

English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

~ ERTA, starting in Bedfordshire and now continuing across the regions, advocating the advancement of select public transport solutions! ~

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<p>Newsletter No. 2 September 2015 Price 90p where sold.</p>	<p>East-West Rail – The Good, The Bad and the Sad News... Consultation on the Western Section Transport and Works Act is due to begin 3rd September until 16th October and people are invited to comment and respond. http://www.networkrail.co.uk/east-west-rail/ is a website which some of our members may be interested in. The Western Section covers Oxford-Bletchley/Milton Keynes-Bedford whereas the Central Section is Bedford-somewhere yonder to the East Coast Main Line and now we have an Eastern Section dealing with all things Cambridge. Weird it is but maybe a necessary evil, that objective and professional (cost) and scientific (assume nothing) work backwards to a basic idea, whereas we amateurs took this line as our starting point "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Hebrews Chapter 11 verse 1). So whereas we amateurs wanted East of Bedford, dubbed 'the inner route' contrast some who wanted an outer route for Bedford (bypassing the town) the Consortium has come up with two options, one following something of the old route Bedford-Cambridge with a undefined fuzz around its exact formation (inner or outer) and Bedford-Hitchin. To lay people, after days, weeks, months, years and decades of waiting and frustration; the only real progress is yes, the Western route, albeit delayed until 2019 and that the objective, scientific and professionals have confirmed the folly of closing the original two lines radial east and south-east from Bedford.</p> <p>Concerns: If the Central Section is an Outer Route bypassing Bedford, naturally those charged as a part of their job to defend and promote Bedford may be more than a little exorcised. Sadly they should have been 20 years ago when the majority wanted the Inner Route. Now blockages at Willington and complications of red tape and bureaucracy demanding bridging rather than level crossings means cost is up, complications abound. The idea of coming off the Marston Vale Railway near Stewartby or Kempston Hardwick and linking with Wixams on a flat level junction from the West, heading out to the East begs credulity as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Flat junctions slow railway operations and the Midland Main Line is being speeded up! Trains wait many minutes to access and enter the current Bedford Midland somewhere north of the A421 Bypass and south of the River Great Ouse due to too many trains on too few tracks and platform capacity. Add East-West trains and the problem, without more tracks and capacity at Bedford Midland would get worse before better. Stopping Marston Vale trains at Wixams would deny the local shuttle service of much needed footfall and revenue. So tying to a Wixams Station, whose schedule keeps slipping as developers don't want to pay up seems nonsensical. Space doesn't permit us to talk here about the idea of coming into Bedford and onwards along the Midland Main Line and turning right via Thurleigh and St Neots, the Cambridge conundrum, the media portrayal of 2 routes, the irony of the 2 routes, the route I would prefer, the challenges of the old route, the benefit of the old route, St John's, what's in it for Bedford, cross town footfall and spend stimuli, buses, cycle-paths and pedestrian access... on the good, the bad and sad; what is required and what will be on offer leaves a gap. By all means prove me wrong!
<p>Inside Page 1 East West Rail Page 2 Amphill Progress Page 3 Olney & Diary Page 4 London and Membership</p>	
<p>Northampton Challenges Psychology before faith or faith informing psychology that is the question! The taking out of the crossing at London Road and the gold-plated Network Rail railway whereby beit security, health and safety or other reasons; every level crossing must be bridged, including this one in the event of reopening. The threat of an inner relief road, partly adjacent to new housing along the old trackbed and the Ransome Road University Campus are all plans and developments we're asking the railway to be supported and included with.</p>	

Disclaimer:

This newsletter seeks to give vent and coverage of news relating to the windows, efforts and activities of the ERTA for members and wider sympathetic potential reach and ranges of others.

It may not necessarily be precise ERTA policy always, but seeks to include the spirit thereof. If you feel anything is 'out to lunch' and worthy of a correction, please do let us know and/or why not write a letter permitting us to publish your observations, facts or counter claim.

