



Picture: South West Trains

# Shock, horror! A new station

With so many rail projects on hold and so many new roads being approved, the opening of Chandlers Ford station in May was one small piece of good news to cheer rail campaigners who had given up on the Government fulfilling its transport promises.

Chandlers Ford cleared the way for South West Trains to begin running a new hourly service from the start of the summer timetable between Romsey and Totton in Hampshire.

Trains call at Chandlers Ford, as well as Eastleigh, Southampton Airport Parkway, Swaything, St Denys, Southampton Central, Millbrook and Redbridge.

Construction of the station (artist's impression above) however continues and is expected to be completed in September. Trains last called at Chandlers Ford 34 years ago.

The county council provided £2million to build the station – the first new station in southern England for 13 years – and the Strategic Rail Authority will provide £3.3million over three years through the Rail Passenger Partnership scheme to cover the cost of running the station and new train service.

It is a rare example of a sensible transport scheme being implemented instead of obstructed.

Hampshire provides a welcome lesson to “rail rogue” councils, like Cambridgeshire, Bedford Borough and Luton District.

Local bickering among politicians is still preventing existing railways reopening. Both Luton and Cambridgeshire would rather smash rail's network

effect, rip up the rails and pump concrete – to create discredited busways.

And Bedford doesn't realise it has the chance to jump start its ailing economy and benefit by being at the centre of a regional and radial rail network.

Both Government and local politicians still seem to believe in the failed and fruitless sixties policy of road building

In Cambridgeshire the A14 road between Huntingdon and Cambridge is being expanded at a cost of £490million, twice the price of two years before.

Yet in 1993 Transport Minister Roger Freeman visited Cambridge and said that the Cambridge-St Ives line would probably reopen in time for its 150th birthday in 1997.

The cost for that would have been only £6.5million – and would have included a new station at Science Park, Histon..

It did not reopen and the East-West rail scheme is still going nowhere.

Ten years after Mr Freeman's visit, we are being sadly let down by ignorant and narrow-minded decision makers who will not spend small amounts of money on sensible rail schemes but are prepared to squander stupid amounts of our money on road-based schemes.

How can their consciences allow them to sleep at night.

They should be clapped in the stocks on the central reservation of a dual-carriageway road.

A few months before the Department for Transport doled out £490million to the road

builders for the A14, it proudly announced a package of £2billion for new roads.

The £17million spent at Polegate should have been invested on the South Coast railway, the £17million wasted on the Silverstone dual carriageway, the £13million spent at Brackley Hatch and the £18million for the A43-B4031 in Oxon-Northants should have been spent on the East-West rail link, the £53million earmarked for Yorkshire bypasses should have gone to reopening the Woodhead rail route, the £124million spent on the A2 in Kent should have gone to the Medway Valley rail line.

The £6.2million spent on the A1 at Willowburn should have gone to reopen the Alnwick rail line, the £15million spent on the Great Glen bypass should have been spent on the National Forest rail line in Leicestershire.

The £21million spent at Aston Clinton should have reopened the Aylesbury-Winslow rail line, the £31million spent on the Clapham bypass should have reopened the Bedford-Northampton line and the £27million on the A11 in Norfolk should have reopened Wymondham-Dereham-Fakenham-Wells

The £10million spent on the A66 in Cumbria should have been diverted to the Penrith-Keswick rail reopening and the £28million for the A500 in Cheshire should have been spent on the West Coast main line electrification infilling.

The £74million spent on the A120 at Stansted should have paid for reopening the Stansted-

Braintree rail line. The £13million for Nesscliffe, Shropshire, could have been spent on reopening Llangollen-Dolgellau.

The £10million on the A6 at Desborough and the £9million at Higham Ferrers could have been spent on electrifying the Midland main line.

The £24million earmarked for the A10 at Colliers End would have been better spent on widening the Welwyn viaduct.

How much more is the Government going to waste on creating a second M25?

This Government seems incapable of joined-up thinking on transport.

The sensible transport policies are being carried out, despite the Government, in London by Mayor Ken Livingstone.

Central London road charging has been a success. It should be extended.

Two more new stations are to open on the West London line.

**The City of London reports that 91% of people who work in the City get there by rail, split between mainline rail and the Tube. Only 4-6% travel by bus.**

The City claims to make £3million per second for the UK economy.

Wake up at the Treasury! Build Crossrail. Build Thameslink 2000. Stop wasting money on roads. Let's see 90% of the money spent on rail – or at least on public transport.

In France they plan to tax lorries to pay for high-speed rail.

RAILWATCH WEBSITE: <http://www.railwatch.org.uk>

RAILFUTURE WEBSITE: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk>