

Dear Friend

I hope you are staying safe.

I invite you to our meeting on **Thursday 27th August at 19:30 on Zoom**; I am targeting a finish by 20:45; definitely by 21:00.

Our subsequent meetings are then:

- **Saturday 26th September in person from 11:00** at St Paul's Church, Hatfield Road, St Albans, followed by a 'social' lunch.
- **Tuesday 27th October at 19:30 on Zoom.**

I'm not setting a November / December meeting date for now, on the basis of uncertainty; if we are lucky, we might have a social outing on East West Rail to Oxford (fingers crossed); other options include a pre-Christmas social.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88450315544?pwd=d3krdCtiUHlrMExQcGtMWm1zVU9Qdz09>; alternatively join manually via <https://zoom.us/join>, then Meeting ID: 884 5031 5544 & Passcode: 910342.

If your PC doesn't have a microphone, then use the link above to open (and download, if needed) the software and, once connected, click the up arrow next to the microphone or join audio icon (bottom left) and follow the "switch to phone audio link". If you don't have a PC, tablet or Smartphone available, call one of the 3 numbers below, enter the Meeting ID [then '#'] at the first prompt; at the second prompt just press '#' and at the third prompt, enter the password [then '#']. Phone numbers to dial: 0131 460 1196 | 020 3481 5237 | 020 3481 5240.

Topics for meeting

1. Welcome
2. Late 2026 meetings (see above)
3. Local campaigning priorities refresh (see below)
4. GTR Ticket Vending Machine reductions (more below)
5. East West Rail (more below)
6. Ticket fraud (more below)
7. TfL & GN Inners (more below)
8. Stakeholder sessions (see below)
9. Performance (more below)
10. Round table

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Local Campaigning priorities

The [list of campaigning priorities](#) has been updated; it will next be updated around the end of the year.

Compared to the April edition, I think the changes are evolution, rather than revolution. A Word version with Track Changes is available [here](#).

As we've not taken a proper look at it for some time, I think it worthwhile to spend a bit of time at the meeting reviewing it and concluding that we are focusing on the right topics (or not if the case) – ones where we think we have some chance of success in achieving change.

East West Rail

I have no news on East West Rail – neither the developments east of Bletchley, nor the start of the train service between Oxford and Milton Keynes.

On services from Oxford there was talk of an agreement, but that was then immediately back-pedalled. Chiltern will move to the DfT Operator on 20 September, and I suspect we will hear more around then, possibly even a date that is both credible and imminent.

For now, it looks like this will be the [first scheduled service](#) (GWR from Bristol Parkway to Euston).

TfL seeking control of GN Inners

There is no new official news on this. A reminder that as regards milestones, a key one is around September when the window closes on bids for the May 2027 timetable (when shadow running is envisaged) – before then TfL will want to know if there will be enough drivers available, even after allowing for the segmentation of the available drivers between GN Outers/Thameslink and GN Inners. I suggested to Geoff Hobbs, TfL's Director, Public Transport Service Planning that we chat again, and I am following up on this.

Ticket fraud

A number of operators including [GTR](#) and [SWR](#) have launched an initiative targeting 'doughnutting' or short faring – buying an online ticket from a station near to the point where the passenger plans to get off, despite having travelled considerably further. Apparently, online purchase is still possible, but the ticket has to be collected from a TVM. The SWR article specifically mentions Vauxhall for Waterloo.

For me personally (and genuinely travelling (eg) Vauxhall to Waterloo) I wouldn't be using online purchase for a ticket – I would opt to use Oyster or Contactless. It strikes me that this would generally be the preference for many travellers.

This follows on from the earlier decision to not allow refunds for flexible tickets on or after first validity. This could create pain to me, at least, as I might be using a flexible ticket as a route to a seat reservation.

I'm interested in thoughts on:

1. Adverse impacts on legitimate travellers; and
2. Anything else we can think of that can reduce fraudulent travel

GTR reductions in Ticket Vending Machines

I believe GTR have now completed reducing TVM numbers, although out of use TVMs should generally still remain in-situ.

