

Friends of Dore and Totley Station – FoDaTS

Autumn 2017 Newsletter – more catering, plants, progress with getting more cover, and maybe more trains, plus a walk over to Grindleford



Planters

It was much later than we'd hoped, but we've finally got some planters in place, funds provided by Northern. Good soil donated by the National Trust at Longshaw and brought in John Bartolome's trailer to the site. They're discretely tied down to prevent them from being 'borrowed' or thrown on the track, thereby complying with Northern's regulations. Two volunteers helped to select and plant them and dead heading is being attended to daily. So far the rain has ensured watering has not become an issue, but we are prepared. With work planned for the station it wouldn't be sensible to be doing very much more just yet, however we'll need to keep things smart with winter planting. If you're interested in helping out please get in touch, see contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Department for Transport! The Hope Valley Capacity Scheme

This will transform our station once/if it gets the go ahead. The DfT advised that they had to give full consideration to the Inspector's report following the public inquiry in May 2016 and they aimed to do so within 6 months. They've had it since 15th November. 10 months is rather too long. We think the clerical side must have done their bit by now. Either it gets agreed, amended or shelved. Your Chairman cynically suggests it may be awaiting a suitable news window to be announced with a great fanfare as bringing more investment to the north. Party conferences are due. Watch that space.

Our friends in the Hope Valley Rail Users Group got a good piece in the [Sheffield Star last week](#)

There are many people wanting to know what's happening and FoDaTS is trying to liaise with bodies such as the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Transport for Greater Manchester, as well as the Train Operating Companies, our local council officers and neighbouring station friends groups. All wish to see better services between Sheffield and Manchester, but we want a better station at Dore & Totley too. Our new MP Jared O'Mara is aware of the situation.

Northern Rail and more cover on the platform – a canopy?

Northern have set aside substantial funds for stations over the franchise period and we believe some of that should be spent at Dore & Totley. We're looking into how they could fund a canopy on the existing station building from the £38 million station improvement fund. That may be provided separately from the main station redevelopment. We were a little disappointed that our initial approach for funds to design the canopy were turned down. We're awaiting further news from

Northern as to how it should now proceed. Network Rail and all other interested parties were all supportive of the idea.

It seems we would have to find other parties to contribute to the scheme as it would be more expensive than just dropping a bus shelter type construction on the platform!

Further delays may be dependent on what the final plans are for the Hope Valley Capacity Scheme and it's timing. It's conceivably possible that our plea for more shelter as part of the scheme may be agreed – dream on!

Timetable improvements FoDaTS has contributed ideas on the draft timetable proposed by Northern from May 2018. They may be able to fill most of the 2 hourly gaps but some trains won't be able to stop at all stations. We expressed the hope that most will stop at Dore & Topley. We asked for a morning train to arrive in Sheffield about 7.30 to fill a major gap for commuters in that direction, but that is problematic.

Northern may want, and be able, to provide the services but other operators also want to provide better services nationwide, so the end result will be decided by Network Rail. They have to agree after checking it can all be done.

Separately, we hope TransPennine Express may be able to stop an extra early train to Manchester and a late train back in the evening from December. Again, this depends on Network Rail agreeing the stops can be practically accommodated within the overall timetabling for the region.

Car parking - no change here We need more, the railways companies agree, as do SYPTE and Sheffield City Region, but there's no budget for it. SYPTE have a free Park & Ride policy and they own the freehold. Northern were about to start charging £2 a day at Grindleford, Hathersage and Dronfield from October. It seems the planned pay by phone system may not work well in the Peak District due to poor mobile phone service. It may not happen in all planned locations for some time!

Catering at the station



At last it's happened. We've heard rumours of parties interested in operating a mobile van at the station for years. We've spoken to two or three. Restaurants on the site have considered opening early, but considered it commercially unviable for them. Sandra Russo with her Artisan Van has finally persuaded Northern's agents to grant her a licence to trade and we welcome her to the station. The precise positioning is on a trial basis. Get your early morning crepes or porridge as well as a coffee or tea. We've asked for it. It's there. The more we use it the better it can become.

Rajdhani and the Summer House point out that they also provide takeaway food to satisfy returning commuters. With 20 minutes notice they'll have it ready for you to collect on arrival.

