

Dear Friend

I hope you are staying safe.

I invite you to our meeting on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April at 19:30 on Zoom**; I am targeting a finish by 20:45; definitely by 21:00.

Our next two meetings are then:

- **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 19:30 on Zoom.**
- **A Saturday morning in June in person**, likely 13<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> (and definitely not the 6<sup>th</sup>) – see agenda.

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. June meeting – in person, but 'business' or social – if the latter, ideas...
3. Our campaigning topics (more below)
4. Fares more generally (more below)
5. TfL & GN Inners (more below)
6. East West Rail (more below)
7. Performance (more below)
8. Round table

## Newsletter content

Topics for meeting	1
A shorter than usual email	1
Other Railfuture meetings you might be interested in	2
A reprise of local campaigning topics	2
Fares	2
TfL seeking control of GN Inners	2
East West Rail	3
Performance	3
Cancellations over time	3
Cancellations year on year	4
Spread of cancellations	4
Cancellations by week / day of the week	5
Can I forward this email to others?	5
Privacy, including GDPR	5

## A shorter than usual email

This month is much shorter than the usual email due to being away for two weeks on holidays. The key message from that holiday is we moan about low national UK rail performance measures, but when one ferry company manages a 100% cancellation rate and the other a Time to 30 mins performance rate of 0%, that is not good news.

## Other Railfuture meetings you might be interested in

Sat 18 April, 11am	Railfuture LSE Annual Meeting	Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London
Sat 4 July, 11am	Railfuture National Annual Meeting	Priory Rooms, Birmingham

## A reprise of local campaigning topics

The [list of campaigning priorities](#) has been updated; it will next be updated in July. Comments are welcome. Changes this time are small and incremental.

## Fares

It seems to me that the current implementation of fares is just a random collection without connected thought. We have:

1. The move to flexible tickets being only refundable up to 23:59 on the day before the ticket becomes valid. Yes, it will be a good move to reduce fraud, by stopping anyone whose ticket is never scanned / checked from submitting a fraudulent reclaim travel. The amount at risk is mentioned as £40m per annum. But, then
  - a. The Business Travel Association [comments](#): “the loss of “flexibility” would be damaging for business and remove the “main selling point” for rail travel .... BTA members handle about £1 billion of rail spending a year and 65 per cent of the tickets they book are the flexible” – so how much of that £40m might disappear?
  - b. It usually isn't possible to reserve a seat without a ticket – the bargain of buy early, get a reservation but if plans fall through a refund was possible was tolerable. But now there is no option.
  - c. The impact varies – for me, the lack of an option for a seat reservation is a pain, but buying my tickets immediately beforehand is not a problem – I have a Smartphone and to buy goods and services on it, so same day purchase is not an issue, but if you are an in-person buyer (or need to collect from a TVM) then again a disincentive to travel.
2. Contactless fare extensions around London are missing railcard discounts and peak / off peak limitations means the promise of “always cheapest” can't be met.

I'd like to spend some time exploring what our vision for a good fares system should be on Wednesday.

An extra I'd like to cover is seat reservations. A classic example of the challenges of the current arrangements can be seen from my daughter's recent trip from Sheffield to Edinburgh:

1. Someone in their seats when they boarded northbound (who did move when asked)
2. Whilst on the northbound journey actively (and sensibly) encouraged by the guard to move to near the bike space as that's a good place to keep the pram with them.
3. So on the southbound, straight to near the bike space ignoring their booked seats.

So, should we generally move away from specific reserved seats – probably, as with airlines, charging for premium seats (but for a small price).

## TfL seeking control of GN Inners

There is no new official news on this. I heard that the DfT has commissioned and received an independent assessment of the TfL Business Case and I submitted a [Freedom of Information request](#) to request it, but this was refused on the grounds of “inhibit the free and frank provision of advice, inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, and (or) otherwise prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.”

I've contemplated whether to appeal and decided a like for like appeal is unlikely to succeed. I'm interested to hear suggestions for a more limited scope request.

To recap, there are three broad outcomes:

1. TfL's business case is accepted and implemented.

2. GTR’s alternative proposal – the same for the Hertford Loop, and that the Welwyn Garden City to Sevenoaks service becomes all day is accepted and implemented.
3. Nothing changes.

The view of the January meeting was that choice 2 was our preferred option.

For my next steps, I think the 80/20 rule very much applies – a little bit of time is justified but making it a big time consumer is not sensible – the decision is probably going to be driven in good part by national political and perception views.

And to recap, TfL’s response to my 10 questions is [here](#) and the redacted business case [here](#).

