



ABFLY newsletter

www.abfly.org.uk

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ABFLY MEMBERS' MEETING

Monday 12th November 2012 @ 19:30
(doors open 19:00)

ST STEPHENS PARISH CENTRE
BRICKET WOOD

1930 – 2015: London Midland update -
Deborah Carr (Customer Service Manager)

2015 – 2030: Community Rail Partnership
update – Janet Tyndale (CRP Officer)

2030 – 2130: “Running a successful railway”
- Rob Brighthouse (MD, Chiltern Railways)

New members are welcome to join on the door.
Membership is £3 per household per year.

CONNECTIONS POLICY

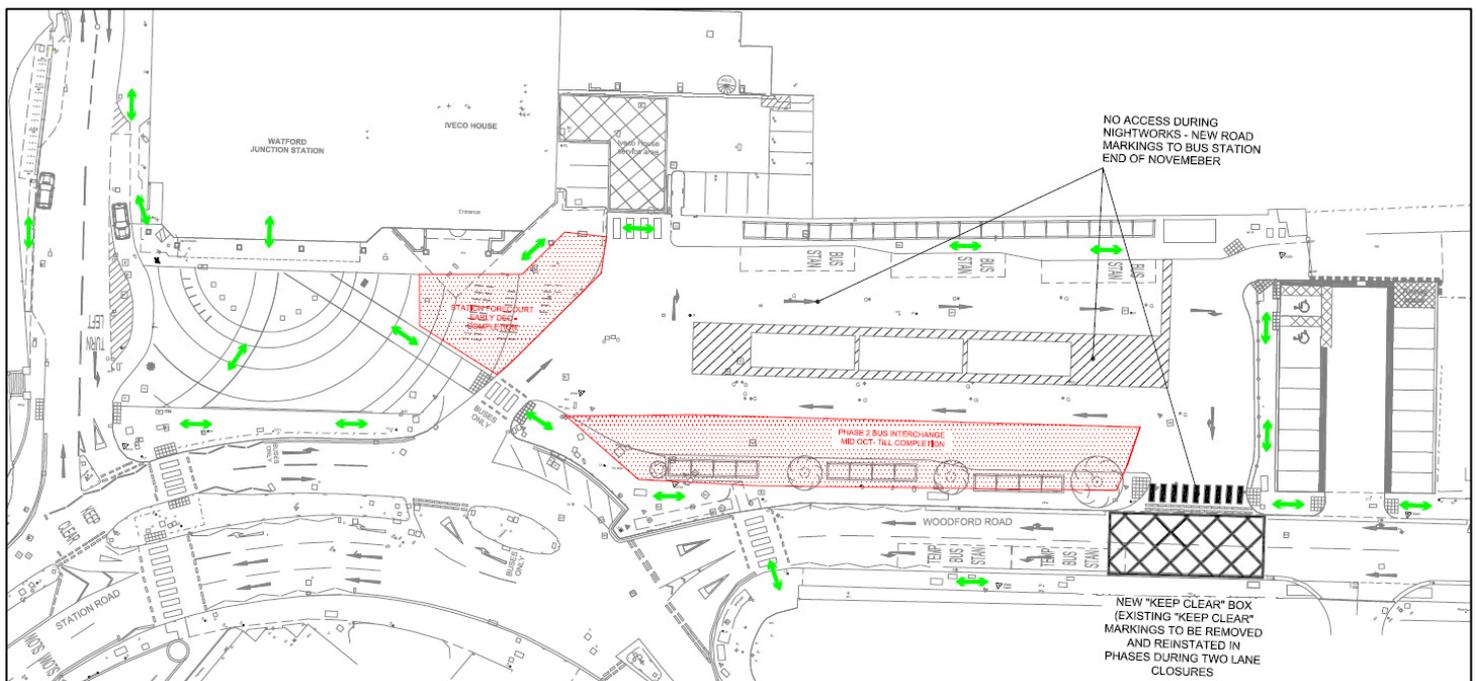
ABFLY have sought clarification on London Midland's policy regarding late-running mainline connections to the Abbey Line at Watford Junction. This follows a spate of incidents where Abbey Line passengers have been left behind, having missed the 'right time' branch line departure by a few seconds.

London Midland has no connectional policy except for the following evening peak services, which may be held for a maximum of 5 minutes to connect with a late running service from Euston:

2F33 1721 Watford Junction – St Albans Abbey
2F35 1810 Watford Junction – St Albans Abbey
2F37 1855 Watford Junction – St Albans Abbey

Last train of the day: it may be held for up to 5 minutes, provided that the line will be open throughout and the crew's hours permit.

Special authority is given by the Duty Control Manager at London Midland's Operations Control office in exceptional circumstances. If anyone has any comments on this, or finds this policy being contravened, please get in touch.



