

IRO Midlands News

GNGE - Phase 3 Commissioned successfully

After a 10-day blockade the GNGE team successfully completed commissioning of Phase 3 of the GNGE route upgrade works, with the railway being brought into operational use at 0445 on April 14.

This phase saw the route between Lincoln Pelham Street Jn and the Blotoft Signal Box area resig-nalled and control transferred to Lincoln Signalling Control Centre, with a new Lincoln East work-station being introduced. A total of 4 new MCB-OD level crossings were commissioned, and the work saw the first implementation of a flashing aspect using modular signalling technology.




The commissioning brings the Down Sleaford Avoiding Line back into use after 20 years, abolishes Sleaford North, Sleaford South, Scopwick and Blankney signal boxes, and closes two level cross-ings and one barrow crossing.

David Anderson, GNGE senior sponsor, presented to IRO Midlands on the project in October 2012 and you can read David's presentation on the IRO Midlands web-space [here](#).

New ticket office for Lincoln

East Midlands Trains has completed a £250,000 investment in ticket hall facilities for Lincoln station, providing a larger, brighter booking hall, additional cycle parking and free WiFi across the station.

The new facilities were officially opened on April 4 by Karl McCartney, MP for Lincoln alongside Andy Moore, EMT Head of Stations who said "Good rail links are vital for connecting people and busi-nesses. With 1.6 million journeys made through Lincoln station each year, these improvements to the ticket hall will help us make a big difference to the overall travelling experience for our passengers using Lincoln station." 



Inside this issue

- Dates for your diary..... [2](#)
- Around the Midlands [2](#)
- Stafford Area Improvements [2](#)
- Rachel Gilliland in 60 seconds [3](#)
- What we do..... [4](#)
- Meet the team [4](#)
- Membership Statistics for March [4](#)

Your views count!



If you have comments or suggestions about this newsletter, or would like

to submit a story, picture or sug-gestion, please get in touch—we'd love to hear from you!

Email your thoughts to:
m.chairman@railwayoperators.co.uk



Dates for your diary

May 19 2014

Council Meeting (Birmingham). *Committee only.*

June 9 2014

Presentation by Michael Roberts, Director-General of RDG, on the role of the Rail Delivery Group and the future prospects for the UK rail industry. This event will be held at Network Rail's Quadrant building in Milton Keynes. *Contact Mike Christelow for more information.*

June 14 2014

Our Summer Family Day will be held on Saturday June 14th when we take a trip to the Gloucester Warwickshire Railway. As well as

the opportunity to ride on the line, we have visits to the signal box, carriage works and loco depot lined-up too. *Places limited. Contact Julia Stanyard for more information.*

2014-15 Season

Dates are as follows (subject to confirmation):

- ◆ 8 September, Birmingham
- ◆ 6 October, Derby
- ◆ 3 November, Milton Keynes
- ◆ 11 December (Christmas Social Evening)
- ◆ 12 January, Birmingham
- ◆ 9 February, Derby
- ◆ 9 March, Milton Keynes
- ◆ 13 April, Birmingham
- ◆ 11 May, Derby
- ◆ 8 June, Milton Keynes
- ◆ 15 June (Summer Family Day)

Contact Rachel Heath for more information.

“Norton Bridge has been described as like having traffic lights in the middle of the M6”

Around the Midlands

London Midland recorded the biggest fall in complaints out of all 19 UK-based train operating companies, with ORR data showing a fall of 73.3% compared with last year (April 16). [🌐](#)

A proposal by 14 West Midlands council authorities to take full control of the region's rail franchise has been rejected by Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin (April 8). [🌐](#)

CrossCountry has extended the availability of Advance fares up to 10 minutes before travel, allowing passengers more flexibility (April 10). [🌐](#)

Chiltern Railways has released its designs for Oxford Parkway station, the first station to be opened in Oxfordshire since 1935 (April 22). [🌐](#)

Freightliner is to launch new daily trains between Birmingham and London Gateway from May (April 17). [🌐](#)

Suzanne Mathieson—Staffordshire Alliance

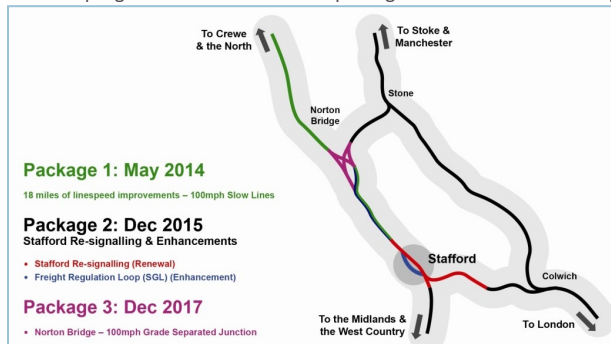


The Virgin Trains' boardroom at Meridian was packed to capacity on Monday April 7 when Suzanne Mathieson delivered a compelling overview of the Stafford Area Improvements Programme (SAIP) and the Staffordshire Alliance which is delivering the works.

