

Rail South East Bulletin

October/ November 2025

The periodic branch bulletin of **raillfuture** in London and the South East
Britain's leading *independent* campaign for a bigger better railway for passengers and freight

NEWS AROUND OUR BRANCH

The branch remains busy on the campaign front, our main focus at present relating to the Gatwick Express and capacity issues effecting the Brighton Main Line, compounded by the announcement on 22 September 2025 permitting a second runway at Gatwick Airport. We are very much concerned as to the likely impact on the Brighton Main Line.

Our Surrey Division is holding its first divisional meeting for some time, taking the lead on Gatwick Express/ Brighton line issue. It should be noted that trains on the Brighton Main Line effect not only long distance passengers but those closer to the airport, many of whom work there. The meeting is sponsored also by the Sussex and London Metro Divisions.

This meeting will be followed up by regular meetings of the Surrey Division throughout next year, a likely mixture of live meetings and those by way of Zoom. All Surrey members are encouraged to contact the Surrey Division Convenor (Stephen Rolph) with any thoughts they may have as regards a meeting venue.

Our Kent Division has long wished to see cross-channel passenger services stop again at Ashford and Ebbsfleet. This is seeing renewed interest with a number of railway operators with open access pretensions indicated that they may offer stops at those stations. We are beginning to engage with MPs and local councils in support of these stops.

Our Metro Division is lending its support to the extension of the Dockland Light Railway to Thamesmead and has responded to a TfL further consultation in that regard. The Division, on behalf of the branch, hosted a meeting with an invited guest from Chiltern Railways, and the division chair will be attending the annual Chiltern stakeholders meeting later this month. October also sees the opening of a new station on the Great Eastern Main Line, Beaulieu Park on the outskirts of Chelmsford. Railfuture has been invited and will be attending the opening ceremony.

Our Herts and Beds Division is focused on East West Rail and on the new Universal Studios Station (previously Wixams station). In both cases the key underlying factor is Universal Studios. For the former it is the impact on demand from both commuters and theme park visitors and for the latter, it is a desire for early delivery to benefit those living in Wixams who have waited many years for the arrival of a station. We're also focused on performance and on compiling a long list of wishes (recognising that on many of these we will only give ourselves a watching brief. We will be meeting on Zoom at 7:30pm on Tuesday 4 November on Zoom and will meet in person on Saturday 6 December – lunchtime near Kings Cross or Euston for a social event.

Our Sussex Division continue its regular meetings and is now discussing its campaign aims for 2026. Its remaining meetings for 2026 are Thursday 6 November and Thursday 4 December by Zoom starting 6pm.

Gatwick Express and Capacity Issues on the Brighton Main Line

The main campaign of the LSE branch at present relates to the Gatwick Express and capacity problems on the London - Gatwick line, which comprise part of the London - Brighton Main Line, one of the busiest lines in the country. Those in the know avoid the Gatwick Express due to its premium pricing, and in consequence many of its trains are partially empty. Indeed our own research suggests that only around 12% of passengers travelling from Gatwick to London by rail choose the Gatwick Express. This results in passengers standing, due to over-crowding, on the cheaper Southern and Thameslink trains. To compound matters, Gatwick Airport has been granted permission to add a second runway, with the hope of increasing air passenger numbers from around 41 million today to around 75 million by the late 2030s and 81 million by 2047. Governmental permission for such expansion has been granted, dependent on specified matters, including a requirement that at least 54% of airport passengers must arrive/ leave the airport by public transport.

We are holding campaign meetings in respect of this issue, as you will not on the following pages. Please join us in Salfords to discuss how we resolve these issues.

JOINT MEETING OF THE SURREY, SUSSEX AND METRO DIVISIONS

Gatwick Express/ Brighton Main Line Capacity Campaign Meeting

Date: Thursday 20 November 2025, starts 7.30pm

Venue: Salfords Village Hall, 5 Honeycrook Lane, Salfords, Redhill RH1 5DG



Gatwick Express, Thameslink and a freight train at East Croydon, a major bottleneck.

Railfuture is now in campaign mode. Following the delivery of our report to the Minister of State for Rail, a joint meeting is to be held of the Surrey, Sussex and Metro Divisions of Railfuture to discuss issues concerning the Gatwick Express, why it isn't working, and how matters can be improved.

