

# THE TRAVELLER

NEWSLETTER OF FELIXSTOWE TRAVEL WATCH

FELIXSTOWE



TRAVEL WATCH

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## Chairman's Editorial



**Graham Newman**

([Graham.Newman.FLX@gmail.com](mailto:Graham.Newman.FLX@gmail.com))  
writes...

Dear Members. So... into 2022, and Covid is still with us - and still upsetting the patterns of public transport, not to mention our need or desire to use it. Not exactly the best way to usher in the 50th year of Felixstowe Travel Watch's [and its predecessor in title - *East Suffolk Travellers' Association (Felixstowe)*] operation.

Over that period, we have seen both today's Committee Members and many of our predecessors - like Charles Taylor, Ken Tricker, John Woollan and Peter Mellor - fight hard for Public Transport in Felixstowe. It all started with the (post Beeching) threat to withdraw our passenger rail service in 1972 - when the town was served by around 8 departures a day on what were already becoming elderly diesel multiple units. Fast forward 50 years, and we now have 18 departures Monday-Friday - hourly throughout most of the day - on some of the most modern rolling stock on the UK railway system.

Later, the then Association's attentions turned to the bus service. We have sadly lost some of the "around town" and summer open-top services of the 1970s. But we were - until the coming of Covid - still blessed with 4 buses an hour during the day between Felixstowe and Ipswich. These also serve Western Felixstowe (75 & X7) and the Landguard peninsular (77), with Old Felixstowe being catered for with a rather cut-down service to Martlesham and Woodbridge. Other than the county town itself, Felixstowe remains one of the best connected towns in Suffolk with its bus service, despite the fact that bus ridership in general has significantly decreased over the last decade.

The third arm of FTW's operations is of course our popular annual tours programme. Still running with 10 or 11 outings per year up until Covid struck, our tours produced the bedrock of our membership and fund

raising over the years. Alongside our customary coach outings, in the early days we were even able to justify hiring a train for our outings. As recently as our 30th birthday, we managed to fill a 3-coach Class 170 train for a round trip of East Anglia provided for us by the then Anglia Railways. And for many years, we participated in one of NENTA Train Tours each year.

In more recent times, running special trains has become increasingly difficult, with the amount of work carried out at weekends by Network Rail, and operation of charter trains becoming the sole responsibility of specialist companies, as opposed to the regional franchisees such as Greater Anglia.

Covid sadly saw off our tours programme for both 2020 and most of 2021, (and indeed has put the operations of the likes of NENTA Train Tours into abeyance). But we have put together a series of outings by train for 2022. We sincerely hope you will enjoy participating in these.

Coming up to date, the 3.8% fare increase of 1st March has come as a bit of a shock to the system - although of course it pales to insignificance when compared to the 30p per litre rise (20%) in the cost of diesel at the pumps we've witnessed since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. We've updated our typical fares table and we reproduce it in this edition of *The Traveller*.

Also in this edition, there's a strong plea for all our members on our books since early 2020 to renew their memberships and confirm their contact details for GDPR purposes. Although our tours may have been curtailed by the pandemic, other aspects of our work certainly haven't been, including the issue of our very popular local bus & train timetables; and our successful Facebook and Tourist Information campaigns to publicise them.

Finally, may I apologise for the lateness of this edition of *The Traveller*? This has been caused by uncertainty as to when we would be able to restart meetings and a tours programme; the uncertainty around both bus and train timetables and also personal circumstances.

**FELIXSTOWE  
TRAVEL  
WATCH  
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## Felixstowe Travel Watch Tours 2022

### Richard Holland

(richolland1@btinternet.com) our Vice Chairman - is - with wife Jenny - also our Tours Organiser & Felixstowe Station Adopter; and now also FTW's temporary Treasurer. He reports:



As we celebrate our 50 years anniversary (see Chairman's Editorial) and try to cope with whatever Covid brings along, the theme we are using for the 2022 Tours will be **"let's get back on track"**. The advantage of rail in 2022 will be the feel-good factor of being able to spread out on the trains, the pleasure of riding on the new rolling stock, and being able to make a last minute decision about going out or staying at home.

