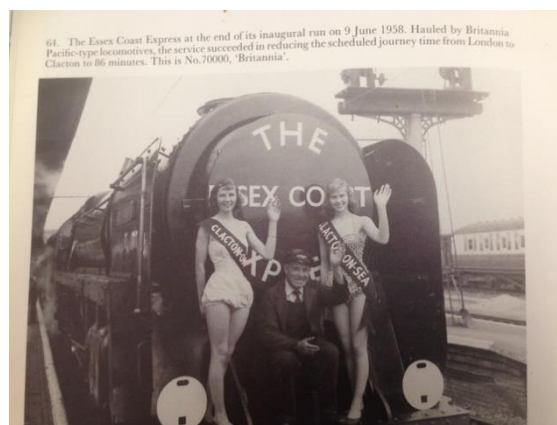


“ONTRACK” RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION – PUBLIC “INFORMATOR” NEWS

Our MP Giles Watling has launched a report about the Clacton & Walton to Colchester railway line produced in collaboration with ONTRACK and the Tendring Transport Liaison Group. As the GAZETTE reported < **A RAIL group produced a report to highlight how a train line has been “neglected”**> before later dashing off to catch a train to a meeting in London himself. Our MP GILESWATLING told the ONTRACK QUESTIONTIME audience that he has been lobbying the Secretary of State for Transport, meeting frequently with **Gt. Eastern Mainline Taskforce** and will pass on the report that has just been completed on the state of Tendring’s Rail Services to the Minister of State. The Report is entitled < **Colchester to Clacton & Walton – A Very Under Achieving Railway** > which has been produced, in advance of the Greater Anglia 2020 timetable consultation, by the Tendring Transport Liaison Group of which ONTRACK is a Stakeholder, set up by ECC Councillor Mark Platt. *Should it not be also Clacton in 60 minutes from London, as well as Ipswich?* Even the latest edition of RAIL magazine, the rail industry bi weekly, reports that the local Clacton lines fare revenue growth is static compared to almost all the other lines in East Anglia, which have seen increases in the number of trains and the level of service. The journey times are worse than the steam age and fares are also up, 25 per cent higher than those applying on average across Norfolk or Suffolk. The full report can be read or downloaded from ONTRACK WEBSITE <https://www.ontrackrailusers.org.uk/> .



1st. Picture MP launches the report (rear view Cllr Mark Platt Blue Suit on front seat) **2nd. Picture** Copy of newspaper report from over 60 years ago of British Rail launching a **Clacton in 85 Minutes** for the **Essex Coast Express** using the Britannia Class steam locomotive (currently between 90-100 minutes)

The 2019 ONTRACK QUESTIONTIME & AGM had the MP, GILES WATLING, Matt BRENNAN NETWORK RAIL and ABELLIO’s Greater Anglia Railway’s Alan Neville all speak and present. Network Rail spoke about the planned resignalling of Clacton Station- Thorpe Le Soken (left out of the original scheme for the rest of the line a few years ago - see the NETWORK RAIL Slides on the ONTRACK website) and extra tracks to help the Gt Eastern Mainline to run more trains more freely. The resignalling work between Clacton and Thorpe Le Soken may require some disruption of service and will result in everything being controlled from Colchester, and is expected to take place over 2021. Abellio’s Greater Anglia Railways spoke about the new trains starting to be delivered and measures being taken to improve it. G.A.R reported on the first test run of the new intercity trains over the previous night into Liverpool Street, SMART CARDS, and improving reliability and performance.



3RD Picture GILES WATLING MP CENTRE- flanked by Alan Neville Greater Anglia Railways, (LHS) and MATT BRENNAN Network Rail Anglia (RHS),

Councillor Mark Platt raised the Green Agenda aspects of improving transport, highlighting the need for more chargers within Tendring and at railway stations. The inadequacies of Disabled Access at Thorpe Le Soken, which did not rank high enough for central funding, were highlighted during the general question time session. There was dissatisfaction in the legacy: of accessibility compliance, which appears to be lagging behind other service sectors, a point underlined by Cllr. Nick Turner. Questions were also raised in respect the operational issues and priorities created by the management of delays during the disruption of services and suggestions made how this might be improved.

The report <Colchester to Clacton & Walton – A Very Under Achieving Railway> summarised as follows:

- The report highlights how the this line has, uniquely, suffered from neglect for decades, whilst almost all other lines in East Anglia have seen big increases in the number of trains and the level of usage. On top of the train service here being worse than it was in the 1960s, there are also abnormally high fares here (about 25% more than the Norfolk/ Suffolk average, and this despite east Tendring being a low-income area); nobody knows why this is the case!

