

On the WAGN

Newsletter of Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users Group

April 2001

Extra trains on the way

Both Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations are to get an evening and Saturday service, starting next month – on Monday 21 May.

According to provisional information, the Monday-Friday evening trains will run until midnight or 11.30pm depending which way you are travelling. The Saturday trains will start at 6am and run through until midnight.

It has taken a long campaign to persuade WAGN to provide these trains but at least from next month there will be a good six-day-a-week alternative to sitting on a bus, stuck in a traffic jam.

Compared to the present poor service from Stagecoach on routes 26 and 48, the train – which takes only five minutes to get to Liverpool Street – is brilliant.

It also beats walking to Bethnal Green and trying to get on an overcrowded Central line Tube train.

And of course no bus could get to Enfield in 25 minutes. But we still need improvements to the new timetable.

There is now worse congestion in Hackney Road on a Sunday than a normal weekday because of inconsiderate car parking so there is an even stronger case for a Sunday service.

And of course, at most times of the day there is and will still be only a train every 30 minutes.

We have always said there should be a train at least every 15 minutes from

our two stations. It would mean that passengers could turn up without needing to look at the timetable, knowing that they would have only 15 minutes to wait at most.

Obviously a ten-minute frequency would be even better and more sensible for a busy part of a busy city so we still have some way to go.

GOOD NEWS

Passenger information system needed

West Anglia general manager Julian Drury has written to the user group accepting that better facilities should be provided at our two stations and Bethnal Green.

He told us: "Railtrack and we are considering Customer Information Systems (CIS) for Bethnal Green, Cambridge Heath and London Fields. We will also consider CCTV for the three stations as soon as capital funds become available, although this may not be before the end of 2001. The money for CIS would use funding from Railtrack.

"We have submitted our plans to Railtrack and are now waiting to receive news of investment approval by their board. Obviously given Railtrack's current financial difficulty as a result of the costs arising from Hatfield we are hoping that an immediate approval can be given and no last-minute hitches will arise because of any review by Railtrack of their capital commitments." The user group has

also been asked to contribute information to a study of the West Anglia rail network. The study was commissioned by the Strategic Rail Authority and is being carried out by consultants Mott MacDonald.

We said that our main aim was to see a seven-days-a-week service, with trains at least every 15 minutes. We also said that some passengers would benefit from Chingford, Hertford East and Cheshunt trains stopping at both our stations.

We said that new train services could be provided from Liverpool Street to Tring on the West Coast main line by using the Graham Road curve at Hackney.

We even suggested that a feasibility study should be carried out into providing a link near Bethnal Green so that trains from our two stations could access the East London line.

Even if these ideas are accepted, it will be a long time for some of them to be

carried out. But in the meantime, remember, there have been improvements.

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 information in place. Ticket machines at both stations where Travelcards can be purchased.

Improvements to come

A Saturday service and late evening trains are expected to be introduced in May 2001.

CCTV at some stage.

Improvements still needed

An information system which could tell passengers when the next train is due. This is important when there is only a train every 30 minutes and essential when there is disruption to the service.