

**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, see website [here](#) (from the "Membership Type" menu, select "RUG").

We continue with the usual roundup of news items from rail user groups around the UK. As always, I'm very grateful to RUGs that send me their magazines and bulletins.

LevenMouth Rail Campaign – spreading the word

In an update, we read that LMRC activists have been out and about in recent weeks, giving talks to community, business, pensioner and other groups to spread the word about their campaign to reintroduce passenger services on the Thornton-Leven rail link. Further talks are planned for the Autumn.

Although somewhat delayed, the draft of the latest STAG Pre-Appraisal & Phase 1 Report is now out, and the LMRC committee awaits the Key Stage 2 Report with interest. The first AGM of the group took place on 2 Sept - the guest speaker was Allison Cosgrove, Chair of Railfuture Scotland.

Campaign for Borders Rail – building on success

On the day of the Royal Opening of the Borders Railway (9 Sept 2015), the CBR issued a further press release calling for a renewed push to extend the line southwards from Tweedbank to Hawick and Carlisle. With its new slogan, 'building on success', CBR anticipates that the popularity of the Borders Railway will boost the case for further rail reinstatement. CBR Chair Simon Walton commented:

"Hawick is the Borders town which has suffered most from the loss of the old Waverley Route in 1969. And to meet its full potential, the Borders also need a direct rail link to the South. The key benefits of southwards extension would include social inclusion, economic regeneration and tourism opportunities – and sustainable transport for timber from Kielder and the Borders forests, getting lorries off the roads. And a reinstated railway through to Carlisle would provide a strategic diversionary route, relieving pressure on the busy West Coast Main Line."

Simon continued: "The physical obstacles to extending the line to Hawick initially are far fewer than had to be overcome in construction between Edinburgh and Tweedbank – such as the massive multi-million pound structure needed to burrow under the Edinburgh City Bypass."

- Aerial footage of the Royal Train with scenes from the official opening event can be viewed [here](#).

Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line – *slow line speeds are here to stay*

The FoSCL Futures Group had a very informative meeting with Network Rail's strategic planners on 8th June. One of the items on the agenda was line speed – the group had previously been led to believe that some minor improvements were possible but at the meeting it became clear that the line is stuck with 60 mph maximum for a very long time. The group also learnt that the signal boxes will not now be decommissioned until 2027 (FoSCL will be considering which ones to preserve). A current project for FoSCL's Futures Group is examining the case for through trains over the line, such as London or Leeds to Scottish destinations. It's known that the line has spare capacity for freight, steam specials and diverted trains.

On discovering that Network Rail had felled some mature trees in the spring (when birds might be nesting), FoSCL queried the matter and was told that the necessary permission had been obtained – the group has suggested that an equivalent number of trees are planted by NR at another location.

The 4th annual *Ride2stride* Walking Festival along the Settle-Carlisle Line took place from 28 April to 4 May – FoSCL played a major part in the organisation of the event. Around 100 people gathered on Settle Station on a chilly morning for the official opening ceremony. During the week 788 people, many from overseas, took part in the walks, talks and music. Elsewhere we read that the route of the Western Dales Bus from Dent Station, popular with walkers, was extended for 2015; a new vehicle to be delivered this Autumn will proudly display the FoSCL logo in recognition of the support the group gives to the service.

FoSCL's August magazine contains an appeal for new volunteers to help staff the Visitor Centre at Ribbleshead - volunteers work in pairs so applicants would need to be able to operate as part of a team. Over 10 pages of the magazine are given over to letters from members, mostly on the subject of the future mix of services needed on the line (faster long-distance trains versus a more regular stopping service). *Many newsletter editors would be envious of this level of correspondence! - Ed*

This year's FOSCL Christmas Lunch will be held at the Falcon Manor Hotel in Settle on Saturday 5th December. On the following Saturday, there will be an Open Day at Settle Station. The station at Settle now boasts its own piano which passengers can use while waiting for their trains.

Keswick to Penrith Railway Project (CKP Railways) – *Bondholders remain on board*

A meeting of CKP Railways plc Bondholders at the Keswick Hotel on 2nd June decided to extend the term of the Bonds to 30th June 2018. Over 63% of Bondholders (by value) voted, with the decision to extend carried by nearly 94%. This gives the Company more time to work on the legal stages and construction ahead. A significant proportion of Bondholders live locally, with the money raised in Keswick alone equivalent to £10 for every resident.

A number of local residents are talking about forming a campaign group to demonstrate that the community really wants this railway. Some of them visited the new Borders Railway in Scotland and met campaigners from the Regional Council.

There is talk of World Heritage Site status for the Lake District National Park, and CKP thinks that transport solutions will need to be on a grand scale to handle the additional visitors – much bolder than schemes that have been implemented over the last few years.

Three of the bidders for rail franchises in the North met or had discussions with CKP Railways plc about the Keswick to Penrith Railway Project. Passenger numbers predicted 20 years ago for the Keswick to Penrith route would at least cover operating costs but in the meantime, rail passenger numbers in the UK have reportedly doubled thereby strengthening the business case for the line. It is now 43 years since the line closed and CKP hopes that reopening will be achieved before the 50th anniversary. They say that a further effort could see the link re-instated to the Cumbrian Coast.

Ribble Valley Rail – double track completed ... but have passengers deserted the service?

The group is pleased to report that work to lengthen the double-track section of railway through Darwen Station was completed on time and to budget, and the line reopened on 24th August 2015. However, the replacement buses that ran during the blockade were not well used, and RVR thinks it will have to work hard to attract people back to the service. A picture accompanying the story shows two RVR members clad in hi-vis jackets and hard hats, ready for a site visit to the works at Darwen. Other pictures in Ribble Valley News illustrate the complexity of the track re-doubling project.

Clitheroe Food Festival was very well attended and RVR was pleased that Northern strengthened trains on the day to provide 4-car units. The group also reports that preliminary work has begun at stations along the line in preparation for the installation of Customer Information Screens.

A welcome pack promoting local rail transport in the Ribble Valley has been devised by Community Rail Lancashire with support from the borough council and RVR members. The pack includes train timetables, local rail history, a Rail Ramblers guided walks programme and how to get involved in local rail support groups. The packs are being distributed to new homeowners by housing sales offices in the area.

Ribble Valley stations have been looking very attractive this summer, with their beautiful displays of bedding plants. RVR's Chair, Marjorie Birch, sends her thanks to the loyal band of volunteers for all their hard work.

Support the Oldham-Rochdale-Manchester Line (STORM) – continued concerns over rolling stock

Rolling stock issues continue to exercise the minds of STORM members. The news that Porterbrook leasing is to move 17 electric units from routes in Greater Manchester to the West Midlands hasn't gone down well. If the Class 319 (ex-Thameslink) units are to fill the gap, there are concerns about whether the performance of these units is suitable for certain lines in the North West, especially where fast acceleration is needed.

The performance of Vivarail's converted D-stock trains is also questioned – their top speed of 60mph means they are suited to only branch line work, but this (and their non-standard couplings) is going to cause problems for fleet flexibility and movements to/from depots. STORM representatives visited Vivarail's premises on the Company's recent publicity day to inspect the prototype unit and ask questions.

Other issues of concern to STORM members in recent weeks include: Virgin's decision to bar railcard holders from buying off-peak tickets for use on certain peak-time trains (some fares triple in price as a result); the exit from the new railway car park at Rochdale being regularly blocked by delivery vans (on one occasion for over an hour); overcrowding (with passengers being left behind); and the usual problems of poor information at times of service disruption.

Poulton and Wyre Railway Society - Fleetwood's railway link plan moves nearer.

Wyre Council's Shaping Your Neighbourhood initiative has provided £5,000 towards a two-carriage diesel train which will be the first passenger vehicle acquired to run on the intended service. P&WRS have match-funded the grant to £10,000 and now need just another £10,000 to buy the DMU.

The Railway Society is pushing forward with its plans to provide a heritage railway in the area, initially between Thornton and Burn Naze where there is existing track as well as established platforms. It is hoped to later extend the line to the south end of Fleetwood - at least as far as Chris Allen's Garage - and also to Poulton. The voluntary group has spent years removing weeds, tidying up the railway lines and the platforms across Thornton in preparation for its scheme. It is hoped the train could be in Fleetwood within the next two years.

Society chairman, Eddie Fisher, said: "This council grant is a great help and we are confident of having enough money to buy the diesel multiple unit fairly soon. We are already in negotiations to buy it. Although this service will initially run in the Thornton area, we are serious about extending to Fleetwood, and by linking it to Poulton that opens up even more possibilities." The unit in question is a former British Rail train in dark green livery which, by virtue of its age, comes under the "heritage" banner.

Fleetwood Civic Society has long been supportive of the railway group's work and chairman Margaret Daniels said of the latest development: "It is very welcome news. It is important that Fleetwood gets some sort of rail link back and the work this group is doing is brilliant. The news that they will soon be able to buy a passenger train is very exciting." - *Blackpool Gazette*

Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association – "promises shunted into siding!"

HPSRUA is bitterly disappointed that passengers in Yorkshire will not benefit from new electrification schemes until well into the second quarter of the 21st century. Sheffield, the UK's 5th largest city, will remain without a single electric train service for years to come: "the trainload of promises issued over the past 18 months have been shunted into a siding!" The group points out that "pausing" the TransPennine and Midland Main Line electrification schemes has wider implications: diesels that were to be displaced from these lines will not now become available, so other parts of the region will have to soldier on with their aging train fleets. Furthermore, plans for platform extensions and train lengthening will be put on hold.

