



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

Left: Work-in-progress on the south (platform 2) entrance to Dunbar station in January. The new station entrance is expected to open by the end of March 2026.

(Photograph: G Moulding)

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HADDINGTON RAIL LINK UPDATE

RAGES continues to host a stand at the monthly Haddington Farmers Market, where interest remains consistently high. Visitors repeatedly tell us the same thing: Haddington needs its railway back.

Many are surprised that a town of this size still lacks a direct rail connection to Edinburgh.

PROGRESS ON THE ACCESS STUDIES

In January 2019, East Lothian

Council commissioned Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to produce the East Lothian Access Study 1 – Case for Change under the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). The study confirmed

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Haddington Rail Link Update
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that reinstating the Longniddry–Haddington branch line and constructing a new station is technically feasible. The follow-up study, East Lothian Access Study 2 – Preliminary Options, was completed by Stantec and submitted to Transport Scotland in March 2024. Despite repeated

enquiries, no publication date has been provided.

**ENGAGEMENT WITH
GOVERNMENT**

RAGES has sought meetings with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Fiona Hyslop MSP, to present the case for Haddington directly. These requests have been declined until the Access

Study is released. We also asked Paul McLennan MSP for an update on the project. His responses are reproduced below in italics.

- What is your current position on reopening the Haddington branch line and building a new station?

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EAST LINTON TIMETABLE UPDATE

Since the station opened on 13th December 2023 the passenger numbers using the station have grown steadily, mid-December 2023 to March 2024 almost twenty two thousand passengers used the station and from April 2024 to March 2025 - almost sixty-seven thousand passengers used the station (source ORR). I would expect the passenger numbers using the station for April 2025 to March 2026 be closer to one hundred thousand.

With the introduction of the new timetable on the 14th of December 2025, East Linton midweek now has 13 southbound trains (was 10) and 14 north bound trains (was 10) East Linton is served by TransPennine Express and ScotRail. Midweek TPE has seven southbound trains stop at East Linton and ScotRail has six. Northbound, TPE eight and

ScotRail six.

Overall, this is an improvement in services for the East Linton and the wider community.

However, there are still village residents being forced to travel to Dunbar, Drem and North Berwick because of gaps in the timetable at key times of the day. However, the timetable with regards to East Linton is not ideal, there are still some gaps in services that require to be addressed, these are:

- The first midweek southbound train from East Linton is now 09.27 (09.08 ex Edinburgh) as opposed to the 05.49 (05.29 ex Edinburgh) with the old timetable.
- Midweek southbound there are large gaps between the 14.15 ex Edinburgh ScotRail service and the 16.08 ex Edinburgh TPE service and more importantly between the 17.21 ex Edinburgh TPE service and the 20.23 ex

Edinburgh TPE service. From an evening commuter point of view this is clearly not acceptable.

- Midweek northbound, there are large gaps between the 15.00 ex East Linton ScotRail service and the 16.42 ex East Linton TPE service and between the 19.40 ex East Linton TPE service and the 22.42 ex East Linton TPE service.
- **RAGES** is engaging with the rail companies, politicians and Scottish and UK governments to improve services for the South-east of Scotland which includes timetable changes for East Linton, especially for the first south bound train in the morning and to add another service to cover the late afternoon/early evening time of the day.

DUNBAR STATION UPDATE

DUNBAR STATION

APPROACH ROAD

POTHOLES

The station road is starting to look like one big pothole again. **RAGES** has contacted ScotRail to request that the whole road is resurfaced rather than the repeated patching that has taken place previously.

DUNBAR STATION TOILET

Station waiting room toilet refurbishment has still not started. The design for the new toilets has been approved, just waiting on ScotRail to get started. ELC planning application 24/00627/LBCrefers.

DUNBAR STATION PLATFORM 2 ENTRANCE

Platform 2 access from south of the station. East Lothian Council completed their part of the project late Autumn 2025.

Network Rail are now in the process of constructing the access route on the station side. Work will include a new bicycle shelter and rack, additional lighting, new CCTV cameras and a new ticket vending machine to be located on platform 2.

