

The RAGES Rag

AUGUST 2014, ISSUE 62



The newsletter of the Rail Action Group, East of Scotland, bringing members up-to-date with progress on improvements to local rail services.

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RESTON AND EAST LINTON STATIONS ON TRACK WITH RAIL STATION FUND BID

Scottish Borders and East Lothian Councils, along with the South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran), have made an offer of additional funding to the Scottish Government's Rail Station Fund as part of plans to provide two new stations at East Linton and Reston.

The submission of the bid is the culmination of years of endeavour by a local working group which includes **RAGES**, both local authorities, SEStran, and local MSPs.

The news follows an announcement by Transport Scotland in November that the five companies bidding for the new

ScotRail franchise would need to consider new stations at East Linton and Reston in their submissions.

The case for a local rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed was also supported by a paper presented to Scottish Government's Transport Minister Keith Brown MSP in December 2013.

The group is now awaiting a response from Scottish Government which will consider submissions from across the country as well as deciding who will be operating the rail network in Scotland. An answer is expected towards the end of the year.

RAGES welcomes this dedicated funding for the two stations at Reston and East Linton by the respective councils.

The contribution from East Lothian Council is £1,560,000 and the contribution from Scottish Borders Council is £1,280,000.

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RAGES AGM: 10 SEP 2014

The date of the **RAGES** Annual General Meeting has been set for **Wednesday 10th September 2014 at 7.30pm** at the West Barns Bowling Club.

All members are invited to attend.

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RESTON AND EAST LINTON STATIONS ON TRACK WITH RAIL STATION FUND BID

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The local authority commitments provide a total maximum contribution of £2,840,000 or approximately 40% of the estimated project costs.

This is a very significant gesture, particularly as resources in both organisations are severely constrained both by the availability of finance and by a range of other important infrastructure projects. Despite these constraints both Councils, however, place a very high priority on this project and it should be noted that there is a willingness to enter into further discussions on funding if necessary to understand what would be required to secure the investment in both stations.

Other opportunities for potential contributions will also be investigated.

The full bid document can be seen at www.rages.org.uk/downloads/ssfb.pdf



THE BRAND NEW EAST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

Last month Keith Brown, the Scottish Transport Minister, announced the establishment of the East Lothian Community Rail Partnership, the second in Scotland. The partnership will cover both lines from Edinburgh to North Berwick and Dunbar. This is a result of the Scottish Government policy to enhance local railways through community involvement.

Unlike **RAGES**, the Community Rail Partnership is not a campaigning organization and will not lobby for increased service frequencies or new routes or stations. Instead it will concentrate on the promotion of rail travel to the general public by working with various departments within East Lothian Council (including Transport and Economic Development), local business and community groups as well as the rail industry.

So far the ambitions of the Community Rail Partnership are centred on:

- Improving the range of information available at stations
- Keeping local stations looking beautiful
- Promoting East Lothian by rail
- Finding ways to co-ordinate bus and train timetables
- Local incentives for rail travel

Included with this issue of the RAGES Rag is a survey from the Community Rail Partnership. The survey is also available at local libraries and online at www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk.

Please take some time to fill it in and help them set their priorities for action over the next year. Encourage friends and neighbours to take part as well. Paper surveys should be returned to your local library or to *Amber Moss, John Muir House, Haddington, EH31 3HA.*

ERRATUM

In our May newsletter we mentioned a new ticket office at Berwick. We should have said 'information lounge'. The ticket office remains in its usual position. Tickets cannot be purchased from the information lounge.



DUNBAR SURF AND SAND GARDEN

Volunteers at Dunbar Station have been busy tidying up the gardens and have planted up this surf and sand garden to remind passing travellers of the seaside attractions at the town. The surf-board was donated by nearby *Coast to Coast Surf School* which operates out of one of the former station buildings.

PARKING PROBLEMS AT DREM

RAGES members continue to report the acute lack of parking space at Drem Station. These complaints are not a restricted few, and are growing week on week. The frustration is shared by residents in Drem, who daily find cars parked outside their properties.

