

On the WAGN

Newsletter of Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users Group

September 2000

Saturday trains next year!

Success! Years of campaigning have paid off. WAGN has promised to extend the train service at both Cambridge Heath and London Fields to include later weekday evenings and Saturdays from May next year.

The news came in a letter to the user group from WAGN service development manager Paul French who said that WAGN had decided to improve the service despite the "low figures" recorded in an independent census taken at both stations in April.

However, CHLFUG carried out its own survey in May and found that the numbers of passengers using both stations were holding up well and that the afternoon peak at Cambridge

And a later evening service too

Heath showed the highest number of passengers since we started our counts in 1996.

The good news of the Saturday and evening trains was confirmed when representatives of the user group and council officials from Tower Hamlets and Hackney met WAGN's new station manager Jim Holden in June to inspect the two stations and to visit

Bethnal Green (WAGN) station.

Mr Holden was keen to see conditions improved for passengers and was given a list of our aspirations, including Sunday trains.

Within a month, he had arranged for benches to be installed at Cambridge Heath on the platform for Liverpool Street. A good start.

In the short term, however, we may see the train service suspended for some periods while the West Anglia Route Modernisation scheme is carried out.

Railtrack is upgrading the signalling and although it will improve the service as far as Stansted, there is not much direct gain for the inner London stations.

Big changes for WAGN

Prism, the parent company of WAGN, has been taken over by bus and train giant National Express which already runs Gatwick Express, Midland Mainline, Central Trains, Scotrail and Silverlink.

By taking over Prism it now controls the Stansted Express airport service which runs through Cambridge Heath and London Fields but which of course does not stop.

In an earlier deal with the Strategic Rail Authority, Prism agreed to relinquish the Great Northern side of its operations (through Finsbury Park) before its franchise runs out to allow a new franchise to cover Thameslink 2000 which will absorb the Great Northern.

WAGN management is adopting a more pro-active approach to our stations which we hope will continue under the new ownership. These are a few of the things that are under consideration for Bethnal Green, Cambridge Heath and London Fields.

London Fields

More lights to be fitted on Enfield-bound stair case.
Mirrors on blind corners.
Customer information system.

Cambridge Heath

Mirrors on corners to take away the dark hiding places.
Reopen the old entrance/exit at foot of stairs into Hackney Road.
Yet another paint job.

More action is needed

Remove the needle bin and let the responsibility lie with the local council/police/chemist.
Customer information system.

Bethnal Green

Repaint in a pleasant colour. Anything but dark blue!!
Remove porch from entrance.
Erect bike stands outside front of station.
Check lighting to see if it can be replaced with white light rather than yellow.
Customer information system.

Check number of passengers using the station to see if it warrants opening the ticket office.

■ Money, as ever is always a big factor but WAGN recognises that things need to be done.

There is a long way to go but there is now greater confidence that things will improve.

Improvements so far:

Off-peak train services. Help points at Cambridge Heath and London Fields. New telephone in the foyer at London Fields.

New seats on the Liverpool Street-bound platforms at Cambridge Heath and London Fields. More official timetables and printed information in place.