ERTA editorial reserves the right to restrict responses to the first 150 words, as space is always at a premium.

All pictures are the Editors unless otherwise stated.

Olney Objection Coordination

We alerted members and activists about the upgraded application for a superstore Sainsbury's and fuelling point for Lavendon Road/A509 corner North of Olney.

We know that as a result several significant objections were received for which we thank people.

Re: Application no: 14/02212/FUL would block the Handley Alignment but would also act as a brown field catalyst for more infill and piecemeal development, indeed for a northern access to and from the Olney Bypass.

Apart from denying Olney any rail chance ever again, it is likely a 10% shift in shopping at the supermarket than local shops would mean some go under.

Amphill Pilgrims Progress

We held our Amphill Forum on 26th August at the Albion Pub side room in Amphill and 8 people were in attendance, one a landowner, another from CentreParcs and another a commuter as well as our own contingent members.

ERTA representatives have looked and gathered the populations of villages within a 5 mile approximate radius of a mooted site for an Amphill Railway Station and concluded that some 62, 302 people could find such a facility useful for work, shopping, leisure and general access for parking and travel further afield.

ERTA shares some concerns at recent changes to bus services and the distance between CentreParcs and Flitwick, making a need for a railway access closer to the site and general area of Amphill to cut congestion, the volume of traffic and make getting around easier.

Flitwick is the current nearest rail head to CentreParcs. Former black buses are now replaced with a contract with Grant Palmer, a local bus operator. CentreParcs draws mainly from a North London audience currently. It is fully self contained and secluded unless you're heading for it specifically. It enjoys a 95% occupancy all year round. In statistical terms that is 4000 visitors at any one time to 1000 staff. Only about 6000 of those stats come by the rail arrangements in the entire time since opening – a couple of years ago. Flitwick has no lifts; all disabled people must go to Bedford and be sent in a special vehicle to the centre.

Flitwick is currently 2.2 miles, if Amphill Station were reopened, with a western facing access off Steppingley Road, that would make about 1 mile distance and thus walking, cycling and bus integrational ideas would be more realistic and apparent. Probably the rail-share of the visiting audiences and staff would go up.

CentreParcs has acted as a road traffic generator and the two M1 exits of Junction 11 Toddington to A5120 and the Junction 12 at Brogborough, to mitigate through traffic adding to congestion at Flitwick and Amphill – a busy thoroughfare road indeed as anyone trying to cross the bridge to get the Swan Pub discovers. Clearly a candidate for a crossing. We need a station for the Amphill area as well, as people tend to drive south to commute to London and this could provide more parking capacity and share the growth of volume with Flitwick and call upon the Central Bedfordshire Council to be a partner in this project.

Staff, are encouraged to car-share. They can also walk or cycle which is hazardous on current roads and winter darker evening months ahead. 7am-1am are main hours of centres operating day. It is an employer and is keen to show awareness of 'green credentials' in environmental care, sensitivity and responsibility.

Discussion centred on the fact that Amphill Station would boost CentreParcs on a number of fronts and it would commission its own studies of how it would benefit them and have its own talks with Central Bedfordshire Council and other parties with a view to forward the project apart from ERTA, which would generally support any and all moves for the station concept to be developed and case made.

Other speakers agreed it would give parking capacity and not be a real threat but support to Flitwick. Wixams for CentreParcs is further out, and Flitwick would remain the favourite station as closest if no Amphill. However Flitwick has no lifts and the turnaround room at the forecourt, especially for buses, leaves much to be desired. Next Amphill Forum: Wednesday 25th November 7pm, The Albion Side Room, 36 Dunstable Street, Amphill, MK452JT. T. 01525 634857 No. 42 buses call outside venue.

