

West Midlands

■ ■ Closure provokes revolt

Passengers have been protesting over the eight-month closure of Tipton station on the Wolverhampton-Birmingham line. They say the £2.5million project to lengthen platforms and build a road tunnel under the line to replace the level crossing has been badly handled. There have been so many complaints that the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority has summoned Network Rail to its 14 December meeting to explain. Railfuture member Donald Payne said: "Network Rail, London Midland and Sandwell council are blaming each other for the problems while passengers are being ignored. No evidence has been presented to show it is not possible to rebuild the station without closing it. The alternative bus station is hopelessly inadequate. I hope the rail industry has learnt from this disaster and that similar problems are not encountered in future projects."



■ ■ Howls of support for station reopening

So many people turned up at a public meeting to discuss reopening Baschurch station on the Shrewsbury-Chester line that the fire doors and kitchen hatch had to be opened to let them in. Railfuture's Ian Jenkins said: "About 250 people crowded into the village hall to hear from MP Owen Patterson, as well as representatives from Arriva, the Wrexham and Shropshire Railway – and me. The campaign is really taking off. No one in the room spoke against it, except initially the visitor from Shropshire County Council who was howled down. Arriva has agreed to consider stopping services at Baschurch."

Baschurch could cater for a local market of around 10-25,000 people. Local residents have now formed the Baschurch Station Group which has already made contact with Transport Secretary Lord Adonis. Members also hope to restore the Victorian station building.

More info: <http://baschurchstation.org.uk/>

■ ■ Your chance to influence the future of railways

Railfuture members are being urged to have their individual say on the local transport plan which is currently out for consultation from West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority in the shape of a Visions and Issues document. The LTP will be crucial in deciding what projects are advanced in the period from 2014 to 2026. It can be downloaded from www.westmidlandsltp.gov.uk

■ ■ Smart move to make travel easier in three towns

Railfuture is keen to see progress from a trial of smart card ticketing in the Worcester, Droitwich and Kidderminster area which begins next month. The scheme is part of London Midland's franchise commitment to introduce a system similar to London's Oyster cards.

■ ■ More options for passengers at Leamington

Rail passengers at Leamington Spa will get a greater choice from December 2009 when Wrexham and Shropshire trains – with refurbished mark 3 coaches – begin serving the station.

■ ■ New station for Kenilworth but not just yet

Many years of campaigning paid off when Warwickshire County Council agreed a contract in September with John Laing to build and operate a new railway station at Kenilworth on the Leamington-Coventry line, although the proposed start date is three years hence. Campaigners from ASK – A Station for Kenilworth – are delighted. Kenilworth has grown by 40% since the station closed in 1965.

More info: www.kenilworthstation.org.uk/

These reports are taken from Railfuture West Midlands November newsletter

Future transport policy

By Trevor Garrod

Trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk

The European Passengers' Federation responded to a consultation paper by European Transport Commissioner Antonio Tajani entitled *A Sustainable Future for Transport: Towards an Integrated, Technology-led and User-friendly System*.

In our eight-page response in September, we called for greater emphasis on the potential role of public transport in assisting sustainable economic growth and mitigating the effect of transport on the environment and in promoting social cohesion.

If a major change in the quality of public transport is to be delivered, public intervention is needed. It is not enough just to open up the market and hope that services will then improve.

The European Commission has produced research which indicates that there is a lot of dissatisfaction among rail, bus and coach passengers in many European states.

Yet there are also many examples of good services. EPF urges the commission to promote best practice by collecting and publishing comparative user-satisfaction data.

Such a process already happens in

Great Britain through the twice-yearly National Passenger Survey, which interviews more than 50,000 rail passengers every year. This exercise could be broadened to cover all modes and all countries.

The EPF submission also points out the amount of research and development investment being undertaken in the automotive and aeronautical industries. We urge encouragement of similar research and development in public transport, which would also stimulate European knowledge-based industries.

Examples would be work towards a universal smartcard for public transport and an easily accessible and affordable GPS-based public transport information source, so that individuals can find out about, plan and cost their journeys.

Most international journeys in the EU are multi-modal. Few people live at airports, harbours or railway stations and information technology must be developed to make these multi-modal journeys as seamless as possible.

The full EPF submission is on the website www.epf.eu and a paper copy is also available from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

Bring back British Rail campaign

A campaign got under way in November to bring back the best of British Rail. It coincided with the failure of the National Express East Coast franchise and the creation of government-owned Directly Operated Trains to run the trains on the East Coast main line. The franchise will be returned to the private sector in two years time but BBBR campaigners say this should be an opportunity to rethink the 1993 privatisation. More info: www.bringbackbritishrail.org/

LYON

Visit by high-speed trains
10-16 May

RDS Group Travel
for Railfuture members, families
and friends

For details, send an SAE to
Trevor Garrod

15 Clapham Road South
Lowestoft NR32 1RQ

trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk