

NEWSLETTER No 2 RAILFUTURE WESSEX Branch

Chairman's Introduction

This is the second of our annual newsletters which aims to keep members of the Wessex branch informed of what your committee is doing on your behalf. I will not cover matters which are reported in RAILWATCH.

Committee

We meet about five or six times a year in locations around our area. Items on the agenda usually include: preparation of responses to consultations at both national and local levels; reports of meetings with Passenger Focus and representatives of the rail industry; and a review of progress towards meeting the objectives set out in the paper: 'Development to Rail Services – Wessex'.

Consultations

At the national level we have contributed to most of the important papers and consultation responses which Railfuture, as a national organisation, submits to central government. These have included: 'A Rail Manifesto for the 21st Century' (prior to the General Election); 'Britain's Railways – Much More for Much Less' (in response to the Coalition Government's request for suggestions); and the current consultation on franchising policy.

More locally we have responded to a consultation on the draft framework master plan for the proposed Whitehill -Bordon 'Eco-town' and to consultations on Local Transport Plans (see below).

Visit to South West Trains Driver Simulator

For the branch winter visit we are planning to arrange for groups of 8 members at a time to be given a conducted tour (with practical experience) of the SWT driver simulator at Basingstoke. Each visit would be from about 1800 to 2100 on a weekday evening as this is the time when the facility is not in use for driver training. Please let me know, either by letter or email, if you would be interested? You will then be contacted with available dates and further details. Note: the visit is a privilege of Railfuture membership.

Development to Rail Services – Wessex

A revised version of our list is enclosed. We do not expect that every member will agree with every item on our list but we have tried to produce a realistic, though admittedly optimistic, template for the future. Some projects which have in the past been viewed as impossible are now quite probable. For example funds have already been committed by interested parties, including Dorset County and Purbeck District Councils, to enable through trains to run to Swanage; and the re-opening the Marchwood branch line to passenger traffic is no longer merely a pipe-dream. Please send any comments you may have on the list to any member of the committee?

RAILFUTURE National Conference

It is not too late to sign in for the National conference on 13 November. Some excellent speakers have been booked for the event in Shoreditch Town Hall. See the latest RAILWATCH for details.

Local Transport Plans (LTP)

It is quite likely that the planning process will change in the near future as the Coalition Government attempts to cut down the scale of Quango activity. Regional development agencies have already been abolished and so the SE and SW plans which affect this area are no longer valid. However an important consultation at county/unitary authority level is currently taking place about LTPs. In the case of Hampshire, the County Council is coordinating its plans with those of Portsmouth and Southampton. Each authority's LTP will consist of a 20 year long-term strategy and a 3 year Implementation Plan.

Similar plans are being developed by Dorset, with the unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole, by Wiltshire and the Isle of Wight. Our main comments to date have centred on the generally small attention paid to rail in most plans. All members are asked to monitor local plans in their own areas and to comment if you see fit.

Annual General Meeting 2011

The next AGM will be held on either Saturday 19 or Saturday 26 March. We are looking for a suitable location, possibly in Romsey. Formal notification will be circulated in February.

WESSEX BRANCH COMMITTEE 2010

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