The ticket machine The TVM, is OK when it works. That isn't often enough. Northern are aware, and may be going to replace it. In the meantime if it fails please use the platform help point to let them know, call 0800 600 2020, option 9 (at present), or [Tweet](#) and tell them. It seems that's the

only way they can sometimes be aware.

In theory many of the faults will self correct within a few minutes, but that's no help when 20 or more want tickets for the train about to leave. It's also infuriating for those who come down to the station to pick up tickets for a future journey.

Manning the station There are no plans for full time manning, but two people may be on the platform 3 days a week. At other times they are being deployed across South Yorkshire and are having success catching many folks who'd become used to avoiding payment. That could be by not buying a ticket at all, or not buying tickets for the entire journey. Some have been picked up as regular abusers by the combination of manual checks and CCTV surveillance. That has helped to spot regular travellers who change trains at Sheffield. As a result Northern are collecting a lot more revenue than previously! It's pointed out that those who don't pay are part of the reason why those who do pay have to pay so much.

Manning the trains and strike action by the RMT Unfortunately this issue has not been resolved. Both sides seem to think the other has an unreasonable position. All we want are safe trains that run to time. Of course that's easier said than done, but we wish the two sides would get together and let us all know what the real stumbling block is, then get it fixed. Northern's position is stated as follows; "There will be a gradual introduction of Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) on parts of the Northern franchise, with the driver being responsible for all safety aspects of the train, including operating the train doors. This will free up the second member of staff on board to focus on customer service – including by helping those with mobility impairments or other disabilities – selling and checking tickets and providing a sense of security. Trains will only operate without a second member of staff on board where it can be demonstrated that passengers will still be able to purchase a ticket at the station or on-board the train, that they will still have access to appropriate information about the service and that they will feel no less safe and secure."

As most stations on our line are unmanned it would seem highly unlikely trains could operate without a conductor, although it has to be noted that a Northern train out of Manchester with 4 coaches will not permit the conductor to patrol the front two! Allowing the driver to control the doors should get them opened a bit quicker.

During the latest strike on a Friday and Monday East Midlands stopped 3 trains out of Sheffield in the evening to help commuters. Few will have known about them, but FoDaTs did get a notice on the station a couple of days before the strike days, and on our Facebook page. We should thank East Midlands for this and hope we can anticipate similar stops that we can rely on if we have more Northern strikes.

A knock-on effect of the strikes is that the people we are supposed to work with at Northern have had to train to act as conductors, and do so during strikes. Other work piles up!

Northern rolling stock Northern has started to renovate their older trains, many of which will be well over 30 years old before the end of the franchise. One has operated on our line. We'll only get new trains if the old are unavailable. Pacers are to go and the first may be withdrawn next year.

Station name – Dore & Totley It has been brought to our attention that Northern, TPE and EMT all have us down as Dore & Totley in some places, but Dore lingers on in others. All have been



contacted and we're given to understand the responsibility may lead back to the National Rail set up. Chris Heeley, the previous station adopter, was working on this 5 years or more ago so it may

take a little longer to fix than we might like.

On our Facebook page a discussion has been taking place as to whether we should have a British Railways 1950s retro sign mounted on the wall beside the ticket machine. Quite apart from finding the money and getting agreement to mount anything on the wall, it seems there is a degree of dispute as to whether it would be in Eastern Region dark blue, or in original Midland Region maroon. The station changed regions during the British Railways period! Dronfield have one in dark blue. The current majority at Dore & Topley would be for Midland maroon.

The East Midlands Franchise This was to have been relet this year but the timetable has slipped and consultation has only just opened with the change (assuming there is a change) now to take place in August 2019. How will this impact on us at Dore & Topley?

1. The service from Liverpool to Norwich looks likely to be split in two, most likely at Nottingham or possibly Sheffield. This means that those travelling across Nottingham would have to change trains. However, it should help to improve punctuality. This would probably mean transferring the Liverpool – Nottingham route to TransPennine Express or maybe Northern Connect, their fast services.
2. Sheffield and Chesterfield station will move to the new operator. This may give opportunity to demand platform and access improvements.
3. The London service will suffer impact from trying to provide faster services with bi-modal trains that can only maintain lower journey times by making fewer stops.

