

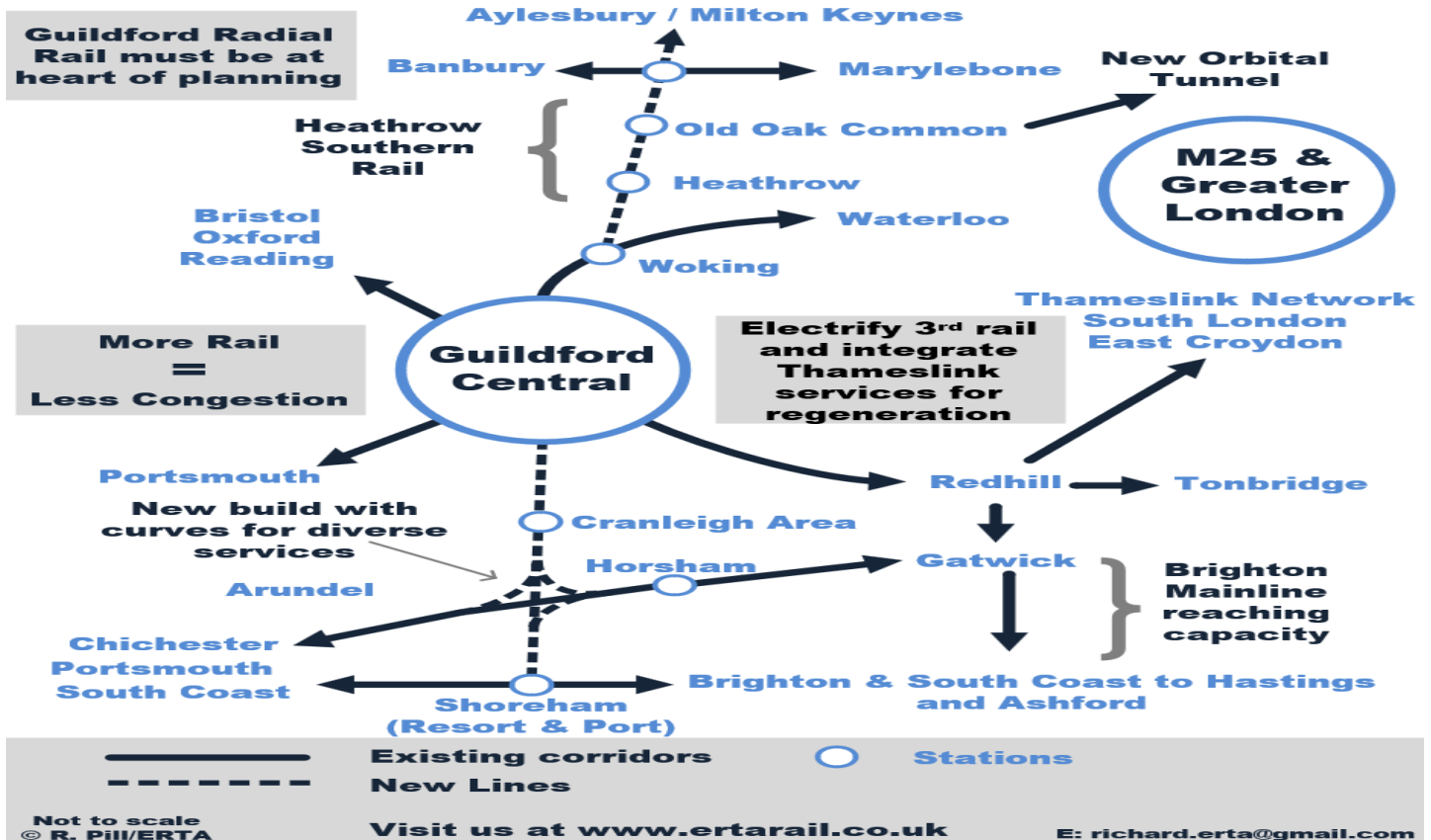
English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