Separately, I noticed a [news item](#) on improvements at Southeastern. I don't think this is necessarily incompatible, but the headline is different. I've also heard that Northern have started using some of their TVMs to display next train information.

I'm interested in different perspectives on this topic.

GTR and other stakeholder sessions

GTR had a stakeholder session last month. I didn't pick up any great breaking news from this – I'm curious on feedback from others.

At present, GTR's approach outbound focus seems to be a mix of:

- Their twice a year lunchtime session – a combination of networking and short updates
- Intermittent updates on topics – in person
- An approximately monthly 'newsletter' email
- Intermittent briefings on specific topics – usually starting with an email.

How does this compare with other TOCs?

Class 700 Seat Replacement

[The Times](#) is reporting that the Class 700 seats are to be replaced. I know this is correct, as I tried out new seat options earlier this year (but was asked not to talk about) – all the options were noticeably better. I asked about wider seat spacers at the time, but was told this was not possible as the change is happening as part of the contract signed at purchase for mid-life change.

Of more general relevance is that I am told that standards now give more flexibility than those in place at the time of construction and this will apply to other refurbishments.

Fares

I've not been able to pursue moving the contactless debate on this month and am planning post meeting activity.

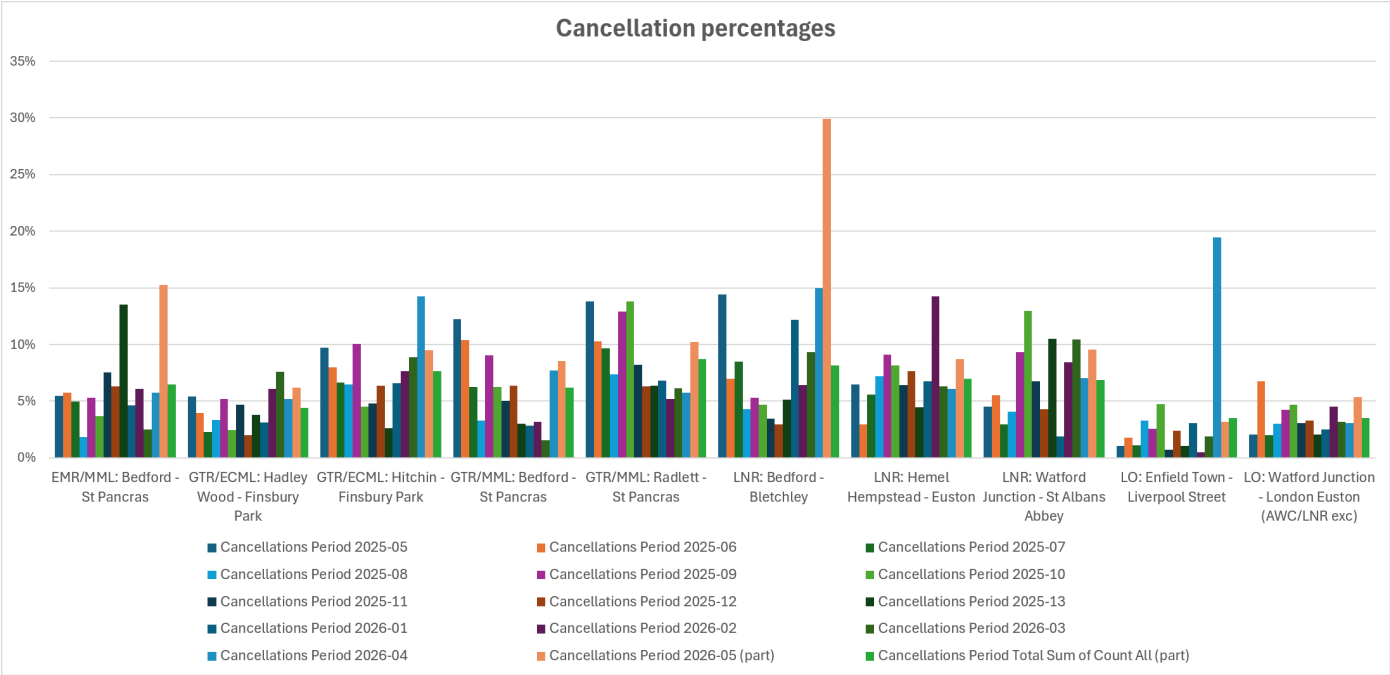
Performance

I have continued to collect the performance data for our main services via Recent Train Times. Recently, I've made a shift in time periods – I have been using 4 week periods since I started and have now switched to using Railway accounting periods (also 4 weeks), except around the railway's year end of 31 March, where instead I use the nearest Saturday. This should have no meaningful impact in the data but does mean it should more match the data we get from TOCs.

As previewed last month, I've excluded the days on the Midland Mainline badly impacted by the Elstow train crash.

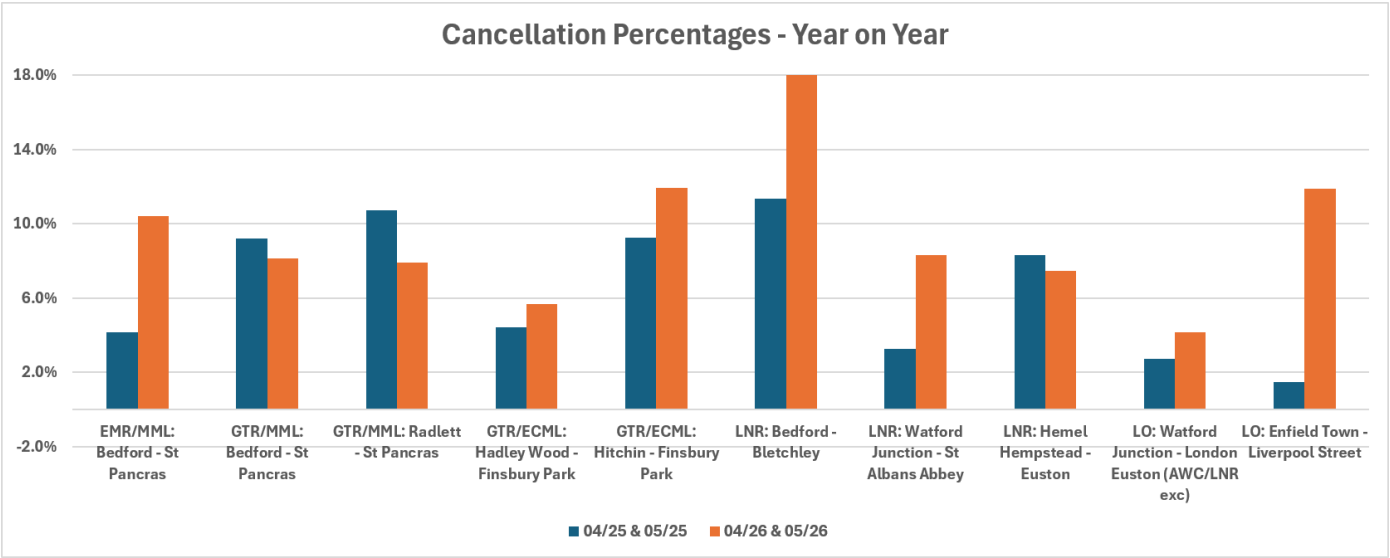
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Cancellations over time



