

# Marpa

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

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## February 2019 Newsletter

Dear MARPA member.

After the last newsletter's section about 'what does MARPA do?' I give you updates on the Community Rail Partnership and Station improvement campaigns below. We have also attended conferences on the future of railways in East Anglia and given our input to rail industry surveys. Can I commend the AGM to you? Last year the attendance was noticeably lower than previous years and we do hope there will be a better turnout this year. As I am in charge of the free refreshments it might be handy if there was indication of who is attending to make sure that there is enough tea and biscuits, so if you are coming, I'd be pleased if you can let me know.

### AGM

The AGM takes place at 2.00pm in the Friends Meeting House in St Johns Street Bury St Edmunds on **Saturday 13th April**. Please do come and meet other people with an interest in our line. Refreshments will be available.

There will be talks from Alan Neville from GA and Matt Brennan from Network Rail. By inviting both Greater Anglia & Network Rail to speak, the aim is to stimulate a discussion at the meeting about the range of ways in which trains, stations, other infrastructure & timetables can better work together in the interests of the travelling public.

Do come along, all are welcome and it is good to put faces to names and to meet new people. There is usually an attendance of over 20 and FREE refreshments are available.



### Community Rail Partnership

It is noted from various meetings and correspondence that there is general support for the idea but councils are generally not wanting to pay towards it. It is part of a CRP that whilst the train operator has some money it needs a level of financial support from the local councils to proceed. MARPA don't know what GA have discussed with councils. The Mid Anglia footfall statistics are set out with a brief analysis below

### Station facilities

MARPA actively support the Needham Market disabled access campaign. There has been no practical progress recently, despite vigorous lobbying and the support of the constituency MP, but the local Action Group meets again once outcomes from the Access for All bid are known, hopefully in April. The thinking is now for a ramp on the up platform but there are still hurdles to be overcome. The lack of a help point on the same platform continues to cause concern.

Our MARPA Chairman noted that there were announcements about trains being given at Trimley station and suggested that similar announcements were needed at Newmarket as passengers sometimes ask the guard if they are joining the correct train. Trimley and Newmarket are similar with trains running in opposite directions within a few minutes from the same platform

There is a new information screen on the up platform at Elmswell which is much appreciated – but it would be handy if the down platform was similarly catered for, this would especially be welcomed by the London bound commuters on the first train of the day.



The new Elmswell passenger information Screen (photo © Peter Feeney)

## MID ANGLIA ROUTE STATION USAGE ESTIMATES 2013-2018

(As published by Office of Rail & Road 11/12/18)

Station name	Year ended 31st March			% change 2018 to:	
	2013	2017	2018	2013	2017
Needham Market	85,078	91,706	100,648	18.3	9.8
Stowmarket	927,856	951,396	935,244	0.8	<b>-1.7</b>
Elmswell	79,482	71,566	68,546	<b>-13.8</b>	<b>-4.2</b>
Thurston	64,082	69,258	72,388	13.0	4.5
Bury St. Edmunds	566,110	633,362	652,084	15.2	3.0
Kennett	27,530	37,150	39,512	43.5	6.4
Newmarket	268,696	363,784	358,798	33.5	<b>-1.4</b>
Dullingham	31,596	40,376	39,028	23.5	<b>-3.3</b>
<b>ALL EAST ANGLIA</b>				<b>22.1</b>	<b>3.3</b>

The ORR data published in December 2018 reflects a mixed picture regarding passenger numbers on the Mid Anglia (Cambridge – Ipswich) service. The full dataset plus methodology is here:

<http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>

Whilst Elmswell emerges from the figures as the only station where passenger numbers have consistently declined over a five year period, numbers using both Newmarket and Dullingham have fallen since 2017. By contrast, Needham Market shows impressive growth of nearly 20% over the five years between 2013 – 2018, with a particular rise of close to 10% in the year since 2017. Surely further evidence to justify investment by Network Rail and the train operator to improve access arrangements at the station! Consistent growth in numbers at Kennett – over 40% in five years - might indicate a case for introducing a more frequent service in the new timetable from December 2019, especially given the amount of new housing development underway in the area. And despite the dip in passenger numbers between 2017 & 2018, Newmarket emerges as at or near the top of the league of unstaffed Greater Anglia stations, with over a third of a million passengers annually using a single platform station with the most minimal of facilities. Perhaps something else for the operator to reflect on.

Analysis by Railfuture committee member Phil Smart of “line data” – aggregated passenger numbers for all stations on a given route – over a fifteen year timeframe leads to this summary of the Mid Anglia line: “data shows growth moving ahead of the (national) average over the past 15 years, if not at the spectacular rate evidenced by the Breckland line. This is leading to overcrowding on many trains and supports the case for additional services and the infrastructure to support them.”

**Peter Feeney**

## Rail Conference for the East – 1 February 2019



Priti Patel facilitating

(photo © Ben Walsh)

Ben Walsh attended this on behalf of MARPA and reports that in essence it is all 'good, positive stuff!'

The speakers were Jamie Burles, M. D. Greater Anglia, Meliha Duymaz, Network Rail, James Bradley, Network Rail, Chris Starkie, Chief Executive, New Anglia LEP, Tony Potter DfT, Rizwaan Hadid, Senior Sponsor, Anglia Route, Network Rail, and two people from the business community - Sue Gullane, Partner Scruttonbland and David Birch, Director of Policy at Essex Chambers of Commerce with the Facilitator being Priti Patel, MP.

The meeting discussed, in relation to our line, future upgrades at Haughley Junction and Ely – both on the horizon, but no confirmed decisions about funding as yet.

The other good thing promised is an improvement to the Great Eastern Main Line, starting this Summer, with new 'Norwich in 90' trains - two of them, I believe, in each direction.

**Ben Walsh**

## 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 2018 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)*

Please renew your 2018 subscription by getting in touch with our Membership Secretary (Peter Rutt 01359 242464). 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

Please visit/use our website [www.marpa.org.uk](http://www.marpa.org.uk)



Trains pass at Elmswell, January 2019 (photo © Ben Walsh)