	Patrons: Sir Edmund Verney, The Rt Hon. the Lord Newby OBE, Mr George Bathurst, Professor Andrew N Williams BA, BM BCh, MSc, PhD, MRCP, FRCPCH, FRHistS, Mr Trevor Garrod, + Others welcome of professional, business or other acumen and of good repute.	
	Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Media and Newsletter Coordinator, Bedfordshire Area Rep, General Advisor: Mobile: 07752096392 E. richard.erta@gmail.com	
	Vice Chairman, Railfuture Liaison Rep. Executive Committee Member, Westminster Team Member, Berkhamsted Area Rep. Mr Colin Crawford, 21 Clunbury Court, Manor Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 2FF T. 01442 870904 Mobile 07836-693977 E: colin.crawford1@btconnect.com	
	Membership Secretary: Mr Tony Houghton T. 077659 77318 E. tony.houghton@keystonelaw.co.uk	Treasurer: Mr David J. Start T. 07535 641055 E. davidjstart63@gmail.com
https://ertarail.co.uk/	ERTA Northern/Yorkshire Area Rep: Mr Chris Hyomes, 10 Tythe Barn Road, Knottingley, West Yorkshire, WF11 9BU E. chris.hyomes@hotmail.co.uk T. 07971766207	
www.linkedin.com/in/richard-pill-erta	https://ertarailvolunteer.blogspot.com/	
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Guildford-Horsham-South Coast-Brighton and vice versa to Reading (west) and Heathrow, Old Oak Common and Chiltern (east/north). If it is to happen, we need all hands-on deck, not for a talk shop, but everyone to have a role and be responsible for it!

Guildford Radial

2-Jan-2023



There has been a lot of talk and campaigning over the years to get this rail line reopened for regular passenger and possible freight-by-rail use.

To these ends, how ERTA operates is for people to join as members and offer to voluntarily assist with tasks which need doing. Having more local people involved brings not only the wealth of their

local knowledge, but also the prospect of more other local people identifying and being willing to also join and get involved.

ERTA could do once a year public meeting in Guildford and Horsham to gather the great and good, but we need a pulling together Working Group meeting in Guildford to pursue and take on delegated roles and collaborate loosely together with a view to moving the agenda towards ultimate delivery.

Getting a study needs local people to write to existing and prospective politicians and winning their support, getting councils on board. They demand audits and studies, which we are not equipped to do and road upgrades are evaluated by professionals at cost, not lay people, so we need equitable standards and values operating between road and rail for example.

If you are interested in the Working Group idea, starting preliminaries in November 2023 with a bi-monthly chipping away February 2024.

Things we need are:

1. Field Officers to know the line well 'now', compile lists and photographic evidence of issues to be addressed in a systematic and chronological order. E.g. level crossings/bridges, pinch-points, any blockages or threats of blockages. To keep on top of it.
2. Specific council/including Cranleigh Town Council with a view to winning them over that the gains outweigh the pains.
3. Getting professionals interested and establishing a funding pot - bait via council or ring-fencing via ERTA.
4. Building local support along and at both ends and feeding into ERTA Membership.
5. Seeking to act at Local Area Reps for ERTA, seek stalls and recruit support and members.
6. Write to local media selling the good idea concept of reopening and encourage the good idea to be adopted in planning policy and actions to forward towards processes for rebuilding the line as a local, modern public transport asset - heavy rail solution for more people and goods by rail.
7. I understand it is MPs to Councils to Government and public support. Then we need a power with authority to be able to say 'here's the cheque, move please'. I am convinced there is an overwhelming need, case and demand for this missing rail link. Further afield, the Arundel Curve for Horsham to South Coast to Brighton wrap around and then the issue of whether a direct new-build Shoreham rail link can be done, should be done and how to do given blockages and issues abounding including Tim Loughton MP saying over 20 years no-one has suggested reopening the railway and there is no case or it is too far gone? This is the sort of work a roving Working Group could usher along. It need not be the only effort; we can all update each other and liaise. But a pulse is needed and life needs to be put into the collective effort to progress matters. If interested in going on a list for future looping, please email back to that effect. I attach 2 diagrams, not the last word, but a planting of ideas of intent. The Working Group can produce others for its purposes and cross 'i's and dot t's.