The group thinks the Government should forget about a high-speed line across the North (HS3) for the time being and focus instead on quadrupling the Leeds to Manchester route so that fast services can be separated from stopping trains. Huddersfield could then be the main interchange station along the route.

In the time taken to discuss and plan the fairly minor tram-train project in South Yorkshire, a new high speed line has been built and is operating in China! The Penistone line was blighted for two years by being earmarked for the tram-train trial, but at least the line has now been shortlisted as a "tier two priority" for electrification ahead of many other lines across the North.

In a feature article, the writer, Andrew Oldfield, thinks that the South Yorkshire transport authority (SYPTA) is in danger of putting all its rail "eggs" in the tram-train "basket", and needs to take the lead on a number of other projects such as station re-openings and sorting out bottlenecks. Andrew hopes that Rail North will inject a new vision for the region, one that has been so sadly lacking from SYPTA.

One item of good news to end with: information screens are, at long last, being rolled out at stations along the Penistone line.

Friends of the Barton Line – new Forum highlights service unreliability

Interesting and useful information is being exchanged on the group's Web Forum (hosted on e-voice.org.uk), and members are encouraged to register so that they receive an automatic alert when a new item has been posted. Regrettably, constant reports of service delays and cancellations on the Forum reveal the full extent of the unreliability of Barton Line services! Even so, cancellations have not been as bad recently as they had been in previous years.

In his report for the AGM in July, the Chairman of FoBL concluded by saying that there is more the group could do in raising the profile of the line at public events and in publicising the service to those who wouldn't normally consider travelling by train: "In order to achieve this we need to increase the number of volunteers by recruiting new and younger members." [*Sentiments echoed by chairmen the length and breadth of the UK! – Ed*].

The next outing for group members is to the Saltaire World Heritage site on 19 Sept.

Bedford Commuters' Association – the Rail Users' Group for Bedford and Flitwick

One issue that has been affecting performance of late is the lack of drivers. Along with their neighbouring group APTU (Association of Passenger Transport Users), the BCA has been lobbying Govia Thameslink Railway for the recruitment of more drivers. The two groups say that the situation now is much better than at the end of 2014, but more drivers are still needed.

Along with the APTU, representatives from the BCA met with GTR management recently to discuss contingency plans for periods of disruption. The two groups expressed their concerns about current arrangements and stressed the need to: (i) Recover the service as soon as possible (ii) Consistently communicate the latest up to date travel information and (iii) Refrain from making late changes to train stopping patterns. After years of lobbying on the issue, the BCA welcomes the news that compensation for delays and disruption can now be taken in cash instead of as National Rail vouchers.

Commenting on the new Class 700 units for Thameslink services, the BCA remains concerned that a train with essentially an inner-suburban “Metro” style interior (narrow width seats and wide corridors) is going to be used on journeys of two to three hours. They have not given up campaigning on the issue!

Members are invited to renew their membership of the BCA by bringing their completed form and remittance to either Bedford station on 22 Sept or Flitwick station on 24 Sept, where the committee will be on hand at the BCA information stall.

...news from Railfuture follows...

RAILFUTURE'S AUTUMN CONFERENCE – booking remains open, but hurry!

Railfuture autumn conference and RUG awards ceremony takes place at the Mercure Bristol Holland House Hotel, Redcliff Hill, **Bristol BS1 6SQ**, on **Saturday 7th November** from 10:45 to 17:00.

Guest speakers include Matthew Golton from First Great Western, James White of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, James Freeman of FirstBus (on the subject of bus/rail integration), Charlotte Leslie the MP for Bristol NW and John Parry of Parry People Movers. There will also be presentations focussing on specific rail campaigns.

The conference remains open for bookings, and the fee is just £30 (includes lunch). For further information and a booking form, see: www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

RAILFUTURE NORTHERN POWERHOUSE CAMPAIGN

Railfuture has launched its own [Northern Powerhouse campaign](#) for improved services that can be achieved now within current constraints, and that can be achieved in future through a coordinated investment programme, to turn the great Northern cities of Liverpool, Preston, Manchester, Sheffield, Bradford, Leeds and Hull into a single strategic economic entity linked by a fast high capacity rail network to realise the economic potential of the region as a global powerhouse.

The Government has recognised the value of investment in rail infrastructure in the north in the form of projects for HS2 Phase 2 to Manchester and Leeds, the Manchester ‘Hub’, the North West electrification programme and the commitment to improve the notorious Leeds to Manchester link with HS3. This represents a significant but fragmented investment package, controlled from London. If however the people of the North were allowed to specify these elements in a coordinated plan that created a truly integrated rail network serving the whole region, then the full benefits of a strategic economic entity could be realised.

RAILFUTURE'S POLICY GROUP LOOKS AT FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE INDUSTRY

Railfuture's Deputy Director of Policy, Norman Bradbury, has published a "Summary of Rail Industry Economics 2014-15". Norman says that the financial performance of the national rail industry continues to improve, helped by ongoing growth in passenger volume.

