

# Marpa

Mid Anglia Rail Passengers' Association  
[www.marpa.org.uk](http://www.marpa.org.uk)

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## Autumn 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to the autumn newsletter.

### **Needham Market Station Disabled access to Ipswich bound platform**

First of all a thank you to you, the MARPA membership. I don't like emailing MARPA members between newsletters as I know how frustrating it is to receive constant emails from organisations you belong to. However the committee thought the 38 Degrees petition to improve access to the platforms was worthy of support, and support it you did, there was a noticeable jump in signatures to the petition over the few days after I sent the email. The petition still needs support so if you didn't sign first time around the link is

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/needham-market-train-station-accessible-to-all> .

This campaign has received some coverage in the East Anglian Daily Times but in case you are unaware of the problem at Needham Market the issue is that there is a subway between the two platforms with a total of 49 steps. This is impossible for wheel chair users, difficult for mums with buggies, travellers with heavy luggage, cyclists, and the elderly and infirm. One proposed solution suggested was a sloping path up to the Ipswich bound platforms, accessing it through the Cattle Tunnel. We hope that Network Rail will do their own Feasibility Study, and propose a lift similar to the one which has been installed at Manningtree, which would go down to the subway, rather than a tall bridge, which might be difficult because Needham Market Station building is a listed building. We know that where Network Rail has put in improved access the train traveller numbers increase. Needham Market passenger numbers are approx. 90,000 and we expect that they will go up to 100,000 when the next figures are released. Needham market, like many other villages on the MARPA line is having a lot of new houses built, so it is an opportunity to invest for the future.

### **Update on the Bury Masterplan**

You may recall the item in the spring 2017 Newsletter summarising proposals for a major consultation about Bury town centre – the aim being to maximise the appeal and attractiveness of the centre for business, retail and tourism. You may indeed have contributed yourself to the initial stage of the consultation process. Since then, a second phase of consultation, based on priorities established from the earlier process, has just finished. Amongst the key priorities highlighted from feedback is the formal recognition that the route between the railway station and the centre for pedestrians and cyclists is in need of a significant makeover and re-think. More detailed information on the aspects of the Masterplan most directly relevant to people using the station can be found at

[http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning\\_Policies/BSEmasterplan/index.cfm](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/BSEmasterplan/index.cfm)

In particular, improvement work at the station end of the corridor to the town centre is associated with the area the document identifies as “the Northern Gateway”. It is worth noting that very significant amounts of residential accommodation are now scheduled to be built in the

immediate vicinity of the station, which makes substantial enhancement of links between that area and the town centre even more pressing – as well as more likely to happen. Concurrent with the Bury Masterplan activity, and directly linked to it, you may also be aware that Suffolk County Council, as the statutory highways authority, has recently completed a parallel consultation designed to get feedback on plans to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists on the Northgate Street – Tayfen Rd – Ipswich Street axis. MARPA made a response which broadly endorsed the SCC proposals, including the introduction of new light controlled crossings on Tayfen Road, but also emphasised the urgent need to improve signage between the station and the centre, which as many will know is wholly inadequate. Both St Edmundsbury District Council and SCC recognise the need to enhance and upgrade this key route into and out of the town centre – which is obviously a plus. It is likely that the engineering required to deliver the SCC plan for the road infrastructure will happen in the relatively near future – work could start by or before April 2018, which is very welcome news. Around the station however it is clear that further discussion is required with Abellio Greater Anglia and Network Rail to ensure they are on board and ready to contribute to the infrastructure improvements in terms of better signage and increased cycle storage facilities at the station. In its regular dialogue with Greater Anglia MARPA will press the train operator on its specific plans and keep members updated via the newsletter.

### **Newmarket Foot Crossing**

The Network Rail plans to extinguish the right to cross the railway at the foot crossing near the station will be the subject of an inquiry in the New Year. If we find out more we will tweet the information.

### **The Ely Derailment**

Many of you will have been inconvenienced by the freight train derailment near Ely in August. As a non traveller that day I thought the railway reacted well to provide information that something had happened and that it was a major incident that would take days to clear up. Admittedly I was reading messages on my computer and not trapped on a train. If you were caught up in that how did GA respond and aid you to complete your journey? Was it the best customer support in the circumstances, which were understandably difficult?

