

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

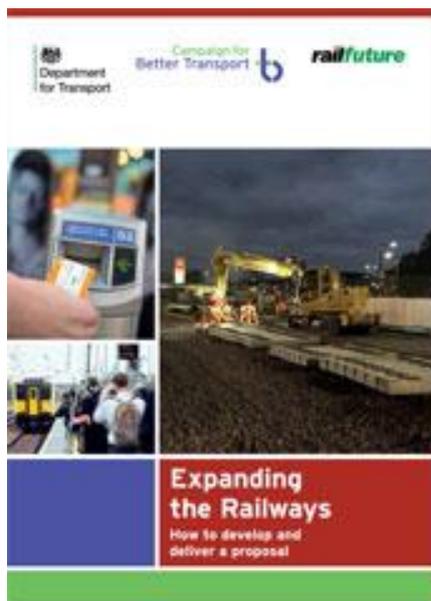
Britain's leading *independent* campaign for a bigger better railway for passengers and freight

Railfuture: 'bigger better railway' DfT: "Restoring Your Railway"

The phrase "reversing Beeching" was first popularised by a former Transport Secretary and the former Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission, and also a Railfuture Vice-President, Andrew Adonis (below) in a [speech in June 2019](#). The soundbite has now become officially formalised in the Department for Transport's new '[Restoring Your Railway Fund](#)'.



The Fund was first announced in late-January by the latest Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, with detailed Guidance then updated in mid-February. It all comes though nearly two years since Railfuture co-launched a campaign for a [Rail Re-opening Fund](#). That followed our guide to '[Expanding the Railways](#)' which had been published, jointly with the DfT, the previous year.



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.

The **Restoring Your Railway Fund** has three parts:
~ an Ideas Fund;
~ Accelerating existing proposals;
~ a New Stations Fund.

The total Fund announced in January is £521.9million. It comprises five allocations, in order of magnitude:
~ £500million for delivering successful Ideas Fund proposals and for Accelerating existing proposals;
~ £20million for a third round of the [New Stations Fund](#);
~ £1.5million to develop proposals for re-opening the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne (freight) line in Northumberland;
~ £300k to help develop detailed business cases for successful Ideas Fund proposals (up to £50k each);
~ £100k to develop proposals for re-opening the Fleetwood line in Lancashire.

Railfuture's response to what is a successful result for our campaign for a Rail Re-opening Fund? With input from all of our branches and support from independent advice, a national schedule of potential schemes has been produced, in the three categories and considered to be deliverable within the next five or up to ten years.

In the London and South East regional branch area two schemes have been identified for the Ideas Fund:
~ Uckfield-Lewes (still has no detailed business case!);
~ Medway-Maidstone-Gatwick corridor,
and two schemes for Accelerating existing proposals:
~ Hundred of Hoo passenger services;
~ High-Speed services for East Sussex.
Ideas Fund schemes need local MP sponsorship; after expert panel assessment in March, notice of successful proposals is expected by Easter. Existing business cases are required for Accelerating existing proposals.

In the end though, it's all about **who** you know!



How to influence people and win friends – Chris Page (r) with Chief Executive of Coast to Capital LEP Jonathan Sharrock (top right) at Local Industrial Strategy 'Big Debate' workshop

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

National Railway Heritage Awards

Half of last year's [12 winning entries](#) have come from around our London & South East regional branch area:



London Bridge – Operational Enhancement Award



Battle station – Craft Skills Award



Tunbridge Wells clocktower – Supporters' Award



Bat & Ball station – Urban Heritage Award



King's Cross Coal Drops – best overall

The Chairman's Special Award, to mark 40 years of **National Railway Heritage Awards**, to King's Cross Lands redevelopment, including the two stations.

Railfuture's Rail User Group Awards

Inaugurated in 2012 but paused for 2019, the annual [RUG Awards](#) are returning for 2020, with a switch to presentations being made at the national AGM – now confirmed for Saturday 27 June in Birmingham.



Closing date was Sunday 1st March. Railfuture Vice-Presidents who judge the entries will be visiting them.