- In particular there has been a big drop in the number of people travelling into Colchester by train in the am peak, with two of the three best-used trains having been taken off in the 1990s, and peak fares levels (over £12 return from Clacton/Frinton/Walton). This of course is one of the reasons for the major traffic problems in east Colchester, and contrasts greatly with the big increase in rail use for local commuter journeys elsewhere in the country.
- Usage of Frinton and Walton stations has also become especially poor (despite major population increases); due to the loss of through London trains and the generally bad service and risk of missed connections.
- Our MPs and councillors are called upon to lobby now for this line which has been 'nobody's baby' for so long.
- The initial requests for the local service are very modest - two extra trains each way to make the am and pm peak services at Colchester Town half-hourly for both Clacton and Frinton/Walton users. [This might not even cost anything if interworked with London trains, but that depends on details]. Plus a 'normalisation' of the fares and a publicised 'relaunch' of the service to emphasise the end of the years of neglect.
- If this is successful further enhancements at other times could follow in the 2020s.
- Also requested is an improvement of the current mish-mash London peak service, which has become ever slower over the years [the p.m. peak service has just been made slower again this week in the interests of even faster journeys for Norwich people!]. With at least two 'fast' Clacton trains (nonstop Colchester-Stratford) each way, and two proper through Walton trains each way [not useless ones that get overtaken en route!]. [NB this does not require an increase in the total number of peak trains].
- None of the improvements requested require infrastructural changes, or any substantial financial commitment by any party.
- There is no way that Colchester car congestion in the peaks can be dealt with without reducing the huge number of cars coming in from Tendring.

THE REST OF THE NEWS –

GREATER ANGLIA RAILWAYS have produced small timetable booklets for each line only instead of three all in one for complete booklets for the route sections, which might make journey planning a tad more complicated and one may have to ask at the booking office for a copy – if any are left.

FARES NOTE: Fares increased on some “unregulated fares” with the start of the new timetable; ask at the booking office about what is the cheapest fare for the journey and what are the restrictions applying. The problem about travel up to London that travel across London by Tube and Bus to /from Liverpool Street may have too many unpredictable variables if booked on set trains departing Liverpool Street

FIRST GROUP BUSES as you must be neither already aware are not printing timetables; one has to look at and use the web based version. . HEDINGHAM BUS may be starting a review of their Clacton services this summer

CLACTON AIRSHOW DAYS - Once Again a modified service might be run to cope with demand.

TRANSPORT LIAISON GROUP: Understand some key Councillors in the new Council are keen to relaunch this and have asked for key short term v long term priorities. Key short term priorities for infrastructure perhaps include DISABILITY ACCESS & GENERAL STATION ACCESSIBILITY, CENTRAL AVENUE BRIDGE & STATIONS FOOTBRIDGES, STATION SHELTERS; OPERATIONAL might include half hourly local service and 80-85 minute through direct journey times to from London BUSES Might include Extending Dial A ride to cover all of Tendring, better Early morning. Late Evening services. What would want? Please let us know and Cllr Nick Turner?

NEW TRAINS: We understand the length of the new trains may create problems in respect of the use of the bay platforms at Wickford, Manningtree and there may also axle weight problems on some of the other rural lines with old bridges, which will have to be resolved.

TOGETHER EVERY BODY ACHIEVES MORE (TEAM) - MEMBERSHIP & SUMMARY DATA PROTECTION POLICY –

1. We welcome new members. New European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into force in May 2018 and we summarise our policy here.
2. **SEE ONTRACK WEBSITE FOR FULL DETAILS;**
- 2.1 Data will be updated/deleted in 30 days But this means we cannot contact you or advise you of upcoming events or issues that affect you in future even if you are a lapsed member
- 2.2 We do not divulge membership details for third party use. Please let us know if you have any concerns
- 2.3 Except
 - Where request for help in sorting out complaints in respect of customer service may require sharing / verifying customer details and we will let you know if we do so
 - Otherwise in respect of surveys and/ or petitions where signatory's identities need to be retained for verification purposes
3. What Data do we keep? Your contact details so that we can keep in touch and keep you updated.
4. Any surveys you participate in we collate the results data as a statistical profile (personal identities not revealed)
5. You can request update of your details and preferences at any time via the ONTRACK website or by contacting the Membership Secretary by post or e-mail

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PLEASE MAY WE JOIN ONTRACK. May we contact you: By E-mail: Y/N By Post Y /N,
By Phone Y/N ... By TEXT Y/N

SIGN HERE.....PRINT NAME.....

TEL NO/MOBILE NO. E-MAIL

.POSTALADDRESS/.....

CUT SLIP OFF, Place in box at HARWOODS OF ESSEX, Connaught Ave Frinton OR POST to our Hon. Sec D J BOLTON 71 Park Road, Clacton On Sea, Essex. CO15 1HQ