

Connect to Railfuture information

Rail campaigners used to rely on piles of paper files.

But email and the world wide web have provided an alternative.

Railfuture is one of the many organisations using email and websites to good effect.

But we also have an internet Bulletin Board to help keep members informed on various aspects of campaigning and to allow informed discussion of current issues.

For seven years, Railfuture members have been using the Bulletin Board which has been described as a "giant electronic pinboard floating in cyberspace".

Messages posted there, whether serious or not, can be found by keyword or by date of posting.

Approximately 120 messages are posted on the "pinboard" each month.

You need an internet connection to read it or contribute although it is also possible to access the Railfuture website and the bulletin board at an internet cafe or public libraries.

If you see something relevant to rail campaigning happening in

your home county, or even in a foreign city, that could have lessons for us all, you can post a message on the bulletin board.

It could prompt someone else to write a piece for the Railfuture website, make a point to a councillor, or restyle the commercial service that their firm provides.

Perhaps you've seen something in a commercial magazine or mainstream newspaper that distorts the facts and want others to know?

Good ideas are also too important to be kept to yourself.

You can join the Railfuture pinboard "wizards".

Sometimes the board carries instant reactions to letters or articles you have read in *Railwatch*.

Applications to join the Railfuture message board can be emailed to John Davison at rail@london.com.

To show that you are eligible, please quote a headline from a 2007 or 2008 edition of *Railwatch*. To keep the board manageable and within the bounds of copyright law, only paid-up members of the society are eligible to post and browse the views and information posted there.

New hope for 60,000 people

By Roger Bacon

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Erewash Borough Council recently passed a motion supporting the opening of new stations on lines within the borough.

This will help the position of Ilkeston, a town of more than 60,000 people, which has a railway – but no station.

Derbyshire County Council included a new station at Ilkeston in the Derbyshire local transport plan for 2002-06 as a priority.

According to the new LTP 2006-11, Central Trains would not agree to call at the station so there is still no station in Ilkeston!

The county council maintains that the station is still a priority and East Midlands Trains has indicated

that it would support the proposal with a park and ride facility and parking initially for 200 cars, with the potential for 500.

Ilkeston sits on the Erewash Valley line by Trowell Junction.

It would be served by Nottingham-Sheffield services and the mooted Nottingham-Leeds service.

Apart from the obvious benefits for the people of Ilkeston and commuters going to Nottingham, the station could potentially also give East Midlands Trains an opportunity to speed up some Sheffield-London timings by avoiding Derby and Nottingham.

It is hoped that all parties work together to ensure this much needed facility is achieved sooner rather than later.

LOCAL ACTION

Yorkshire

By Chris Hyomes

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Woodhead tunnel protest

Railfuture members from Yorkshire and the North West joined a protest in January against another threat to a key rail link which was closed by Mrs Thatcher's government 26 years ago.

The protest was staged at the west end of Woodhead tunnel.

A visionary plan to reopen Woodhead tunnel along with 20 miles of track to provide a 35-minute service from Sheffield to Manchester via Barnsley, Penistone and Guide Bridge is at risk because of a scheme to use the tunnel for electricity cables which would effectively halt any plans for rail reopening. It has been estimated that if the Woodhead route between Sheffield and Manchester was reopened for rail use it could save 100,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year by transferring freight from road to rail.

The rail route could be carbon neutral if regenerative braking is used, as is now common on many parts of the rail network. Much of the track infrastructure still exists so the estimated costs are a modest £139 million. (Widening just 1.2 miles of the M1 motorway between junctions 30 and 31 will cost £178million.)

Six years ago there were plans to use new 125mph trains and to reopen Woodhead tunnel. The four-trains-an-hour scheme – which would have included park and ride and freight – should have been in operation this year if the then Strategic Rail Authority had agreed to a £200million investment programme.

But now, against the wishes of the Peak District National Park and local MPs, National Grid is proposing to run its power lines through the (new) 1954 Woodhead tunnel.

Campaigners are urged to ask their MPs to sign Early Day Motion 459 (proposed by Graham Stringer) which calls upon the Government to investigate and intervene on this issue as a matter of urgency.

One proposal is to avoid constructing damaging new roads by reopening the railway as a "rolling road". Details: www.stopmottrambypass.org/impact.htm

A petition has been set up, calling on the Government to reopen the railway from Manchester to Sheffield via Woodhead. Sign this online at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Woodhead/> More info at: <http://www.savethewoodheadtunnel.blogspot.com>

The Northern Way, a unique collaboration led by the three northern Regional Development Agencies to raise the economic prosperity of the northern regions, has thrown its weight behind calls to protect the tunnel for rail use.

Research published by the Northern Way in 2007 has demonstrated the wider economic benefits of a national high speed rail network linking London with the North West, and Scotland and the North East, and linked by a trans-Pennine route. These benefits could be as much as £10billion nationally with £3.5billion of this in the North. A Trans-Pennine link – potentially using the Woodhead corridor – adds as much as 40% to the gain to the economy enjoyed by the North.

11,000 lorry movements

Railfuture welcomes an agreement which will take 11,000 lorry movements off the road. The deal involves EWS and UK Coal, which owns the Gascoigne Wood railhead which was once used to take coal from the Selby coalfield.

About 20 acres of the former coalfield is now being converted by UK Coal into a business park with office accommodation, warehouses and lorry depots.

EWS will haul gypsum – a by-product of coal burning and used for making plasterboard – from Drax power station to Sherburn by train.



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Membership is £21 per year for an individual ■ Family: £21 plus £2 for each extra person ■ Pensioners, students and unemployed £14 ■ User groups, community and parish councils: Please use this form to ask for group rates

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