More Southern comfort in December

Two tweaks + one 35-year legacy reversed = three successes for lobbying by Railfuture-affiliated groups.

One tweak has been the 10-minutes earlier start of the first Rye shuttle to Ashford International, to enable the connection into a 12-car rather than the following 6-car Javelin. The other tweak has been the insertion of an extra westbound call at Collington at 17.53 to better fit with the shift patterns of staff at nearby Hastings Direct.

The 35-year legacy reversal is the welcome return of all-day weekday and Saturday services at Cooksbridge.



Right: Cooksbridge Area Rail Action Group – from left: Cllr. Robert Baughan, Ian Ginn, Kevin Froude

On Thameslink, half-hourly Horsham-Peterborough Saturday through services began on 21 December.

TfSE rail – west of East Sussex: BTN-FMR-LWS-UCK-COH-ERI-TBW

As mentioned in our front-page story, the DfT's new £500million [Restoring Your Railway Fund](#) has restored campaigning for an Uckfield-Lewes rail link. The MP for Lewes has sponsored a bid to the [Ideas Fund](#) and the outcome is of course awaited with great interest.

DfT Guidance: "DfT will fund 75% of costs up to £50,000 of successful proposals to help fund transport and economic studies and deliver an initial business case. Future funding to develop projects towards delivery would be subject to submitting a successful business case." Note: only 75%.

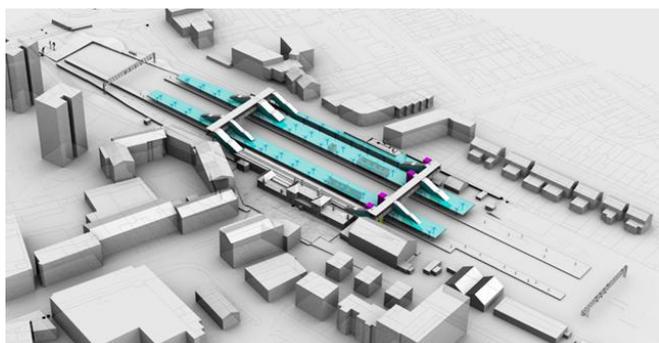
DfT's initial timeline is first an expression of interest from MPs by 28 February, to be in the first round of assessments (there will another in June), then a short submission making the case by 16 March, followed by a pitch to a panel of experts in late March. The DfT hopes then to announce which proposals it will offer funding to within two weeks of the panel, eg by Easter.



A rail-served sustainable new garden community, about the same size as Uckfield or Lewes, somewhere between them

The conclusion of consultation on Transport for the South East's [draft Transport Strategy](#) – "A Sustainable route to growth" – in January now directs attention to the next step, a 'South Central Area Study' over the coming year, feeding into a Strategic Investment Plan for TfSE by September 2021. The area to be studied is a cone between south London and the Sussex coast between Chichester and Hastings/Bexhill.

Elsewhere along the Brighton Main Line corridor, Network Rail have brought forward consultation on the [Reigate station upgrade](#) including a new third platform.



Network Rail has reported [overwhelming public support](#) for the proposed Norwood Junction station upgrade

See more about [Railfuture's Uckfield-Lewes campaign](#)

TfSE rail – east of East Sussex: EBN-BEX-SLQ-HGS-RYE-AFK-STP



Two reports of direct relevance to the campaign to bring direct HS1 services to the east of East Sussex: ["High Speed One at 10: measuring HS1's impact on Kent's visitor economy"](#) dated September 2017, and ["Delivering for Kent: the Economic Impact of HS1"](#) dated September 2019.

Railfuture is one of six rail groups in the Hastings and Rother Rail Users Alliance, formed to champion the Railfuture-inspired 'Eastbourne overlap' May 2018 Southern timetable. The new Ashford-Eastbourne and Brighton-Hastings overlapping services have resulted in record-setting footfall at many MarshLink and East Coastway stations. Of the 17 stations between Ham Street and Eastbourne, eight saw their highest-ever usage in 2018-19 and a ninth saw its second-highest.

