

# English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

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

	<p><b>Chairman, Local Government Transport Liaison, Co-London Coordinator and Campaigns Officer:</b>  <b>Mr David Ferguson, 12 MacDougall Court, North Road, KEW TW9 4EH T. 020-8876-3340</b></p>	
<p><b>Secretary, Media and Bedford Area Local Contact:</b>  <b>Mr Richard Pill,</b>  <b>24c St Michael's Road, BEDFORD, MK40 2LT</b>  <b>T. 01234 330090, E. erta.9rails@yahoo.co.uk</b></p>	<p><b>Ampt Hill Station Advocacy, Forum and Central Bedfordshire Area Rep., Mr Richard Moynham:</b>  <b>7a Alameda Walk, AMPHILL, Beds., MK45 2JX</b>  <b>T. 01525 791 935 E. club30@live.co.uk</b></p>	
<p><b>Hertfordshire Area Rep:</b>  <b>Mr Michael Hustwait, 52 Eastfield Avenue, Watford, WD24 4HJ T. 01923 350726</b></p>	<p><b>Treasurer &amp; Membership Secretary: Mr Simon Barber,</b>  <b>20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey,</b>  <b>TW10 6HT T. 0208 940 4399 E.</b>  <b>simong.barber@o2.co.uk</b></p>	

<http://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.co.uk/>

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*ERTA... the voluntary association which likes to help others, as well as just ourselves!*



**Caption Above:** Looking over the new station from the mound of Northampton Castle, hence the name 'Castle Station' Like it or loathe it, off rail capacity won the day here. The battle is on elsewhere including Bedford with life expired facilities and a need to serve customer demand and put aesthetics in. However a re-modelling with more tracks and platform capacity is required to cater for East-West trains and a through line from the East-West Rail to Midland Main Line north of Bedford.



**Caption Above:** Train approaches Northampton viewed from the south bridge over the Northampton Loop Line. The Brackmills Branch, which is the stub of the former Bedford and Wellingborough lines veers off to the left. But putting the parking on stilts and relaying a baying capacity would have boosted the Bedford potential and enabled more trains to serve Northampton from the south without occupying a through route.

## Olney Meeting:

**We have windows of opportunity but a diminishing theatre with curtains on the side waiting to come down.** Some 8 people gathered from as diverse a place as North Beds Villages, Milton Keynes, Hertfordshire and South West London. A varied agenda was followed, veteran campaigner Mr Leonard Lean was in the chair. The meeting included items related to parochial matters: Draft Plan Milton Keynes, New Sewage Works, Osier Way Planning Appeal, Sainsbury's on-line and opposite development threats, Lavendon Road and congestion into Bedford and Milton Keynes from the A428 and A509 corridors in a growth context. Discussion then opened out to Bedford-Olney-Northampton, support, configuration, what and who is needed to be consulted and getting organised to share the load. It was noted that the Handley Route took into account current and hitherto blockages with Turvey Station End as another area where realignment is required and the whole line needs a trackbed watch. The need to make a business case was raised and Richard would be covering that area with the invite given for any input or offers of help or mentoring welcome (erta.9rails@yahoo.co.uk).

### ***Olney Meeting Continued...***

Some principal grounds covered included around ERTA and Bedford-Olney-Northampton rail link.

Some 8 people gathered today. Key agreement was:

- a. it needs champions and backers in official circles
- b. route protection a key issue for Bedford-Northampton
- c. membership is gateway to getting involved - more members welcome to grow our voice
- d. anyone interested is welcome to get involved and offer any time and talent they may to work with us.

The Blogspot: <http://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.co.uk/> has other background information.

We hope to reconvene somewhere along the A428 in September/October dates and places to be finalised. Other meetings are pipelined for Northampton May, Road possibly June and other events as per previous newsletters. Really welcome more people and support.

**The Atkins Report** had mentioned Bedford-Northampton positively and a new book called 'Disconnected' had suggested it should be kept under consideration. There was a feeling at the group that the grand standing East-West citation of the Bedford-Northampton corridor as playing a strategic role was not apparent in any shared Local Government 'common understanding policies' around tailoring development, citing development elsewhere and critically protecting the old route, the Handley Alignment and adequate deviation spaces.

