



Supporters Newsletter for the



Heritage Railway Trust

Winter 2020

2020 has been a traumatic year for so many people, it's difficult to know where to start with a newsletter for such a time. The Covid virus has affected virtually everybody throughout most of the world, and the necessary lockdowns and general restrictions in this country has hit Bramley Line progress along with everyone else. But, working whenever possible on our regular workdays, progress has continued amid increasing uncertainty regarding the future of the line. The picture below, is a flashback to when the Bramley Line first entered Waldersea depot, and preparation for the start of the siding, no office, no storage, just a hole in the ground.



Waldersea Depot, Long Drive, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180

BACK ON TRACK



Moving On- On the last working day of 2020, a relatively small group of volunteers extended the track length by a further 60 feet, putting in place the next two full length rails seen below. Weighing in at just under 1 tonne per rail, a small team has to use ingenuity to ensure they keep a safe working environment and get the rails correctly placed in the sleeper chairs.



One in, one to go.



Thinking of joining us or renewing, fees and options below:

Membership Fees for 2020/21

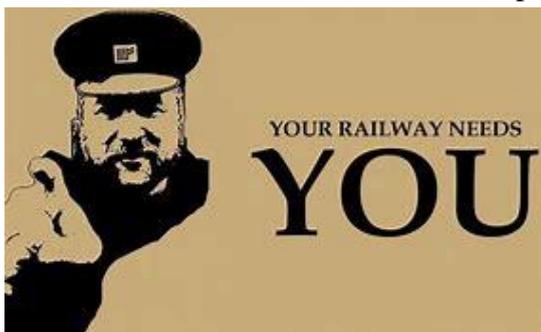
Annual Membership:

| | |
|------------|--------|
| Individual | £12.00 |
| Couple | £18.00 |
| Family | £24.00 |

Individual Life Membership ONLY for the over 55's £250.00

Individual Life Membership ONLY for the over 65's £150.00

Corporate Membership £100.00



Existing or expired memberships can be renewed by card through Paypal, just go to the links on our website, or by cheque through the post to the Waldersea depot address at the bottom of the page.

WHY should I bother, this group's going nowhere is a question sometimes heard? Some facts on the next page might make you think again.

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As most people are aware, a reopening process has been going on for some years now, spearheaded by the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, supported by the local MP, and increasingly with local demand being voiced supporting a reopening to ease travel, in particular to Cambridge, not an easy commute by road. The necessary Grip study is going through it's paces, with reported positive results in terms of viability for the line once built. We say built rather than reinstated, because whilst the bulk of the track bed is still in place, there are a few major obstacles to overcome before the line could become a reality.

The latest budget estimate to reopen the line is in excess of £200 million, and as we've noticed so many times, government major project estimates, rail in particular, seldom if ever remain in budget. You only have to look at Crossrail, and HS2. Somewhat larger in scale, but the principle remains.

A major slice of that estimate is taken up by having to negotiate the A47 just outside Wisbech. The only acceptable method of doing this currently is to bridge over the railway line, estimated in excess of £50 million. Network Rail will not accept new level crossings being planned, particularly on major trunk roads. Then of course, government budgets have to look at best value for their investment. The subject of dualling the A47 between Peterborough and Kings Lynn, has been under discussion for the last 50 years, and now the case is receiving increasing attention again. Thousands use the A47 every day, commuters, increasing freight traffic, more holiday traffic likely with restrictions making holidays abroad more difficult. Whilst the task is huge, its pound for pound value per head is far greater than the railway connection to March.

The figures that have been needed to support the overall economy in the midst of the Covid pandemic, with still no end in sight, have been quite alarming and at some point the books will have to be balanced. This is going to take many years, and brings into question the scrutiny that all major government spending will inevitably be subject to. A journey of under 10 miles by car, from the proposed Wisbech station to March station, versus a conservative budget of £200m +, this is still light years away, if ever.

Network Rail have recently been cited as the government preferred body to run the railways, that is the trains as well as the track. This is getting back towards what we would understand as nationalisation. We've been there before, but railway privatisation has not been a success, with the government having to step in so often to prop up or take over failing train franchises. Our membership keeps it's ears to the ground, and the rumours coming out of Network Rail is strong opposition to **any** proposal to reopen this line.



Some Bramley Line pictorial past for local interest

*Wishing all our readers a Happy Christmas and
New Year*

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