As you read our 2022 Tours Brochure enclosed, you will see all our outings are as far as possible "turn up and go", with the intention of allowing as many members as possible to take part. All Greater Anglia's trains are DDA compliant with no step access, suitable for buggies and walkers..

We have not given up completely on coach outings, so if and when Covid rules change and we assess that members feel comfortable about resuming coach travel, and destinations take group bookings, we hope to organise some "days out by coach" tours.

The tours we've planned so far are:

1. Ely
2. Lowestoft and the Transport Museum
3. City of London
4. North Norfolk Railway / Sheringham
5. Norwich
6. Co-op Juniors Christmas Show
7. Any day trips by coach

**Please let us know the tours you are interested in and your contact details** on the detachable form in the brochure, or by e-mail back to me. Depending on the interest shown, we will then finalise the dates, and circulate the details to all members.

We hope very much you will join us on one or more of our 2022 tours.

## After the fares rise - How it affects your local journeys

### TRAIN FARES AND JOURNEY TIMES FROM FELIXSTOWE

Destination	Single		Anytime Return		Off-Peak Return		Advance Single		Typical Off-Peak journey time
	Adult	with Railcard	Adult	with Railcard	Adult	with Railcard	Adult from	with Railcard	
Ipswich	£5.30	£3.45	£7.00	£4.60	£6.30	£4.15	-	-	26min
Colchester	£9.70	£6.40	£15.30	£10.05	£12.80	£8.40	-	-	1hr
Woodbridge	£5.90	£3.85	£9.00	£5.90	£7.20	£4.75	-	-	1hr
Lowestoft via Saxmundham	£16.10	£10.60	£24.80	£16.35	£20.80	£13.70	¶	-	2hr 15m
Bury St Edmunds	£11.90	£7.85	£18.40	£12.10	£15.70	£10.35	-	-	1hr 27m
Cambridge	£16.20	£10.65	£24.70	£16.30	£10.40	£13.45	-	-	2hr 13m
Peterborough	£33.00	£21.75	£50.70	£33.45	£28.50	£18.80	-	-	2hr 11m§
Norwich	£18.40	£12.10	£28.50	£18.80	£20.40	£13.45	-	-	1hr 22m
London Liverpool St	£57.50	£37.95	£89.70	£59.20	£48.80	£32.20	£16.00	£10.55	1hr 51m
London Day Travelcard	-	-	-	-	£55.00	£36.30	-	-	
Gatwick Airport	£87.00	£57.40	£130.00	£85.80	£62.20	£41.05	£25.50	£16.80	3hr 6m
Heathrow Airport *	£63.00	£43.45	£100.70	£70.20	£55.80	£39.20	£21.50	£16.05	2hr 56m
Stansted Airport **	£78.00	£51.45	£127.90	£84.40	£64.70	£42.70	£23.90	£15.75	2hr 59m
Anglia Plus Ranger	-	-	-	-	£25.00	£16.50	-	-	

\* - using London Underground NOT Heathrow Express. Book to London Liverpool Street and then contactless payment with debit card on London Underground. Further saving possible for Oystercard holders over 60

¶ - You can also purchase an East Suffolk Line Ranger for this price, only from the train conductor or staffed ticket office

§ - Using the 09.28, 15.28 or 19.28 departures from Felixstowe

\*\* - via London Liverpool St

Please note train fares can be altered at any time, and are currently revised annually in line with inflation. Advance ticket prices are typical and may not be the same in both directions of travel. Updated March 2022



## Public Transport Notes



**Bryan Frost**

(E-mail: [bmwfrost@btopenworld.com](mailto:bmwfrost@btopenworld.com))  
Chair of FTW's Public Transport  
Committee, updates you on latest  
developments

### BUSES

With the incidence of COVID-19 in welcome - if slow - retreat, hopefully the situation on our buses is set to improve soon, with fewer of the bus company's staff being afflicted by the virus, allowing more to return to work, which should result in a more reliable level of service. First Eastern Counties has been experiencing a shortage of drivers, not only due to COVID but also because of an exodus to the road haulage companies, who have been offering higher pay rates as that industry has also suffered from a lack of drivers.