The continued success of the 'single-voice' partnership between the Alliance and GTR will next be seen with the [May 2020 timetable changes](#), although driven mainly by the demands of the [Gatwick station project](#). MarshLink's weekend services will include some regular 4-car trains to provide the capacity needed to ensure passengers vital to the visitor economy can board their chosen train; Winchelsea and Three Oaks will benefit from extra afternoon services from Ashford.



Mayor of Bexhill and Huw Merriman MP with others at the Hastings & Rother Rail Users Alliance* event from East Sussex CC, GTR, Southeastern, Network Rail (* Hastings and Rother Rail Users Alliance comprises six rail groups: Railfuture, MarshLink Action Group, Three Oaks and Winchelsea Action for Rail Transport, Ore Transport Group, Normans Bay Residents Association, Bexhill Rail Action Group – four of the five local groups are affiliated to or include members of Railfuture)

On 28 February Bexhill & Battle MP Huw Merriman chaired the HRRUA event "Improving our rail services, investing in the future". Network Rail's Andrew Wood confirmed that the DfT had just requested costs and a timescale for a Strategic Outline Business Case for the 'Kent & East Sussex Coastal Connectivity Programme'.

Read more about [Railfuture's MarshLink campaigning](#)

TfSE rail – West Coastway: BTN-HOV-SSE-WRH-LIT-BOG-CCH

“How to improve West Coastway rail services” is the theme adopted by our [Sussex & Coastway](#) division, and in pursuit of that campaign objective our meetings are held somewhere along the route roughly quarterly.



February venue: Shoreham Port's community room, blue/white at left

In February Network Rail's Senior Strategic Planner Paul Best updated us on '[West Sussex Connectivity](#)', their Continuous Modular Strategic Planning exercise. Emerging options target line-speed improvements, passing loops, how to increase platform capacity for West Coastway services in Brighton station, and addressing some power supply issues for more, longer and higher-specification trains in the post-GTR era.

Next steps include incorporating a West Coastway upgrade programme in TfSE's forthcoming 'Outer Orbital Area Study' and Strategic Investment Plan and, like the Kent and East Sussex Coastal Connectivity Programme, doing a Strategic Outline Business Case as the first step in the DfT's RNEP process. Please stay tuned for further news as we get it! Meanwhile, we can all contribute by identifying the new housing and employment growth which will help support the case for investment in growing this orbital railway.

TfSE rail – N. Downs Line west: West Sussex - Surrey - Hampshire - Berkshire GTW-RDH-REI-DPD-GLD-WKM-RDG

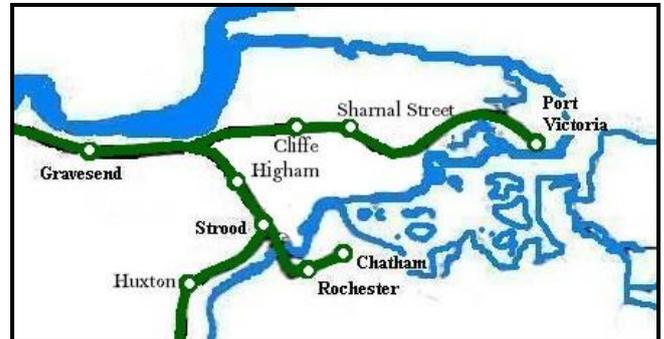
Leap Year Day witnessed a preview third train per hour between Reading and Redhill, marking [the anniversary](#) of a death in the railway family, and his daughter-in-law Jessie's part in a [lineside feature](#) planted in his memory.



L > R: Network Rail Chairman Sir Peter Hendy CBE, Sussex CRP's David 'IKB' Daniels, GWR MD Matthew Golton

TfSE rail – Medway Valley line with North Downs Line east: Kent - Surrey SOO-MDB-PDW-TON-EBR-GDN-RDH

The stage is being set for the [Hundred of Hoo railway](#) to return to passenger service after more than 60 years. Enjoy "[Ride the Hoo, Kent line](#)" shortly before closure. See "[The Hundred of Hoo Railway Story](#)" 40 years on.



