

EAST SUFFOLK TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024/5

What do members and potential members expect from a local train and bus users' association such as ESTA?

It should campaign for improvements, take up concerns when members report these, respond to consultations and engage in dialogue with political and professional decision-makers. An association's hand can be strengthened if it is also promoting the existing services and facilities. How has our association measured up over the past twelve months?

We issued our quarterly illustrated newsletter in which we reported our three public meetings - in Woodbridge, Halesworth and Beccles - and also endeavoured to keep members and non-members up to date with news and plans on public transport. Also included have been articles by individual members on their experiences or advice.

In the spring of 2024 we published new editions of three of our "Discover" leaflets, and in May 2025 are due to publish two more. This means we have been able to encourage train and bus usage throughout our area, not only via libraries, museums and businesses, but also at events, including Woodbridge Regatta, Lowestoft Green Fair, East Anglia Transport Museum and Blythburgh Open Day.

Our officers and committee members took up issues in private meetings with Greater Anglia, Network Rail and bus operators and Suffolk County Council. This included very informative discussions on the findings of our 2023 survey of users and potential users of Westerfield station.

We took part regularly in the meetings by TEAMS of Suffolk County Council's Passenger Information Group and twice by TEAMS with a similar group of Norfolk County Council. A detailed ESTA submission was made to the "Buses Connecting Communities" launched by the House of Commons Transport Select Committee; while we also sent in comments on the proposed East / West Rail Link and Liverpool 10th Street redevelopment.

ESTA welcomed the initiative of Lowestoft Town Council in launching a survey of bus services in the town and helped to publicise this. Further down the coast we welcomed the improved frequency of buses serving Thorpeness and the continuation of the Katch demand-responsive service. The lack of Sunday buses to Leiston and Aldeburgh remains a gap to be filled, however, as does the lack of a usable bus service northwards from Snape. We were invited to a high-level meeting at East Suffolk Council to discuss issues such as these together with the public transport implications of Sizewell C.

Since July our area has been represented by five new Members of Parliament and we have made sure that they know ESTA's concerns.

We have also done our best to inform the travelling public via our notice boards and our website. We formed a Task & Finish Group to reassess and develop promotional work – which has included a totally recast recruitment leaflet, a banner to be displayed at events and an exhibition to be unveiled in October as part of the nationwide Railway 200 celebrations. Our summer buffet at Campsea Ashe and Christmas lunch at Oulton Broad were enjoyable.

Thank to all members who have contributed to our work during the past twelve months. In a voluntary body it is inevitable that not everyone is able to be active to the same degree all the time, but we are always on the lookout for new volunteers who can also help implement new initiatives.

Trevor Garrod Chairman 10th May 2025