

Council takes the lead on Crossrail

Prompted by EPTUG, Ealing Council set up a “Crossrail Specialist Scrutiny Panel” chaired by Cllr John Cowing, with five other Conservative and three Labour Ealing councillors and including co-opted EPTUG member, Simon Rowley. Over the municipal year five meetings have been held and on-site meetings at each of the Borough’s Crossrail Stations took place. Representatives from Crossrail also attended committee meetings, and they praised the initiative of Ealing Council in taking such an imaginative step. Ealing was the first London council to do so and both sides found the



exercise extremely useful and helpful.

Crossrail advised members that what it can do is strictly limited by powers acquired under the Crossrail Act. It cannot, for example, re-locate Southall Station to a site outside land already deemed to be set aside for Crossrail purposes. They were however able and very willing to

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OPEN MEETING
Tuesday 13 April 2010 7pm
 Nelson Room, Ealing Town Hall
Tim Bellenger
 of
London Travelwatch
 All welcome

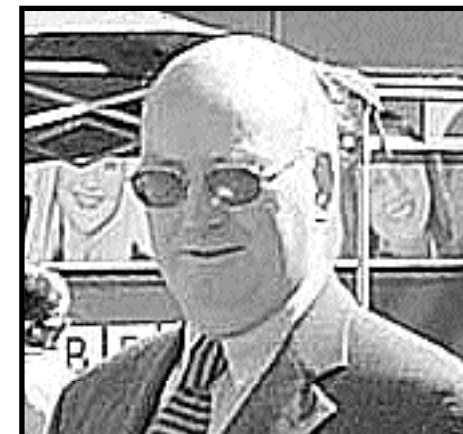
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Chairman’s comment

There is an abundance of good news emanating from across Britain’s transport system. Bus passenger figures even outside London are rising and the number of rail passengers too is at a post-war high. Rail lines are being successfully re-opened and new services started. Exciting plans for new high-speed lines are being announced and everywhere journey times are being reduced. In east London commuters from Kent can already travel to central London at 140mph. When an important road bridge was swept away in the recent Cumberland floods, Network Rail opened a very creditable new station to serve the community in a matter of days. Justifiably, confidence abounds.

But nearer to home things are not so good. Boris has warned that he intends cutting local bus services, raising fares if necessary to reduce the subsidy to the bus network. Local trains on the Borough’s principal rail line remain overcrowded and there is little likelihood of any improvement before 2017. The Greenford Line is still deemed to terminate at West Ealing whilst plans to start new services from Marylebone to Oxford, Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth strike a further blow to



aspirations for a meaningful rail service from Northolt Park and the Sudburys. On the Tube the ill-conceived PPP now means an even longer wait for the “last on the list” Piccadilly Line to see promised improvements and new trains.

More recently the news that HS2 could cut across the north of the Borough (see page 14) brings into question once again the prospect of diminished local services

Never before has there been a need for local passengers to form a strong “passengers’ trade union” to fight their case.

John Beeston
 EPTUG Chairman

EPTUG HOTLINE:
020 8998 0999

Council takes the lead on Crossrail *continued from page 1*

meet all Ealing's requests that fell within the Act.

Transport for London also attended several of the committee meetings. It was bound by TfL's policy which precludes any plans about bus services being raised more than two years ahead, but the Ealing Committee made it very clear that only starting to plan in 2015 was not acceptable to Ealing residents. New routes, new frequencies and better access to stations would be required and these could not be provided in a mere two-year span.

The new committee has now drawn up a list of 47 recommendations which it is now passing forward for council approval. We hope to include the full list on the EPTUG website www.eptug.org.uk soon but in the meantime some of the key demands are:

- All Crossrail stations in Ealing should have at least six trains

stopping per hour in each direction

- North-south links in the borough need to be improved
- Station access plans are needed for each station, including pick-up and drop-off points
- More bus links to Acton Mainline
- An interchange at Ealing Broadway for trains, tubes, buses, taxis and cars
- Proposal for the only entrance to West Ealing Station being in Manor Road is not acceptable
- Greenford line should continue to Ealing Broadway, using a new track if necessary
- South entrance/exit at Hanwell Station should be re-opened and lifts installed up to the platforms
- Location and design of the new Southall Station should be reviewed

Why do the engineers close the line on Sunday?

Thanks to London Overground for supplying information about passenger numbers, showing why Sunday is the preferred day for rail services to be suspended for engineering work.

London Overground advises us that on a typical weekday around 4,000 passengers use Acton

Central Station, but on Sundays this number falls to little over 1,000. At South Acton the weekday total of around 1,300 plummets to around one third of that number on Sundays. Other operators will not supply figures, but confirm that the differences quoted are similar to these figures.