"Cambridge – Northampton was identified as a priority pair for testing due to the potential for journey time competitiveness (compared to car travel) and enhancement (compared to existing rail). The prioritisation process has subsequently identified this journey pair as a very high priority in both the NTEM/Tempo and Local Plan growth scenarios. Whilst the journey time saving of Cambridge – Oxford and Cambridge – Northampton are the same, the faster journey time possible between Cambridge and Northampton means that a higher level of transport user benefits and GVA commuting benefits are generated, meaning that Cambridge – Northampton emerges as a higher overall priority.

In the Local Plan Growth scenario journey pairs of Luton and Luton Airport with Northampton are identified as being high priority. The GVA impacts indicate that improving the labour market accessibility of both Luton and Northampton has the potential to generate significant GVA impacts" **Source: East West Rail - Central Section Conditional Outputs Statement East West Rail Consortium Final Report 8 August 2014, Page 64:** <http://www.eastwestrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ewr-cs - cos - final report 08-08-2014.pdf>"



**Above Caption:** Northampton University is ambitiously promoting itself and is a shout to be reckoned with locally in Northampton. It has power and some resource and its new Riverside Campus and locations elsewhere makes it a natural swathe of support ideas of a rail link to Bedford need to court and tap into. Beit course content, research, voices in places like Northampton Chamber. The University would benefit by the Bedford link and make it more sustainable than bright ideas pitted on cheap oil for masse (popular) mobility, procured from around the world for making life work!

Our railway proposals are about choices, people and places. In brief we:

- a. Do delegated meetings to councils and other official outlets making the case for the reopening and other projects.
- b. Have made in-rails to fight off blockage threats, but this wing needs more activists to wade in and form a team

If you feel you could make a contribution or would like to explore further, please contact the Membership Secretary who would be willing to meet with interested persons and explore collaboration together. Area Reps, Recruitment, Fund Raisers, Trackbed Watchers, telephone canvassers and letter writers are just a few of what we need more of to advance and progress the projects we have. Can you be-friend a key someone, win them to our cause and help build the bank of people we have advocating the rail link? That is the hard work necessary to answer the question of whether something may happen or not, it is really encouraging when we've had a meeting and won a professional over to see some merits in what we are about.

**Diary: April**

Next Ampthill Station Forum will be Wednesday 13th April 7pm at The Swan Pub, adjacent to Flitwick Station.

All welcome to support the effort.

New brochures in pdf format can be obtained by email via [erta.rails6@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:erta.rails6@yahoo.co.uk)

Hard copy by sending a SAE to 24c St Michael's Road, Bedford, MK40 2LT.

We have a landowner and associate interested and are trying to get other developers together to inform a swathe of people who can pool resources to campaign for the railway station. Campaign has become a word of 'risk' in the current operators' eyes, so we will 'promote' our aspirations instead!

May

**Wednesday 27th April 1pm Weatherspoons Watford IAMC\*** Members are welcome but do not have voting rights. Let us know if you wish to attend so we can look out for each other.

**Saturday 14th May 1pm Upstairs Costa Coffee, 32 Abington St, Northampton NN1 2AJ** (behind St James' Church on the right opposite entrance to the shopping centre). Northampton Forum: Cobbler Project and Campaign, Better Buses, General Public Transport, Planning Threats and Freight by Rail/Getting organised.

**Saturday 18th June 1pm, The Cock Inn, 1 High St, Northampton NN7 2NW Road.** Tie in with X4/X7 which ply between MK Central and Northampton via A508/Road. Items to discuss are Roade Station new-build reopening, Blisworth Freight Depot, Brackmills congestion, Northampton-Bedford reopening benefit, freight by rail and any other related business. <http://www.thecockatroade.co.uk/>

**AGM:** Thursday 21st July 7.30pm-9.30pm The Calthorpe Arms, Upstairs Meeting Room, 252 Grays Inn Road, London, WC1X 8JR T. 020 7278 4732 from 19:30-21:30.

