

THE UP LINE

NEWSLETTER OF CAMBRIDGE HEATH AND LONDON FIELDS RAIL USERS

OCTOBER 2010

We deserve a re-count

There are now well over four times the number of passengers using Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations than Government and railway managers have been told officially.

Our figures, based on counting actual passengers, indicate that there are 677,760 people using Cambridge Heath station this year.

The latest official figure from the Office of Rail Regulation – which politicians and planners rely on – is only 150,220.

We also know that 897,280 people are using London Fields this year while the ORR claims only 184,394.

We will use our figures to campaign for better train services and stations and we will point out that the weakness of the ORR figures is that they are only estimates, based on ticket sales.

Many passengers now use Oyster cards and travelcards which the ORR seems unable to include in its figures.

The ORR figures claim that use of Cambridge Heath had declined by 13% but we know it rose by 7%.

The ORR figures claim that use of London Fields had declined by 11% but we know it increased by 21%.

We also know that recent growth at both stations was 15% with the number of passengers increasing from a daily total of 3,699 in May 2009 to 4,291 in May 2010. If sensible decisions are to

be made about investment in trains and stations, the ORR needs to improve the way it compiles and presents its statistics.

CHLFUG representatives have met with station manager Simi Tinubu to thank her for her team's efforts to improve conditions at both stations and to try to find ways to improve the situation further.

Cleaning at both stations is better but anti-social people at Cambridge Heath are abusing the station by using it as a lavatory.

We have raised several other problems, including breakdowns in the customer information system and inadequate lighting on occasions.

On the days of our passenger counts in May, the customer information system at both stations failed. At Cambridge Heath it was out of action completely for several hours and at London Fields, part of the display was unreadable and passengers told us it had been like that for months.

The ticket machine at Cambridge Heath was also out of action but was repaired while we were there. Sadly when the first person tried to top up their Oyster card, it "fell over" again.

Both ticket machines were out of order again in October when we carried out some supplementary counts of evening

and weekend passengers. Thanks to those counts, we now know that more than 1,200 people use Cambridge Heath on a Saturday and 2,200 use London Fields.

More people use the stations on Saturday evenings than during weekday evenings. We are convinced more people would use the stations on a Sunday if a better service – to match the weekday service – was provided.

The introduction of Oyster readers at our stations has certainly helped to boost passenger numbers. But the whole system is undermined when parts of it do not work properly. One of the Oyster readers at London Fields has been unreliable for more than a year and it seems impossible for engineers to repair it!

More London Connections maps have been provided but London and South East and national rail network maps are also needed.

Better signs are also needed at our stations as well as repairs to the shelters at Cambridge Heath.

Improvements look likely now at London Fields thanks to Hackney Council securing some funding.

A second entrance will be provided on the park side of the bridge and real-time train information screens will be provided at the station entrances.

NO TRAINS AT CAMBRIDGE HEATH OR LONDON FIELDS FOR FOUR DAYS OVER CHRISTMAS – 25-28 DECEMBER

Making progress with the CHLFUG campaign

Improvements since the CHLFUG campaign began:

Daytime off-peak, evening, Saturday and Sunday trains. Oyster card readers, better ticket machines with Oyster top-up facilities. Help points. Passenger information system. CCTV. Telephone in London Fields foyer. New platform seats. More timetables and printed information. Re-painting. Improved lighting. Efficient graffiti removal. New signs. Cambridge Heath needle bin removed. Stair edge repairs. Litter collection.

Our aspirations for now and the future:

Proper cleaning and washing of the stations every day. Reliable ticket machines and Oyster readers. A regular service every 10 to 15 minutes, every day of the week, including Sundays. Real-time train information screens at the station entrances. Live monitoring of the CCTV at Cambridge Heath. Ticket machines providing a full range of tickets. Additional station entrances to improve access and safety.