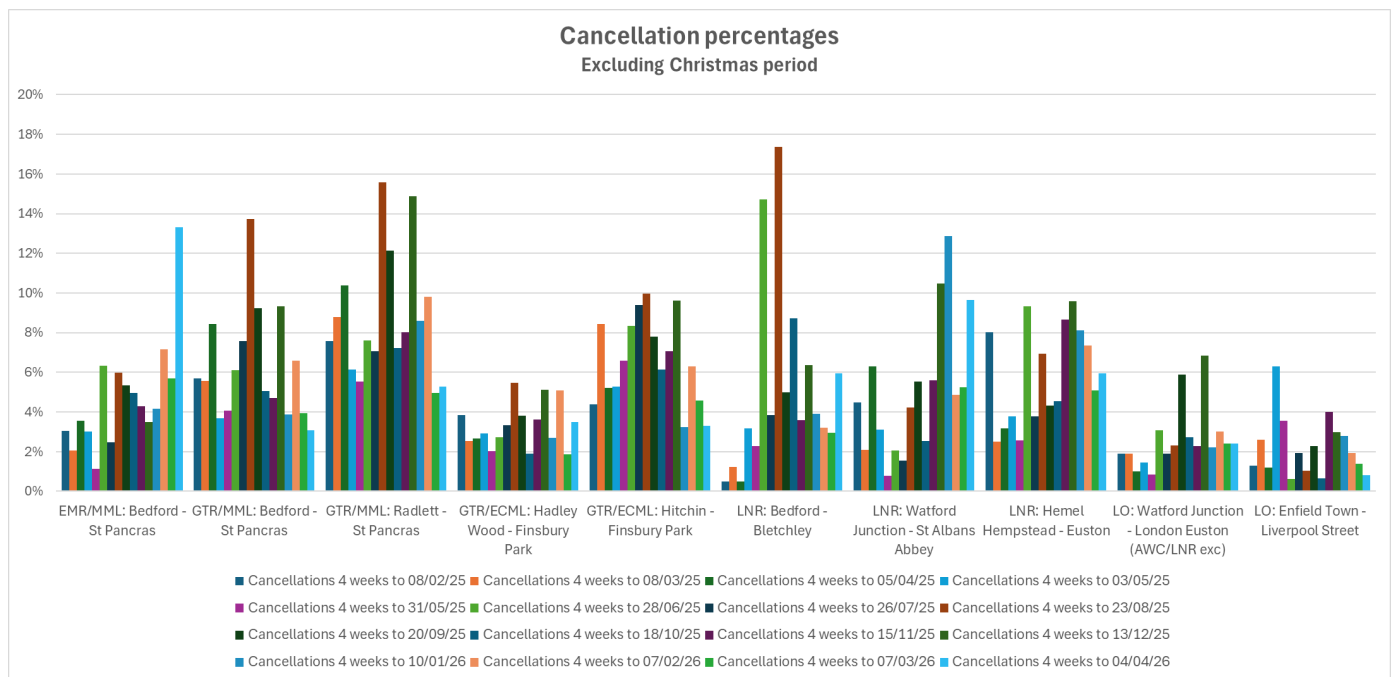
### East West Rail

Still no news on the service between Milton Keynes and Oxford; I think it is mired in a wider dispute about the expansion (or not) of DOO (Driver Only Operation) and/or DCO (Driver Controlled Operation), where there is a second member of staff and the driver opens and closes the doors. I still hope to ride it on the first day. The view of the October 2025 meeting was others want to do the same and so I will organise an outing once everything is clear.

### Performance

I have continued to collect the performance data for our main services via Recent Train Times.