As a result, a small number of journeys are subject to cancellation at short notice and unfortunately these occur particularly in the mid-afternoon services from Felixstowe from 14:40 onwards, when the frequency is reduced from every 20 minutes to half hourly. At this time of day several buses are needed to operate school contracts, and understandably these journeys are given priority, which leads to lengthy waits for those wishing to return home - a far from pleasant experience at this time of year.

**The temporary timetable** At the time of writing, First is operating a temporary timetable, which has reduced the X7 express to just one journey each way at peak hours on Mondays to Fridays, with the 'on the hour' X7 slot from Ipswich being taken up by a service 75 journey, thus enabling a 20 minute frequency to be sustained for a good proportion of the day.

This maintains the service of two buses per hour around Grange Farm, but due to the slower running time of the 75 versus the X7, the interval around Grange Farm is 20/40 minutes, rather than even half hourly. However, the timetable is structured so that from Great Eastern Square towards Ipswich, the interval is every 20 minutes at the same times past the hour as before, at least until mid-afternoon. As a result, the 77 has reverted to an hourly frequency with departures at 40 minutes past the hour from Ipswich returning at 43 minutes past the hour from the Landguard Visitor Centre.

There are no changes to the Sunday service.

**Please be aware that this temporary timetable is subject to alteration at short notice.**

**Service 73 gains a new bus stop** There were no changes to this service when First introduced their temporary timetables last October but due to the

changed route omitting Mill Lane and operating via Orwell Road, there was a lengthy distance without a bus stop from near Devon Rd to Orwell Road. Following our representations to Suffolk County Council, this has now been remedied by placing an additional stop on Garrison Lane near Newry Ave and the development on the former Deben High School site.

### Government support for bus services extended

Fortunately at the last moment the government agreed to extend funding to support for buses (and light rail) by a further £150 million until October, which will certainly assist in avoiding the withdrawal of up to 30% of services, at least for the time being. However this is likely to be the last such package and the incentive will be on promoting increased usage of buses in order to reduce or even avoid the need for future cutbacks in services.

**Bus Back Better** The next stage of the process is the creation of an Enhanced Bus Partnership by April this year, and we understand that work is in progress at Suffolk County Council to establish this organisation. Much needed improvements to services will of course require funding, so the proof of the pudding...

**Fare increases** As might have been expected First introduced some fare increases earlier this year but have revived promotion of the Felixstowe Town Zone ticket, which had been introduced at £4.30 for a day's unlimited travel within Felixstowe and the Trimleys. The Town Zone ticket is also available at discounted rates for longer periods.

### RAIL

**Performance on our line remains very good** - and what a pleasure it is to say this, in marked contrast to the dire situation which prevailed over so many years of Felixstowe Travel Watch's existence. The advent of Greater Anglia's fleet of brand new trains (and plenty of them), together with the creation of the dual track Trimley loop in 2019, have made a major impact on punctuality and reliability.

With the restoration of two trains per hour between London and Norwich good connections have been restored from our line to both these important destinations.

**The Cambridge Conundrum** Whilst this welcome restoration enables rail journey times from Felixstowe to both London and Norwich to be made which are very competitive with journeys by road, this cannot be claimed in relation to Cambridge, where rail travel to this most popular destination is a very lengthy process involving a wait of nearly an hour at Ipswich on the return journey.



## Public Transport Notes (cont'd)

An improvement to the situation is unlikely without a recasting of the timetable, so is there a practical alternative to the A14? - a road on which unpredictable delays can often occur.