Suzanne, Network Rail Sponsor for the Stafford Area Improvement Programme, outlined her presentation with an agenda covering customer requirements, scheme challenges, development of the alliance structure, communication and access strategy, and achievements to date. Suzanne wove each of these topics into a rich picture that showed how SAIP fits closely with our theme this year of “Delivering a sustainable and future-proof railway for CP5 and beyond”.

For SAIP the customer objective is about faster, more frequent services with improved reliability, delivered by two extra off-peak trains per hour between Euston and the North West, one additional train per hour between Birmingham and Manchester and one extra freight path through Stafford per hour. All these paths will be part of the timetable from 2017.

SAIP is a programme of three distinct packages. The first covers line-speed improvement be-



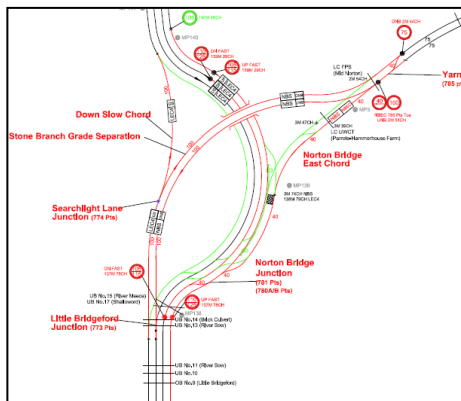
tween Norton Bridge and Crewe and is already completed; package two addresses infrastructure and capacity at Stafford whilst a grade-separated junction will be created at Norton Bridge in package 3. [↔](#)

↩ Line-speed improvements were completed on March 30 2014 with speeds on the slow lines rising from 75mph to 100mph. This involved the realignment of Overhead Line Equipment (OLE), track sluing and the introduction of four new banner repeater signals, with associated data changes to the Norton Bridge interlocking. The work was delivered under “rules of the route”, requiring no additional disruptive possessions.



On completion, Stafford Resignalling will see the abolition of Stafford 4 and 5 signal boxes and resignalling of the area which will then be controlled from Rugby ROC. As part of this, all platforms at Stafford will be signalled for bi-directional working; the line speed on the Up Fast will be increased; Universal Grinding Ltd sidings will be removed; hand-points will be motorised throughout and a new freight loop capable of accommodating 775m trains will be constructed, utilising part of the former Railnet postal facility and extending south to the former down sidings. Work on the ground started in January 2014. Final commissioning is expected in August 2015.

Norton Bridge junction has been described as “like having traffic lights in the middle of the M6”. The grade-separation work here will create six miles of new 100mph railway, including a flyover connecting two running lines between the Stone branch and the existing WCML slow lines. This new railway commences at a new Little



Bridgeford Junction and incorporates a new junction at Searchlight Lane to enable the down slow traffic to continue north toward Crewe. The existing down slow is recovered, as are Norton Bridge South and North Junctions. Official commissioning is planned for 2016. The Development Consent Order (DCO) required for these works was granted on March 31 2014.

Suzanne described some of the challenges faced by the programme and how the Staffordshire Alliance has dealt with these. The complexities of such a multi-disciplinary project required a new approach and the adoption of the Australian “pure alliance” model is a first for the UK rail industry. Achieving this has not been without some obstacles, not least within commercial and procurement circles! The partnership of VolkerRail, Atkins, Laing O’Rourke and Network Rail is incentivised on several “key result areas” that have nothing to do with cost, including collaborative culture, community and stakeholder management and operational railway performance. The predominant aim is to establish a genuine sharing of risk and reward and early resolution of issues through open, honest and transparent collaboration and communication.

Suzanne concluded with an overview of communication philosophy adopted, and access arrangements required, by the Alliance. The Norton Bridge flyover is not just new railway but involves 11 new bridges, river diversions, major environmental mitigations, pipeline diversions and numerous changes to roads and footpaths. Effective communication and stakeholder engagement extending from local Parish councils to the DfT has been vital to the success of this. The project was shortlisted in the “Excellence in Environmental Sustainability” category at the 2013 European Rail Congress Awards and has won accreditation under BS11000, the British Standard for collaborative working.

