

# RAGES RAG

MAY 2014, ISSUE 61



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

## SCOTRAIL FRANCHISE NEWS

**Five** firms have been invited by Transport Scotland to tender for the next ScotRail franchise. Bids are to be submitted by April 2014, and the winner will be announced in September. The new franchise will start on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, and will run for five years with the option of another five years.

The bidders are

- **Abellio** - owned by Netherland Railways, who already have three British rail franchises: Northern Rail; Merseyrail; and Greater Anglia
- **Arriva** - a subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn. In the UK Arriva also operates Cross Country trains, Grand Central, Chiltern Railways,

the Tyne & Wear Metro, London Overground (jointly with MTR) and Arriva Trains Wales. They are also a large bus operator in England

- **First Group** - the current holders of this franchise who have four other franchises in England as well as extensive bus networks
- **MTR** (Mass Transit Railway) - has their HQ in London and most of their work up to now has been Hong Kong based. MTR is experienced in automated systems and responsible for the infrastructure of Hong Kong Railways
- **National Express** operates one rail franchise in the UK - C2C

which serves destinations between London and South Essex, an important commuter route into the capital. They were also a previous holder of the ScotRail franchise, and have extensive bus networks

**RAGES** raised the following points at meetings with bidders for the new ScotRail franchise:

- It was hoped that the bidder would run the local service from Edinburgh to Berwick
- Access from the south side of Dunbar station via the underpass was desirable

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## SCOTRAIL FRANCHISE NEWS

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- Car parking was a problem not only at Dunbar, but also at other stations on the North Berwick route
- Covered cycle racks were required at Dunbar
- Better access to Dunbar station for cyclists
- More space on trains for cycles, surf boards and prams and buggies
- Interchange with local buses could be improved
- The new bus link from Haddington to Wallyford was noted, but our aim is still to have a rail link to Haddington
- It would be beneficial to all parties if the bidders were to put some money into the building costs of East Linton and Reston stations
- As the subsidy for the local service is a key factor in getting the Minister's approval for the service, bidders could reduce the subsidy with some imaginative use of existing train sets.

We thanked the representatives for taking time to understand the improvements that **RAGES** hopes to see during the next franchise.



## EAST COAST FRANCHISE

The next East Coast rail franchise is also currently out to tender, and three bidders have been shortlisted: **East Coast Trains Ltd** (First Group plc); **Keolis/Eurostar East Coast Limited** (Keolis (UK) Limited and Eurostar International Limited); and **Inter City Railways Limited** (Stagecoach Transport Holdings Limited and Virgin Holdings Limited). The bids must be submitted by 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014 with the successful bidder announced around November and the new franchise starting in March 2015.

Campaign Group Railfuture Northeast drew our attention to the following information tucked away in Appendix A2 of the Invitation to Tender:

*The franchise operator will:*

- *work with relevant stakeholders in preparing for the transfer of Dunbar station to ScotRail as set out in the Franchise Agreement*
- *enter into 99-year station leases for all stations except York, Newcastle and Dunbar within four months of the Franchise Start Date*

It makes sense with the re-opened neighbouring stations at East Linton and Reston being run by ScotRail, that Dunbar is also run by them. However, it is hoped that as Dunbar is an important interchange station for East Lothian that:

- the station will retain its ticket office and staff
- long distance trains to London will continue to stop and perhaps have additional stops, as it has been made clear in the local rail study that the benefit cost ratio improves with such stops at Dunbar
- the addition of a north-bound platform at Dunbar will come to fruition to save trains having to cross over the south-bound line
- passengers will see car parking charges abolished.

**RAGES** has met with First Group and is currently trying to engage with bidders to discuss our aspirations to be achieved during the forthcoming franchise.



### JOHN MUIR WAY LAUNCHES IN DUNBAR

The new John Muir Way walking and cycling route links Dunbar with Helensburgh on the West Coast. On the 8<sup>th</sup> April a new information board funded by Sustaining Dunbar and Scottish Natural Heritage was unveiled at Dunbar Station advertising Dunbar's many outdoor attractions to passing travellers.

## STATION IMPROVEMENTS

### New car park at Dunbar

Eighteen new car parking spaces have been created on a piece of derelict land opposite Countess Avenue only five minutes walk from Dunbar Station.

### New ticket office at Berwick

Passengers at Berwick will have noticed the newly refurbished ticket office at the station.



*New Information Lounge at Berwick.  
Photo: Barrie Forrest*

## CONTINUED INCREASE IN STATION USAGE THROUGHOUT EAST LOTHIAN

According to the latest figures from the Office of Rail Regulation, all stations in East Lothian continue to enjoy high patronage figures, with year on year increases in the number of passengers. Musselburgh in particular had an increase of more than 17,000 users and Prestonpans' increase was more than 13,000. \*Every single station showed an increase, from almost 4000 at Drem, 6000 at Dunbar and 10,000 at North Berwick.

Newcraighall station figures show a passenger increase of almost 8,000.

*\*Figures extrapolated from the ORR report.*



*Photo: Russell Darling*

## HADDINGTON TO WALLYFORD BUS LINK

Prentice Coaches has launched the brand new **X1 Rail Link** service between Haddington and Wallyford railway station.

The service connects with three trains at morning and evening peak times, with tickets available to buy online, or on the bus. The combined journey takes around 35 minutes from Haddington High Street to Waverley Station in Edinburgh, and also enables students to travel quickly to Queen Margaret University.

Disappointingly, patronage appears to be falling and the company is considering whether or not to continue the service.

Mr Prentice said to RAGES: "This is our 8th week and every single journey has run to time and all connections made with ease ... one of the problems is that commuters have been let down so often in the past [with other providers] that it's just too big a jump to try our service."

To try to encourage more use, Prentice Coaches has introduced a new return fare of £4.50 and lowered the 10 journey pass to £10.

**RAGES** hopes that this service is a success.



*Photo: Barrie Forrest*

*A ScotRail train passing the new station site at East Linton.  
The underpass can just be seen to the left of the whins.*

## SCOTRAIL LAUNCHES NEW TWO TOGETHER RAILCARD

First ScotRail have introduced the new Two Together Railcard – Britain's first in thirty years. Costing £30 it gives one-third off Standard and First Class Anytime, Off-Peak and Advance fares across the entire National Rail network after 9.30am for two named people travelling together. It is thus the first railcard that is not specific to any age or other group or to a geographical area.

**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 .....