STATION IMPROVEMENTS at Watford Junction have begun. The work, funded by Hertfordshire County Council and the Department for Transport under their National Station Improvement Programme, will see the relocation of the taxi rank to the area adjacent to The Flag public house (top left in the plan above). A new short-stay car park will be opened on formerly derelict land (right-hand side) and the bus station area will be totally reorganised (centre). A new pedestrian circulation area in front of the station entrance will be created (semi-circles) on the land formerly occupied by the old taxi rank. The aim is to improve the flow of both pedestrians and vehicles, to improve safety and the ambience of the station frontage. A new heated and enclosed waiting shelter will also be installed on Platform 11 for the benefit of Abbey Line passengers. ABFLY are calling for a ticket machine to be installed on Platform 11 to help alleviate the peak-time queues at the excess fare window, formed because of the continually woeful state of revenue collection on the branch. The work is due to be completed by the end of January 2013.

LIGHT RAIL UPDATE

There has been silence on the Light Rail front since March, when Hertfordshire County Council released their last e-newsletter. For the benefit of those who don't receive the HCC e-newsletters, extracts are as follows:

"The complexities of the project require more time as the project team work through the details. Over the last two years, the team has been working with bidders and the railway industry to consider the complexities and assess the approach to securing a company to operate the service. From discussions with the bidders, it is clear that they have many good ideas about how the light rail service could be set up and run.

Before the project team are able to restart the competitive dialogue procurement procedure, they need to continue to work to resolve some complex issues. For example, taking the line out of the national rail network has highlighted some issues – such as land ownership and responsibility for maintaining and renewing bridges and other structures – that need to be resolved before the project can move forward. At the same time, the team is also looking at how best to maintain revenues on the line and achieve the objective of maintaining through ticketing, and HCC is working with the DfT and the Association of Train Operating Companies to enable the operator to be able to sell through tickets. In addition, DfT has recently published a command paper on reforming the railways, and consultations on fares and ticketing and on decentralisation. It is appropriate that we also take the time to consider the implications from these consultations on the Abbey Line project. Delivery of the project will not be in 2012, as we had originally hoped, as the project has proved more complex than originally expected."

Put simply, it is commercial and legal wranglings, not technical complexity, which is holding up this eminently sensible project. While lawyers and consultants no doubt profit from the delay, yet again the ordinary passengers and the local economy suffer the consequences of a second-rate service as the branch line is held back from reaching its true potential. This is a direct consequence of the fragmented Rail Industry; innovation stifled by contractual relationships, vested interests and endless consultations. Under a single guiding mind such as British Rail, this project may have been completed within 18 months. It is now getting on for three years since it was first announced, with still no visible progress on the ground or even a contractor selected. How long can this go on before the project withers and dies?

ABFLY has written to Norman Baker MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, with responsibility for Light Rail and Trams, urging heads to be brought together! Local MPs have been copied in.

LONDON MIDLAND 'PROJECT 110'

London Midland's 'Project 110' is a scheme to modify their Desiro (Class 350) fleet from 100mph to 110mph maximum speed, which after initial technical trials is now well underway. This will allow them to operate additional fast line trains on the main line by fitting two 110mph trains into the "path" currently occupied by one train at 100mph, and to keep out of the way of other trains running at 125mph on the fast lines, allowing those 110mph trains to use the direct route from Milton Keynes to Rugby (not via Northampton) without reducing the frequency of services between London and Northampton.

The proposed benefits are mostly for travellers between London and Milton Keynes / Northampton / Rugby and Trent Valley stations. For example the journey time between Nuneaton and London Euston will be reduced by between 20 and 30 minutes. There will be three additional services in the morning peak non-stop from Northampton to London and five additional in the evening peak from London to Northampton, allowing the fastest journey time between the two to be reduced from 57 to 48 minutes. These peak time changes are subject to approval from the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) and should be implemented in May 2014.

However the off-peak changes, which are due to be implemented in December this year, are not so good for Watford Junction passengers. There will no longer be direct London Midland services between Watford Junction and stations between Nuneaton and Crewe inclusive (except on Sundays). It should be noted, however, that a number of these journeys are currently quicker (or as quick) by using West Coast Trains' services and making one change.

Thus, the present (Monday to Friday) service departing at 46 minutes past each hour from London Euston will no longer call at Watford Junction or Northampton, instead operating fast to Milton Keynes, and then via Weedon to Rugby. This train would continue to Crewe via Tamworth and Stafford, and could potentially save 25 minutes from the journey time south of Rugby.

However a new service, departing at 49 minutes past each hour from London Euston, would call at Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Long Buckby, Rugby and stations to Birmingham New Street. A similar service would operate in the reverse direction. It is likely that the new service would present a challenge to Virgin Trains' express services from Rugby to London Euston, as the journey time penalty with London Midland will be very minor.

LETTERS & ARTICLES

The editor is always happy to receive and publish newsletter contributions from members. So if you have something to say, please do get in touch:

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