“Reopening rail line could cut Northampton to Leicester journey time from 90 to 35 minutes”

Funding is being called to complete an interim 2020 Network Rail feasibility study on reopening the Northampton to Market Harborough railway line.

The population of Northamptonshire has considerably grown since the line was closed in 1981. Northamptonshire has the highest population growth of the UK and amongst the poorest rail access. We are all familiar with the difficulties travelling between Northampton and Leicester using the M1. Congestion at all stages is a frequent problem.

'Restoring this rail line would transform commuting between Northampton and Leicester' says Mr Richard Pill, CEO of the English Regional Transport Association. (ERTA). **For more information, join our email loop via richard.erta@gmail.com and see next newsletter due in January 2024.**

News and Notes

Notice: Over the last few months, we have seen lots of news stories and have increased our newsletter to 12 pages. We are growing numerically as a team and need every member to help recruit others to our fold. Our Membership Annual Subscription goes up £5 to £20 to help us cover costs and to help sustain our moving away from Wetherspoons-based operations to hall hire, which costs but gives more capacity for growth as we attract increasing numbers to our meetings. Volunteers are always welcome, especially to assist with existing or new projects or areas of coverage as well as help with our various forums, meetings, and representations be it councils, Westminster, and other work-related activity. Newbies it is experience to try and develop skills for CV's and for more experienced people, use your experiences to make us better and enable more. Together we can ensure ERTA gets things done and challenges others to work with us in this vital endeavour. Failure is catastrophic to all! If any can commit to a regular donation, please contact our Treasurer and either cheque or electronically get it sorted please, as more and better can be the outcome.

Business Cases: "An efficient transport network is the back bone of any economy. It connects people and drives prosperity, reduces our impact on the environment and regenerates local communities."

Source: Guidance Transport business case guidance Updated 16 December 2022 Ref: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-business-case/transport-business-case-guidance>

However, rail wins hands-down on the environment, yet rail reopenings, rebuilds and select new-builds minus HS2 are pretty few and funding contrasts between road and rail show roads has a disproportionate investment pot to that of rail aforementioned. It is ERTA's view that the system itself needs re-engineering to favour rail, land use and the environment and that nurturing rail development where modal shift from road to rail occurs should be given extra investment/an easier passage.

Woodhead Appeal: Please can you talk together and sort or source people to get photos of the 'now' Woodhead rail route esp. the Woodhead Tunnels and adjacent road A628 being 'busy'. Really need feedback, not just criticism but other sources. I can send what is done more-or-less so far. But I need a team effort please before we can finish and put it out. All offers to help gratefully welcomed. Contact

