

Railfuture

is an independent voluntary campaigning group.

Railfuture is the campaigning name of Railway Development Society Ltd, 18a Grantham Road, Bracebridge Heath, Lincoln LN4 2LD

Media enquiries

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Membership

£20 per year.
Family: Plus £2 for each extra person.

Pensioners, students and unemployed £12.50.
User groups, community and parish councils: Rates on application.

All membership enquiries to: David Harby, 6 Carral Close, Lincoln LN5 9BD
david.harby@ntlworld.com

Policy

Chairman Mike Crowhurst 33 Station Court, Aberford Road, Garforth, Leeds LS25 2QQ
Tel 0113 286 4844

Elections

The board is elected annually and nomination forms can be obtained in January.

Railfuture at Swindon

The Mayor of Swindon Cllr Ray Fisher welcomed Railfuture members to our annual general meeting in the Great Western town in May.

The first speaker was Chris Irwin, chair of the South West public transport users forum and member of the European Rail Agency.

In his speech entitled *Fighting the Passenger's Corner*, he described the granting of the Great Western franchise as the result of greed married to desperation.

The Department for Transport was "greedy" to extract as much money as possible from the franchisee. It will be paid £1.13billion over the next 10 years by First Group which was awarded the franchise.

He said the DfT expected to get £380million less than they eventually extracted.

But the extra money will not go to the Treasury. The DfT will retain the balance to offset overspending elsewhere so it is possible that some of the money paid by rail passengers for tickets could go for overspent road schemes.

Mr Irwin added: "This may be all wrong but that is what I have been told. Did Prudence succumb to Government greed?"

The "cut price" franchise has been achieved by abandoning connectivity so branch line services have been cut and do not connect with main line trains.

He said what we have been through in this region could not happen in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland because there is strong devolved administration there.

In the South West we have tried to develop a strong regional voice.

Credit must go to Chancellor Gordon Brown for devolving some assessing of capital projects funding (including transport) to the regions.

As a result we now have £10billion of spending allocated for the next 10 years.

The SW public transport users forum works closely with operators and has been grateful for the support of Railfuture's Stuart Walker, Transport 2000 and the transport activists round table.

Mr Irwin also paid tribute to Railfuture's Trevor Garrod and the European Passenger Forum which knows that you need to have influence in Europe where many decisions are made now.

The regional spatial strategy will ensure that in the future there will be "demand management" on roads while public transport will be improved.

But the region needs to maintain connectivity where rail has a key role to play as the backbone of the transport system. The cuts applied in the SW could be applied in other areas. The next franchises to be



A rare sight in Britain: A bus stopping within just a few yards of a train.

The picture was taken at Llandudno station where a new integrated public transport ticket is now available for residents and visitors in North Wales.

The Tocyn Taith ticket offers day return travel on all trains and most buses throughout Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.

It is also valid on services outside the area to places including Chester, Ellesmere Port, Machynlleth and Aberystwyth.

The ticket has been set up by a consortium of local authorities in North Wales working with bus and train operators.

"This is the first time that all local authorities in North Wales have

worked together to create an integrated travel ticket," said Ben Davies, stakeholder liaison manager for Arriva Trains Wales.

"Visitors wishing to enjoy the magnificent scenery in the region or families wanting to enjoy a day out visiting a number of attractions can purchase one ticket to suit their travel plans."

The area is split into seven zones and tickets are priced according to the number of zones travelled through. Travel within two zones costs £6 for adults and £3 for children. A journey through all zones will cost £20 (£10 for children).

Tocyn Taith tickets are available from all staffed railway and bus stations and on trains and buses within the area. Further information is available by ringing the Tocyn Taith information line on 0870 608 2618.

awarded are South Western, Cross-Country and Central. Rail campaigners need to get organised in their own regions, otherwise they may suffer worse than we have. He said: If you have got a forum, give it backing. If you don't have one, do all you can to set one up or you will be carved up by the "ruthless imperial civil servants" who run the Government regional offices.

First

Glenda Lamont, customer services director for First Great Western, said before she joined the railway, her first choice of travel mode was the car. She now realises how much better the train is. But we need to get through to all those people in their cars - people like her - that the train is better.

First Group is worth £1.6billion and has sales of £2.7billion per year and has 70,500 employees worldwide.

First runs 23% of UK buses, 21% of rail services and owns Yellow Bus in the US. First took over

the Greater Western franchise on 1 April. It runs for seven years, with an automatic three-year extension if performance targets are met. She said there are still bargain fares on the railways and First plans to

Board line-up

No election was needed for the 2006 board as the number of candidates equalled the number of places available.

The board is now:

Chairman: Mike Crowhurst

Vice chairman: Jerry Alderson

Membership secretary: David Harby

Treasurer: Bob Imrie

Board members: Philip Bisatt, Trevor Garrod, Mike Harrison, Trevor Jones, Ray King, Ian McDonald, Andrew MacFarlane, David Redgewell, Rowland Pittard, Clara Zilahi

target car drivers. She said First planned an integrated control centre in Swindon with Network Rail - as in other parts of the country - with a customer information centre in the control centre.

The bottleneck at Reading will also be dealt with.

She said timetable consultation was much more wide-ranging than "we were obliged" to carry out but gave valuable feedback to present to the DfT. It was the biggest ever consultation on a timetable.

She said First was running out of time to deal with three issues with the DfT: early morning service to Gatwick, Ivybridge, and strengthening the Cardiff-Portsmouth service. On fares, she said there would be changes in June, with new one-way advanced purchase tickets with three price levels based on when people can travel. She said passengers could mix and match out and return tickets and there will also be new cheap day returns in Cornwall.

