

Rail North West



A class 150 arrives at Rose Hill Marple station in better times. Photo courtesy Friends of Rose Hill Station.

Local Rail User Groups Fight Planned Cuts

Rail user groups from Rose Hill, Marple and Romiley are fighting plans to suspend train services on the route from Rose Hill Marple to Manchester Piccadilly via Hyde in the period September to December 2020.

Northern Trains, now run by the Department for Transport’s Operator of Last Resort, has told local MPs that they are planning to suspend all train services on the route from September to December 2020 due to insufficient staffing caused by the need to train for new rolling stock and new recruits.

During this period there will be no trains at Rose Hill Marple, Woodley, Hyde Central, Hyde North and Fairfield stations. As a result, frequencies will also be cut at Romiley, Guide Bridge and Ashburys. The campaign to stop these plans also involves the Goyt Valley Rail Users’ Association and is supported by all the local MPs and Councillors.

Rachel Singer, Chair of the Friends of Rose Hill Station, said “*The withdrawal of service is not just inconvenient, it will cause distress*”

and a severe sense of dislocation and disruption to life for many who use the service when we are all struggling to re-establish some routines as lockdown eases. We are also concerned about the many local school pupils who will not be able to use the service just as they return to school at the start the new session. Many of those affected will switch to travelling by car, causing more pollution and congestion. Others will be forced to use less convenient bus and rail services, increasing the pressure on these services and making social distancing harder. Some people will decide not to travel at all, undermining the Government's efforts to get the economy growing again".

Chair of the Goyt Valley Rail Users' Association, Peter Wightman, added "Northern are asking passengers to find other ways to travel, pointing them to local bus services, and to rail stations on the routes from Glossop and from Sheffield via Marple. But this comes when bus services are being reduced, and passengers are already being asked to try to avoid the rail route from Sheffield via Marple due to overcrowding. With capacity on alternative routes being limited due to social distancing,

overcrowding may force passengers to find another means of transport, or make it impossible to maintain social distancing.

"The longer this closure goes on, the harder it will be to persuade passengers to come back to rail, working against the aim of making our transport system more sustainable. This also undermines the government's commitment to rebuild passenger confidence when it took over the running of services across the Northern rail network in March."

The user groups point out that several thousand people have signed petitions against Northern's plans in less than a week, and they have created a storm of opposition on social media. The groups are committed to fighting the plans until they are scrapped. Following a meeting with Northern, also attended by the local MPs, there was no change to the proposal, although they are now running six replacement shuttle buses per day in a circuit from Woodley to Romiley then on to Rose Hill and back again via Marple

For more information email forhs142@gmail.com or follow @forhs142 or @FoMarpleStation on Twitter.



Rose Hill Station entrance. Photo Arthur Thomson.

Chris Dale, Transport Campaigner 1948 – 2020



Railfuture North West is very sad to report the death of long-standing branch committee member and Chair of Travelwatch North West, Chris Dale

Chris will be known to many members and across the wider transport campaigning community, he was always the friendliest campaigner, but never let that prevent him telling the truth to those who needed to hear.

John Moorhouse from Travelwatch North West writes; "Chris Dale who died suddenly on June 22nd 2020 will be widely missed by many people and organisations who knew him and benefited from his extraordinary knowledge and experience of buses and trains.

In early life an avid Railfan and train spotter, Chris' enthusiasm matured into an active involvement in public transport

campaigning for over 30 years. Owning no car, he was a dedicated user of public transport with an extraordinary knowledge and experience of buses and trains. Chris will be missed by a wide range of people and organisations who knew him and benefited from his astonishing, encyclopaedic grasp of transport facts.

Chairman of TravelWatch NorthWest for the last 12 years, Chris was a former Director of Campaign for Better Transport and he chaired the Crewe to Manchester Community Rail Partnership. More recently he was heavily involved with Cheshire Best kept stations.