<http://www.rampubcompany.co.uk/visit-pubs/calthorpe-arms>

**April**

ERTA National Rail Reopenings Meeting:\* Thursday 7th April 2016 19:30-21:30 pm Upstairs Room, The Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road, London: [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant\\_Review-g186338-d1043968-Reviews-Calthorpe\\_Arms-London\\_England.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g186338-d1043968-Reviews-Calthorpe_Arms-London_England.html)

\* The ERTA National Rail Reopenings Committee is open to all genuinely interested in seeing rail reopenings, new builds of conventional passenger and freight 'mixed use operational' rail capacity across the English Regions, similar to the progress made in Scotland where several lines have been reopened/rebuilt and have exceeded expectations of use take up.



**Above Caption:** Members of ERTA gathered in November 2015 at the Queen's Head Pub in Sandy for their surgery on public transport. These forum type meetings are scattered to give our members a chance to tap into something, put faces to names and network. Please try and attend some of our events and encourage others to the public ones with a view of recruiting more members. This is your association and you, the membership trust us with keeping the show going, so in return we need you to help people our organisation, help resource the organisation and ensure it is adequately and properly being run.

More information can be found via our Blogspot: <http://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.co.uk/>

**Are you a dab hand with computer map and diagram making?** Is technical stuff your forte? If so, your association welcomes you to kindly consider if you can improve on our maps, diagrams and tele-visual presentation. ERTA is made up of volunteers who play different roles. People bring different talents, experiences and all ages can get involved.

## Consolidation

Facebook has insisted that separate accounts to delineate between private life and campaigns must be commuted to one account holder and presented as 'pages' instead. This has caused chaos in the translation with little or no recourse to mop up spillages 'un-linked accounts hanging loose 'out there''. However you will find ERTA pages on: <https://www.facebook.com/RichardPill24c> Please do send friend requests and if we recognise you, you will be welcomed. Likewise, please tap into our Blogspot and let us have feedback as well as offers of volunteer support. <http://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.co.uk/>

Our team is growing and we extend a warm welcome to people helping us with record keeping, diagrams, web development and much else.

## 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.

## Northampton

Meetings have taken place with Northampton Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), The Chamber, Various Councils and we continue to table a Forum for local people to rally to. We have had splashes in the local newspapers, local BBC Radio and a short interview on Look East-West.

## Olney

This, part from the need to protect junctions is the hardest part of protecting and most vulnerable. But helpers to take on:

- Network Rail GRIP criterion
- Put a business case or cases together
- Act as area reps and help canvas the parishes can make a huge difference. Existing team can't cover it all.

## Bedford

Meeting was held with the elected Mayor Cllr Dave Hodgson and we thank him for entertaining us. At the meeting, representatives of ERTA stressed Bedford-Northampton, East-West Rail and a need to examine the case for a Kempston Retail Park Station. Kempston is 18, 000+ population and is on the Bedford-Bletchley alias Marston Vale Railway.

The station would open up the whole area to inward and outward journeys by rail, relieving local roads.

## Milton Keynes

Representatives spoke at the Council for the allotted 3 minutes against the Sainsbury's application which was defeated by a casting vote. However appeals and other development may mean we win the battle but lose the war!

## Roade

A new flyer has been launched to ask the people living there their views on whether they want a new station or not. We hope responses will be fair and that if new members result who are interested in the idea of a Roade Station (located on the A508) that area reps can be appointed to take it further and a Forum convened. It is called democracy!

## London

Government proposals for yet more road crossings across the Thames in East London raises the question of rail and it's turn? The QE2 Bridge takes traffic one way whilst the old tunnels take traffic another way informing an 8 lane roadway. However there is no rail link between Purfleet/Grays and Dartford/Slade Green and Barnehurst for example, which would link Southend Airport with Woolwich for example. Have your say: <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/new-river-crossings-for-london>

\_\_\_\_\_ Fill In, Tear Off and Send with Your Subscription. Please help us recruit more members! \_\_\_\_\_

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel/Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

If you wish to renew your membership please contact: Mr Simon Barber, 20 Fitzherbert House, Kingsmead, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6HT T. 0208 940 4399/ E. [simong.barber@o2.co.uk](mailto:simong.barber@o2.co.uk)