Figures released by the ORR (details [here](#)) show that for the fifth consecutive year premium payments paid to government by TOCs exceeded total government subsidy paid to TOCs, giving a net surplus of £802.2m. **This increase in premium payments compared to subsidies is good news for campaigners, moving closer to a railway system which is financially sustainable.**

Headline figures are...

- The top paying TOCs were: SWT (£374.3m), East Coast (including Virgin/Stagecoach East Coast and DIR East Coast, £266.7m), Southern (187.4m), Greater Anglia (187.1m), Thameslink (179.8m), Virgin West Coast (93.7m).
- TOCs in receipt of the most subsidy were: First ScotRail (£261.1m), Northern (£112.7m), Arriva Trains Wales (£101.9m), Mersey Rail (£86.2m).
- Measured in pence per passenger kilometre, the highest premiums were: SWT (6p), East Coast (5p) and Thameslink (4.5p). The highest subsidies were Mersey Rail (12.4p), First ScotRail (8.6p) and Arriva Trains Wales (8.5p).
- Direct grant to Network Rail rose 10% to £3.802bn (2013/14 £3.453bn). PTE grants fell 32.4% to £123m (2013/14 £182m).
- Total government support for the rail industry in 2014/15 fell 9% to £4.796bn (down from £5.287bn in 2013/14). However, the 2014/15 figure includes £1.097bn investment in Crossrail which is really a separate issue.

So, excluding Crossrail investment, total government support for operating, maintaining and renewing the railway was £3.7bn. But a study by Oxera for the Rail Delivery Group last year found that £3.9bn was returned to government by the rail industry as a whole each year from taxation, most of which would not have applied to British Rail. Norman concludes from this that, **far from being subsidised, the government and the tax-payer gained a net profit from rail operations last year.**

Not included in this analysis is Network Rail debt now amounting to £38bn, accumulated from years of investment sourced from the private sector at the behest of the government. Annual interest charges on this debt of approximately £1.4bn are now the responsibility of government following the transfer of NR to nationalised status.

Finally, it should be noted that private sector investment in the railway last year amounted to £647m (up from £423m in 2013/14).

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

SYSTEM OPERATION – *a consultation on making better use of the railway network*

This ORR (Office of Rail and Road) consultation looks at System Operation, ie how Network Rail operates the rail network and how decisions by both Network Rail and others are made about the use of this network and its expansion over time. System operation plays a significant role in determining how well the railway delivers for passengers, freight customers and train operators and those funding both the network and train services.

The consultation will inform ORR's preparation for the next five yearly review to determine what is required of Network Rail between 2019 and 2024 (PR18). The ORR welcomes the views of "passengers and their representative groups" so please get in touch with them to discuss the issues, to attend the workshop hosted jointly with Network Rail on **Friday 2 October** and to respond to the consultation.

The workshop is from 10:00 to 15:00 at ORR's offices, 1 Kemble St, London WC2B 4AN (close to Holborn tube station). The consultation closing date is **16 October 2015**. Further details [here](#).

ENGINEERING RESTRICTIONS MAY BE EASED BY NEW NETWORK RAIL UNITS

New track maintenance vehicles are being introduced by Network Rail which may mean that tracks running parallel to lines occupied for engineering work may be able to stay open for traffic. Such a change could reduce the amount of disruption to train services which engineering works cause.

The first of the new 'moving maintenance trains', due in service this month, will make work on the track 'quicker, safer and more efficient as well as less disruptive for passengers and freight', Network Rail said. Eventually there will be eight of the new machines, which will be based at various civil engineering depots around the country. The MMT units are manufactured by Robel in Germany and will be operated and maintained by Colas Rail under a three-year contract.

Each train will have a workshop, two built-in 2-tonne cranes to move heavy equipment, multiple power points and a welfare area with kitchen and toilet. But their key feature is the large, extendable work area that allows access to the track below, provides cover, floodlighting and protection from passing trains, which may mean that restrictions affecting the use of adjoining tracks may not be needed. - *Railnews*

EAST WEST RAIL: PHASE 2 CONSULTATION – *attend presentations and have your say*

Network Rail has just opened the first round of consultation for phase 2 of the Western section of East West Rail. The scheme includes plans to upgrade and reconstruct existing and mothballed sections of track linking Bedford to Bicester and Milton Keynes to Princes Risborough. It aims to deliver new journeys between Bedford and Bicester, new services between Milton Keynes and London via Aylesbury, better regional links and increased capacity for freight trains.

The 'Western Section Phase 2' project is a part of East West Rail, whose overall goal is to establish a strategic railway linking East Anglia with central, southern and western England.

