

The **monthly** branch newsletter of **railfuture** in London and the South East

Britain's leading *independent* campaign for a bigger better railway for passengers and freight

## From fragmentation to re-integration

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May marked the next stage of the latest re-organisation of Britain's passenger rail services – and it happened in our regional branch area.



On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May Railfuture put out communications via a number of media channels, and the Transport Secretary issued this [Written Statement](#).



After LNER in June 2018, Northern in March 2020, Southeastern in October 2021, TransPennine Express in May 2023 were all transferred to DfT Operator of Last Resort Holdings Ltd, First MTR South Western Trains Ltd was brought into DfT Operator Ltd (DfTO) – a public corporation of the Department for Transport.



Transport Secretary in Bournemouth, Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

As Railfuture national Board Director and Wessex regional branch Chair Mike Southgate said on the 22<sup>nd</sup>: “On Sunday, all that is going to happen is that SWR will have a new shareholder – and it's the DfT who have effectively been dictating many policies to SWR since the pandemic. So what has changed? SWR has already emailed its customers saying “*Although the legal operator is changing, your experience won't. You'll continue to see the same branding, same services, and the same teams running your trains.*” That's not exactly good news, for the many passengers who want better services not more of the same.

“We recognise the financial challenges the railway faces but we also believe there are huge opportunities and much more needs to happen if public rather than private ownership is to be the success we all hope for. The Government has set out its vision for the legislative framework for the new world and has talked about the importance of Great British Railways (GBR). But that isn't going to happen for some time.

“So, we look for action before then to tackle topics like workforce terms and conditions e.g. drivers to open and close doors, improving customer service and a lot more. There are some marginal improvements which could be introduced quite quickly to demonstrate that change is possible such as following other operators and reinstating the main and suburban lines off-peak services cut during the pandemic. To finally resolve the class 701 fiasco and restore a ten-coach reliable service in the suburban area to reduce the over-crowding which is now commonplace.

“A reliable and effective railway is a key enabler to grow the economy locally and nationally, improve mobility, and to reduce carbon emissions through modal shift to rail.”

## What shall we be doing this month?

London and South East regional branch members, and / or committee members, will be:-

- ~ running our '[Bridge the gap](#)' campaign stall at the Uckfield & District Lions Club's annual Family Fun Day.
- ~ participating in GTR's stakeholders' summer event.
- ~ participating in Southeast CRP's MarshLink and Uckfield / East Grinstead Steering Groups.
- ~ holding regular meetings of our Sussex & Coastway Division in-person and Herts & Beds Division [online](#).
- ~ holding a regular monthly meeting of the L&SE regional branch committee, [online](#).
- ~ drafting our responses to five consultations:
  - # Planning Inspectorate's closing date for responses to Gatwick Airport's [additional information](#) submitted on 24 April, in reply to the Transport Secretary's request following her 'minded to approve' interim decision on the Northern Runway Project on 27 February 2025, is Monday 9 June.
  - # City of London's consultation period for Network Rail Property's applications for [Liverpool Street station redevelopment](#) closes on Tuesday 17 June.
  - # Mayor of London's consultation on "[Planning for a better London - Towards a new London Plan](#)" closes on Sunday 22 June.
  - # Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils' consultation on [local government re-organisation in East Sussex](#) closes on Monday 23 June.
  - # East Sussex County Council's consultation on its [draft 2025-50 strategies for freight and for rail](#) closes on Monday 30 June.

*Your opportunity* to influence our responses is to email [londonandsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:londonandsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk)

## Calendar of forthcoming diary dates

**Sunday 1 June** Sussex & Coastway '[Bridge the gap](#)' campaign stall at Uckfield & District Lions Club annual Family Fun Day & Car Boot Sale on Luxford Field,



**Uckfield and District  
Lions Club**

off High Street via Civic Approach or Library Way, central Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AL.

Invite non-members!

**Friday 6 June** [MarshLink Action Group](#) AGM in Rye.

**Saturday 14 June** “*INTERSECTIONS – between sustainable transport infrastructure, digital tech, cycle networks, architecture, and the built environment.*” An afternoon micro-symposium in Lewes by Fourth Door, including a contribution from Railfuture’s national Board Director for Infrastructure & Networks on prospects for a new Lewes – Uckfield rail link.

**Tuesday 17 June** Herts & Beds Division evening meeting, [online](#). Invite non-members!

**Thursday 19 June** Sussex & Coastway Division evening meeting, in-person in Brighton with speaker from Govia Thameslink Railway. Invite non-members!

**Saturday 21 June** East Anglia regional branch quarterly open afternoon meeting, in Ipswich.

**Saturday 5 July** National AGM for all Railfuture members, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Full details in our [Events](#) and [Rail dates](#) web pages.

## Britain’s Growing Railway in London and the South East: June birthdays

- ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2008, Mitcham Eastfields station.
- ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2019, Meridian Water station.
- ~ 23<sup>rd</sup> in 1998, Heathrow Airport Junction <> Heathrow Terminal 4 station (via Heathrow Terminals 1, 2 & 3 station).
- ~ 23<sup>rd</sup> in 1998, Heathrow Terminals 1, 2 & 3 station (later Terminals 2 & 3, now Heathrow Terminals 2 & 3 station) and Heathrow Terminal 4 station.
- ~ 26<sup>th</sup> in 2013, Hitchin (‘Down Cambridge’) flyover.

**Our vision for rail:** *A railway system that provides services which travellers and freight forwarders want to use, and which offers more journey opportunities to more people and more freight.*

This branch e-newsletter is free, published monthly and distributed to branch members with their GDPR consent. Items for our newsletters, and our branch Local Action column in *railwatch*, to [londonandsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:londonandsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk)

# railfuture

**Railfuture’s mission: to be the number one advocate for Britain’s railway and rail users**

Website: [Welcome to Railfuture](#) Twitter: [@RailfutureLSE](#)

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## What has @RailfutureLSE been doing?

Since the early-May edition of *inter-railse* no.83, Railfuture’s London and South East regional branch members, and / or committee members, have:

~ participated in GTR’s May 2025 timetable changes workshop [online](#).

~ participated in ‘Guildford 180’ as the town’s Rail 200 celebrations.

~ held meetings of five of our six Divisions: Sussex & Coastway and London Metro in-person each with a Network Rail speaker (Paul Best on East Coastway & Marshlink, and Lisa Barrett on Liverpool Street station, respectively), Kent during an annual weekend event,



Herts & Beds in-person, and Eastern Division [online](#).

~ held a regular monthly meeting of the L&SE regional branch committee, [online](#).

**Our vision for Railfuture:** *An independent organisation whose views are respected by the rail industry, to which decision makers come for advice, which rail users are proud to join and recommend.*

## Railfuture is ‘in the news’ / ‘making the news’ / sharing ‘news and views’

- ~ Stay abreast of Railfuture members making, not just watching, things happen in our website [media extracts](#).
- ~ Stay abreast of Railfuture making, not just reporting, the news through our [press releases](#).
- ~ Stay abreast of Railfuture’s and others’ reports and thoughts published in our [website articles](#).
- ~ Railfuture is active on [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#) / [LinkedIn](#).

## Railfuture publications by email

- ~ All members – individual, joint, affiliated organisation eg rail user group or similar, or a business – are being encouraged to receive [Railwatch](#) direct to their Inbox immediately on publication by logging-in at [Member services](#); it’s accompanied by branch newsletter [railse](#).
- ~ All members can receive Railfuture’s regular monthly newsletter [Rail User Express](#) and occasional [Rail Action](#) bulletin direct to their Inbox upon publication.