

THE UP LINE

NEWSLETTER OF CAMBRIDGE HEATH AND LONDON FIELDS RAIL USERS

FEBRUARY 2020

New trains at last

After years of waiting, new trains are likely to arrive at Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations later this month (Monday 24 February).

We were told in 2015 that the new trains would be coming in 2017 or 2018 but problems with the software on the new British-made Bombardier trains have delayed their arrival. Similar trains are already operating on the Barking to Gospel Oak line.

The new Derby-made class 710 trains all have longitudinal seating which allows for a larger number of standing passengers.

The new walk-through trains have wide gangways, air conditioning and USB charging sockets, but our request for some forward-facing and rear-facing seats (similar to the Metropolitan line Underground trains) have not been taken up.

The Canadian-owned Bombardier company has recently been taken over by Alstom which makes high-speed trains in France.

The new trains are better for acceleration so we have asked if Cambridge Heath's five lost AM peak-hour trains to Liverpool Street and similar PM peak trains from Liverpool Street can be reinstated.



Picture: WIKIPEDIA

THE NEW: The Bombardier class 710 train pictured at West Hampstead on the North London line



THE OLD: The class 315 trains pictured at London Fields station when the improved service was introduced in 2006

Improvements needed

We look forward to the promised new trains, but plenty of other improvements are needed.

We asked Transport for London to consider installing train information screens at ground level at Cambridge Heath, as at London Fields, Hackney Downs, Stoke Newington and Rectory Road stations. TfL responded and the screens were installed and welcomed by passengers.

Changes needed at Cambridge Heath

1. Reinstatement of the five peak hour trains (five in the morning and one in the evening) at Cambridge Heath which were cut in December 2011 and led to a fall in passenger numbers.
2. Ground floor retail unit to be let.
3. Station name and logo on Hackney Road bridge as at Hackney Central.
4. Second entrance on Hackney Road, to augment the existing entrance on Cambridge Heath Road.

Changes needed at both Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations

1. Lifts at both stations to help mobility-impaired passengers, including parents with buggies and small children as well as passengers with cycles and luggage.
2. Additional platform shelters and seats to cope with rising passenger numbers.
3. An earlier start to the Sunday service, from 07.00, rather than 09.00.
4. Improved timetable to provide a train every 10 minutes rather than every 15 minutes as at present.
5. Stopping some Chingford trains at Cambridge Heath and London Fields to provide a direct service to and from Walthamstow, without the need to change trains at Hackney Downs.

6. Designate Cambridge Heath and London Fields as art stations, to reflect the artistic community in the area and brighten up the stations.

7. Encourage artists to use the stations to display their art.

What changes do YOU want?

Please email editor@railwatch.org.uk if you think there are other things we should be campaigning for.

These changes are suggested by Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users for the attention of Gareth Powell, managing director for surface transport, and Jon Fox, director of London Rail. They will also be circulated to local politicians who have shown an interest in train services.

We are unhappy that the “official” estimates from the Office of Rail and Road still seriously understate the real number of passengers who use our two stations, when compared with our carefully recorded observations.

We believe the ORR 2018-2019 estimates of 1,353,678 passengers using London Fields annually and 786,006 for Cambridge Heath are significantly below the actual numbers. This underestimate undermines the case for improving our stations and the train services.

Improvements since the CHLFUG campaign began:

Daytime off-peak, evening, Saturday and Sunday trains. Oyster card readers, and more reliable ticket machines with Oyster top-up facilities. Real-time information screens at street level as well as customer information screens and Help points on all platforms. Live monitoring of CCTV at London Fields and Cambridge Heath. 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 and efficient cleaning. Additional entrance at London Fields. Refurbishment of Cambridge Heath station. Public address system. Station staff while trains are running