It is a potential case-study in 'Restoring your railway', a live candidate for '[Accelerating existing proposals](#)' for "the development and delivery of schemes that already have existing business cases." Alternatively, "Funding may also support newer schemes that already have supporting analysis and are seeking a larger sum of support to progress to an outline business case."



Sharnal Street station site, Hundred of Hoo Railway (Courtesy Creative Commons, original copyright Marathon)

As previously reported, in December's [railse no.146](#), £67million of government funding has been granted to support restoring this railway for passengers, the future residents of the 10,600 new homes on Hoo Peninsula, for services to Gravesend, Medway Towns, Tonbridge.



Hundred of Hoo Academy, Hoo St. Werburgh

Read [coverage in previous issues](#) of newsletter **railse**

Rother Valley <> Kent & East Sussex

As first reported in [railse no.140 June 2018](#) and again in [railse no.143 March 2019](#), Rother Valley Railway's re-started Public Inquiry had an informal pre-Inquiry meeting on Monday 24 February, ahead of the main [Inquiry](#) which is due to start on Tuesday 26 May.

“Easy stations” - across East Anglia

Our neighbouring branch members launched a report – [‘a scheme to encourage further investment in making stations user-friendly for all’](#) – in December.

Community railways round-up

[Edenbridge Town](#)'s station master meets predecessor immortalised in a local church's stained glass window, leading to a [new partnership with local museum](#).

Transport for the South East received a [response from ACoRP](#) to its draft Transport Strategy consultation.

The National Trust supported stations covered by the [Surrey Hills to South Downs CRP](#) ahead of Christmas.

In the New Year [Redhill station](#) got a splash of colour.

The Bedford to St. Albans City CRP has seen a new station partnership take off at [Luton Airport Parkway](#).

Kent CRP's [Medway Valley line](#) gets a music train.

[Cooksbridge Station Partnership](#) celebrates services.

Sussex CRP helps make [trains accessible to all](#).

From April ACoRP re-brands: [Community Rail Network](#).

Community Rail in the city Day is Wednesday 13 May.

Click to subscribe to monthly [“Community Rail News”](#)

“if you don't want to know the result then look away now!”



Our London and South East regional branch area was not immune to the changes of elected representatives in December. Of the 156 new Members of Parliament, 31 are in our branch area, with 15 of them in London – which faces Mayoral and Assembly elections in May. There was no change to the party being represented in 14 of those 31 across the branch/8 of the 15 in London.

Why is this considered at all relevant to Railfuture, as an independent organisation? Simply because we deal with people, and where there have been changes of personnel it's important to our effectiveness to know where new relationships are likely to need fostering.

Campaigns calendar, London & SE

Current consultations of specific and general interest in our London and South East region are shown [here](#). Of immediate interest to our branch are consultations by Mole Valley District Council on [Future Mole Valley](#), the [draft Local Plan 2018-33](#), Hertfordshire County Council's [draft Rail Strategy](#), Network Rail's [Reigate station upgrade](#), the DfT's [Newhaven Marine station](#) closure; Homes England is consulting until December on a Garden Town of 10k+ new homes [West of Ifield](#).



Getting to know you! Usual suspects in Longfield, Kent

In March Railfuture London & South East will have a stall at Alexandra Palace on Saturday/Sunday 21st /22nd (see you there!) and Brighton University on Friday 27th.

Responses to all previous consultations are [here](#). Worthy of note are our December submissions to TfL on the [Bakerloo line extension](#) and to South Western Railway on [proposed alterations to some late-night services](#) from December 2020. In January we responded to [Transport for the South East](#) on its [draft Transport Strategy](#) and to Eastbourne Borough Council on their [Issues and Options: Eastbourne Local Plan](#), in February to East Midlands Railway on their proposed [December 2020 timetable](#) and to the Office of Rail & Road on the [accessibility of rail replacement services](#), in March to Network Rail on [Cambridge South station](#).