To licence phase 2 of the scheme, Network Rail has to apply for a Transport and Works Act Order to the transport secretary, who will consider feedback to this consultation when making a decision. Residents and community stakeholders will be able to discuss the project with project team members, as well as comment on specific features along the route, during several public events running from 21 to 30 September. Network Rail also wants to hear from landowners, lineside neighbours, passenger groups, commuters, and rail enthusiasts. The consultation runs until 16 October. More [here](#).

TRAVELWATCH SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE – 3RD October in Taunton

The next General Meeting of TravelWatch SouthWest has been arranged for Saturday October 3rd 2015 at the Conference Centre of Somerset College of Arts and Technology (SCAT), Wellington Road, Taunton TA1 5AX. Doors open at 10:30 for 11:00 start.

TWSW welcomes academic and originator of Community Rail Partnerships, Paul Salveson, as guest speaker and director for an afternoon programme including a public transport integration seminar. This is preceded in the morning, by briefings by notable speakers from the realms of bus and rail, including; the merits and pitfalls of operating bus services in both rural and urban environments; the beginnings of electrification with First Greater Western elaborating on the Franchise Award made in March, and progress report from Network Rail.

Morning refreshments and a light buffet lunch will be provided free to all delegates. Details and registration via meetings@travelwatchesouthwest.org.

TRAVELWATCH NORTHWEST CONFERENCE – 8th October in Liverpool

The next conference of TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) to be held on Thursday 8th October 2015 at Merseytravel's offices, One Mann Island, Liverpool L3 1BP starting at 11.00 hrs (refreshments from 10.30 hrs). The conference will be opened by Councillor Liam Robinson, Chair of Merseytravel, and the agenda is planned to include presentations by:

- David Brown, Chief Executive and Director General, Merseytravel.
- Liz Chandler, Merseytravel.
- Gary Iddon, General Manager North West & North Wales Routes, Virgin Trains
- Robin Tudor, Head of PR and Communications, Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- David Beer, Passenger Executive, Transport Focus

This is a free event but donations towards costs are welcomed. You need to register for the conference by 28 Sept 2015. Email: admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk

TRANSPORT FOCUS COMMENTS ON EAST ANGLIA AND WEST MIDLANDS FRANCHISES

• East Anglia

Earlier in the year the Dept. for Transport ran a consultation into the future of rail services in East Anglia. This was part of the competition to run services on the network from October 2017. Transport Focus has responded to the consultation and you can read their response [here](#).

TF also recently published the research that they carried out to explore the current experiences and future aspirations of passengers in East Anglia. You can access this report [here](#).

• West Midlands

The current West Midlands franchise is due to end in April 2016. It is anticipated that the DfT will negotiate a short-term contract (known as a direct award) with the current operator London Midland. This will allow it to continue running services until October 2017.

TF carried out research with London Midland passengers to find out what they think about their services and what they would like to see improved over the next couple of years. The findings from the research have been shared with the DfT and will help shape what it asks the operator to provide during the direct award. You can read this London Midland franchise research [here](#).

– TF's Passenger Voice

WORCESTERSHIRE PARKWAY SECURES PLANNING CONSENT

Planning permission has been granted by Worcestershire County Council's Planning & Regulatory Committee for a new Worcestershire Parkway station. Groundwork for the £22m project, which will link the Cotswold and Birmingham to Bristol rail lines, is scheduled to begin by the spring of 2016 with the station set to open in autumn 2017.

The new station will be built in the triangle of land formed by the intersection of the Worcester to London (North Cotswold) and Birmingham to Bristol railway lines and the B4084 near Norton, close to Junction 7 of the M5. It will have a single platform on the Worcester to London line and two platforms on the Birmingham to Bristol line, together with a new station building including a booking office, toilets and shop. A 500 space car park will be provided along with bus stops, a taxi rank and passenger drop-off area. – *Transport Briefing*

GREEN LIGHT FOR REVISED CAMBRIDGE STATION PLAN

Cambridge City Council has approved a second (revised) planning application for a new station at Chesterton sidings.

Funded by the Department for Transport and developed by Network Rail in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, the new station will provide an alternative connection point for commuters in north-east Cambridge, with an anticipated 3,000 journeys being made from the station every day. The station will have a landscaped 450 space car park and 1,000 space cycle park and will be served by a non-guided section of the Cambridgeshire Busway.

Building work is set to start this autumn and the new station is expected to open in December 2016. The name of the station is due to be announced later this year with Cambridge Science Park and Cambridge North among the options likely to be considered. – *Transport Briefing*

WORK BEGINS ON LOW MOOR STATION

Construction work on a new £10.8m rail station at Low Moor, Bradford, is underway. Funded by West Yorkshire Combined Authority, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Network Rail, the new station is on the Calder Valley Line between Bradford Interchange and Halifax and will serve passengers in Low Moor, Oakenshaw and Wyke. The new station is expected to be open in spring 2016.