Diary

Date	Place	Purpose	Contact/Details
Wednesday 30 th September 13:00	Guildhall Rd, Northampton NN1 1DP	Northampton Forum	01604 624811 Buses No. 41 from Bedford and X4 and X7 from Milton Keynes as well as Euston-Northampton.
Wednesday 25th November 19:00pm	The Albion Side Room, 36 Dunstable Street, Amphill, MK452JT.	Amphill Forum	T. 01525 634857 No. 42 buses call outside venue. But stop around 19:00. Drive or you could cycle from Flitwick Railway Station, about 1.5 miles each way.
Saturday 14 th November 13:00	The Queen's Head, 4 Cambridge Road, Market Square, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG191JE	Sandy Forum	T. 01767 681115 Trains serve Sandy regularly from Hitchin, Kings Cross and Peterborough. No. 73 from Bedford Bus Station: https://www.stagecoachbus.com/pdfs/XEAO073.pdf
Association Needs			
Webmaster	ERTA is seeking a reliable and competent webmaster who can provide a basic facility for membership, donations and recruitment purposes and have pages for various campaigns and reflect aspects of interest to us.		
Fund Raiser	ERTA is seeking a reliable and competent fund raiser who can provide a regular effort to help fund-raise. As long as lawful and safe, the reach and range is broad. It could be meetings based or sponsored walks, events and exploring niche funding and applying for it in tandem with others.		
Technical Support	In these days of paranoia over security interests, the financial sector is closing ranks for business and members of the public known as 'individuals' or 'customers' but the downside is the closing down of small groups accounts means we are struggling to find an account for our funds. Clearly we need one and anyone willing to help troubleshoot this aspect is welcome.		
Volunteering	ERTA like many organisations relies on volunteers to make anything happen. A lack of volunteers is likely to inform not-a-lot happens. It is Voluntary-work. Ideally someone who is keen and willing will be flexible, reliable and enthusiastic; but even if you feel you could offer some small contribution, we welcome you to get in touch. There are opportunities to try media, marketing and campaigning/advocacy, as well as behind the scenes like technical realisation, transporting people and goods, manning stalls and thinking outside the box in terms of our growth and suitable resourcing for such. But it is voluntary and it is 'work'. So if you have a spare hour per week, you are just the sort of person we are interested in.		
Time-bank	Some jobs can be done on-line from the comfort of your home; others are more out and about. You can select what suits you and where possible, match that time, talent and interest with what suits us also. Coming along to our forums and helping to people them, enjoy a drink and interject positively is a flying start to keep ERTA on track!		

Richard Pill has his book and promotion stall twice a month at St Paul's Church Bedford: 19.9.15
Michaelmas
(St Paul's), 26.9.15, 17.10.15, 21.11.15
Christmas (St Paul's), 13.12.15.

<http://www.stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk/page4.html>

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Please keep in touch for any further news or updates.

All welcome.

Copies of Richard's English Regional Transport Reform Newsletter No. 2 are available freely as a pdf. Current edition focuses on the Marston Vale Railway. If interested, please email richard.selfemployed@yahoo.co.uk to request a copy. To subscribe for hard copy, it is £10 per annum to cover costs.



North London Line at West Hampstead Railway Station. Here Underground, North London and Thameslink lines meet, albeit with distinct entrances and exits. Extensive development is going on around the area, somewhat changing the visual landscape of the area with the typical London high density development of stack high with concrete, steel and glass. ERTA wants the Gospel Oak-Barking Line (GOB) extended to West Hampstead Thameslink and via the Dudding Hill Lines to West London for more London Orbital lines, connections and choice.

Fill In, Tear Off and Send with Your Subscription Please!

ERTA, come to our local Forums and offer time and talent as you may?

Tick if a New Member: _____ Tick if renewing as an existing member: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ **Tel/Mobile:** _____

If you wish to renew your membership, please indicate category:

New Member: £5 for the first year _____

Business/Corporate/Sponsor/Benefactor: £20.00 _____

Fully Waged Adult/Family/Individual £10.00 _____

Concessions: £5.00* _____

(*Students, Low Income Households, or on any kind of Benefit/Pension or Disability)

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Please send completed form to ERTA Membership Secretary:

Mr Simon Barber, 20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6HT T. 0208 940

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ERTA... it's what its members make it!