In February Transport for London published their [‘Responses to issues raised’](#) during the late-2018 public consultation on a new Sutton Link, and to which [we had responded](#) in January 2019.

Exactly how reliable is your train?



Our Vice-President Cap'n Deltic aka 'Informed Sources' with the annual Golden Spanners Awards for 2019. Nine categories / 25 prizes / [18 winners](#) in our region.

Linda Irvine – RIP

Linda passed away in February. The daughter of a railwayman, she was invited to join the committee of the London and Home Counties Branch of the Railway Development Society around the mid-'80s, being picked out as one of the few female members. Linda was an enthusiastic member of the London Branch Publicity & Sales Team, and a regular helper at events.

Stephen Aselford – RIP

The Croydon-based Railfuture member and disability rights campaigner passed away suddenly last October.

Forthcoming diary/calendar dates

Saturday 21-Sunday 22 March Railfuture's London & South East regional branch stall at annual London Festival of Railway Modelling, Alexandra Palace, N22.

Monday 23 March "Future Mole Valley" Local Plan 2018-33 consultation closes.

Tuesday 24 March East West Rail Company public information drop-in event in Bedford.

Tuesday 24 March "Class 442 re-engineering." Free evening talk in Woking.

Wednesday 25 March "Disrupting disruption: improving customer experience when things go wrong." Free evening talk in London.

Friday 27 March Railfuture 'Bridge the gap' stall at University of Brighton's Green Growth Platform morning event 'What will the Future of Transport hold?'

Saturday 28 March Herts & Beds Division.

Monday 30 March Hertfordshire County Rail Strategy consultation closes.

Thursday 2 April Sussex & Coastway Division.

Monday 6 April Bexhill Rail Action Group.

Monday 6 April Network Rail's Reigate station upgrade consultation closes.

Tuesday 7 April "Brighton Main Line enhancement proposals." Evening talk in Lewes.

Sunday 19 April DfT's Newhaven Marine station closure consultation closes.

Monday 20 April "Platform-train interface." Free evening talk in London.

Monday 20 April "High Speed 1." Evening talk in Sheffield.

Wednesday 22 April "Ladies can't climb ladders." Free evening talk in London.

Wednesday 22 April "An important expansion of the capacity of Southampton's Freightliner rail terminal." Evening talk in Southampton.

Saturday 25 April Railfuture's London & South East regional branch AGM, in central London.

Tuesday 28 April Free evening talk by Dick Fearn, Williams Rail Review member, in Woking.

Thursday 30 April "East West Rail."

Afternoon technical seminar in London.

Thursday 30 April Copy date for your campaign news /reports for London & SE branch Local Action column in July's *railwatch* no.164, and for June's *raise* no.148. Send to londonandsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk

Thursday 30 April Copy date for your campaign news, letters, articles, photos to appear in April's *railwatch* no.164. Send to editor@railwatch.org.uk

Thursday 30 April Closing date for nominations for *Railfuture Campaigner of the Year 2020*.

Thursday 7 May Sussex & Coastway Division.

Monday 11 May "Improving train service performance across the UK network." Free evening talk in London.

Monday 11 May Bexhill Rail Action Group.

Wednesday 13 May Eastern Division.

Saturday 16 May Kent Division, Faversham.

Saturday 16-Sunday 17 May Railfuture stall at annual Faversham Festival of Transport.

Sunday 17 May Timetable changes.

Sunday 17 May All-day Sunday services restored to Cooksbridge (for South Downs National Park).

Monday 18 May "Two London railways – Thameslink and Crossrail."

Evening talk by Chris Green in Sheffield.

Tuesday 2 June "The Helston Railway 1882-2020." Evening talk by its Chairman Chris Heaps in Lewes.

Thursday 4 June Sussex & Coastway Division.

Monday 8 June "Crossrail 2."

Free evening talk in London.

Monday 8 June Bexhill Rail Action Group.

Saturday 27 June Railfuture national AGM, including presentation of Rail User Group Awards and Railfuture Campaigner of the Year 2020 award, in Birmingham.

Wednesday 8 July Eastern Division.

