

# On the WAGN

Newsletter of Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users Group

April 2002

## Making our stations safe

Both Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations have been taken under the wing of the Hackney Safer Stations project.

It should mean that a whole series of initiatives will make both stations better for passengers.

In fact WAGN has already taken the first steps to improve the stations and other action will follow.

One of the facts to emerge from a preliminary investigation is that both stations have a much lower level of crime than most other stations in London.

But all the official agencies recognise that the stations do not present a very good image to the potential passenger.

The British Transport Police has carried out a detailed crime audit to see how the likelihood of a crime taking place could be reduced.

WAGN has acted on the BTP's initial findings by having the tree outside Cambridge Heath station lopped to allow more light into the foyer and entrance hall of the station.

Two new floodlights have also been installed above the station entrance.

But the crime audit agrees with us that closed circuit TV and a more frequent train service would be a great help in making passengers feel comfortable and also deterring people from committing crime and vandalism.

Other suggestions arising from the audit for Cambridge Heath:

- Brightening up the station internally, including removing the blue metal panels on the walls.

- New stronger mirrors as well as the removal of the "dog leg" on the stairs up to the Liverpool Street-bound platform.

- The entrance at the bottom of the stairs on the far side of the station could be reopened to improve access from Hackney Road.

- The station should also be given a "heavy" clean and the track should be cleared of litter.

- Better signs on and to the help points on the platform which could also be linked to CCTV.

- Better platform lighting.

- Letting of the former ticket office to a business such as a cafe.

At London Fields the audit also recommended CCTV and the removal of the brick and steel roof over the stairways to

### Liverpool Street bottleneck

One of the reasons the train service is unreliable at our two stations is the limited number of tracks into Liverpool Street station. Trains often have to queue up to get in and out and this has a knock-on effect. Railtrack was considering adding another two tracks to the existing six tracks at the Liverpool Street "throat" when the Bishopsgate viaduct is demolished to make way for the East London line extension. The plan is now in doubt after English Heritage listed the viaduct as being of historic and architectural importance. Greater London Authority member Meg Hillier has pledged to do what she can to ensure that the plan for the extra tracks goes ahead.

improve visibility. CCTV surveillance in the area around Cambridge Heath will begin anyway when the 253 bus route is upgraded later this year as part of the London Bus initiative. Better street lighting and street CCTV would improve matters around London Fields station.

A full CCTV system for each station is estimated at £35,000 and it is hoped that Tower Hamlets and Hackney councils, Railtrack and WAGN will soon be able to provide the money. BTP say an interim solution could be to install miniature hidden

cameras. A new anti-graffiti team has been taken on by WAGN and a "serial graffiti offender" from Mile End whose "tag" can be seen in many parts of East London has recently been convicted after a year-long operation by BTP.

### More trains

The Mayor of London's transport plan has already identified our line as a candidate for a future Metro-style service with frequent trains.

Now the official watchdog for passengers has also called for a train every 15 minutes at Cambridge Heath and London Fields.

The London Transport Users Committee has put forward its ideas in a newly published booklet *Requirements for Train Services*.

We will be contacting LTUC to suggest that the two stations would be much more useful if they had a train at least every 15 minutes.

We have also contacted the House of Commons transport committee, calling for more attention to be given to stations like ours.

We repeated our arguments for CCTV and real-time train information being essential if stations do not have staff.

It has recently been confirmed by a Capital Transport Campaign survey that the most overcrowded section of the London Underground system is the Central line between Bethnal Green and Liverpool Street.

Between 08.45 and 09.00, 9,469 passengers use that stretch of line.

Of course if a proper service was provided at Cambridge Heath and London Fields, some of that pressure could be relieved. Many of the passengers using Bethnal Green Tube station come from Hackney and walk past Cambridge Heath station knowing that the service is inadequate.

#### Progress after CHLFUG pressure

More peak trains

Daytime and evening off-peak trains reinstated

Saturday trains reinstated

Help points

Ticket machines

Tree cut back and floodlights at Cambridge Heath forecourt

Better lighting at both stations

High visibility staircase handrails

More platform seating

New notice boards

Telephone at London Fields

More official timetables

Stair-edge repairs at Cambridge Heath

Re-glazed platform shelters at Cambridge Heath

Anti-graffiti work at both stations

#### We still want

More contra-peak trains

Sunday trains

Trains at least every 15 minutes

Train-running information screens on the platforms and in foyers

Closed circuit television

The return of staff