The graph (right) shows train cancellations for Dunbar station for the last 10 months, approximately 10,000 stops at the station completed for the period. The scale on the LHS is percentage and 3% cancellations equates roughly to one train per day. Although the numbers are relatively low, there is room for improvement.

Right upper: Dunbar station approach road, showing the potholes which now cover the road surface.

(Photograph: **T Dickson**)

Right lower: Dunbar station platform 2 entrance footpath near Retreat Crescent underpass.

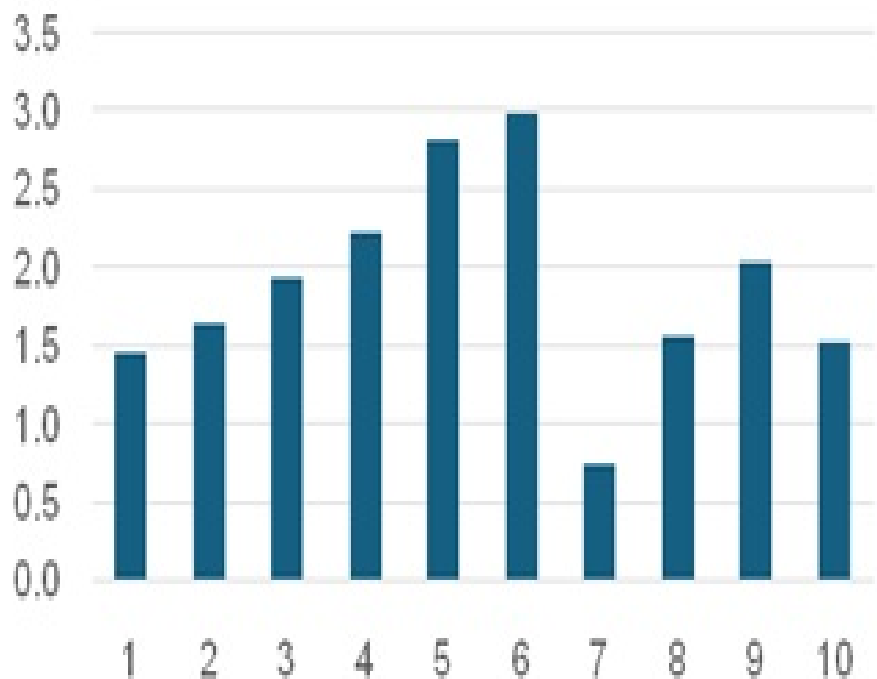
(Photograph: **T Dickson**)

Below left: Dunbar station platform 2 entrance work seen from platform 1.

(Photograph: **T Dickson**)

Below right: Dunbar station platform 2 entrance work seen from west end of platform 2.

(Photograph: **T Dickson**)



NORTH BERWICK LINE UPDATE

PLATFORM 2 ON THE LEVEL

Pat Hanson looks at the options for level access to the Edinburgh-bound platforms at Drem, Longniddry and Prestonpans stations.

DREM

No signage at main entrance indicating that there might be level access to Platform 2. Double white gates can be reached by using the back (Athelstaneford) road (twisty with no pavement), with a

small layby and faded 'pick up/drop off' sign.

LONGNIDDY

No signage indicating that there might be level access to Platform 2. Short ramp access can be reached by initially following signage to the Haddington railway footpath (no designated parking spot).

PRESTONPANS

No signage indicating that there might be level access to Platform 2. Long ramp access can be reached by following the road under the railway to the south car park. The footpath

along this road is narrow and in one place obstructed by street furniture. Overall, it has to be said that level access to these platforms is a well kept secret!



Above: Drem station.

(Photograph: P Hanson)



Above left: Prestonpans station. (Photograph: P Hanson)



Above right: Longniddry station. (Photograph: P Hanson)

TRAINS DON'T FLOAT

On Friday 16th of January 2026, **RAGES** were invited by TPE to witness a special moment at Newcastle station, the naming of a TPE Class 802 train North Star. The naming of the train was to celebrate the partnership with three life-saving charities: St. Abbs Independent Lifeboat, Humber Rescue and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). The partnership represents shared values of safety and a commitment to protecting lives. Paul Staples, Engineering, Safety and Sustainability Director pictured presenting a cheque for £8,000 to representatives of the St. Abbs Independent Lifeboat. The partnership is already delivering benefits to these and other charities through TPE's

delay repay scheme where passengers can choose to donate their

compensation to one of the nominated TPE charities.