Saturday 11 July Railfuture's 'Bridge the gap' stall at annual Uckfield Festival's Big Day.

Monday 13 July Bexhill Rail Action Group.

Thursday 23 July Sussex & Coastway Division.

Details of these and other dates are in Railfuture's national website's [Events](#) and [Rail dates](#) pages.

Branch divisions' meetings – open to all branch members, visitors welcome

Eastern [s. Essex and n. & e. London] – meets second Wednesday of odd-numbered months, at 18.30 in **Stratford**, E15 1NG – next on **13 May**, then 8 July. Division Convener is Howard Thomas (opposite). See [Eastern Division](#).

Herts & Beds – meets on Saturdays at 11.00 in **St. Albans** – next on **28 March**. Division Convener is Neil Middleton at neil.middleton@railfuture.org.uk See [Herts & Beds Division](#).

Kent – meets quarterly on the third Saturday, in varying Kent venues – next at 14.00 on **16 May** in Faversham. Contact Division Convener Chris Fribbins at chris.fribbins@railfuture.org.uk or at 42 Quickrells Avenue, Cliffe, Rochester, Kent, ME3 7RB, or on tel: 01634 566256. See [Kent Division](#).

London Metro – a Division to cover all TfL rail modes: Underground, Overground, London Trams, DLR, and TfL Rail (becoming Elizabeth line). Contact Branch Vice-Chair Roger Blake (opposite). See [London Metro Division](#).

Surrey – next on Thursday **3 September** in Redhill. Division Convener is Stephen Rolph at stephen.rolph@railfuture.org.uk. See [Surrey Division](#).

Sussex & Coastway – meets monthly on first Thursdays at 18.00, in varying Sussex venues. Next on **2 April**, then 7 May, 4 June, and 23 July. Division Convener is John Black at jcbblack@yahoo.co.uk. See [Sussex & Coastway Division](#).

inter-railse

Our monthly branch e-newsletter is available to all members on email (as a pdf or as a link) by requesting it via roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk It's also available in [Branch News](#) for anyone to view and/or download.

This branch newsletter is free, published quarterly and usually distributed with each edition of the national *railwatch*. The copy deadline for *railse* issue no.148, due to be published in June 2020, will be Friday 1 May 2020. Items for this newsletter and our branch Local Action column in *railwatch* to londonandsoutheast@railfuture.org.uk



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

Websites: [Welcome to Railfuture](#) [London and South East regional branch](#)
[Railwatch](#) [Rail Action](#) [Rail User Express](#)

Follow us on  [twitter](#) @Railfuture and @RailfutureLSE and @Railwatch

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Our four branch neighbours

These and other branch websites, with their **events** and **newsletters**, are all in '[Railfuture near you](#)'.

East Anglia – contact is Branch Secretary Paul Hollinghurst – eastanglia@railfuture.org.uk Branch-Board liaison via Director Jerry Alderson.

East Midlands – contact is Branch Secretary Steve Jones – eastmidlands@railfuture.org.uk Branch-Board liaison via Director William Whiting.

Thames Valley – contact is Branch Secretary Andrew McCallum – thamesvalley@railfuture.org.uk Branch-Board liaison via Director Roger Blake.

Wessex – contact is Branch Secretary Tony Smale – wessex@railfuture.org.uk Branch-Board liaison via Director Stewart Palmer.

London and SE Branch officers

Branch Chairman: Vacant.

Vice-Chairman: Roger Blake, 70 Dynevor Road, Stoke Newington, London, N16 0DX. Tel: 020 7254 1580; roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk

Secretary: Vacant.

Treasurer: Howard Thomas, 24 South Primrose Hill, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2RG. Tel: 01245 280503; howard.thomas@railfuture.org.uk

Branch committee meetings

Open for any of our members to attend, as observers, subject to advance notice to our Vice-Chair, (above). Next on **Monday 11 May**, in central London.



Readers may find this free six-item briefing a simple way of staying in touch with rail (and some Railfuture!) developments. Click [RailBusinessDaily](#) to subscribe.