



## **“ONTRACK” RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION**

*(The Walton on Naze, Frinton On Sea, Kirby Cross & Thorpe Le Soken RUA - Serving the Tendring District for over 20 years)*

### **OUR BRIEFING FOR MEMBERS**

- **WE AIM TO UPDATE OUR MEMBERS 2-3 TIMES A YEAR IN ADDITION TO AGM NEWSLETTERS**
- **TELL YOU WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING TO IMPROVE YOUR LOT**
- **WE NEED YOUR INPUT**

1. **WELCOME TO FIRST MEMBERS NEWSLETTER OF 2018.** We aim to inform and involve and invite you to make a difference! We also aim to host informal tea / coffee mornings and series of open committee meetings.

#### **2. WHAT DO THE COMMITTEE DO?**

- **ONTRACK is stakeholder member of the Tendring District Council Transport Liaison Group (TDC TLG monthly meetings)** – our Hon Chair is Acting TLG Committee Clerk and has attended official conferences wearing both ONTRACK/ TLG hat. This has enabled closer working and engagement of local District, County Councillors and MPs.
- **ONTRACK also works in conjunction with not only TDC, but also with Essex County Council, Rail Industry (Dept. for Transport, Network Rail, Greater Anglia Railways, and Transport Focus), Essex Rail Users Federation, Rail Future (Railway Development Society) and other stakeholder organisations e.g. Tendring Community Transport (TCT), Community Rail Partnership (CRP), and British Transport Police (BTP).**
- **It was ONTRACK and TDC TLG that brought you the TORNADO STEAM TRAIN** (But great credit to our TDC Chairman Cllr Mark Platt who worked hard on the admin and arrangements). Outstanding event with national press coverage boosting the local shops and economy.
- **We have represented you and Tendring District at the Essex & Suffolk County Councils Joint Rail Conference** (Key point is that all the parties participating want infrastructure investment. East Anglia apart from London area is one of the two regions that provide a net contribution to the UK economy but lags at the bottom of the national infrastructure investment. The Director for Hutchison Ports (Felixstowe Port) supports the double tracking of the line to Felixstowe which is operating at max capacity. Double tracking would enable up to 2,000 truckloads a day to be carried by rail, which line currently operates at max capacity. Even the car drivers on the A12 and A14 would surely say amen to that! Also, if there is to be housing to cope with population growth and commuting to the economic / employment centres of London, Chelmsford, Colchester, Cambridge, Norwich then transport infrastructure and services need to drastically improve.)
- **We represented you and Tendring District at the Network Rail Control Period 6 Spending Planning Meeting** (We together with Chair of Suffolk County Council, the Director of DB Rail Freight pointed out that pure replacement and repair on a like for like basis is no good if it locks one out for options to deal with the highly likely future population growth driving service improvements.)
- **We attended RAIL FUTURE (Railway Development Society) meetings in September and December;** The latter in December meant meeting the new incumbent Director for the East-West Rail Project linking the key economic/ employment centres Oxford-Milton Keynes- Bedford Cambridge and also eventually onwards to Norwich and Ipswich (We were then running ahead of the media). The September meeting saw the leader of the Waverley Route reopening campaign explain how they did it!
- **We were also able to catch up with the Divisional Commander of the specialist British Transport Police (BTP) at RCTS Meeting Ipswich at the start of December.** There is an operational overlap with the County and Metropolitan Police forces but it is the BTP who have the specialist training to investigate accidents, incidents rail-side. The current target for a person under a

train is 90 minutes to determine if malevolent or not and restore service. The Highways Authorities and County Police forces are just starting to develop a similar target for road accidents. On a brighter note it should be pointed out it is over ten years since a fare paying passenger was killed in train crash. Biggest problems are at level crossing where procedure is not followed and risky unauthorised crossings are made.

3. **August and September 2017 saw representatives visit mock ups of the new trains.** What we will be getting will be version of the Commuter trains as are to be used on Cross Rail. But with no FIRST CLASS, NO BUFFET and seats although positioned higher off the floor and offering head support, will still be 2+3 instead of the more desirable 2+2 configuration for a 90 minute journey. The seat comfort on various comparable train models has already been called into question and we remain to be convinced that ours will be better than those on say the new THAMESLINK TRAINS. . Someone involved on the design of the trains said the design aim was to cram as many seats into a train as possible. And oh, we forgot to mention the RCTS meeting at start of 2017 when we met Chris Green – the BR Director who set up NETWORK SOUTH EAST, InterCity etc., – He wanted 4 tracks all the way from Colchester through to London. So, does the DfT / Abellio solution looks paltry in comparison?
4. **NEW TIMETABLE:** RMT grapevine suggests no through trains to London and all change from Shuttles to/from Colchester (Will this be adding to journey times and fight for a seat at Colchester?). But this is not in the Franchise Specification as laid out in the DfT franchise specification document. (Of course - as always - subject to re-negotiation)
5. **TICKET OFFICE: The whole process has been found wanting and local politicians are furious. Local Government consultation requires 3 months. Dept. for Transport/ Greater Anglia Railways and the consultation run by TransportFocus for them allowed everyone barely 3 weeks.** The criteria and process are we think challengeable. It is sad the Transport Focus seem to have caved in. But we hope local councils will seek legal advice and challenge e.g. using Judicial Review and /or also consider the options for community organisations running local stations and perhaps enjoying the 9% Commission Eddie Stobart enjoyed after it built and operated the Southend Airport Station.
6. **Seen our new posters?** – Tell your friends and neighbours ONTRACK NEEDS YOU – Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM) Why not display one? (Download from the website)
7. **AGM will be in MAY but we plan to have some drop in mornings (watch this space) and / or our ONTRACK website <http://www.ontrackrailusers.org.uk/> and also the ONTRACK FACEBOOK page <https://www.facebook.com/ontrackrailusers.org.uk/>**

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8. **DATA PROTECTION** – the new European General Data Protection Regulation come into force May 2018 so we need to ask you the following and advise you how we use membership data

8.1 Do you want us to keep in contact and keep you briefed and keep you informed of developments where your views can make a difference ?.....Yes...../ No..... (Type Y or N *Or handwrite a circle around preference*)

8.2 Or do you want us to “forget you”?YES...../ NO.....(N.B.Data will be updated/ deleted in 30 days)  
*But this means we cannot contact you or advise you of upcoming events or issues that affect you in future even if lapsed member*

8.3 **We do not divulge membership details for third party us. Please let us know if you have any concerns**

8.4 **Except**

- *Where request for help in sorting out complaints in respect of customer service may require sharing / verifying customer details and we will let you know if we do so*

- *Otherwise in respect of surveys and/ or petitions where signatory's identities need to be retained for verification purposes*

8.5 **Please contact us by e-mail, stating Name Postcode, Telephone Number via web page or face book to let us know that you need us (OR CUT THIS OFF AND**

**SIGN HERE.....PRINT**

**NAME.....AND TEL NO .....AND PLACE IN BOX AT**

**HARWOODS OF ESSEX, Connaught Ave Frinton OR Post via Royal Mail to our Hon Secretary David Bolton (Senior) 71 Park road Clacton On sea Essex CO15 IHQ**

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9. **AND FINALLY, WE WISH EVERYONE A HAPPY, PROSPEROUS AND HEALTHY 2018**