THE PUBLIC CARRIAGE OFFICE

by

John Gashion



PCO history at a glance

1588 First use of Hackney coaches, carrying fare-paying passengers in London.	1897 First horseless cab, the electric <i>Bersey Humming Bird</i> licenced.
1694 Act of Parliament sets up the first licensing system for regulating and licensing Hackney coaches.	1903 First petrol-driven motor cab, the <i>Prunel</i> , licensed. But over 11,000 horse-drawn cabs still operating.
1838 Licences now required for Hackney carriage drivers.	1946 Last horse-drawn cab licensed (the licence was surrendered the next year).
1850 Public Carriage Office (PCO) opens next to Scotland Yard in Whitehall.	1966 PCO moves to Penton Street, N1.
1865 Testing of drivers on <i>The Knowledge</i> starts.	2000 PCO transferred from the Metropolitan Police to Transport for London.

The Public Carriage Office enforced the regulations relating to Hackney coaches, Hackney carriages and their drivers. These powers applied to horse-drawn cabs, their construction, their efficiency, the safety of their passengers and the registration of

their drivers, whose numbered badge had to be visible at all times. London's Commissioner of Police had regulatory powers both in relation to other vehicles used for carriage of members of the public, and the men (no women were employed in those days)

The Public Carriage Office *(continued from page 4)*

who drove them, and later became conductors on them.

With the advent of horse-drawn trams in the late 1870s and electric trams which started in London in 1903, the Commissioner had to be satisfied that the roads were suitable before he would authorise any route. He had to approve the types of vehicle and could set terms and conditions about their use. Each vehicle carried a numbered licensing plate, usually fixed at one end of the car.

Drivers and conductors had to be registered and to display the numbered “badge” while on duty. These regulations also applied to all forms of buses before they were allowed to operate in public service. Buses also carried numbered licensing plates on the rear, and rules for drivers and conductors were carried over from the Tramway regulations.

Bus routes, on the other hand, had not been controlled, so there was a lot of competition on profitable routes. London County Council (LCC) was late into the electric tram era — London United electric cars had been running from Hammersmith and Shepherds Bush through Chiswick to Kew Bridge since

1901, as well as along the Uxbridge Road (most of which was in Middlesex and not controlled by the LCC). The Board of Trade was also involved in tram routes and compulsory tram stops.

When permission was sought for a tram line on Dog Kennel Hill, Dulwich (which is quite steep) the Commissioner would only allow one tram on each track on the hill at a time. So Dog Kennel Hill had four tram tracks — two up and two down.

London Traffic Act 1924

This Act introduced “Restricted Streets Orders” which limited the number of trams/buses that could run along a particular street, but some operators used ingenious back-street routes, avoiding restricted streets. It also brought under control the licensing of bus routes by the Police, if they were to be on restricted streets.

Another result of the 1924 Act was that the Police controlled the numbering of routes. The full route carried the main number, and variations were suffixed by a letter. Thus route 27 ran from Highgate to Hounslow, and those buses extended to Teddington were 27A, and those on Summer

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The Public Carriage Office *(continued from page 5)*

Sundays and Bank Holidays to Hampton Court were 27B. The Hounslow section became Sundays only and was finally withdrawn, but Teddington remained as 27A until the route was cut back in recent times to Turnham Green, when it reverted to 27. Letters beyond “F” were not used — another route number was used instead. The system was dismantled in October 1934.

No windscreen wipers

Officials of the Office could order any vehicle off the road immediately for any infringement of the regulations — even a taxi with dirty bodywork.

One of the regulations was that, unlike in many towns and cities outside London, no public service vehicle, Horse cab, Taxicab, Tram or Bus was permitted to have a windscreen in front of the driver. Maybe it was thought that large sheets of glass subjected to shuddering transmitted through the bodywork from cobbled streets might cause the glass to shatter. Another possibility is that no reliable means of removing rain from screens whilst in motion had yet been devised.

On tramcars there were also problems with the swan-neck

brake handle, which extended over the bodyline when rotated. This was not relaxed until 1931, when Taxicabs and Tramcars could have windscreens but not full-height drivers’ doors, while buses were not allowed any door on the driver’s cab at all. The first central area buses to have full doors on the drivers’ cabs were the “RT” type which entered service in 1940. By contrast Trolleybuses (which had first appeared in Kingston and Twickenham in 1931, and extended to London in 1935) had doors on the drivers’ cabs and windscreens, right from their introduction.