It's the third new station to be built in West Yorkshire, following on from Apperley Bridge and Kirkstall Forge. Station facilities will include: fully-accessible platforms with footbridge and passenger lifts; modern waiting shelters with seating, lighting and CCTV coverage; customer information screens and public address system; 130 car parking spaces with dedicated disabled persons parking bays, drop off point and cycle parking; direct access to and from the adjacent Spen Valley Greenway for pedestrians and cyclists. – *Northern Rail announcement spotted by Andy MacFarlane*

➤ A *Friends of Low Moor Station* group has been set up in advance of the station's completion!

ILKESTON WORK SET TO BEGIN

Work is finally about to start on the new station at Ilkeston in Derbyshire, following long delays caused by the discovery of newts and by making provision for the possibility of flooding. The station is the last of a series across the country being part-funded by the Dept for Transport's New Stations Fund, and when funding was announced it was due to open at the end of last year.

The cost was originally set at £6.5 million, with the DfT contributing £4.5m, but the latest estimate is £9.938m. Derbyshire County Council's cabinet approved additional funding of £515,000 on July 25. The DfT has said it will start a second round of New Stations Fund bidding shortly. – *Rail magazine*

THIS IS WHAT WE DO...

Community Rail Lancashire recently played host to a film team from the Department for Transport, who were making a video to be shown at a series of events called 'Civil Service Live'. The purpose of the events is for each of the different Government departments to show the others what they do. The DfT is using the video to put across the importance of community rail across the country and wanted to include some of the activities in Lancashire.

The team began at Clitheroe and filmed the start of a guided walk led by the Lancashire rail ramblers. They then moved to Huncoat to capture the sort of work that volunteers do at stations and interviewed one of them about how and why she got involved with her local station. The team also visited Blackburn and Mill Hill stations to record some of the artwork done by schoolchildren and local youth groups, then finished at Pleasington to get some footage of the 'Harrington Hump' installed on the eastbound platform. – *Lancashire's Community Rail newsletter*

COMMUNITY STATIONS INITIATIVE

In a bid to revive their Community Stations scheme, ACoRP has appointed a new Community Stations Development Officer: Martin Yallop from Stamford, Lincs. The initiative seeks to identify a community (not-for-profit) use of empty station premises which are no longer needed by the rail industry and deemed to have no commercial value. Martin will soon be out and about, helping communities with projects and ideas at their local stations.

TEN MOST OVERCROWDED PEAK TRAIN SERVICES

The Dept for Transport collects rail passenger counts from train operating companies to monitor train crowding levels. All franchises let by DfT require the train operator to address crowding and to plan their timetables in such a way as to ensure, as far as possible, that crowding is not unduly concentrated on any particular route or individual service.

You can access the DfT's list of the 10 most overcrowded peak train services [here](#). The list was compiled from passenger count data collected by train operators during autumn 2014.

NETWORK RAIL BLAMES ROCKETING DWELL TIMES FOR POOR PERFORMANCE

Network Rail says there is "strong evidence" that passenger journey growth is directly impacting peak performance in London and the South East (L&SE) because of rising dwell times on an already "saturated network".

In a report seen by Rail Technology Magazine, submitted as evidence to the Office of Rail & Road during its investigation into poor performance on Southern, Govia Thameslink (GTR) and in Scotland, the infrastructure owner stated that passenger journey growth in 2014-15 exceeded the Strategic Business Plan's (SBP's) anticipated 3% compound growth by 40%.

The 'Impact of Passenger Growth on Train Performance' report stated: "there is strong evidence that weekday peak performance in L&SE has been directly impacted by this increase through extended station dwell times on a saturated network". Network Rail added that "in simple terms" the London morning peak Public Performance Measure (PPM) has fallen by 5%, and this has generated a 2% drop in the L&SE weekday PPM.

Rising dwell times go largely unrecorded, but they have the most acute effect on performance where there are multiple closely-spaced station calls, heavy volumes of commuter traffic, complex junction arrangements and large numbers of services. – *Rail Technology Magazine*

CHARITABLE STATUS – an appropriate model for RUGs?

You will remember that, in the August edition of Rail User Express, I passed on a query about Charitable Status from a committee member of ABFLY (the Watford - St. Albans line users' group). He wanted to know if it would be an appropriate model for rail user groups and wondered if any other RUGs had gone down this path. I've now had some interesting replies...

Railfuture's own experience

Firstly, Railfuture Board member, Roger Blake, replied saying that Railfuture had investigated, and decided against, seeking charitable status; the reason being the disproportionate amount of extra admin work involved.

Jerry Alderson, Railfuture's Director of Finance and Corporate Governance, then got in touch to point out that the situation may change in the future: "when interest rates rise, so too will the interest on our savings and therefore the corporation tax will rise as well. Also we are paying increased VAT on certain items. Therefore Charitable Status may be something to re-visit to see if the savings would cover the cost of paying someone to do the extra work."