richard.erta@gmail.com

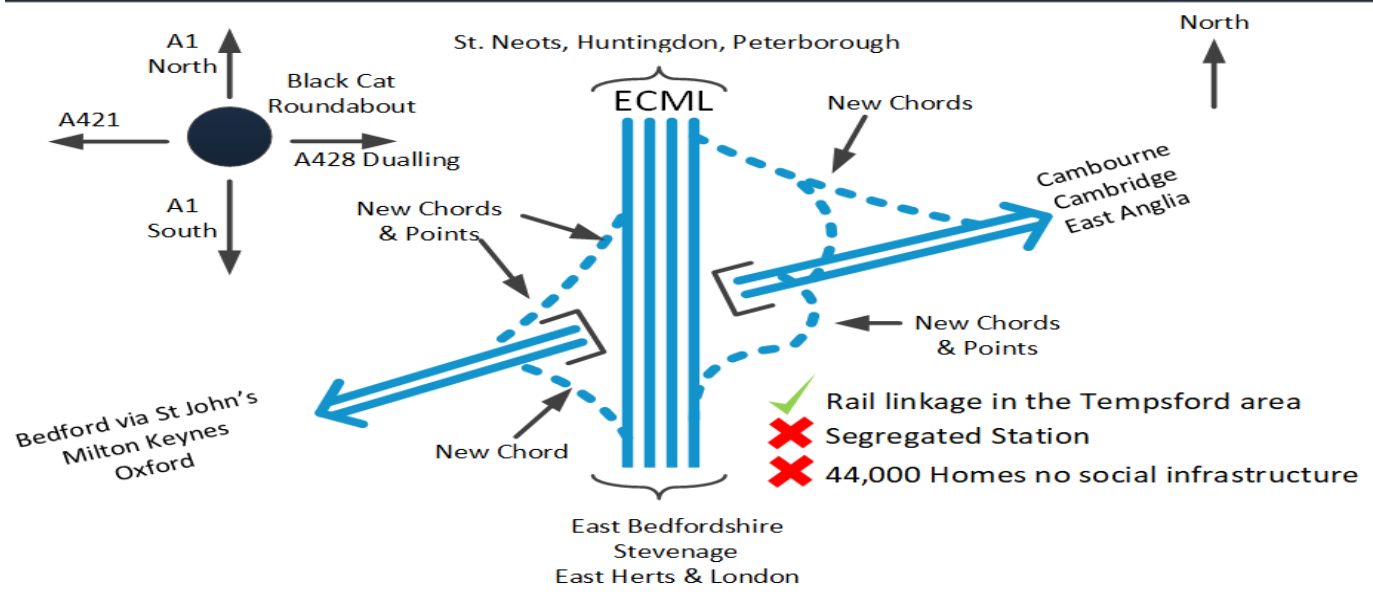
On the one hand we meet 'it will never happen' which becomes a self-defeating prophecy spiral down and the other, 'supersede with HS2 and HS3' sort of views which a. do not link outlying areas and b. do not have intermediate stations for access. Both lend to a congested roads-only outcome! Re-Rail Woodhead and UK PLC! What stops our leaders from seeing it? Capacity constraints need sorting both ends, so do it now!

Volunteers needed: Geography or disability need not be a disincentive to helping ERTA achieve its goals, ensuring it is properly administrated and runs as efficient as possible. Please come to our meetings and forums/working groups and think what you can offer be it remote but reliable desk-top help, field work, research and fund-raising for example. We need dedicated teams of people or individuals to focus on these and reliably make a go of it. Government preoccupation with cuts to welfare and job-seeking, has squeezed the under-65 community and younger people from doing voluntary work as they lack time or money or both. Mind the gap!

East-West Rail – An Assessment – lessons can be learnt at every level coupled to a clearer sense of galvanised direction of travel of where we wish to go in rebalancing our nation’s transport in favour of more by rail? Support physical connectivity where east-west rail meets the north-south main line at Tempsford!



ECML Tempsford Area



Visit us at www.ertarail.co.uk
Not to Scale
© R.Pill ERTA 16 June 2023

The battle for Tempsford – ERTA appeals to Government and scheme promoters to think again!

ERTA wants a physically joined-up rail linkage between East-West Rail and the existing principal north-south main line slow lines of the East Coast Main Line (ECML) in the Tempsford area rather than as proposed, a segregated station without physical linking rail arms for multiple benefits and optimal market reach and ranges.

ERTA is against 44, 000 houses* being dumped in a green field site, north and south of Station Road, Tempsford, which will require significant social infrastructure akin to a new town development. We are not NIMBY objectors seeking to de-rail the rail link scheme, but notwithstanding we have a preferred route east of Bedford via St John's and approaching Tempsford from a south-westerly direction, our call for physical rail linkage stands in its own right. *From above: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-65874170>
Richard Pill CEO ERTA said "It is crucial the new railway has physical linkage for south of Peterborough, north of Stevenage and East Bedfordshire to get on a train where they live and travel direct to Bedford or Cambridge without changing. Who wants to change in the middle of nowhere and await another train, when car, bus and our rail ideas offer seamless journey access, saving time and cost?"