Displaying no airs and graces and no attitude of self-importance, Chris' style was always verging on the modest and unassuming, yet effective because of his profound knowledge of the transport industry. He was deeply conscious of the interests of passengers, nevertheless fair in his dealings with transport operators. He had a very positive working relationship with those operators and indeed local authority and other procurers and was very well respected throughout the transport industry.

There was a lot of warmth towards Chris and for the great campaigning work he did and the following comments are typical of the many that have been received following his untimely death -

"I am so very shocked and sorry to read this. He really was one of the best, and always so good-humoured, always up with all the latest news and with a chuckle and a grin to go with it. I am really going to miss him, and I know

many others will too.”

“(Chris) was always cheerful, down to earth and committed to improving public transport.”

“He always came over to say hello, and his impression on me, that I found charming, was that even when he was dead serious, he was smiley. A nice man”.

“He was a likeable, generous spirit with humour and humility and a surprisingly popular man. I will miss Chris as someone I could trust and always be assured of a welcoming smile.

“I will remember him as always cheerful, always sensible with a wealth of knowledge, an all-round decent man. His death is a big loss to the community of public transport advocates.”

“Chris led his life to the full with things he loved doing, with so many people gaining so much as a result. I will miss him - you will miss him - and, although they may not immediately realise it, a vast number of people in the North West will miss what he has, so very quietly and without fuss, done for them.”

We at TravelWatch NorthWest will miss Chris’ example and leadership. It is now for us to take forward his good work as we look to the future and the immense challenges.”

The branch committee at Railfuture North West England echo those remarks; we too are going to do our best to follow his example and we hope it gives encouragement to others.

Reversing Beeching: North West Bids Announced

Earlier this year, the Department for Transport announced a new scheme (with £500m of funding across the UK) which invited MP’s’ Local Councils and Community Groups to make proposals to re-open stations or re-instate lost services.

The first round of the bid process closed in April and two bids from the North West were successful; reopening of the Bury – Heywood – Rochdale route, currently part used by the heritage operation, East Lancashire Railway and the rest via a connection at Castleton onto Network Rail tracks to Rochdale. It’s thought this could become a tram-train service.

The other bid is to re-instate regular passenger services on the line from Clitheroe to Hellifield. This line has

summer Sunday and regular freight services.

MPs and local authorities have now bid for a share of the second round of the [Restoring Your Railway ‘Ideas Fund’](#), to develop proposals to build or reopen railway lines and stations, including those closed by British Rail chief Dr Richard Beeching from 1963.

The funding will be available to develop these plans and they will be awarded up to £50,000 each (with the promoter expected to find 25% of the cost), which the government says is to “progress plans to improve local connectivity, bringing communities one step closer to better rail connections with the capacity to boost job opportunities and ease congestion.”

In the second round of bids announced 30th June, 10 of the 50 bids were from schemes in the North West, they were;

- South Fylde Line Passing Loop
- Kenyon Junction Station
- Reopening Golborne Railway Station
- Reinstatement of Bolton-Radcliffe / Bolton-Bury
- Reinstating Beeston Castle and Tarporley railway station
- Re-opening Midge Hall Station
- Re-doubling of the Mid Cheshire Line between Stockport and Altrincham and associated station reopening's
- Stockport to Ashton Line
- Glazebrook Junction to Skelton Junction
- East Didsbury – Stockport

Railfuture and the associated Rail User Groups (RUG's) are particularly pleased to see schemes that we have been campaigning for included. The proposed passing loop on the South Fylde Line to enable better than hourly service has long been an aim of the local RUG, Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users Association (BAFRUA).

The plan for a new station at Beeston and Tarporley on the line between Chester and Crewe, has been an ambition of some local campaigners for years, and is supported by the local MP Edward Timpson. A railway construction professional Michael Flynn has started a Facebook group which is getting lots of support. Its likely plans for the station would be for a parkway style as its not near any major settlements, but housing growth in the area could be used to support the case.