Jerry went on to explain that we could restructure so that "RDS Ltd" remains the membership organisation, but our campaigning is outsourced to "Railfuture Ltd". That way, if Railfuture Ltd goes bust, members' assets in RDS Ltd would still be protected. Also Charitable Status for the "RDS Ltd" part would be easier to obtain if the campaigning part were hived off.

South East Northumberland Rail User Group

Dennis Fancett, the illustrious Chair of SENRUG, replied with his own informal comments...

"I (personally, not our full committee) looked at Charitable status for SENRUG but decided against it because charities may not engage in political campaigning. I felt that working out what constitutes campaigning, rather than lobbying, would be too difficult for us and preferred to play safe. It also requires a higher level of internal accounts. But not being a charity possibly limits us on receiving donations from grant making bodies.

"I also looked briefly at forming a Development Trust to take forward our campaign to re-open the Ashington Blyth & Tyne Line (in the perceived absence of local authority action). Most of our local towns have a Development Trust; however, I took advice from some of them and was advised against it. Many of our volunteer committee would be reluctant to take on the extra responsibility so we remain an unconstituted voluntary organisation.

"For any group wishing to become a Charity, there is now a new kind of charitable status called a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which avoids both the risks of a simple unincorporated charity and also the onerous conditions of a charitable company. I am a trustee of a different charity and we have just changed our status to CIO. This is the format I'd recommend for a RUG."

Footnote

You can get more information about Charitable Status from the Charity Commission's pages on the Government's website here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

The website tells us that "there are four main types of charity structure:

- charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
- charitable company (limited by guarantee)
- unincorporated association
- trust

"You need to choose the right structure for your charity, depending on whether you need it to have a corporate structure and whether you want to have a wider membership."

EVENTS

Events lifted from newsletters and emails received in recent weeks, are listed below.

Further events are shown in the [Events listing on Railfuture's website](#)

Coloured blobs differentiate between types of events...

- National & regional rail events.
- Railfuture events (rail user group representatives are welcome to attend).
- Local Rail User Group events.

■ **Party conference - a chance to lobby the decision-makers !!!**

- 14 September 2015. Monday. Lichfield Rail Promotion Group meet at the Kings Head, Bird Street, **Lichfield** from 20:00. secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk. Representatives of train operators usually attend.
- 14 September 2015. Monday. Skipton & East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership open members meeting. **Colne**. 19.00. <http://www.selrap.org.uk/>
- 14 September 2015. Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group meeting at Hastings Direct, **Collington**, East Sussex. 19.00-21.00. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>
- 16 September 2015. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton Line meet at the No 1 Inn, **Cleethorpes** from 19:00. enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk
- 17 September 2015. Thursday. UK Railway Industry Forum conference entitled "Strategic insight into the future of the network and how to deliver an improved service" in **London**. 10% discount for Railfuture members by quoting code 273RFT. Details and online booking: <http://www.waterfrontconferencecompany.com/>
- 17 September 2015. Thursday. Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group meets in Shepreth Village Hall, **Shepreth** at 19:00 for 19:30. <http://melbourn.org.uk/railusergroup/>
- 18 September 2015. Friday. Lancaster & Skipton Rail User Group AGM at **Bentham** Town Hall LA2 7LH. 19.30. Speaker: Pete Myers of Northern Rail. <http://www.lasrug.btck.co.uk/>

■ 16-22 September 2015. European Mobility Week promoting active travel and public transport. www.mobilityweek.eu. Car free day is on 22 Sept: www.etatrust.org.uk/2015/05/world-car-free-day-2015/

- **19-23 September 2015. Saturday to Wednesday. Liberal Democrat party conference in Bournemouth.**
- 19 September 2015. Saturday. Railfuture East Anglia branch meeting. **Norwich**. 14.00.
- 19 September 2015. Saturday. TransWilts Transport Forum meet at the Cheese Hall, The Town Hall, St John's Street, **Devizes** SN10 1BN from 10:00. secretary@transwilts.org
- 20 September 2015. Sunday. Official opening of Birmingham New Street station after major rebuild.
- **25-28 September 2015. Friday to Monday. Green party conference in Bournemouth.**
- **27-30 September 2015. Sunday to Wednesday. Labour party conference. Brighton.**
- 30 September 2015. Wednesday. Rail Action Group East of Scotland (RAGES) AGM will take place at **Reston** Village Hall at 19:30. All are welcome to attend. <http://www.rages.org.uk/>
- 1 October 2015. Thursday. ACoRP Community Rail Awards 2015 competition gala dinner and awards ceremony at the Riviera International Centre, **Torquay**. <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>
- 3 October 2015. Saturday. Branches and Groups Away-day. Priory Rooms, 40 Bull Street, **Birmingham**, B4 6AF. 10.00-17.00. chris.page@railfuture.org.uk
- **4-7 October 2015. Sunday to Wednesday. Conservative party conference, Manchester.**
- 5 October 2015. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail meet at the New Inn, **Clitheroe** from 19:30. www.ribblevalleyrail.co.uk
- 7 October 2015. Wednesday. Shrewsbury-Chester Rail Users' Assn general meeting at the Booking Office Café, Gobowen station from 19:15. Guest speaker: Sheila Dee. shrewsbury.chester@gmail.com