ERTA calls on the promoters of the new east-west railway and Government to think again and accommodate the physical rail linkage as per our diagram suggests which needs working up if so interested. Once the development happens, the curtain comes down on available land and scuppers the option we are suggesting, locking in a less-than optimal situation.
On the link between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury for South Bucks scope, the following news has been communicated as well: Greg Smith MP for Buckingham raised the issue of the Aylesbury Link in the Transport select Committee.

Welcomed funding in Spring Budget for current work on EWR.

Is DfT confident it has funding for next stages of EWR?

Does DfT see the Aylesbury spur as part of EWR?

Huw Merriman, Rail Minister:

Funding for Phase2 and 3 to Cambridge is £4b-6b. Current Phase (to Bletchley) £1.3 billion.

Economic benefits are £103 billion are high return.

Treasury is committed to EWR as sees the economic benefits to UK.

Useful link: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons>

Demand our alternative route which is probably cheaper, be worked up and assessed for expediency to gain the railway but reduce the pain of the Northern Route.

Llangollen Four Great Highways Threat Increased!

Remember this warning I posted on my Llangollen Railway petitions about the Four Great Highways threat on the East side of Llangollen bridge: <https://www.change.org/p/mark-drakeford-support-and-fund-mainline-railway-links-to-llangollen-railway-to-connect-it-to-ruabon-and-bala/u/31536729>? The threat has unfortunately increased because the developers have given a poor diplomatic response to me and Simon saying that although they understand the benefits re-instating the railway to Ruabon would bring, they are not interested in doing anything to passively allow for the railways aspirations to keep the land clear for a future railway and are intending to go with the plans of blocking off the East side of the bridge where the railway currently ends. They are even using the excuse that the Bishop's Walk housing estate is blocking off the route when it isn't. Here's their response below in italics text:

Dear Simon and Daniel,

Further to our previous e-mails to you, we are now making contact with you to confirm that the Four Great Highways project is not required to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and following advice from the LPA, the new ramp and steps within Lower Dee Mill Park will be included within the Permitted Development works together with the other improvements within the park.

We have noted your concerns relevant to the project and should a future reinstatement of a single-track standard gauge mainline railway from Ruabon to Llangollen station be successful, our works will be included in any consideration by the railway along with the other developments within the area, including the Health Centre, apartments and car park. The attached image plots the former Llangollen to Ruabon railway alignment to show where it passes through Lower Dee Mill Park and beyond.

Once again many thanks for getting in touch and sharing your concerns with us. Your comments have been recorded with all other feedback received regarding this project.

All this is very serious and it needs countering as much as possible, including counting support of the local MP, to ensure that at least a 6-metre-wide strip of land at railway trackbed level immediately along the back of the riverside wall is kept clear through the full length of the Project's footprint to allow for the future reinstatement of a single-track mainline railway reinstatement from Llangollen to Ruabon.

As I stated to the developers, while I understand the advice from the local planning authority to feature the new ramp and steps within Lower Dee Mill Park with the other improvements within the area, the current design needs to be re-designed to ensure that at least a 6 metre wide strip of land at railway trackbed level immediately along the back of the riverside wall is kept clear through the full length of the Project's footprint to allow passive provision for the future reinstatement of a single-track mainline railway from Llangollen to Ruabon. A future reinstated railway being needed for the area as an

environmentally friendly car-free green transport link is needed to help reduce road congestion in the Dee Valley, and to help fight the emerging world-wide Environmental Climate Crisis and effect of Adverse Climate Change.

The other thing which I've been able to research out is that all of the footprint of the former railway land to the east side of the town bridge actually sits within Llangollen Railway's current land Lease. Llangollen Railway's current Lease is Legally binding with Denbighshire County Council, through terms Agreed with Llangollen Railway Trust Ltd.'s Solicitors, and runs for a term of 55 years from 2002 and therefore is in place until 2057. The Lease permits Llangollen Railway Trust to construct, maintain, and operate a Standard Gauge Railway within the footprint of all the land that is shown edged Red in the attached UK Land Registry Lease Plan and as described in the attached UK Land Registry record. This is as Legally Agreed with the Railway's Solicitors and Denbighshire County Council in 2002. I have attached copies of these lease documents to this e-mail as proof for you to see.