: Below: TPE staff at naming ceremony. (Photograph: T Dickson)



Haddington Rail Link Update

(concluded from page 2)

“I support the re-opening of the branch line, and a new railway station. This line, and station should follow the standard process in place regarding viable BCR Ratio and STAG process.”

• Can you provide an update on the Scottish Government’s and East Lothian Council’s commitment to this project?

“East Lothian Council have I understand undertaken preliminary studies, which they will share with the Scottish Government, but have yet to do so.”

WHY RAIL MATTERS FOR HADDINGTON

Haddington is well served by buses, but rail would offer a 20-minute journey time to Edinburgh—far quicker and more reliable. With a population of 11,354 (per the 2022 census), Haddington is larger than several Scottish towns that already enjoy strong rail links:

North Berwick, with a significantly smaller population, records over half a million rail journeys each year. A reinstated Haddington line would be expected to attract similar demand.

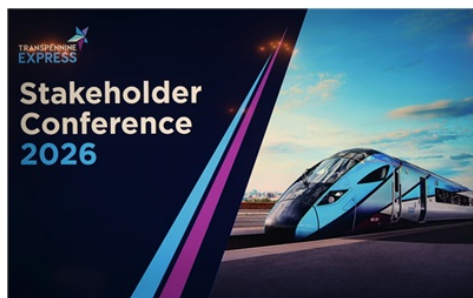
HOW MEMBERS CAN HELP

We encourage all members and supporters to contact their local councillors and MSPs and express support for:

- Reopening the Longniddry–Haddington branch line
- Constructing a new station for Haddington
- Publishing the East Lothian Access Study 2 without further delay

A fast, modern rail link is essential for a town of Haddington’s size and future growth. Together, we can keep the pressure on and ensure this project remains firmly on the agenda.

TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE



Tom Thorburn, Barrie Forrest and Tom Dickson attended the annual TPE Stakeholder Conference at the Milner Hotel, York on 19/01/2026. The day was packed with interesting presentations, with question-and-answer sessions after each presentation, particularly with how they are preparing for becoming part of GBR. Following the introduction of the December 2025 train timetable, **RAGES** identified that two instances of the

timetable where Dunbar and East Linton were being disadvantaged. Firstly, at East Linton, the first midweek train south that stops at East Linton is now the 09.08 ex Edinburgh TPE service. Prior to the December timetable change the first southbound train at East Linton was the 05.29 ex Edinburgh. The 05.43 ex Edinburgh TPE service first stop is now Reston, so it is missing out East Linton and Dunbar.

Secondly, the new timetable has moved the 17.34 ex Edinburgh TPE service to a new slot of 17.21 ex Edinburgh TPE service. This means that the retimed service now must wait at Dunbar to allow a fast train

service to pass through.

RAGES has requested TPE to look at the 05.43 ex Edinburgh TPE service to be retimed to allow it to make calls at East Linton and Dunbar and for the 17.21 ex Edinburgh TPE service to be retimed so that it will depart slightly later from Edinburgh and therefore have no dwell time at Dunbar. This would have the benefit of providing more balanced commuter services south during the late afternoon early evening for Dunbar and East Linton.

TPE RAIL 200 TRAIN NAMING AT NEWCASTLE

TPE kindly invited **RAGES** to attend the naming of one of their trains '1825' to mark 200 years of Railways in UK at Newcastle on December 19.

Tom Thorburn, Barrie Forrest and Tom Dickson attended this historic event.

