

Wisbech Rail Reopening Campaign



Reopening the seven miles of railway line between Wisbech and March will create an economic stimulus, encourage new development and improve transport links between Wisbech and the surrounding towns and cities.

Please sign the petition at wisbechrail.org.uk

Wisbech and surrounding area is relatively impoverished. Unemployment is high compared with the south of Cambridgeshire. Services such as health and education have below average outcomes. The perception is that the town has visibly stagnated both socially and economically since the railway closed in 1968. The town and surrounding area have a population of around 31,000, one of the largest in the country without local access to a railway station.

Why build a new rail link?

The number of passengers travelling by train has increased continuously over the last 15 years, and is now at its highest level since 1920. In some parts of the country former railway lines have been reopened and have been a great success, both in terms of the numbers using the new services and also in the economic stimulus they have provided to the local area. An example is Alloa in Clackmannanshire which has a population 19,000 and route length from Stirling of seven miles. It reopened in 2008 and the numbers of people using the hourly train service is already 394,000 per year. There are other equally successful reopenings and we believe Wisbech would soon achieve similar figures.

Although using the old railway as a heritage route has been suggested, a proper railway as part of the national network will bring far wider benefits in terms of jobs and access to the region.

Could Wisbech be next?

The line to Wisbech was used by freight services until 2000. The majority of the track is still in place, although it would need to be replaced to allow new trains to run. Existing level crossings would need to be upgraded to modern standards.

A direct train service to Cambridge is proposed with a journey time of around 40 minutes, much faster than a car journey or existing bus service. Trains would call at March, Manea, Ely and the new station at the Cambridge Science Park. Such a service would improve access to jobs and education and help connect Fenland with the rest of Cambridgeshire. Passengers would be able to connect with other train services to London, other centres in East Anglia, the Midlands and the North West.

What is happening now?

Wisbech Town Council supports the rail reopening. **Cambridgeshire County Council** is carrying out feasibility studies into the rail scheme. The first part of the study, looking at operating costs and likely usage, will report early in 2013. A second item of work will look at the costs of reopening including the location of the new station in Wisbech and how to cross the A47. This will report later in 2013.

If there is a good business case, it is possible that the rail reopening could be included within the one of the new rail franchises serving the area when this is let in a few years' time.

Official Supporters

“Wisbech 2020 vision” by Fenland District Council, Stephen Barclay MP and Cambridgeshire County Council

“Many actions have been started, delivered or accelerated even before the formal launch of the Vision. An expert study on the viability of Wisbech rail connectivity has been commissioned – recognising the importance that the transport network has for the future of the town.”

“Wisbech 2020 is a bold vision, but one that requires collaboration amongst partners and stakeholders, and lobbying to central government and external funders. Funding will be a major challenge and it is only by working together that we can build a sustainable economic future for the town.”

Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011

“...the Transport and Access Group are keen to see the line between Wisbech and March re-opened. The Council supports further work by the Association of Train Operating Companies Connecting Communities Report and Fenland District Council to assess the costs, benefits and feasibility of the scheme.”

Association of Train Operating Companies

“Connecting Communities – Expanding Access to the Rail Network”

“Stations: Wisbech Town; possible additional park and ride station adjacent to A47.

Catchment area: a station at Wisbech would also serve a wider catchment area of villages and towns such as Long Sutton, to the north.”

Steve Barclay MP for North East Cambridgeshire

“One of the biggest problems faced by those of us who live in North East Cambridgeshire is transport links. Rail services are key to a rural area like ours and a priority which I am working on closely with Ministers, Train Operating Companies and other key stakeholders is how we deliver a better rail service. There are four key targets:..... 4. Securing a feasibility study for getting trains back to Wisbech in the longer term, as Wisbech used to have two train stations and now has none.”

**Please sign the
petition at
wisbechrail.org.uk**



**to urge the County Council to
get the line open soon**

Twitter: @WisbechRail

Facebook: WisbechRail



Leading the Wisbech Rail Reopening Campaign

Railfuture is Britain’s only national independent organisation campaigning for rail passengers and freight.

www.railfuture.org.uk @railfuture @railwatch

Railfuture campaigns for cheap and convenient rail services for everyone; better links for buses, bikes and pedestrians; policies to get more freight on to rail; new lines, stations and freight terminals - a better rail service and a bigger rail system for both passengers and freight.