Some challenging questions and debate followed covering, for example, bus substitution (there will be some), the lack of paths at the southern end of the WCML even after SAIP delivers its benefits (this is acknowledged!) and the use of timely and repeated communication about project works and the impact on train services. This was an excellent presentation on a complex project that left the audience impressed, enthused and enlightened.

IRO Midlands would like to thank Suzanne Mathieson for her presentation, Virgin Trains for hosting the event and all those who attended. Audience: 20.

You can download a copy of Suzanne’s presentation from the IRO Midlands webspace [here](#) or you can watch a video of the presentation [here](#).

Rachel Gilliland in 60 seconds



Rachel Gilliland is Customer Relationship Executive for DRS, Charter Operators and aspirant Open Access operators at Network Rail.

When and why did you join the railway? I joined the British Rail Graduate Management Training scheme in 1991, based in Southend on the then LT&S line

What was your first job? Mobile Ops Manager at Barking

What do you think of the IRO? I think the IRO is a great organisation which allows a career in the rail industry to be seen as a profession rather than just a job. It allows members to develop their training and experience along with other like minded colleagues.

Proudest moment? Last year, overcoming my presentation fears by delivering a highly successful presentation on freight performance to senior rail freight industry leaders.

Next big thing? Working with Alliance Rail and Swanage Railway to get them both Track Access Contracts, turning them from aspirant into live operators.

And finally, cat or dog? Cat!

What we do

The IRO Midlands area promotes railway operations, and the role of operators, as fundamental to the success of the railway.

Our objective is to connect members with experience and learning opportunities that broaden their understanding of railways, grow solid cross-industry and inter-disciplinary awareness, develop their knowledge and enhance their skills.

We aim to achieve this through a friendly and informal network which promotes

- ✓ mentoring and support for personalised learning and professional development
- ✓ a yearly programme of events exploring contemporary themes in the rail industry
- ✓ visits to front-line rail-industry facilities and
- ✓ advancement of the IRO education programme delivered by Glasgow Caledonian University.

The UK rail industry is a complex place. Our vision is for confident, well-aware operators to be at the forefront of the industry today and in the future.

Meet the team

Secretary	Julia Stanyard MIRO. <i>Customer Manager, Network Rail.</i> m.secretary@railwayoperators.co.uk
Treasurer	Doug McLellan MIRO. <i>Operations Standards Specialist, London Midland.</i> m.treasurer@railwayoperators.co.uk
Events Programme Manager	Rachel Heath AIRO. <i>Business and Planning Manager, High Output, Network Rail.</i> m.events@railwayoperators.co.uk
Visits Coordinator	<i>Vacant</i>
Communications	<i>Vacant</i>
Cross-industry liaison	<i>Vacant</i>
Mentoring & PDP	Colin Robey MIRO. <i>Head of Operations Rail and Rapid Transit, Centro.</i>
Committee advisors	Peter Bowes MIRO. <i>Safety and Environment Director, Virgin Trains.</i> Martin Ward MIRO. <i>Driver Manager, East Midlands Trains.</i>
Chair	Mike Christelow MIRO. <i>Technical specialist, Traffic Management, Network Rail.</i> m.chairman@railwayoperators.co.uk

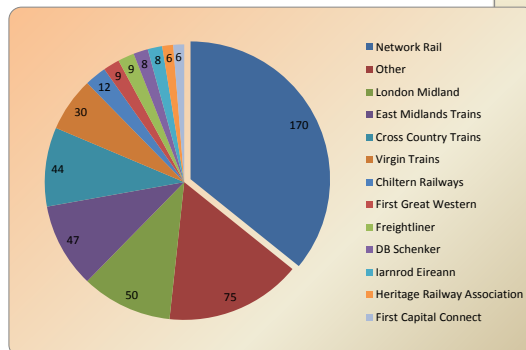


Reading this and not a member...?

If you'd like to join IRO Midlands or would like further information about the benefits of joining, contact any of the team shown above or go to www.railwayoperators.co.uk and click on Membership.

IRO Midlands membership March 2014

During 2014 our membership has grown by 36, and now stands at 535, with 37 joiners this year and 1 leaver.



The graph above shows the membership by grade, whilst the graph to the left shows the breakdown by Company, for those companies with 6 or more members.