



Reproduced With Permission Frinton Station Mural Illustrating Tendring Districts Diverse Coastal Legacy

"ONTRACK" Walton On Naze, Frinton On Sea, Kirby Cross, & Thorpe Le Soken Rail Users Association
Representing Clacton & Walton Lines Rail Users for over 20 years

ANNUAL REPORT

ONTRACK is Tendring District's leading rail passenger user group based in Frinton and Walton but catering for the needs and well treatment of all users of rail and passenger transport. It is an officially recognised transport stakeholder body by the Greater Anglia railways, TDC, DfT, Network Rail. We work closely with Tendring District Council on planning transport needs, being a key member of the TDC Transport Liaison Group. In the run up to submissions for the franchise bidding we have had conferences with the three rail companies looking to run our railway from October 2016. ONTRACK is affiliated to TDC TLG, ERUF, RAIL FUTURE (railway Development Society) and Hon Chair is now a member of the august Railway Correspondence & Travel Society to which many senior rail managers belong. We were involved in the historical article for the Frinton Residents magazine and Kirby residents Association magazine celebration 150 years of the Tendring Hundred Railways coming to Kirby Cross Station

RECOGNITION & REWARD

Our Chairman John Smock took an award for our TEAM at Tendring District Council's Pride of Tendring event Feb 5 for community groups. We have a base of experience within the group including a retired senior rail manager. Also championing our work is Cllr. Mark Platt who chairs Tendring's Transport Liaison Group. We have now got people across the social, professional and political spectrum making up the TEAM including Chartered Engineers. All are working for you towards the overall aim of improved transportation delivering economic growth, regeneration, tourists, access to employment and educational opportunities.

NEW FRANCHISE

While we waited for the Dept. For Transport announcement about which Train company got to run our passenger train services ONTRACK along with all other Councils, Stakeholders, did not stop lobbying - nor cease to make Tendring's voice heard and build the case for improved transport. An announcement from the Dept. for Transport (DfT) had been due just after the EU Referendum, by the end of June 2016. The "BREXIT" outcome of the EU Referendum, and the changes at the top in HM Government and the inherent unknowns arising from the new order, led to the rail franchise bidders being called back into the DfT to review costs and figures. An announcement was made finally late Autumn and it was awarded to the incumbent. The new franchise contracted started at the end of October 2016. The rail industry grapevine has indicated that perhaps up to 60% of the franchise revenue earnings comes from the humble Essex Gt Eastern commuter lines: But do we get a good deal?. GAR are reliant on NR agreeing to tweaks in the signalling system and infrastructure to enable modest hoped for increase in train capacity which the newtrains might deliver via improved reliability and performance

ENGINEERING WORKS

In March ONTRACK with Senior TDC Councillors and a Council Officer attended a Network Rail Consultative meeting in Ipswich. The point as made that 20 plus years of weekend engineering closures has damaged tourism and employment prospects, so that one week or two week blockades are preferable (Why not shut down and get the pain over and done with in one hit.). In the meantime weekend engineering works resumed in the Autumn of 2016 and are running through to the end of May (particular problems have been created by the Crossrail (Elisabeth line). Passengers still continue to experience delays, missed connections and a creaking Network Rail infrastructure, that needs more than sticking plaster solutions to tweak out extra capacity. on the two track Gt Eastern mainline. Chris Green the BR London SE Director who set up Network South East wanted 30 years ago four tracks put in all the way from Colchester to London to provide extra



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capacity. So will HM Treasury and DfT exact cuts in investment, rather than increase it here in order to save the bloated sacred cow that is the HS2 line?

DEMOLITION OF DISUSED STATION HOUSES AT KIRBY X, WEELEY & ARLESFORD

The DfT have offered ABELLIO Greater Anglia Railways a pot of money to fund demolition of disused Station Booking Office Houses that have been subject to long term decay and neglect since the British Rail era and replace in two cases with glorified steel and glass “bus shelter” type “short life” structures. ONTRACK’s financial and economic analysis using HM Treasury Green Book Methodology (using Nobel Prize Capital Asset Pricing Model) indicated that it is far better far better value for money to restore these for community use (see the splendidly restored example at Thorpe Le Soken Station), rather than the short term expediency of decisions based on short term cash in hand options. The matter is now with Tendring District Council and local Parish and Town Councillors and although the deadline passed we are hoping common sense will prevail.

FOOTPATH CROSSING CLOSURES

Network Rail in order to improve Health & Safety – and save money - intends to eliminate some railway crossings in a programme starting with East Anglia. In this area this means foot path crossings. “ONTRACK” and Tendring District Transport Liaison group have pointed out that suitable alternative arrangements should be provided as these are in most case long established rights of way pre-dating the construction of the railway. Locally there is a footpath crossing near Pork Lane Road Level Crossing, Kirby Cross, on the closure hit list.

POOR RELATION?

Compare Clacton or Frinton circa 70 miles from London Liverpool Street, to a place like Newark, Population 27,400, some 120 miles from London Kings X, on the East Coast Mainline. Newark is served by very modern, very fast trains, and has far quicker journey times to /from London and also far better off-peak fare deals. The average journey time between London Kings Cross and Newark Northgate is 1 hour 19 minutes. The fastest journey time is 1 hour 13 minutes on an average weekday, and there are 48 trains (Averaging 2 per hour) per day. Then one realises that Essex and East Anglia have been left out in the cold as far as rail investment and high quality speedy rail services are concerned.: How can Tendring attract inward investment, expect new job creation, expect substantial economic regeneration and/ or increased tourism, or easy access to London jobs market, when it often takes around 90 minutes to travel to London by glorified suburban commuter trains, with just one an hour off-peak, and lacking the amenities East Coast main Line travellers are well used to. So why does Whitehall still think lots of extra houses can built here without improved rail services or other infrastructure? Without that investment will Tendring end up as a dustbin for London Borough’s decanted tenants?

Remember TEAM also stands for TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE, and You are all welcome to come on board, and join THE TEAM and make a difference (see our website) <http://www.ontrackrailusers.org.uk/>

David Bolton (Senior) Hon Sec