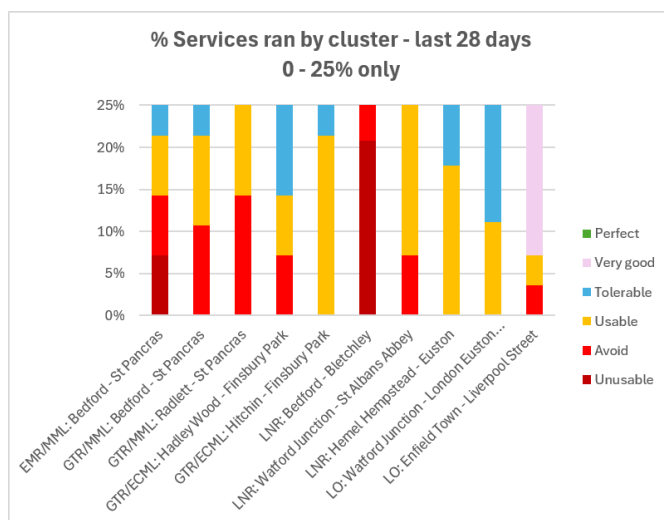
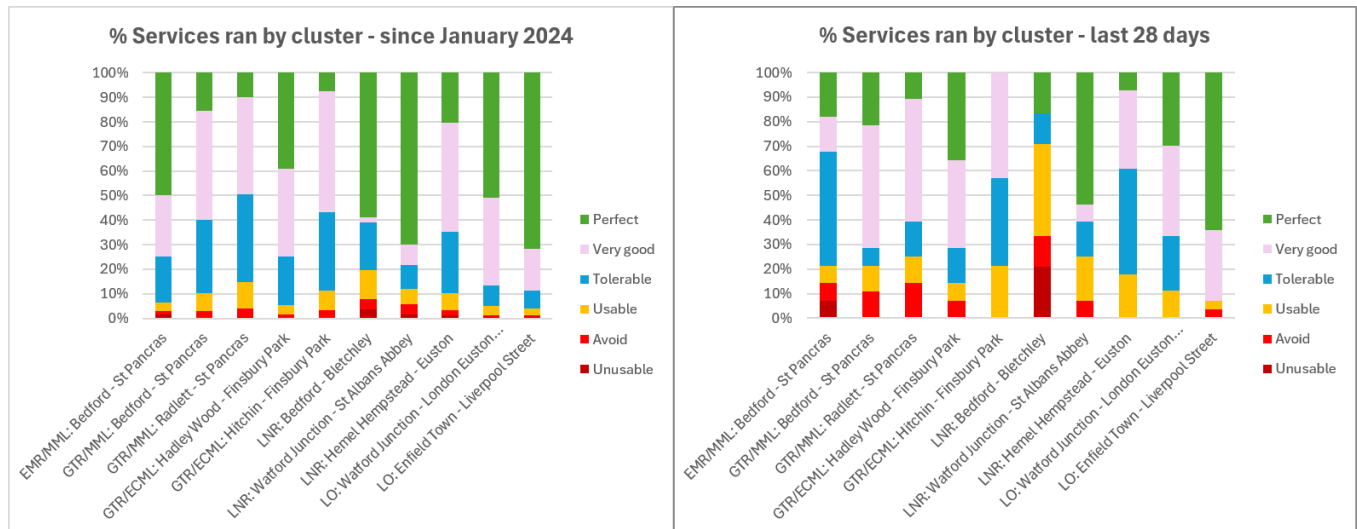
This graph is also available in landscape at the end of the newsletter.

