



## Are new railway stations a reality?

**T**he current rural scene to the North of Horsham is rapidly changing to one of urbanisation, with two major developments in progress. These are at land north of Horsham, being developed by Legal and General and Kilnwood Vale at Faygate, a development which is being undertaken by Crest Nicholson. A third development, 'West of Ifield', whilst in the early stages, has also been proposed. This would comprise the construction of some 10,000 houses. Both the Legal and General and the Crest Nicholson developments have included within their brief new railway stations as an integral part of their developments in order to provide good links for the residents. The same will probably apply to the West of Ifield scheme.

These three developments are adjacent to the main rail link between Horsham and Three Bridges and could possibly be served by the existing stations of Littlehaven, Faygate and Ifield. The platform of Little Haven Halt has recently been extended to accommodate longer trains and increased passenger traffic. However, both Legal and General and Crest Nicholson have proposed



new stations. Whilst this may seem a good idea, such proposals would open up a whole can of worms!

The Horsham to Three Bridges line has an extremely busy timetable and it is essential that the 'Up' and 'Down' times are maintained at Three Bridges. It would not be possible to introduce new stations without affecting the timetable for services

to Brighton, Eastbourne, Worthing and Havant, to name but a few, also services to such towns such as Bedford. Furthermore, how the franchising system works for the railways would mean that it would be extremely difficult to change timetables mid-franchise.

The closure of existing stations is a long, drawn out process and would require parliamentary intervention. Therefore, instead of closing a station, the service is reduced to possibly one train per week and very often in one direction, thus keeping the station open. The resulting service is called 'parliamentary trains'. Examples of this are Norton Bridge in Staffordshire and Stalybridge, which has only one train per week on a Saturday.

Construction of a new station is not a straightforward process. Apart from two platforms being required, compliance with current legislation and risk assessments would be a part of the design process. Accessing the two platforms with a track crossing would not be an option on a busy line such as this, resulting in the only option being the construction of a pedestrian bridge and lifts for passengers, including those with mobility difficulties to

get from one platform to the other. Taking the minimum requirements into account, costs for a new station would start at £10million.

It would also be reasonable for the developer to underwrite all costs incurred by Network Rail, associated with the engineering works which would take place in accordance with schedule 4 of the track access contract between Network Rail and the Train Operating Company. These would include special traffic clerks, alterations to the train services and replacement bus services whenever it is necessary to close the line, due to the proximity of the works. Current Health and Safety at Work legislation make such line closures far more frequent.

Is it really practical for a developer to suggest a new railway station?

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.*

*Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns.*

*For more information, visit the website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or phone 01403*

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