

The RAGES Rag

SPRING 2018, Issue 70



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

Left: A CrossCountry service passing the site of the proposed Reston station is framed by a picturesque scene during the recent wintry conditions.

Photograph: B. Forrest

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Meeting With The ScotRail Alliance & Network Rail

A meeting was held between **RAGES** and **ScotRail Alliance** on 21st November 2017 at 50, Waterloo Street, Glasgow. The representatives of **ScotRail Alliance** were Alex Hynes (Managing Director) and Jonathan Pugh (Strategy & Planning Director). A report of this meeting by Tom Thorburn (**RAGES** Chairman) is given below.

“Vice Chairman, Barrie Forrest BEM

and I travelled to Glasgow Central using the 07:00 from Dunbar to meet with Alex and Jonathan. This meeting was primarily to discuss the re-opening of East Linton and Reston Stations. We were given the opportunity to explain our Aims for Dunbar, East Linton and Reston utilising a ScotRail service from Edinburgh to Berwick, in addition to all the success we have had with additional services and where there are shortfalls in services given the vast

programme of housing development currently underway in our area.

We welcomed the news that the Line Capacity Study had just started and would conclude sometime around April/May. This will look at not just our service requirements for a viable all day service timetable, but that of all other users of the East Coast Main Line

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Meeting With The ScotRail

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including freight. Discussion centred around the question of the requirement of additional passing loops for the Local Service namely at East Linton and Reston, the plans for implementation of quadrupling around Prestonpans and lengthening of the Grantshouse loops. **ScotRail's** fleet will expand from the current level of 800 vehicles, to 1000

resulting in a 45% increase in seat miles as these trains will operate a more expansive service.

We enquired as to when we could next meet to discuss progress on East Linton and Reston, we were advised that this would be when the Line Capacity Study concluded in April/May. Barrie and I felt this was a very constructive and informative meeting from all parties

point of view and we were especially pleased that the Line Capacity Study is underway.”

Drem & Longniddry Parking

RAGES member Harald Vox has been an active campaigner to improve car parking facilities at Drem station in particular, and also at Longniddry, both of which have been inadequate for the number of passengers using these stations for some time. The current situation can be seen from a selection of correspondence regarding this, which is reproduced below:-

Dear Iain,

Thank you for your letter of 15th November 2016, regarding the position of East Lothian Council in relation to parking at Longniddry and Drem railway stations.

I can advise that we are currently in discussion with **Network Rail** regarding the possibility of improvements to car parking facilities at both stations. These discussions are at a very early stage and there are no timescales at this time. The first stage of any process following discussion will be the development of a feasibility study on possible options.

I am sorry that I cannot provide any detailed information on this matter but as I said earlier, discussions with **Network Rail** are at a very early stage and no decisions have been taken.

I trust this will be sufficient to allow

you to reply to Mr, Vox.

Yours sincerely,
Ray Montgomery, Head of
infrastructure.
eastlothian.gov.uk

Dear Mr Vox

I enclose copy letter dated 29 November 2016 from Mr Ray Montgomery, Head of Infrastructure at East Lothian Council, in response to the issue I raised on your behalf.

I am sorry that East Lothian Council are unable to provide you with timescales for improvements to car parking facilities at Longniddry and Drem stations, but I hope the reply provides you with an indication of the current position.

Kind regards
Yours sincerely
Iain Gray MSP

Dear Iain

Thank you for your letter dated 23rd November addressed to Alex Hynes, our Managing Director, which has been forwarded to me for attention. Thank you also for enclosing a copy of your original letter dated 16th October. Unfortunately, we don't appear to have received this letter.

I note you have been contacted by the above constituent concerning our current position on car parking at Drem station. I can confirm that we are looking at two schemes at Drem, of which one does use the sidings for additional car parking. The scheme is slightly on the 'back-burner' however and we are aiming to look for funding and Board approval around mid-2019. Thank you for taking the time to write.
Yours sincerely

John McBrinn
Head of Customer Experience, Major Stations

Abellio ScotRail Ltd

Atrium Court, 50 Waterloo Street
Glasgow G2 6HQ

Dear Harold,

Please find enclosed a copy reply from **ScotRail** regarding the parking at Drem station.

I am afraid that they have not provided a great deal of detail with regard to the provision of parking but I will continue to pursue this matter in future conversations that I have with the company.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me.