Cancellations year on year



Continued overleaf

Spread of cancellations



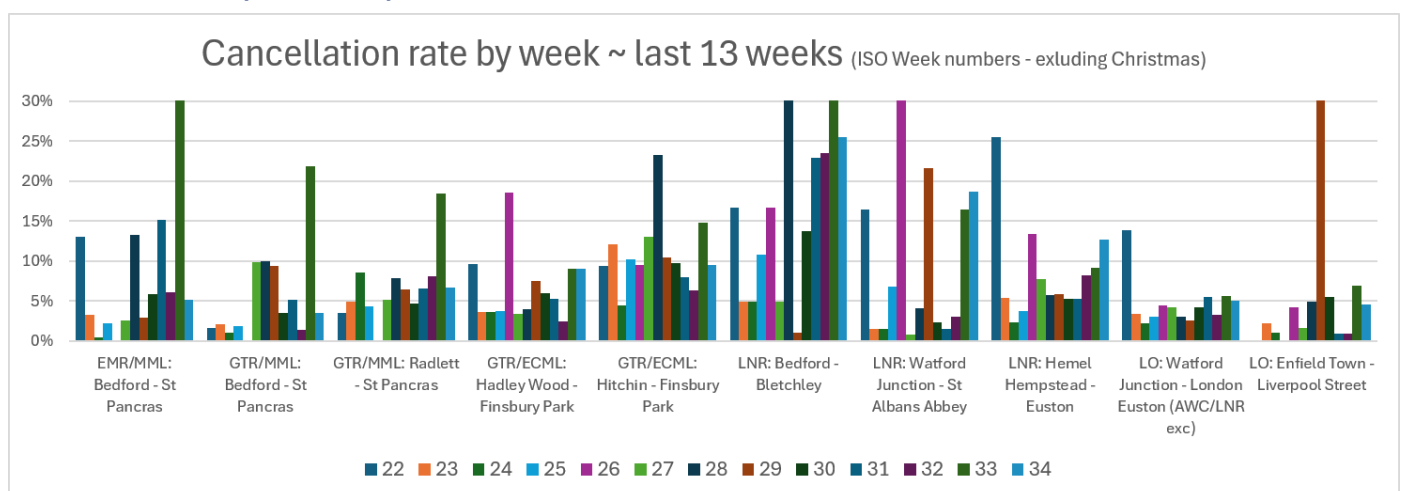
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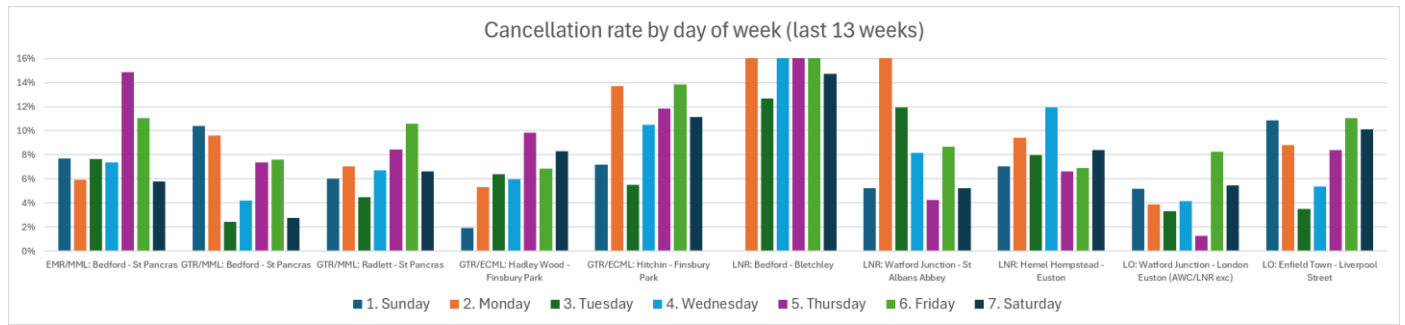
38%	Unusable
50%	Avoid
70%	Usable
85%	Tolerable
95%	Very good
100%	Perfect

For 'all of 2024' Action
Short of a Strike days have
been excluded.

Because I am measuring this statistic across at the "whole of day" level, I do not detect long gaps within the day.

Cancellations by week / day of the week





A reprise of local campaigning topics

The [list of campaigning priorities](#) was updated in April; it will next be updated in August. Comments are welcome. Changes last time were small and incremental.

Can I forward this email to others?

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Privacy, including GDPR.

You are receiving this email because you meet one or more of these criteria:

1. You are a Railfuture member who lives in the area, has provided an email address.
2. You have previously attended one of our meetings (or actively declined a previous invite) and I believe you have given us clear permission to keep you updated about future meetings.
3. You have specifically given us permission to keep you updated about future meetings.

If you want to be taken off this email list either reply to this email to that effect or follow the unsubscribe link at the foot of the email. If you are a Railfuture member, to update your general Railfuture communication preferences, follow the process set out in the member area on the website or in the address flyer for Railwatch.

Stay Safe.

Neil

Neil Middleton

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Cancellation percentages