Right: Close-up of '1825' nameplate. (Photograph: T Dickson)



Above: TPE staff at naming ceremony. (Photograph: T Dickson)

RAGES MEETING WITH JOHN LAMONT

Vice Chair, Barrie Forrest and Tom Thorburn met with John Lamont MP on 23rd January 2026 to discuss a whole raft of issues centred on Reston Station. Points raised with John were: -

1. Border Buses No. 60 Route requiring to be amended to take in Reston and its station - John was provided with an A3 map of existing and amended routes;
2. Border Buses early morning No. 253 from Dunbar to Berwick does not call at Reston;
3. All No. 60 and 253 buses require to be aligned to Reston

Dec 2025 Railway Timetable to give an integrated Public Transport network;

4. Teviot DRT taxi has very restrictive Mon to Fri operating hours due to it being unavailable during 'school run' hours in the morning and afternoon and is not capable of fulfilling the requirements of those who wish to use it. Additionally, it does not serve Coldingham and St Abbs.

5. Scottish Borders Council's website still does not show Reston station but strangely shows Berwick and Carlisle which are not in SBC's region;

6. ScotRail TVM prices at Reston can only be described as atrocious. The opening screen shows a Reston to Edinburgh single fare costing £28.80. Prices of this amount only serve to put people off rail travel;

7. Fares set by LNER for Reston are not in line with those at Dunbar and Berwick – they are required to be set somewhere between the aforementioned station's fares. John went onto his LNER App and was clearly taken aback when he found the following fares. Berwick £13.40, Reston £14.20 and Dunbar

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RAGES Meeting with John
Lamont (concluded from page 6)

£5.40. Using the miles and chains between these stations, the Reston fare based on the Berwick fare/distance would be £10.85, whereas the Reston fare based on the Dunbar fare/distance would be £8.65.

8. Reston B6438 junction with A6112 is very unsafe due to lack of visibility when joining the A6112 due to the saplings and trees on the north side of this junction;

9. Loss of LNER services at Berwick. This unjustifiable loss of services at Berwick (and to a

lesser extent Dunbar) is all down to the DFT's sole desire to see faster end to end (EDB to KGX) services. It is unjustifiable for the following reason that there is only 20% of patronage between these two stations, the 80% is made up by the intermediate stations that LNER serve. Indeed the best way to cut journey times is not by cutting out stations served by LNER but by investment;

10. Proper investment in the ECML Infrastructure north of York requires urgent attention by the DFT. Too many delays (some of these are extensive) are

occurring through failures of signalling, signalling to points interlocks electrical equipment, flood prevention schemes and the long overdue completion of the power upgrade to allow all trains to run electrically using the Overhead Line Equipment (OLE). Note – if this much overdue investment and flow through of works were to be expedited, delays to services would become a thing of the past, services would become more reliable thereby allowing more local/semi fast services to be run and the removed LNER services returned to Berwick.

RAILFUTURE PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION

John Lamont, the MP for Berwick, Roxburgh and Selkirk, recently attended Railfuture's Parliamentary Reception in Westminster, one of only two Scottish MPs to do so.

In recent months, John has queried the cancellation of several direct southbound LNER services at Berwick Station since the December timetable changes, and has taken this up with LNER, as connectivity at Berwick has been greatly disrupted. Passengers now face changes on what used to be uninterrupted journeys to the South. John has also discussed possible stops at Berwick with Lumo Trains, which would help

restore connectivity if these went ahead.

When **RAGES** raised the cancellations directly with LNER at a recent Stakeholder

Meeting, we were informed that "there were winners and losers in the December timetable" which treats the population of Berwick as second class citizens.



Above: John Lamont MP with Railfuture Board members Roger Blake (left) and Chris Page (right).

RAGES works to

- Improve the rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- Re-open the branch line from Longniddry to Haddington.
- 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.
- 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 re-open the branch line from Longniddry to 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:

Tom Dickson

Membership Secretary (RAGES)

44 Kirk Park

Dunbar

EH42 1BJ

Bank Details:

Bank: BANK OF SCOTLAND

Account Name: Rail Action Group, East of Scotland

Sort Code: 80-13-28

Account Number: 00921093

If you are joining the group or are due to renew your membership please consider joining by bank transfer or direct debit, if you don't already do so.

Apart from a monthly bank service charge of £4.25 the group is charged 50p/cheque paid in or paid out and 75p/£100 deposited.

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

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