RAGES will be conducting a postcode survey at Drem station over the next few weeks to enable us to get a picture where all the station users are coming from. We have raised the issue with Transport Convener Michael Veitch and written to the 3 local councillors who cover this area. Members who are affected are encouraged to write independently to their own councillor. Unfortunately it seems that nothing will be taken forward until after the new

ScotRail franchise holder takes on the station in April 2015, but it is hoped that progress in extending the car park can be made as soon as possible after that, if the council and ScotRail can be persuaded to make it a priority. In the meantime, rail users are encouraged to car share on their journey to the station. This journey-matching site might help to find others going your way: www.eastlothian.liftshare.com



Full car park at Drem Station. Photo: Barrie Forrest

NEW COLOURS AT DUNBAR?

Last year the governments of Holyrood and Westminster agreed in principle that management of Dunbar station should fall within the ScotRail franchise. While bidding periods for both ScotRail and InterCity East Coast franchises are now closed it will not be until after the franchises have been awarded that the process to transfer management can start. The date of any change remains unknown, but it looks likely that Dunbar Station will be decked out in new colours before long.

X1 RAIL LINK WITHDRAWN

At the end of its six month trial, the X1 Rail Link bus service from Haddington to Wallyford has been withdrawn and will make its last journey on 19 August. Ross Prentice of Prentice Coaches which had set up the commercial service said "It is extremely disappointing but the supposed demand simply is not there and we have to concentrate on the parts of our business which do make money."

CALLING ALL SNAPPERS

Railfuture, the national campaigning organisation to promote rail use, is running a photography competition for images to use in recruitment and publicity. Could YOUR photo be a winner?

The rules of the competition are:

- The photograph must show an aspect of rail development that is needed, in progress or recently occurred
- Each photo must have a caption, not exceeding 40 words, explaining the development, its location, why it is needed and its relevance to Railfuture
- The technical quality of the photo must be sufficient for use as a postcard and digital photos must have resolution of at least 2048 x 1536

Closing date: 30/09/14. Email mmc@railfuture.org.uk or post to Railfuture, Clara Vale, Thibet Road, Sandhurst, GU47 9AR.

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CALLS FOR RE-OPENING OF EAST LINTON STATION – 20 YEARS AGO! – AND WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP

One of our members spotted this article in the *20 Years Ago* section of the East Lothian News on 4 July: "District councillors have called for better transport provision in East Lothian, including the re-instatement of a railway station at East Linton." **RAGES** was formed in January 1999 to campaign for better local train services and has depended on your support ever since. Please pass on this newsletter to friends and neighbours and encourage them to join us.

RAGES works to

- Improve the rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- Have East Linton and Reston stations re-opened for active use.
- Improve the level of service to North Berwick.
- Consider the implications with regard to car parking and bicycle storage at stations between Waverley and Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- Keep under scrutiny the standards of passenger facilities at stations between Waverley and Berwick upon Tweed, including North Berwick, and to draw the attention of the relevant bodies to shortcomings which arise.
- Re-open the branch line from Longniddry to Haddington.
- The group, being environmentally minded, will actively strive to encourage rail travel within its geographical area.

**RAGES** NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

RAGES (Rail Action Group, East of Scotland) is the rail users campaign group for the area between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed, including the North Berwick service.

Our aim is to persuade the Government, both at national and local level, train operators and Network Rail to improve the level of service to stations in our area and to seriously consider re-opening key stations such as East Linton, Reston and Haddington.

Please join us to lend your support.

Membership will give you a say in how we influence the rail companies to improve local train services. Additionally you will get up-to-date information on significant changes in rail matters, and a regular newsletter.

The annual subscription is £4 for individual membership or £10 for corporate membership, such as community councils and organisations, and is renewable on 1st April each year.

Please send your completed form with your remittance (made payable to Rail Action Group, East of Scotland) to:

Mr R J Darling
 Membership Secretary (RAGES)
 5 Somnerfield Crescent
 Haddington
 EH41 3RW

I enclose my first RAGES membership fee of £4 / £10*. (* Delete as applicable)

Title Surname Forename(s)

Company

Address

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Post Code Telephone

Email