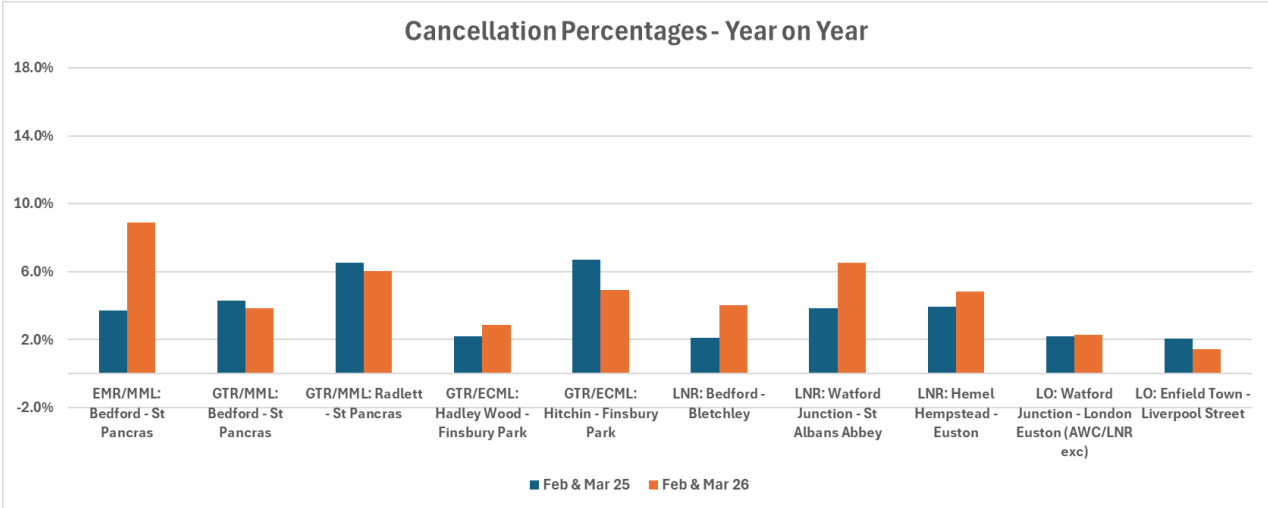
#### Cancellations over time



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

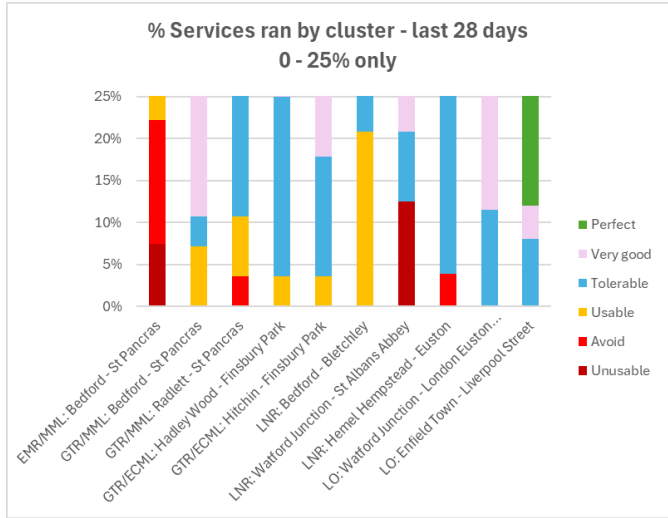
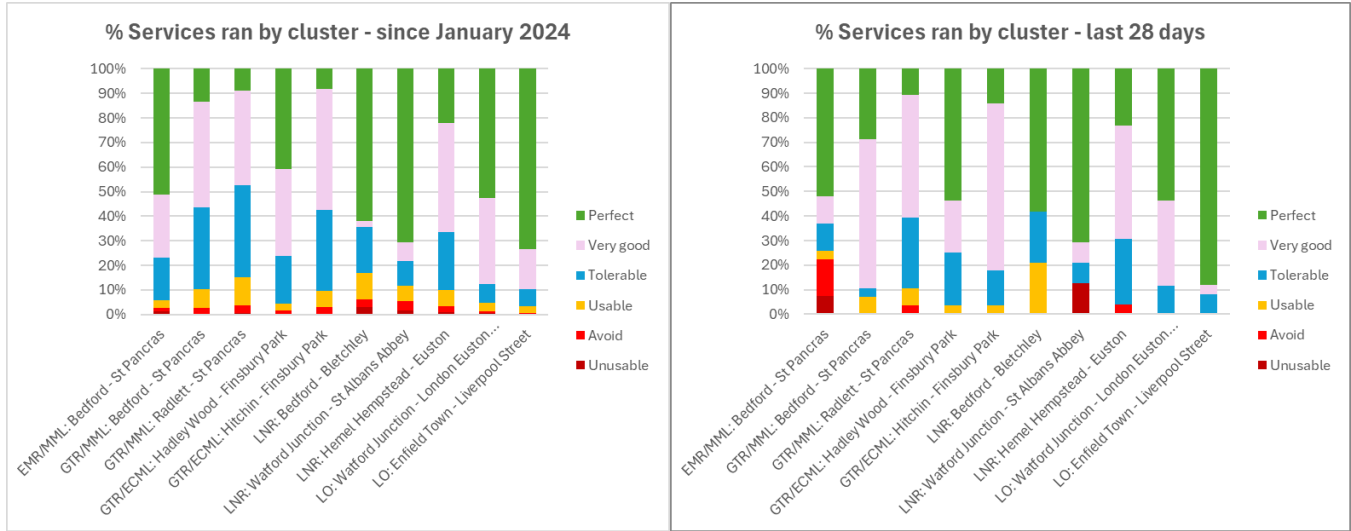
*Continued overleaf*

**Cancellations year on year**



An interesting point on the above graph is to compare it to the next step – for instance comparing EMR and GTR between Bedford and St Pancras, EMR has more ‘perfect’ days than GTR, which hints at issues being less operator and more infrastructure / whole of line management. This also hinted at by high volatility in the cancellation rate per week in the subsequent graph.