### **Newmarket**

MARPA held a committee meeting in Newmarket in September. If, like me, you are not a regular visitor to Newmarket, then I think you will find that the town has improved, the National Museum of Horseracing would seem to me to be a driver of a bit of regeneration in the town. Even if you are not a fan of horseracing the bakery and restaurant look to be good establishments. The car parks and roads are a bit tight but come by train, it's not a long walk from the station to the town centre.

### **MARPA Walks**

Member Roger Wolfe has produced a leaflet for MARPA walk number 15 from Cambridge Station to Cambridge North Station, 5.5 miles. It can be downloaded from <http://www.marpa.org.uk/walks/Walk15v3.pdf> .

### **New Trains**

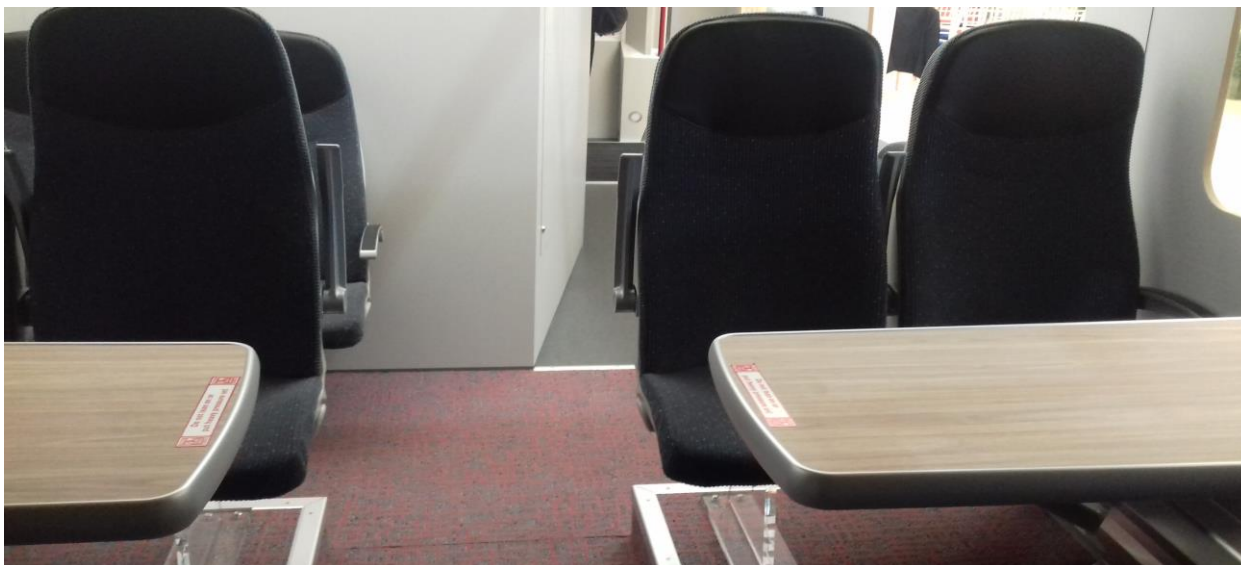
As part of the franchise commitment you will be aware that all the rolling stock is being renewed with state of the art trains. MARPA were invited to look at the mock ups at Norwich Crown point depot. MARPA attendees gave some constructive feedback to Greater Anglia which we hope will be taken into consideration in the final design. The pictures show the 'mock up' to give you an idea of the inside of a Norwich – London unit



Passenger information showing connecting trains



Catering 'café/bar' area



Seating (I think this is meant to be the inter-city standard class)

## **MARPA Membership**

The membership of MARPA is from **1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December** each year. If you have **NOT** renewed for the year please do so now! Currently MARPA does not have the IT capability to send reminders to each and every member when the subscriptions are due other than to issue reminders in this Newsletter. Your membership is valued by us and the subscription is vital if we are to continue to campaign in support of issues that members feel strongly about in relation to our local rail routes etc.

Annual Membership Subscription Rates:

Adult - £5.00

Family/Joint - £6.00

Concession - £4.00

*(Student / Senior / Unwaged / Disabled)*

Our Membership Secretary is Peter Rutt. His address is:-

MARPA (Membership)

c/o Well House, The Street, Elmswell, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9BS

Please make your cheque payable to 'Mid Anglia Rail Passengers Association'.

## **WEB SITE REMINDER**

An ongoing reminder to visit/use our website [www.marpa.org.uk](http://www.marpa.org.uk) and follow us on twitter @marpa\_peter

## **Parting Shot**



A photograph from back in May when the oil-seed rape was flowering, a Felixstowe bound train passes Elmswell Hall