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Drem & Longniddry Parking

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Yours sincerely,
Iain Gray MSP

Rail Connectivity Event – Berwick Regeneration Commission

RAIL CONNECTIVITY EVENT – Berwick Regeneration Commission

Barrie Forrest BEM, Vice Chairman and I were invited to speak at the Rail Connectivity Event which was held in Berwick Town Hall on Tuesday 16 January at 18:30. This event was organised by Northumberland Councillor, Georgina Hill as a means of 'promoting and enhancing Berwick's rail links'. Other invited speakers were:

- Dennis Fancett, Chairman of SENRUG (South East Northumberland Rail User Group); Edward Dunn, Strategy and Planning, LNE & EM, Network Rail; Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Northumberland County Council and Councillor Mark Rowley, Scottish Borders Council.

Being the first up to address the public audience of the evening, I outlined the successes in train services that **RAGES** had achieved since their inception i.e. 3 fold increase in services to Dunbar, increased service to North Berwick along with modern train stock, East Linton and Reston Stations waiting in the wings to be built along with the implementation of a Local **ScotRail** Service from Edinburgh to Berwick. Berwick requires and deserves better late night and early morning services such that it can fully take advantage of events such as the Edinburgh Festival and connectivity for work/education. Barrie on the other hand appealed to the members of the public to get behind our case to bring about this local service

with the two new stations to write to the Scottish Government's Transport Minister. One of the most notable questions that we were asked was – why did we wish to have a **ScotRail** service to Berwick when they had such a poor punctuality record and not have **Virgin Trains East Coast**. I answered that the poor punctuality figure was down to all the electrification works on the Edinburgh Glasgow line via Falkirk and we were more or less immune to that with our local services to North Berwick and Dunbar. Strangely enough only the next morning, the **Virgin** 06:22 Ex Newcastle service was lying broken down a mile north of Grantshouse. This service calls at Berwick and Dunbar at 07:17 and 07:41 respectively.

Councillor Rowley was next up to give his address. Mark explained to the audience that Scottish Borders Council were fully behind the Local Service and the re-opening of Reston Station. It was emphasised that the support was also in Council's significant financial commitment to Reston Station. The Council recognised the huge success that the Borders Railway to Tweedbank had played in a more vibrant Central Borders and better transport links to Edinburgh.

Dennis Fancett who had come to the meeting by train from Morpeth emphasised how their group had been

successful in attracting new services for Morpeth and his desire to see a local Newcastle to Berwick service which would be able to serve this beautiful coastline that adorns north Northumberland. This local service would give better connectivity to all the intermediate stations which was currently very poor.

Due to the heavy snow on the night of this meeting, I was unable to take in any of the lovely spread of refreshments which was provided by the Mayor of Berwick. On behalf of **RAGES** I would like to thank Councillor Hill for inviting Barrie and myself to this meeting to explain to Northumberland Council and the public at large that we take very seriously the Aim of achieving a Local Service to Berwick to bolster the long distance services.

Tom Thorburn

Dunbar Micropub

As heralded in the last issue of **RAGES** RAG, Scotland's newest, and East Lothian's first, micropub, 'The Station Yard', opened on 1st December 2017, in the old station lodge adjacent to Dunbar station.

The owners are Gerard Phillips and David McGee, both from Dunbar, and the micropub sells a range of mainly local craft keg and bottled beers, as well as wine, some spirits, tea & coffee and cold snacks.

As well as a small outdoor seated beer-garden, the pub has also featured live music.

The Station Yard also has a website, at:-

<https://www.station-yard.com/>

which gives much more information about the micropub, including details of its opening hours, upcoming events etc.

(right: Dunbar Micropub co-owner David McGee at the bar of The Station Yard. Photograph: J. Yellowlees)



How You Can Help **RAGES** Achieve Its Aims

REGISTER YOUR DISMAY

One of the actions taken away from the **RAGES** AGM in September was to inform members of the addresses such that they can write to or e-mail the Transport Minister to register their dismay of the delays to our stations.

The following is the contact information for the Minister:

Humza Yousaf MSP
Minister for Transport and the Islands
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

e-mail:
humza.yousaf.msp@parliament.scot

Perhaps you might wish to copy your letter or e-mail to your respective MSP(s):

Iain Gray MSP -
Iain.Gray.msp@parliament.scot

Rachael Hamilton MSP -
Rachael.Hamilton.msp@parliament.scot

Paul Wheelhouse MSP -
Paul.Wheelhouse.msp@parliament.scot

Michelle Ballantyne MSP -
Michelle.Ballantyne.msp@parliament.scot

The postal address for each is:

Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh

EH99 1SP

SIGN THE PETITION

RAGES member Alice Fisher has set up an e-campaign to call for the early provision of the stations at Reston and East Linton. All **RAGES** members, and

anyone who supports the campaign, are encouraged to sign the petition.