Consequently, the Land Possession Rights which Llangollen Railway Trust Ltd have through their Lease to build, maintain, and operate a railway east of the town bridge, within the red edged land footprint, means that Passive Provision needs to be reasonably made by the Four Great Highways Project to allow for the reinstatement of a railway within that Red edged land footprint. At the absolute very minimum, at least a 6-metre-wide clear strip of land at former railway trackbed level along the back of the riverside wall needs to be protected, within which a single-track Standard Gauge railway can then be reinstated through the town bridge as far as the eastern end of the red edged land.

The google image which the developers have shown of the railway passing through the area (with the red line) is also largely incorrect. They are showing the railway going through the car park of Lower Dee Mill and through the middle of Bishop's Walk estate. The route goes behind the car park and the housing estate, therefore there is no problem getting the line past the estate (I have made a correction to the map with an orange line, which I have attached to this email). Although the original railway track bed east side of Llangollen Station has been encroached on there is still a suitably wide strip of land available hugging the riverbank along which a 'Deviation Railway' could be constructed to go beneath the roadside Council garden, and around the south side of the Lower Dee Mill Flats, the Cottages, the Bishop's Walk Housing Estate, and the Woodlands Health Centre to re-join the old railway track bed on the outskirts of the town and then run on to Trevor and Ruabon (I have attached some photographs to this message which reveal the suitable amount of space there is behind these buildings). The whole route from Llangollen to Ruabon was surveyed in the year 1999, and revisited again in 2006 and 2014, by Llangollen Railway, and the enclosed survey maps and documents I have attached to this e-mail reveal the inspections made at the time. Also, if you look at an article from the Daily Post 2 years ago (which I have

also attached to this message), towards the end of the article it mentions the Ruabon to Llangollen route being among the Welsh government's future phase 2 railway reinstatements which are scheduled to take place between 2025 and 2035.

Restoring the Llangollen Railway over the 5-mile disused track bed eastwards towards Trevor, for serving the nearby Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site visitor attraction, and onwards through back to the main line in Ruabon, and then eventually Westwards from Corwen towards Bala would greatly secure the long-term future and viability of the existing Llangollen Railway as well as significantly enhancing public transport into all of the local areas along the route in the Dee Valley and Vale of Edyrnion, re-connecting all the towns and villages giving local people and new housing developments much better access to the outside world, jobs, education, and also helping to bring in more tourists than possible by road to further boost the local economy. Therefore, the whole route, including the section on the Lower Dee Mill Park site needs to be safeguarded from development blockages to enable the future mainline reconnection.