**Spread of cancellations**



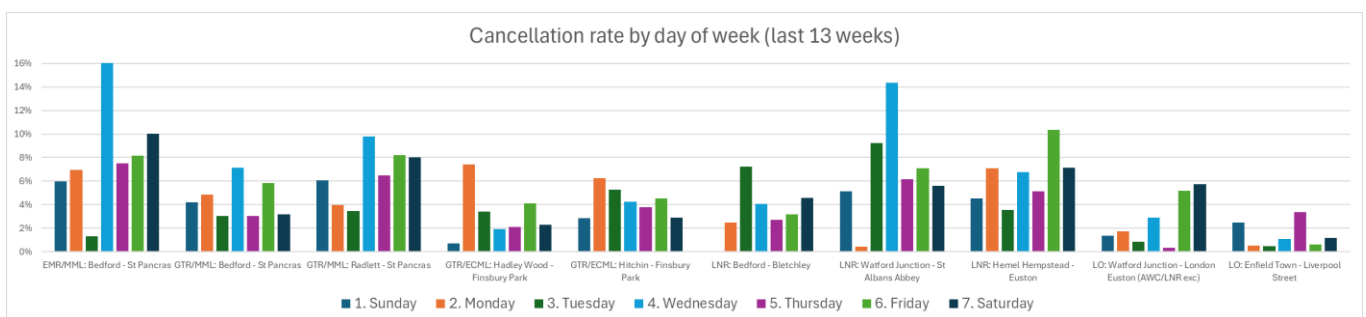
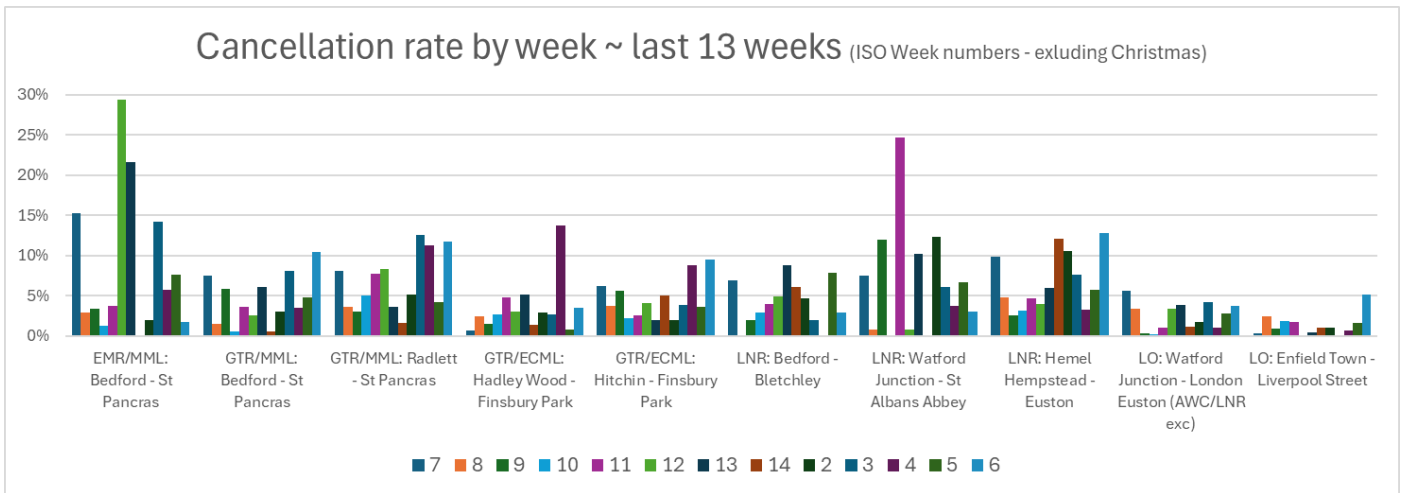
**Definitions**

- 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



### Can I forward this email to others?

Definitely. If you have received this email via someone forwarding it, to be added to the Herts & Beds mailing list, please send me an email. You will be able to unsubscribe at any time.

### 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

Director (with responsibility for Communications) | **Convener, Railfuture Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire** |  
 TOC Liaison Representative for GTR | Vice-Chair, London & South East Branch  
 e-mail: [neil.middleton@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:neil.middleton@railfuture.org.uk) | phone: 07887 628367  
 our websites: [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk) | [www.railfuture.org.uk/Herts+and+Beds](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Herts+and+Beds) | [www.railwatch.org.uk](http://www.railwatch.org.uk)  
 follow us on Twitter: [@Railfuture](https://twitter.com/Railfuture) | [@RailfutureLSE](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLSE) | [@Railwatch](https://twitter.com/Railwatch)

Railfuture Ltd is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 05011634.  
 Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only)  
 All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU

#### NOTICE AND DISCLAIMER

This email (including attachments) is confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, notify the sender immediately, delete this email from your system and do not disclose or use for any purpose.

## Cancellation percentages Excluding Christmas period