The petition, which is called '2019 NOT 2024 – Open the Stations – No More Delays' is being hosted by 'change.org', and can be found at the following link:-

<https://www.change.org/p/2019-not-2024-open-the-stations-no-more-delays>

RAGES COMING TO AN EVENT NEAR YOU!

After holding stalls at some local galas last year, the **RAGES** committee are going to try and get out and about again during the summer. We'd like to attend flower shows, galas and any other events that will have us, to keep our members up to date with our

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How You Can Help RAGES Achieve Its Aims

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activities. Please let us know if you'd like us to come to your town and we'll do our best to attend.

JOIN RAGES COMMITTEE

The **RAGES** Committee welcomed Tom

Dickson as the new Membership Secretary at their recent committee meeting. Tom, a long time member of the Group brings with him a wealth of computing skills and is therefore ideally suited to this important position on the committee. Russell Darling has held the post of Membership Secretary from the inception of **RAGES**, and on behalf of the Committee and wider

Membership I would like to thank Russell for all his dedication to this post.

Tom Thorburn, **RAGES** Chairman

Resume Of RAGES 18th Year

This year past has been another busy year for the Committee. We have met with Transport Minister, Humza Yousaf MSP on several occasions, primarily to encourage more Government Investment in East Linton and Reston Stations such that their construction could take place. Eventually agreement was reached whereby the Stations would receive the guaranteed funding from the Government (along with the Councils contribution) if the construction/opening of the Stations was moved into **Network Rail's** Control Period 6 which runs from April 2019 to March 2024. We have pressed the Minister to have the Stations opened in the early part of CP6 and eagerly await a detailed programme of works. This was somewhat tainted to say the least at our last meeting where politicians and ourselves were informed by Transport Scotland that they were going to conduct yet another study into the East Coast Main Line, which could take to 2020!

We held our Open Meeting at Prestonpans to highlight the problem of overcrowding on the North Berwick peak trains. This meeting was poorly attended but those who did attend left the then **ScotRail/Network Rail**

Alliance Managing Director, Phil Verster in no doubt of the problems faced by passengers using this service. It is pleasing to note that peak services on the Edinburgh/North Berwick service are now served with 6 car trains.

Our meetings and written communications with **Virgin Trains East Coast** have had a number of successes for our area. We now see an additional southbound train on Friday and Saturday nights, and a northbound train on a Sunday morning. All three of these trains call at Berwick and Dunbar. We complained about the high increase in fares from Dunbar, which is a **ScotRail** station, yet the fares are set by **VTEC**. This complaint resulted in the Dunbar Edinburgh day return being reduced by £1 and confirmation that administration of fare structuring at this station will be handed over to **ScotRail** in the coming year. This is felt to be important to the 'Group' as passengers from Dunbar will then be able to enjoy such offers as 'Kids go Free', as enjoyed at all other **ScotRail** stations.

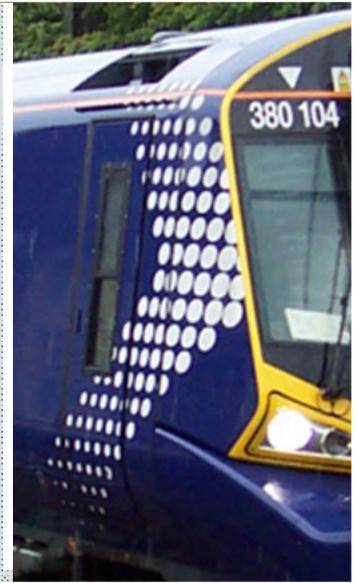
Dialogue with **CrossCountry** trains has continued with the 'Group' responding to their study into

services. This has proved to be useful to both parties and we have been informed that Dundee and Aberdeen services will now continue to these destinations (for the time being) as XC had plans to terminate them in Edinburgh. The 'Group' have arranged a meeting with XC management on 18th October where we will be putting the case for additional calling of their trains at Dunbar (which will also enable greater connectivity between it and Berwick).

Meetings continued with SEStran, again these were hosted by Councillor Michael Veitch at East Lothian Council until the Local Elections. The 'Group' would like to acknowledge all the good work and dedication that Michael put into these meetings. Attendances at these meetings by the Group and the politicians have proved to be very worthwhile and we eagerly await the next meeting.

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:

Tom Dickson
 Membership Secretary (RAGES)
 44 Kirk Park
 Dunbar
 EH42 1BJ

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

Title Surname Forename(s)

Company

Address

.....

Post Code Telephone

Email