An earlier study into re-opening the station funded by Cheshire County council in 2006 underestimated the local population by a third and the population has grown by 10% since that study so this should help too.

The last of those listed above, East Didsbury to Stockport, is thought to be tied to a bid from Stockport council and TfGM for an extension to Metrolink network for which it was reported that outline funding has already been agreed in January.

Re-doubling tracks on the Mid Cheshire line between Stockport and Altrincham is also thought to have the backing of TfGM and is likely to have new stations at Cheadle, Northenden and Baguley, where an interchange with Metrolink would give access to Manchester Airport. The actual single-track sections are between Cheadle Village Junction and Sharston Junction, a distance of about two miles for which the track formation is there to quickly re-instate double tracks (although one the two bridges across Roscoe's roundabout at Cheadle Heath looks to have been singled). The other is the short section either side of Navigation Road station controlled by Deansgate Junction signal box, which would be much harder to reinstate as the other track is now in use for Metrolink services to Altrincham.

The Department for Transport said these bids will now be considered by expert panel including Network Rail Chair Sir Peter Hendy, with announcements regarding the successful schemes expected by the end of the summer.

STORM Air Quality Success

For over a year STORM has campaigned, about the air quality at Victoria Station, especially on the overbridge, writing to Northern, Network Rail, Manchester City Council and to TfGM.

The overbridge is used by the majority of Rochdale area stations passengers, arriving/departing from platforms 5 and 6, and STORM's concerns were echoed by the agencies mentioned above. A new extraction system has now been installed on the overbridge and Chris Jackson, Northern's Regional Director commented this, "has been installed at Manchester

Victoria to help improve air quality at the station."

STORM recognises the help received in bringing this campaign to a satisfactory conclusion, including Raj Chandarana, former Stakeholder Manager at Northern, who was a great help in several initiatives concerning the Rochdale area, STORM wishes Raj all success for the future.

Owain Roberts, Stakeholder Manager for the West Region is now also covering duties in the Central Region where he will be assisted by Rebecca Styles, Regional Community and Sustainability Manager.

Peak time service goes to North(ern).

Transport for Wales is to withdraw the Chester – Manchester Airport peak time services from December and Northern will

step in, replacing them with Northern Connect services to Leeds via

Manchester Victoria, however Northern are transferring the early morning Ellesmere Port to Leeds service to facilitate this, with Chester now the starting point

The Manchester Recovery Task Force, setup to involve key stakeholders in plans to improve the network resilience after the issues with more trains than can be reliably sent through the Castlefield

Corridor has set this out as one of the ideas to recover the network.

Chester residents and those at intermediate stations will obviously now be taken to Victoria rather than Piccadilly stations

Penrith – Keswick moves a Step Closer

Allerdale Borough Council's bid to reinstate the Penrith to Keswick railway line, submitted in conjunction with CKP Railway Plc, was supported by the Cumbrian Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria Tourism and Eden District Council. The Department for Transport has agreed to help find the best way forward for this project, and work with the group to develop its application for funding, or to find another way.

Pacers Here Until December 2020

Northern will continue to use Pacers in passenger service in the North West until

December, following on from their request to the Department for Transport

to be able to use them until May this year. This was partly due to late delivery of new rolling stock meaning Northern needed to keep some Pacers to maintain services.

Pacers were meant to be removed from passenger service by December 2019, because they don't meet accessibility regulations that started on January 1st but a number have been kept initially as a contingency fleet, because of late delivery of the new train fleet and the converted 769 bi-mode units.

Letters of authorisation from the DfT confirm that a number of class 142's will be retained in the North West and although Nick Donovan told the

Transport for the North committee that none were planned to be in passenger service, several are now being used on the Manchester Piccadilly to Rose Hill route mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, although these are coupled with accessible diesel multiple units.

The class 769 bi-mode trains which were intended to be deployed on the Southport – Alderley Edge route (which previously had Pacers regularly running on it and is currently running to Oxford Road only), are still late into service and aren't expected until September 2020 at the earliest. This route is one in which its permitted for Pacers to run without a paired accessible unit.