Railfuture business

The next speaker was Railfuture vice chairman Jerry Alderson who spoke about the Railfuture business plan. He said the board must manage first and then set priorities for campaigning.

Railfuture president Peter Lawrence said the Government wants value for money from the railway but fails to see the value the railway offers.

There is no overall plan for the expansion of the railway in England. Only one new station opened in England in 2005. He said: "That is pathetic."

Scotland and Wales however are getting on with the job of expanding the railway.

Railfuture has long been in favour of a national railcard, and according to a study carried out by the Railway Consultancy Limited on our behalf, a national railcard would generate extra journeys and be profitable but the Association of Train Operators claims in subse-

quent research by consultantants MVA, that the national railcard would also undermine existing cards/deals. We must keep up the pressure to ensure passengers get a fair deal on ticket prices.

He advised branches to get involved in the new transport users forum.

Chairman

Railfuture chairman Mike Crowhurst warned: "Rail minister David Twigg told us there is no programme for rail closures but actions speak louder than words.

"We can see the old routine: withdraw useful services and then you can say the line is uneconomic. There has been a lot of bluff and posturing in the SW but rural branch services look like being cut. Transport Secretary Alistair Darling, famous for his idiotic remarks about carrying air about in trains but not mentioning the air being carried around in cars, has been moved on.

His successor as Secretary of State for Transport, Douglas Alexander, supposed to be "one of Labour's brightest stars" and is a former parliamentary researcher for Gordon Brown.

Mike said: "We hope to see Mr Alexander do something about the explosive growth of air traffic."

Motions

Two motions to modify the way Railfuture elections are held and to amend the functions of the board and another to introduce regional and electronic membership grades suggested by Railfuture Wales were referred back to the board

The following motions were passed calling for more major infrastructure projects, a study into the implications of free rail travel for pensioners, an independent study into the protection of railway trackbeds to ascertain which ones have potential for reopening, and high speed rail services.

One motion was passed against objectors being pressurised at public inquiries.

£88million a week spent on rail

The new Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander sent the following message to Railfuture members in response to our plea for investment in rail projects: "You may know that, between 2004-5 and 2008-9, the Government will be spending over £23billion on the rail network.

"That is around £88million a week. Capacity enhancement projects which will benefit from that funding include the West Coast route modernisation, Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Cross-rail, Thameslink and the King's Cross station redevelopment.

"A longer term strategy for the railway, which is due to be published next summer, is also likely to address capacity enhancement issues."

Road user charging will increase rail trips

By Nick Dibben

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An initial study into the effect of area-wide road user charging has indicated that it would result in a significant increase in rail journeys and would be more effective than new road building in reducing traffic congestion.

Forecasts by the Highways Agency show that traffic congestion in the East of England region is likely to grow by nearly 50% by 2021.

This increase will occur despite billions being spent on upgrading the road network.

To help inform the discussion at the recent review of the East of England Plan, the East of England Regional Assembly asked consultants to consider the impact of road user charging.

The consultants looked at the effect of a universal charge of either 10p or 20p per kilometre on all road journeys. Time constraints and the data available within the traffic model did not allow the impact of variable charges depending on the time of day or type of road.

The results of the study must therefore be treated with some caution as they do not represent a likely method of charging. But

at 10p per kilometre, morning peak traffic queues would probably reduce by 17% and at 20p by 31%.

Rail passengers would increase in number by 8% if there was 10p per kilometre road charging and by 16% with 20p charging.

Bus use would rise by 3% and 8% respectively.

The study also looked at the impact of road pricing in reducing traffic congestion when compared with implementing 27 additional road schemes on top of those in the Regional Transport Strategy.

It found road pricing may be more beneficial in reducing congestion and time spent in traffic queues than building the roads.

Although the costs of introducing road pricing were not considered by the study, the Government could save billions of taxpayers' money by cancelling some of the road schemes.

Although the Government recognises that road pricing is likely to be required, the Rail Planning Assessment for the Eastern Region, issued after the results of the road charging study, did not include the implications when looking at the plans to develop the region's rail network.

News in brief

■ Railfuture's national rail users conference will be held on 4 November in Reading. The theme of the conference, at South Street Arts Centre, Reading, from 10.00 to 17.00, will be *The Booming Railway*.

For further details, please contact Chris Burden, 24 Cromwell Road, Caversham, Reading, Berks RG4 5EB. Email: f-chris-f@clara.net Tel: 0118 946 2537.

■ Enclosed with this *Railwatch* you will find draw tickets. Please buy as many as you can. You have a chance of winning some great prizes and the proceeds from the draw will help Railfuture campaigns.

For those of you who do not wish to receive draw tickets, please accept our apologies. It increases our mailing costs substantially to accede to a small number of requests not to include draw tickets with individual mailings.

If you wish to have additional tickets or if any groups would like them to sell at events, please send an SAE to Railfuture, PO Box 7690, Hinckley LE10 9WJ.

■ Correction: *Railwatch* 107 reported the "early day motion" in the House of Commons sup-

porting the Growing the Railways campaign as number 1214. It should have been 1412.

■ The European Passengers' Federation held its largest annual general meeting and conference to date when over 70 participants from 11 countries gathered in Maastricht, Netherlands, on Saturday 18 March. For a full report of the conference log on to www.epf-eu.be or send a cheque for £1.50 (payable to Railfuture) to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

■ *Car Sick: Solutions for our Car-addicted Culture* is a new book by Lynn Sloman. It can be ordered directly from the publishers on www.greenbooks.co.uk or from your local bookshop, or (at a £1 discount) from www.guardian.co.uk/bookshop. It costs £10.95.



■ Grand Central and Fraser Eagle sponsored the Railfuture campaigns conference held in Stoke-on-Trent on 1 July.