- 7 October 2015. Wednesday. Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group meet at **Shepreth** Station for a sociable morning of gardening from 10:00. <http://melbourn.org.uk/railusergroup/>
- 8 October 2015. Thursday. NorthWest TravelWatch Conference in the Offices of Merseytravel, **Liverpool**, to include AGM. Details: admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk
- 8 October 2015. Thursday. London and South East branch, Sussex & Coastway division meeting. 18.00.
- 10 October 2015. Saturday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association AGM at the White Lion, **Machynlleth** from 11:00. sarpa@sarpa.info
- 10 October 2015. Saturday. East Suffolk Travellers' Association autumn meeting, in the parish church hall, **Aldeburgh** from 14:00. Guest speakers from Abellio & the County Council. www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk
- 12 October 2015. Monday. Lichfield Rail Promotion Group meet at the Kings Head, Bird Street, **Lichfield** from 20:00. secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk. Representatives of train operators usually attend.
- 12 October 2015. Monday. Bexhill Rail Action Group meeting at Hastings Direct, **Collington**, East Sussex. 19.00-21.00. <http://www.bexhillrailaction.org.uk/>
- 16 October 2015. Friday. Lincolnshire Transport Conference at Springfield's event centre, **Spalding**. 10.00-16.00. Booking essential. <http://www.spaldingtransportforum.co.uk/>
- 19 October 2015. Monday. Avocet Line RUG's AGM at Malthouse, The Globe, **Topsham**. www.avocetline.org.uk
- 21 October 2015. Sustainable Transport Conference, **London**: www.greeningtransport.co.uk/event-home
- 23 – 25 October 2015. "Revolving Words – the Festival of Railway Literature", part of the 25th Anniversary Celebrations of the Wensleydale Railway Association, takes place at **Bedale** on the Wensleydale Railway. The full programme can be found at www.revolvingwords.com. Tickets are on sale now.
- 2 November 2015. Monday. Ribble Valley Rail meet at the New Inn, **Clitheroe** from 19:30. www.ribbonvalleyrail.co.uk
- 3 November 2015. Tuesday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association meet at the Sportsman, Severn Street, **Newtown** from 18:45. sarpa@sarpa.info

■ 7 November 2015. Saturday. Railfuture's Rail User Conference at The Mercure Bristol Holland House Hotel, Redcliff Hill, **Bristol**, just a short walk from Temple Meads station. Details [here](#).

- 9 November 2015. Monday. Lichfield Rail Promotion Group meet at the Kings Head, Bird Street, **Lichfield** from 20:00. secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk. Representatives of train operators usually attend.
- 10 November 2015. Tuesday. ACoRP Members' Seminar North in **Manchester**. <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>
- 13 November 2015. Friday. East Suffolk Travellers' Assn 50th anniversary reception and exhibition at the Market Hall, **Saxmundham**. Booking essential. www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk
- 14 November 2015. Saturday. HPSRUA open meeting at Stocksmoor Village Hall from 10:00. Guest speaker to be announced. hpsrua@btinternet.com
- 14 November 2015. Saturday. Railfuture North West branch meet at The Moor Club, Heaton Moor Road, Heaton Moor, **Stockport** (provisional venue). northwest@railfuture.org.uk
- 17 November 2015. Tuesday. ACoRP Members' Seminar South at the Dept. for Transport offices, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, **London** SW1P 4DR. <http://www.acorp.uk.com/events.html>
- 18 November 2015. Wednesday. Friends of the Barton Line AGM at the Sloop Inn, **Barton-on-Humber** from 20:00 (food and ale from 18:00). enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk
- 28 November 2015. Saturday. Railfuture London & SE, Herts & Beds Division meet at St Paul's Church, corner of Hatfield Road/Blandford Road, St Albans AL1 4JP from 10:30 for 10:45 start. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Herts+and+Beds>
- 12 December 2015. Saturday. Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association meet at the Cambrian Hotel, **Aberystwyth** from 11:45. sarpa@sarpa.info
- 14 December 2015. Monday. Lichfield Rail Promotion Group meet at the Kings Head, Bird Street, **Lichfield** from 20:00. secretary@lichfieldrailusers.org.uk. Representatives of train operators usually attend.

■ 13 January 2016. Wednesday. Harrow Public Transport Users Association rail meeting at Harrow Baptist Church Hall, College Road, **Harrow** from 14:00

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 from Dorset by...

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