Date & Time: 7:30pm 20 November 2025

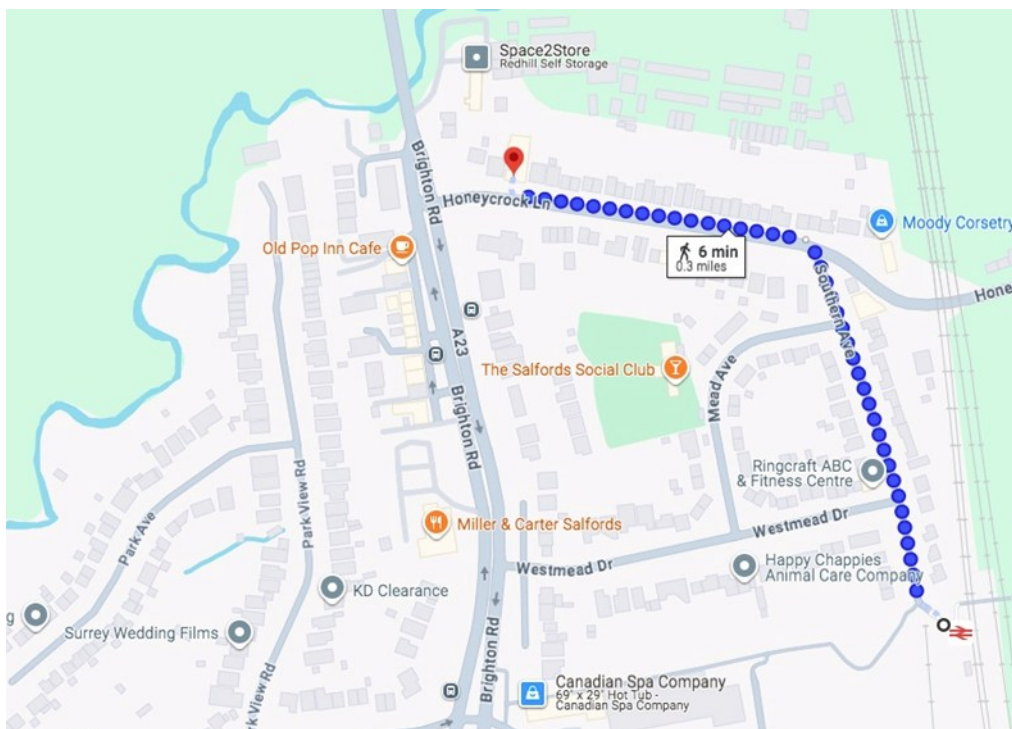
Venue: Salfords Village Hall, 5 Honeycrook Lane, Salfords, Redhill RH1 5DG

CAMPAIGN MEETING TO BE HELD ON BRIGHTON MAIN LINE CAPACITY AND GATWICK EXPRESS

'The ridiculous reality of express services from London Victoria to Gatwick Airport is that for 50 minutes in the hour, they are provided by Southern trains and not by Gatwick Express!'

So reads the opening sentence of a report prepared by the Metro Division vice-chair, Charlie King, into the Gatwick Express and line capacity on the Brighton Main Line. A full version of the report has been submitted by way of letter to the Minister of State for Rail, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill CBE, copied to Members of Parliament for Crawley, Dorking, Reigate and Croydon East, Thameslink Govia Railway, and Network Rail, among others. A copy of that letter can be found [here](#). An article on the Gatwick Express also appeared in the recent 'South East Rail Action'.

There are significant capacity issues on the London - Gatwick - Brighton railway, one of the busiest lines in the country. Those in the know avoid the Gatwick Express as being an over-priced service for little added value, and consequently many run partially empty. This results in over-crowding on the cheaper, nearly as fast Southern and Thameslink Gatwick trains. With Gatwick Airport receiving consent for its second runway, capacity issues will get worse. All those having concerns as to these issues are urged to join our meeting in Salfords on 20 November.



How to get to Salfords Village Hall

By Thameslink: Depart London Bridge at 17.51 (arr 18.33) or 18.21 (arr 19.03)

By Southern: Depart Victoria at 17.38 (arr 18.30) or 18.08 (arr 18.59)

By GWR: Depart Guildford 18.06 (arr 18.59) - change at Redhill

Depart Brighton 17.44 (arr 18.39) or 18.14 (arr 19.09) - change at Three Bridges

Venue: Salfords Village Hall just a 6 minute walk from Salfords station (see map for directions). Light refreshments will be available.