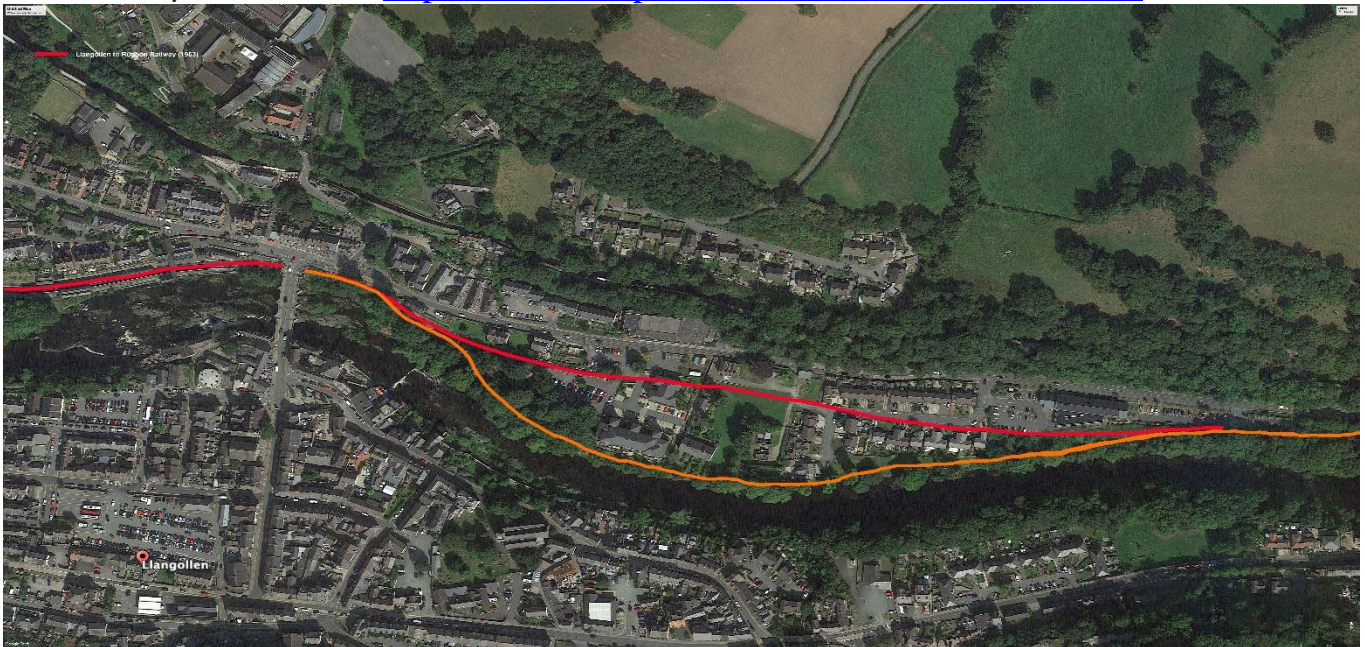
Taking into consideration the UK Government's current "Restoring Your Railway" initiative in which they are seriously evaluating and supporting a 'Rolling Back Beeching" policy nationally as part of their strategy for providing people with an alternative to car travel in response to the deepening Worldwide Climate Change Crisis, it would be extremely negative to public perception if The Four Great Highways Project Team were to unfortunately appear to not be sharing an aligned Regional vision and outward thinking policy to help form part of the bigger National future picture. The outside world and future transport is now post-pandemic changing/having to change rapidly due to the Climate Change issue and it would be a travesty if the opportunity to reconnect Llangollen directly to the mainline rail network were to be lost forever at such a late date just before such connection is required again. Therefore, this is yet another reason why the whole route, including the section on the Lower Dee Mill Park needs to be safeguarded from encroachment by modern developments and other possible blight. We are seeking interested people to pioneer the local rail link being restored incrementally and to work with Richard Pill and Daniel Newton accordingly. Making a case, compiling a report, lobby MP's, Councils and getting media coverage is what a local team could inform. Contact richard.erta@gmail.com

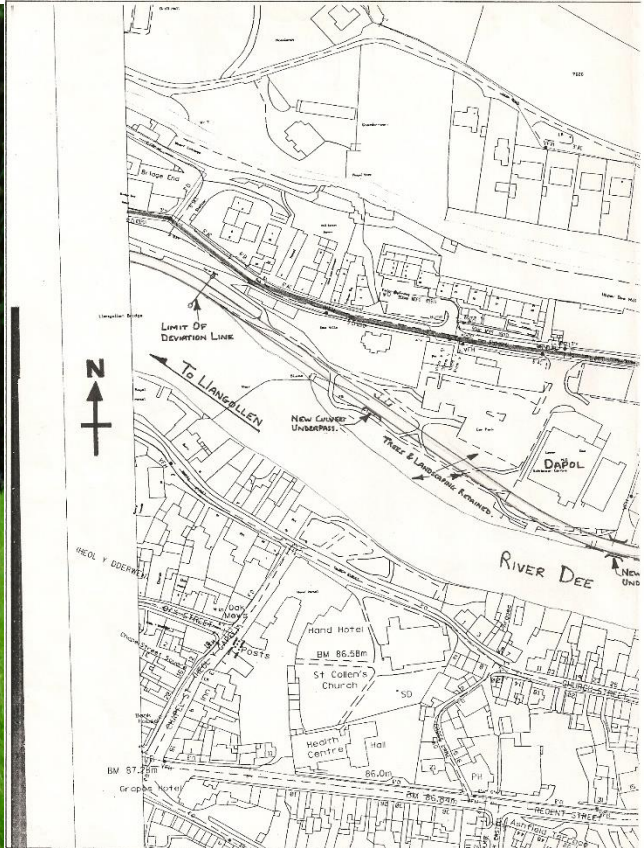
Please notify this threat immediately to all other members of ETRA and get them to e-mail all their local MPs and express their concerns to the Four Great Highways project managers by emailing them at this e-mail address: fourgreathighways@denbighshire.gov.uk

