agrees that Scenarios C & D are the best identified to form the basis for further economic study and the preparation of business cases. However, we retain some concern to ensure that the findings have not been unduly influenced by the introduction of Network Rail's imaginary aspirations (Paragraph 3.4.1).

Question 2

Does the methodology for assessing the capacity of the route provide a clear understanding of how the aspirations can be accommodated on the route and the necessary trade-offs or capacity enhancements that would be required to accommodate them?

- 10 The train paths identified must accommodate passenger and freight growth on the scale indicated in the Northern RUS as well as growth further south along the route (we have yet to assess the implications in the soon to be published London & South East RUS). The programme of enhancements to meet the needs of 2016 should be developed to facilitate progressive improvements in the

longer term. Plans should recognise the need to achieve a significant shift in passenger travel mode choice from car to train and freight traffic from heavy goods vehicle to rail freight, in order to reduce carbon emissions and contribute significantly to the Climate Change Act targets.

- 11 In building capacity to facilitate future enhancements to meet the long-term need identified in the Northern RUS, the opportunity should be taken to work towards an effective, electrified four-track railway north of Doncaster. Capacity enhancement schemes in this context would include:
 - o Temple Hurst Junction/Hambleton North Junction via Selby, particularly for freight services.
 - o Northallerton/Ferryhill via the Stockton/Stillington route.
 - o The Leamside route from Ferryhill to Newcastle via Washington and Pelaw.

Such routes would not only enhance capacity for passenger and freight traffic but would also provide disruption diversion routes and significantly increase the ability to deliver a 7-Day railway, all of which should be given full consideration in the development of business cases.

- 12 The scenarios developed, of course, recognise the benefits of the Stillington route, the need for various enhancements at Darlington and the re-opening of the Leamside Line in isolation. These proposed enhancements are strongly supported.
- 13 In developing capacity, it is of particular concern that the benefits of a regular interval passenger service pattern should be recognised. This is of particular importance north of Doncaster where other interCity services (Cross Country, Transpennine Express) serve stations along the ECML. From Doncaster to Edinburgh the ECML timetable as a whole must deliver an essentially regular service for passengers, regardless of the operating company involved. This requirement should take precedence over capacity gains achieved for example, by grouping together trains of similar operating characteristics.
- 14 Capacity increases achieved at the expense of current or potential crossing and connecting services are unlikely to prove acceptable. Transpennine services, Durham Coast to Tyne Valley line and the future passenger services planned for the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne services would be examples.
- 15 The local train services to stations on the ECML north of Newcastle not only provide important connecting services but also are key parts of the local transport network (Table

2.5). The service from Tweedbank is not properly described as 'aspirational'; it will be operational before 2016. The current morning and evening stopping train service from Newcastle extending beyond Morpeth to Chathill, whilst not an off-peak service, illustrates the need for capacity to be preserved for local trains.

- 16 The provision of capacity for an inter-regional service between Newcastle and Edinburgh is supported, subject to the findings of the current study commissioned by Transport Scotland and Scot rail. This service may contribute strongly to the optimisation of service provision at the intermediate stations and may also promote the opening of an additional station(s) in Scotland.
- 17 The role of the 'Hertford Loop' may require further evaluation. The desirable option to facilitate extra LDHS services may require an upgrade to eliminate journey time penalties, but calls at e.g. Hertford may generate new business from those travelling further north. Similarly, enhancement of the GN/GE Joint Line as well as benefiting rail freight would generate new business in travel to the north and Scotland.
- 18 Tables 2.1 to 2.5 provide a valuable summary of the situation in the route sections concerned, albeit, there are no doubt strongly divergent views on the acceptability of some of the trade-offs identified. The missing link is perhaps the presentation of a strategy overall, showing how work undertaken in the shorter term (2016) will contribute to the development of an effective four-track ECML in the longer term. Such a strategy would recognise the synergistic benefits of the improvements for long distance, inter-regional and local passengers, freight, charter trains, disruption management and the 7-Day railway.
- 19 In summary, **raifuture** supports the development of business cases for Scenarios C & D, which should be mutually supportive, not exclusive; Scenario D, Table 2.9 includes unspecified improvements at Darlington and a re-opened Leamside Line among its capacity enhancing solutions. However, we suggest that capacity should not be enhanced at the cost of LDHS journey time or the development of an ECML timetable providing an essentially regular service for passengers, regardless of the operating company involved. Work undertaken to provide capacity for the 2016 timetable should deliver a 'platform' to facilitate future enhancements to meet the long-term need identified in the Northern RUS (and presumably in the London & South East RUS) and contribute to the development of an effective four-track ECML in the longer term.

Question 3

How well does the economic assessment help you understand how stakeholders can increase the value of the ECML through alternative uses of potential additional capacity?