What else are we up to this autumn?

London and South East regional branch members, and / or committee members, have or will be:-

- ~ Have submitted a response in support GWR's application for [accessibility waivers](#) to bring their Class 230 Battery Fast Chare unit into public use.
- ~ Wrote the Railfuture national [response](#) on the consultation of the Private Parking Code of Practice (focusing on impacts for rail operated car parks).
- ~ Plan to be at GTR's stakeholders' winter event.
- ~ Went to the All Party Parliamentary Rail Group where Sir Andrew Haines covered 'Creating an empowered and accountable Great British Railways' – and asked questions and got to talk one on one with his replacement Jeremy Westlake.
- ~ In addition to the regional meetings above, the Committee meets month on Zoom – normally the first Wednesday of the month
- ~ Been to yesterday's opening of Beaulieu Park Station ([Essex CC](#) | [DfT](#)) – see the Geoff Marshall [YouTube video](#).
- ~ Might attend [TfL's celebration](#) of 100 years of Croyley and Watford Met stations.

Known active consultations are listed [here](#) and consultation and similar submissions are available by [consultor](#) and by [date](#) (most recent first).

***Our vision for Railfuture:** An independent organisation whose views are respected by the rail industry, to which decision makers come for advice, which rail users are proud to join and recommend.*

Anniversaries

October

- ~ Kentish Town West, on 5th in 1981
- ~ Arlesey, on 3rd in 1988
- ~ How Wood, on 22nd in 1988, together with overhead electrification
- ~ London Marylebone-Oxford Parkway via new Bicester Chord, Bicester Village and Islip stations (East West Rail western section phase 1), on 26th in 2015
- ~ Bond Street station, Elizabeth Line, on 24th in 2022
- ~ Beaulieu Park, on 26th in 2025

November

- ~ Southbury, Theobalds Grove, Turkey Street, on 21st in 1960
- ~ Basildon, on 25th in 1974 (25 years after Basildon was designated a New Town)
- ~ Channel Tunnel, Waterloo Curve / Stewarts Lane Viaduct, Waterloo International station, on 14th in 1994
- ~ Braintree Freeport, on 8th in 1999
- ~ Luton Airport Parkway, on 21st in 1999
- ~ HS1 phase two (Southfleet Junction to London St. Pancras International), on 14th in 2007
- ~ Ebbsfleet International, on 19th in 2007
- ~ Stratford International, on 30th in 2009

December

- ~ Watford Stadium station, on 4th in 1982 (services suspended in 1996 and station closed in 2003)
- ~ Eurotunnel Le Shuttle services for cars, on 22nd in 1994
- ~ London St. Pancras International Thameslink platforms A and B, on 9th in 2007
- ~ Aylesbury Vale Parkway station and line from Aylesbury, on 14th in 2008
- ~ London Marylebone services extended between Oxford Parkway and Oxford, on 11th in 2016
- ~ London Overground services extended between Surrey Quays and Queens Road Peckham via Silwood Junction for Peckham Rye and Wandsworth Road then Clapham Junction / Battersea Park, on 9th in 2012
- ~ Rochester station, re-sited on 13th in 2015

Railfuture Publications

[National](#)

[Railwatch](#) - Our national newsletter, 24 pages of news and views, issued quarterly, posted to members and available on-line.

[Rail User Express](#) - News on rail user group issued monthly, and the periodic [Rail Action](#) bulletin, both on-line

[London & South East Branch](#)

[South East Rail Action](#) – Our comprehensive branch newsletter, issued quarterly, posted and emailed to members, and available on-line.

[Rail South East Bulletin](#) – This news bulletin, issued monthly save months when branch newsletter is emailed to members and available on-line.

This branch e-newsletter is free, published in most months and distributed to branch members with their GDPR consent items for our newsletters, and our branch Local Action column in **Railwatch**, to londonandsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk

The logo for Railfuture, with 'rail' in black and 'future' in green, both in a bold, sans-serif font. A small red dot is positioned above the 'i' in 'rail'.

Railfuture's mission: to be the number one advocate for Britain's railway and rail users

Website: www.railfuture.org.uk **X/Twitter:** [@RailfutureLSE](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLSE)

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