We suggest two possibilities. If returning from Cambridge in the afternoon on the 15:46 (which arrives in Ipswich at 17:01), by crossing the road to the bus stop adjacent to the Station Hotel you can catch the X7 express bus at around 17:16, enabling an arrival at Great Eastern Square at 17:46 - some 40 minutes before the train, and avoiding the lengthy wait on Ipswich station. At present, the above is the only X7 journey from Ipswich and it only operates on Mondays to Fridays.

The other alternative is to use one of the frequent trains from Cambridge to Ely, returning to Ipswich on the two hourly service from Peterborough, which reduces the wait at Ipswich to around half an hour. Some research on the timetable is needed for this to work! It does make for a more interesting journey, but please allow sufficient time at Ely to make a comfortable connection into the Ipswich train. There is an additional fare for using this route.

**'Great British Railways' on the horizon** The major rewrite of the Greater Anglia timetable set for December 2021 did not happen and the rail industry is currently in a state of limbo until more details emerge about the 'Great British Railways' organisation, which is likely to determine the shape of the rail industry for many years to come. Watch this space!

## Memberships 2022

If the envelope in which you received this edition of *The Traveller* has a RED spot against your address, you will find enclosed a membership renewal form seeking confirmation of your details and your permission for us to continue to use them; plus an envelope addressed to Mrs Jean Leitch, our Membership Secretary, .

We'd be really grateful if you could return the completed form in the envelope provided, together with a **cash** remittance. Alternatively please pay by BACS (or make an annual standing order), payable to East Suffolk Travellers Association Felixstowe (a/c No:8113 5775; sort code: 40-21-06). This is because the Bank is now (incredibly) charging us 40p to *pay in* individual cheques! Please use the reference **M-SHIP-your surname** when paying by BACS.

Membership fees remain the same at £3 for individuals or £4 for families, but regrettably - given the upcoming increase in postal charges, we need to increase the postal supplement (for addresses outside our Felixstowe and Trimley hand distribution area) to £2.50.

## Our Next Members' Meeting

With the Covid restrictions in place in the run up to, and into February, it proved impractical to arrange our traditional February Members' Meeting. However, with the subsequent relaxation, we have arranged our **next members' meeting for Tuesday evening 10th May, starting at 7.30pm**, in the Salvation Army Hall, Cobbold Road.

We are looking forward to a visit from Alan Neville, Greater Anglia's Customer and Community Engagement Manager, who will update us on all things railway - no doubt including reference to the exceptional reliability of services which have come with the introduction of a completely new fleet of trains in East Anglia.

Following a refreshment break, we will move swiftly to a short **Annual General Meeting**. Please accept this newsletter as official notification of the meeting, at which the following draft agenda will be discussed:

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes of the last AGM held 7th May 2019
- 3 Matters Arising
- 4 Executive Committee report: Comments from the Chairman
- 5 Presentation of Accounts for 2019, 2020 & 2021
- 6 Election of Officers. Current postholders are follows:  
Chairman (*Graham Newman*)  
Vice Chairman (*Richard Holland*)  
Secretary (*Vacancy*)  
Acting Treasurer (*Richard Holland*)
- 7 Election of up to eight members to the Executive Committee. Current members are as follows:  
*Bryan Frost, Malcolm Gee, Tom Hatrick, Jean Leitch, Clive Norman.*
- 8 Appointment of an Independent Examiner
- 9 Resolutions (if any received)
- 10 Any other business

As you can see, we are somewhat light on both officers and committee members, and we would welcome some new members to come forward as we resume operations. If you would like to volunteer, please contact either Graham Newman or Richard Holland, at the phone numbers shown on the front page.

We will have all our usual facilities open at the members' meeting, including our public transport information display and of course our membership desk to receive any outstanding renewals or new member enrolments.

We are also planning our regular October members' meeting. By this time, we hope that the plans under *Bus Back Better* will be further advanced, and that we will be able to get speakers from the County Council and possibly First to describe the improvements they are coming up with!