Transport for the North's "Infrastructure Pipeline"

Transport for the North published its long-term plans for economic recovery in August, focussing on three key areas.

- Schemes that can be delivered within 6-18 months,
- Schemes that can start construction within 2-4 years,
- Schemes where immediate investment in accelerated development would support jobs, boost confidence and maintain an ongoing Northern Infrastructure Pipeline.

The schemes assessed include all transport systems but for rail-based projects those in the first category include a £53m scheme to introduce contactless ticketing at all rail stations and light rail networks across the North (to include Manchester Metrolink, Tyne and Wear Metro, Blackpool, Sheffield Supertram and Merseyrail networks).

The introduction of "flexi-season" tickets on rail networks is also planned, these

are where instead of seven day, monthly or annual season tickets, passengers could get a set number of journeys, like carnets currently available on some bus service.

In the 2-4 years category, further development funding is sought for the Cumbrian Coast Line to enable better freight connectivity and further work could be undertaken to improve Carlisle station.

The project to open a station at Midge Hall in west Lancashire (mentioned in the Reversing Beeching article earlier) is also included, as are plans to improve access at all Merseyrail stations and a major upgrade for Liverpool Central station.

In Manchester, Transport for Greater Manchester also wants to improve access at stations and is looking at a project to add platforms on the Wigan Branch at Lostock station near Bolton.

Government “Kickstart” for Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade

On July 23rd, the Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps announced that the Government would provide £583 million to kickstart the scheme to upgrade the Leeds – Manchester Trans-Pennine route.

Plans to double sections of the route from two to four tracks have been confirmed, but full electrification of the whole route will be considered as part of the an “Integrated Rail Plan” which is due to report in December.

This report will also consider digital signalling, further multi-tracking and look at ways to include freight capacity

improvements to make a better business case. This plan will also look at how Northern Powerhouse Rail (be a new rail link across the north), HS2 and the Trans- Pennine Route Upgrade should be delivered.

The creation of a Northern Transport Acceleration Council was also announced, the purpose of which is for Northern political leaders to have a direct line to Transport Ministers. This council will consist of Northern mayors and council leaders with the Transport Secretary as chair. The aim is for this council to work with DfT staff based in north.

Future branch meetings.

Members will no doubt be aware that we have been unable to hold our regular branch committee meetings since the outbreak of corona virus, and meetings scheduled up to the end of June have been cancelled.

The joint meeting with the Yorkshire branch booked for 4th April was also cancelled, this is provisionally been rescheduled for 7th November but this has not yet been confirmed. If it goes ahead, it will still be at the previous planned venue, Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade Huddersfield, HD1 5JP. It's hoped that we will still have our planned speaker from Network Rail to talk about the Trans -Pennine Route Upgrade. Branch committee meetings scheduled for the rest of this year are on 12th September and on either 14th or 28th November, venues tba please contact the Chair or Secretary for details.

Rail User Groups within the North West area Affiliated to Railfuture

(for those viewing in pdf format, there are
embedded links to most group's websites)

- [Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users' Association](#)
- [Bolton Rail Users Group](#)
- [Chinley & Buxworth Transport Group](#)
- [Cumbrian coast Rail Users' Group \(CRUG\)](#)
- [Friends of Denton Station](#)
- [Friends of Littleborough Stations \(Lancashire\)](#)
- [Friends of Reddish South Station](#)
- [Friends of Rose Hill Station](#)
- Friends of St Annes Stations email tonyford19@gmail.com
- [Friends of Settle Carlisle Line](#)
- [Furness Line Action Group \(FLAG\)](#)
- [Goyt Valley Rail Users' Association \(Stockport\)](#)
- [Lakes Line Rail User Group \(LLRUG\)](#)
- [Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group \(LASRUG\)](#)
- [Mid Cheshire Rail Users' Association \(MCRUA\)](#)
- [North Cheshire Rail Users' Group \(NCRUG\)](#)
- [Ormskirk, Preston and Southport Travellers Association \(OPSTA\)](#)
- [Ribble Valley Rail](#) (no website currently)
- [Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership \(SELRAP\)](#) (reopening campaign)
- [Support the Oldham Rochdale Manchester line \(STORM\)](#)
- [Stalybridge to Huddersfield Rail User Group](#)
- [Wirral Transport Users' Association \(WTUA\)](#)
- [Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users Association \(WBRUA\)](#)

Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users Association (Incorporating South Fylde Line Users Association)

Chairman; Paul Nettleton
8, Balham Avenue,
Blackpool,
FY4 3QP

Vice – Malcolm Richardson
Chairman 135, Branstree Road,
Blackpool,
FY4 4SR,



Join us, it's only £1/year, £1.50 for family membership.
Contact; Membership Secretary, "Hamlet" 2B, Meadow Park,
Wesham Preston PR4 3DN. Download our online form from:
<http://wwwbafraa.org.uk/> click on "Join Our User Group."

LASRUG

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group
www.llmr.co.uk www.lasrug.btck.co.uk

The group was formed in 1989 to support and improve the Lancaster to Skipton railway. This links the towns and cities of West Yorkshire with the city of Lancaster and the seaside resort of Morecambe. It also gives access to the Yorkshire Dales, Forest of Bowland and Furness.

If you would like to help us promote the 'Little North Western' line, please contact our Membership Secretary, Lakeber House, Robin Lane, High Bentham, Lancaster. LA2 7AF.

Membership costs £7-00 annually. You will receive a Newsletter quarterly and we invite a speaker from the Rail Industry to the AGM each September.

Cumbrian coast Rail Users' Group



If you'd like to join a group representing rail users in West Cumbria, and particularly on the Cumbrian Coast line from Carlisle to Barrow, the **Cumbrian coast Rail Users' Group** would welcome your membership.

See www.crug.org.uk where you will find all the details about us and how to join. It costs £5 for individuals or £10 for organisations.

We can make a difference, and with your help, our voice will be stronger.



WIRRAL TRANSPORT USERS ASSOCIATION

We believe in modern, public transport systems for the Wirral and Merseyside and keep our members up to date with public transport developments

We support the campaign for electrification of the Wrexham Central–Birkenhead–Bidston Line

We support new railway stations at Ledsham, Town Meadow and Deeside industrial Estate

We wish to see more bus/rail and car/rail interchange for the benefit of passengers

We are affiliated to Railfuture, Passenger Focus, Travelwatch North West, Bus users UK & represent Campaign for Better Transport in the area.

We publish a newsletter twice a year and run coach excursions

Why not join us? Join today

Annual individual subscription £6.00; Family £8;

Corporate Bodies £25.00, representative bodies £12.50

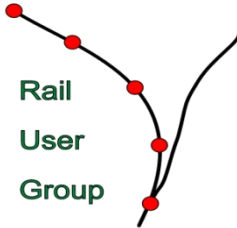
Send your subscription to our Membership Secretary today and receive a copy of our latest newsletter

Brian Grey, 56, Coombe Road, Irby, Wirral, CH61 4US.

THE LAKES LINE RAIL USER GROUP

Formed in 1984 to promote and support Cumbria's only branch line for locals and tourists alike. Travel the lakes line into scenic Lakeland.

Lakes Line



Join Today!

Contact: Mr. P Bell 9, Vicars Hill, Kendal, Cumbria

Membership: £5.00 Individuals,

£7.00 Family, £13.00 Corporate

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Rail North West is the newsletter of the North West branch of Railfuture. Contributions in the form of articles and letters are welcomed. Please send them to Arthur Thomson at arthur.thomson@railfuture.org.uk or by post via the chairman as above. Text files e-mailed are particularly welcome. The opinions expressed in Rail North West are those of any individual contributors and not necessarily those of Railfuture.

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