

Dear Member

Annual meeting with First Capital Connect



This year this will be on Thursday 27th May at 7:30pm at the Friends Meeting House, 7 Upper Lattimore Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3UD. This is a return to our venue of 2008. From the station[Ⓡ], head down Victoria Street towards the centre of St Albans and turn right at the second set of traffic lights (where there is Cotswold Outdoor Sports shop) and the Friends Meeting house is on the approximately 4th on the left - see <http://tiny.cc/krhcc>.

↳ Victoria Street is straight ahead from platform 4; from platform 1, turn right and cross the bridge over the railway.

As always, if you have specific questions, then please let us have them in advance (preferably by Saturday 22 May), so FCC have time for research, should this be needed.

My aim is for the meeting to look forward, covering both the short term (for instance the planned improvements in communications) and the longer term (mainly Thameslink Programme).

The meeting will be attended by Neal Lawson, FCC's Managing Director and other members of FCC Management (including, of course, Larry Heyman).

An [ICalendar event file](http://tiny.cc/e7ryj) (<http://tiny.cc/e7ryj>) is available on the website for you to record this event in Outlook, Google Calendar etc.

Treasurer's Note – Subscriptions

Thank you if you have paid in advance, recently sent a cheque or paid by standing order, otherwise your subscription is now due for 2010/11.

The rate remains as before, £3.00 for individual membership, £5.00 for joint membership residing at the same address.

Please send a cheque made payable to APTU to myself at the address below.

Alternatively please consider paying by standing order, if you wish to do this please contact me, again details below, and I will let you know bank account details.

Thank you

Malcolm Howe
149 Crabtree Lane
Harpenden, AL5 5RD
malcolm.howe@aptu.org.uk

Film maker's request

We have had a request from a film maker who is interesting in filming someone who is a regular commuter - preferably someone who's normal commute involves them standing both ways. If you are interested, give me a call on 07887 628367 and I will explain more. Be aware that they could well want to film you at home as well, so, if relevant, do discuss this with your family first.

Engineering work – including all station trains not serving St Pancras on Saturdays

The timetable change on 23 May brings an unwelcome change in that all stations trains will not serve St Pancras on Saturdays (and some Sundays).

This is an inevitable consequence of the engineering blockade covering St Pancras to Kentish Town on these dates. When this happens, FCC can run 4 trains per hour into St Pancras International high level platforms and these are occupied by the fast services (when there are 2 fast services per hour, the all stations services do run from St Pancras).

FCC are undertaking a publicity campaign on this with a particular aim of encouraging Underground travellers to remain on the Underground rather than leaving at St Pancras. Their posters and advice are available at:

- <http://www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/extendedpossessionsplan2010stakeholder.pdf>
- <http://www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/gettingacrosslondonleaflet260410.pdf> (note: 3Mb)

We have asked FCC why this is happening on a Saturday (as opposed to Sunday) and are awaiting their response.

We understand that all stations services will not serve St Pancras on Saturdays and Sundays from the December timetable change.

May timetable – update

Following extensive lobbying by the BCA, East Midlands Trains will be stopping the 17:30 from St Pancras at Bedford. Whilst not of direct relevance to us, it may ease loadings around 17:30 slightly.

Train Heating

During the winter, lack of train heating is a problem from time to time. The BCA took this up with FCC, who commented *“Replacement heating elements have been ordered. The challenge is that on the Class 319s fleet, the seats and floor of the carriage need to be removed in order to replace the heating elements. This requires the train to go out of service for a considerably longer period than would apply to the normal mechanical maintenance regime and, for most of last year, taking trains out of service would have resulted in cancellations and / or short forms”*.

Passenger Focus

The most recent Newsletter for the East of England leads on their call to FCC Management to improve their services - noting in particular *“less than a third of First Capital Connect’s (FCC) passengers are happy with the way the company handles delays, according to Passenger Focus’s Autumn 2009 National Passenger Survey (NPS). This result of just 32% satisfaction was before the impact of this winter’s snow, short-formation trains and criticism of the company for what was considered an inadequate offer of compensation.”*. Read more at <http://tiny.cc/nocc7> and <http://tiny.cc/ypnrj>.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
16 May 2010