We need to be aware that the completion of the Hope Valley Capacity Scheme was originally expected to be before this refranchising takes place. It was anticipated that a 3rd fast train each hour would serve Sheffield - Manchester. The route of that train has not yet been confirmed, not least because the scheme is in doubt, but it could run towards Leicester, and might start at Liverpool or Blackpool! It's all still up in the air.

FoDaTS will be making it's views known in the consultation but all those who wish to contribute personally may also do so online, and as soon as possible. The more constructive comment that's received the better. See the [East Midlands Franchise Consultation](#) The [full details are very long](#), but worth a look.

There'll be a Public Consultation Event in Sheffield, 27 September 2017, 11am to 1pm at the Town Hall in Pinstone Street.

At this stage we want more reliable trains, both as to numbers of seats and keeping to timetable. We'd also like more stops. We know some do commute between Dore & Topley and Chesterfield, occasionally Nottingham and maybe one to Dronfield, but the vast majority are using the services to Manchester and Sheffield. Comments about platforms and services at Sheffield may be appropriate. Let us know what you think so we can bear it in mind when making our submission.

Come with us for a walk on Saturday 23rd September starting at the station at 10.30

Along with his newsletter you should also receive a copy of a poster advertising the walk. Come down to the station early and get a coffee or full breakfast at the Summer House. The Artisan Van may look in too if the weather's nice to try morning opening on a Saturday, although normal operating days are Monday-Friday.

The walk of just under 7 miles is hilly and will follow the line of the railway, crossing the railway triangle where construction work will be based if the loop and station rebuild takes place. It passes close to the site of the proposed Dore loop and over the footbridge beside Topley East signal box, before climbing up onto Topley Moss and the tunnel air shaft, 600 feet above the railway tracks!

Comfort break at Longshaw and back down to Grindleford station aiming for the 14.50 train back. Hopefully there'll be enough room aboard for those participating, and it's nice weather!

Dore & Totley as a destination People do come to our station as a destination. A small number commute. They may come to meet local families. They may come to attractions like Abbeydale Sports Centre, the Industrial Hamlet, the Sheffield Round Walk and Ecclesall Woods, our selection of eating places, the three golf courses nearby (Dore & Totley was named after the station despite the hike up the hill to get to it) and not forgetting the Abbeydale Miniature Railway. Maybe we can promote these more for travellers from further afield – like Manchester!

Where do our passengers come from and go to? Two thirds of commuters are heading towards Manchester, 70-100 on the 7.14 alone. Informal research reveals they can come from a very wide area. Aston by the M1 (2 separate groups), Calver, Chesterfield, Dronfield, Baslow, Hathersage, Fulwood, Nether Edge. It's so much easier to travel to Dore & Totley station than to go into the city centre. Talk of improving city centre to city centre travelling times misses what passengers really want. That is a quicker journey time from their point of departure to their destination. Reconciling that with traffic and parking in our local area is a bit of a challenge!

Concluding The next few years will see major changes at Dore & Totley. We intend to supply meaningful input, ensuring that the needs of users and local residents are as well satisfied as possible. Please lend your support, and ask any other like minded people to join.

We normally hold committee meetings on the second Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November, the next on 12th September at 7.30 at Totley Library. If you'd like to come along please contact our Secretary, Nick Barnes, or myself. You'd certainly be welcome to observe, and maybe get more involved in due course.

We hope to have another open meeting at Totley Library once we know what's happening with the Hope Valley Capacity Scheme.

You can contact us by sending an email to; [Secretary, FoDaTS](#) or [Chairman, FoDaTS](#)

You can also find and message us on Facebook - just go to; [FoDaTS Facebook](#)

Look in from time to time to see the latest news - and make constructive comment, please!

See our excellent website set up by Derek Gillibrand; [FoDaTS website](#)

Chris Morgan, [Chairman FoDaTS](#)

8th September 2017

Deputy Chairman; Ken Wheat, Secretary; Nick Barnes, Treasurer; John de Bartolome
Committee; Dawn Biram, Ian Cox, David Crosby, Derek Gillibrand, Joe Otten



What we're waiting for, although more cover is a must and was requested at the public inquiry