Yours Sincerely, Daniel Newton daninewton1@live.co.uk for updates/correspondence on this matter and/or join ERTA and our loop via emails to richard.erta@gmail.com and join us! <https://ertarail.co.uk/become-a-member/>

ERTA: Please give your support to the effort Daniel has started and write to your MP calling for "All I can do is loop others in and appeal to them to wade in and work with you to secure a better rail-based future.

Please keep in touch for these purposes. The route must be secured and protected. We need a government nationwide plan to protection of old routes and potential new-build/realignment lands and a nationwide plan for reopenings, rebuilds and select local, conventional rail solutions and new builds. You may find this organisation useful. <http://thehregroup.org/> If we can all ask our MP's to support this call and the Welsh Assembly to focus on rail reopenings like the Ruabon-Llangollen route and link in 'their' wider interest, if any lead-political-party gets involved, so much the better. Social, Economic and Environmental demands. Otherwise, all development is excessive and unsustainable as its transport goes straight onto the roads, which is self-defeating from numerous angles. Thanks very much." See: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons>





From the CEO: I am writing this at a time of personal trepidation, basically should I return from sheltered accommodation to 24 St Michaels Road or seek a new start in a new place? Our railways also, span between the past glories and the future and its hopes and uncertainties. On the campaigns front there is the Bedford-Bletchley Railways of this world and what low-cost scope could fill trains and enable a more robust performance intrinsically to the railways it links and them vice versa to 'the branch' as it is affectionately known. Bedford-Bletchley one side, HS2 another, the contrasts could not be more different, but to some, they are rail-based solutions and better than nothing or a status quo of roads proliferation, with ever increasing congestion and pollution impacting communities and public well-being. On the one hand the script of the Department for Transport is high-sided business cases and complicated maths, aimed at professional consultants (courting high salaries/costs) and even if one is so fortunate as to get that study fully paid for and done, no guarantee of acceptance, as it can either flounder on risk, liability and costs or the State has no money and so good ideas get shelved and rot/decay with time. ERTA is positioned somewhere between these interfaces. We want government to treat road and rail either equally or if you take a need for modal shift back to rail seriously for good land-use based social, economic, and environmental issues; then tilt in favour of rail and ideally start from the basic railway upwards and if reopenings and select pieces of new-build does not do the trick and indeed expansion of the existing rails like widening lines and sorting out bottlenecks, then build new lines even High Speed. We are told HS2 is about capacity, but Network Rail's West Coast South Strategic Advice (WCSSA) Report as cited in Rail Magazine Edn. 991 pages 8-9, "HS2 won't fully resolve WCML capacity issues" It recommends widening Bletchley-Milton Keynes Central and the Northampton Loop. Just what we have long been calling for! We need it now, not 2050!



Please Join ERTA Help us help you! <https://ertarail.co.uk/become-a-member/>

Tick if a New Member: _____

Membership of ERTA costs £15 per annum. I/We wish to join _____

I/We wish to explore volunteering opportunities (optional) _____

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____ **Postcode:** _____

Tel/Mobile: _____ **Email** _____

I/We hereby give consent to our data being used and stored for the purposes of communication with ERTA and its purposes compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) _____

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

Please send completed form and payment to ERTA: c/o

T. 077659 77318 tony.houghton@keystonelaw.co.uk

Postal address is: 2 Leigh Road, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9AB

Join our free email loop for news and views: E. richard.erta@gmail.com

and see our website: <https://ertarail.co.uk/events/>