20 The inclusion of socio-economic benefits in the economic assessment is a welcome step, although Paragraph 3.4.2 tends to read as though it is work in progress. The generalised conclusion that aspirations with the largest number of additional services tend to have the highest estimated socio-economic value and its corollary that the lowest estimated socio-economic value tends to have the lowest number of additional services may seem to be statements of the obvious but do serve to reinforce the need to provide a service as against an occasional train.

21 The need to preserve commercial confidentiality is stated in Section 3 although the operators concerned are identified in Section 2. There is a need to ensure that the economic analysis has not been unduly influenced by the introduction of Network Rail's imaginary aspirations (Paragraph 3.4.1).

22 As noted in paragraph 7 above, it is paradoxical that sweating the railway assets in Britain in the interests of efficiency has resulted in reduced flexibility, poorer performance and in a railway apparently more costly than those in Europe. It is recommended that an attempt be made in the economic analysis to reflect this position.

23 It is noted that the King's Cross-Newark North Gate services are likely to generate less value per train than the majority of aspirations (Paragraph 3.4.2/6).

24 The finding that increasing capacity (Page 37) by spreading the intermediate calls between the services on the route, thereby reducing journey opportunities between these stations Figure 3.6 illustrates the economic penalty that this loss of shorter distance connectivity would incur is of equal importance to the services north of York and Newcastle. In judging the trade-off between extra LDHS services and improved shorter distance connectivity, there is a clear case for taking into account the views of the stakeholders in the communities concerned.

25 It is of particular importance to ensure that the business cases developed take a holistic view of the railway. For example, the business case for re-opening the Leamside line should include:

- The benefit of the Line to the operational railway as a diversionary route for disruption management and its contribution

to the pressing need to develop a 7-Day railway.

- The benefit to rail freight services from the provision of a terminal at TurSDale at the southern end to a link to the new Nissan electric car plant at the northern end.
- The impact of local services on the Line in reducing significantly the excessive traffic volumes on the essentially parallel Gateshead/Newcastle Western Bypass (A1 road).
- The establishment of a rail service for Washington (Population 53,400) as recommended in ATOC document Connecting Communities in June 2009.

Such an approach allows for the differing socio-economic benefits of freight and passenger services to be recognised and for account to be taken of the wider economic benefits of the schemes, for example in reducing carbon emissions and congestion on the road network.

26 The business cases developed should take note of the need to provide capacity for charter trains; such trains bring important commercial benefit to the places served and might perhaps be best included within the open access category. Equally, the benefits should reflect a freight policy of path allocation as required, rather than block booking, to ensure that best use is made of the capacity provided.

27 It is noted that there is some uncertainty generated by the implication (Paragraph 3.5) that Scenario D would not require additional infrastructure, in contrast to Table 2.9, which appears to suggest Scenario D to include improvements at Darlington and a re-opened Leamside Line among its capacity enhancing solutions. Hence, it is considered important for the business cases for both Scenarios C & D to be developed in a complementary way, to ensure that the best value for money is obtained from making best use of existing facilities together with the selective implementation of infrastructure enhancements. Such an approach is more likely to ensure that the synergistic benefits of developing a four-track ECML in the long term are realised.

28 **railfuture** looks forward to further information and consultation, when the results of the business case studies, including the wider economic benefits are available.

This consolidated national response has been prepared after consultations with the following **railfuture** branches: Scotland, North East, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, East Midlands and, London & South East. The **railfuture** national Passenger Committee was also consulted.

Branch Divisions' members' meetings — our three sub-regional Divisions' meetings are open to all Branch members. In alphabetical order they are:

Coastway — usually meet monthly in Lewes on the first Thursday at 18.00 – the next one on 2nd December will be followed by 20th January and 3rd March, in the Lewes Arms. Contact Dick Tyler at richard.tyler@railfuture.org.uk or 27 Windsor Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN39 3PB or phone 01424 211500.

Eastern — usually meet bi-monthly in Stratford on the second Wednesday at 18.30 – the next one will be on 12th January and then 9th March. Contact Howard Thomas at howard.thomas@railfuture.org.uk or 24 South Primrose Hill, Chelmsford, CM1 2RG or phone 01245 496439, before 21.00.

Kent — usually meet quarterly on a Saturday afternoon in a different venue around Kent – the next one will be at 14.00 on 19th February, at the United Reformed Church near the Angel Centre in Tonbridge. Divisional Organiser is Peter Collingborn at 82 Burnham Walk, Parkwood, Rainham, Kent, ME8 8RX or phone 01634 364744; email contact is Chris Fribbins at chris.fribbins@railfuture.org.uk

National events — the next national **AGM** will be held on Saturday 7th May 2011, in our regional Branch area at the Brighthelm Centre in Brighton. See *railwatch* and www.railfuture.org.uk for further details.

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This Branch Newsletter is published quarterly and is usually distributed with each edition of *railwatch*. The copy deadline for issue 111 will be 13th February 2011. Please submit material through Branch Chairman Keith Dyall.

The *railfuture* mission: to be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users

Websites: www.railfuture.org.uk and www.railwatch.org.uk

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