Poacher & gamekeeper

Between these dates much changed as far as the ownership and operation of Buses is concerned. Firstly controlled by the Greater London Council, then by the Greater London Authority who control the actual operation of the vehicles by private bus operators under contract to Transport for London. The controls exercised over buses by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner have now been assumed by Transport for London (so TfL is now both gamekeeper and poacher — not always to the

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The Public Carriage Office *(continued from page 6)*

benefit of passengers).

The main work of the Public Carriage Office is now the control and licensing of Black Taxicabs and their drivers and other businesses, vehicles and drivers involved in the private hire trade, including so-called Minicabs.

There are now two types of black taxi driver licence.

All-London Green Badge

It typically takes three years to learn the knowledge and pass the test, to obtain an all-London licence (Green Badge) — drivers need to know 320 routes (known as runs) covering about 25,000 streets within six miles of Charing Cross, together with a working knowledge of the main routes throughout the remainder of the Greater London Authority area. Drivers can ply for hire and pick up passengers from any street or taxicab rank within the whole area, including Heathrow Airport.

Suburban Yellow Badge

There is also a Suburban licence (Yellow Badge) which covers nine suburban sectors of Outer London*. A driver may apply for a licence to cover one or more of these sectors, and is tested on 30-50 runs in each sector, together with a working knowledge of

routes and popular attractions in Central London. It takes an average of two years to learn this and pass the licensing test. Suburban drivers may only ply for hire in the sectors they are licenced for; they are not allowed to ply for hire in Central London or at Heathrow Airport. This is an interesting point for EPTUG because our suburban sector covers the Boroughs of Ealing & Hillingdon. Heathrow Airport is in the LB of Hillingdon (though its roads are not public highways), but our local drivers cannot ply for hire there.

Minicab licensing

Since 2006 private hire licensing has become compulsory, and all journeys must be pre-booked. Private hire operators must be licensed in one of two categories; a small licence for operators with just one or two vehicles, or a standard licence for operators who have more than two vehicles. Each vehicle must seat fewer than nine passengers, must be licensed by Transport for London (the Public Carriage Office) as well as having a normal road fund tax from the DVLA; and its driver must also have a private hire driver's licence issued by the Public Carriage Office.

The Public Carriage Office *(continued from page 7)*

Both Black cab drivers and private hire drivers must be over 21 years old and have:

- Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure
- a Driving History
- DVLA Group 2 medical fitness (similar to HGV, Buses or Coaches)
- full DVLA, Northern Ireland or European Economic Area driving licence held for at least three years
- the ability to conduct a reasonable conversation in English.

Black cab drivers must have passed the knowledge plus a Driving Standards Agency Taxi Driving test. Private hire drivers do not have to pass the knowledge, but they must show that they can read a map and exercise route-finding skills.

The author acknowledges information provided by the Public Carriage Office.

The high cost of graffiti removal

£50,000 is to be spent to remove graffiti and repaint the Acton High Street railway bridge. Because of health and safety concerns — something which vandals, but not their nearest and dearest, can

In February 2010 there were:-

22,260 Licensed Taxis
24,872 Licensed Taxi Drivers
2,797 Licensed Private Hire Operators
59,743 Licensed Private Hire Drivers
48,991 Licensed Private Hire Vehicles.

***The nine suburban sectors:**

Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham and Redbridge
Barnet, Brent and Harrow
Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham
Bromley
Croydon
Ealing and Hillingdon
Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest
Hounslow, Kingston and Richmond
Merton and Sutton

choose to ignore — the work requires night-time working and road closure. The job will include the installation of roller spikes, palisade fencing and anti-climb paint.

Ealing Council squares up to London Buses

Ealing Council has taken on the challenge of planning bus strategy across the Borough, stating that local bus services do not meet local needs. Many areas are not served by bus routes and elsewhere, bus routes do not follow local needs — a mish-mash of historic routes not following changing trends.

Ealing's main need is for more routes running North to South and vice versa but, say London Buses

(though not in so many words) "we are the experts, we know what is needed". "Not so" says Ealing, and spurred on by the coming of Crossrail and the admission of London Buses that they will not start to plan for Crossrail until 2015, the fight is now on, with councillors demanding that LBE's Transport planners stand firm.



Ealing's corner will be manned by Nick O'Donnell, Transport Projects and Policy Manager who relishes the opportunity of putting right many years of neglect and indifference. Importance will be placed on consultations with residents through EPTUG. In the London Buses' corner though, there is already some gloom and despondency. Mayor Boris Johnson has made it clear that he intends slashing the bus subsidy within months.

Relations between the Council and London Buses took a dip a few years ago when plans for a bus garage on the Western Avenue at Gipsy Corner were turned down. Since then requests for toilet facilities for bus crews at some terminus points have been declined, and in recent months many bus lane operations have been cut back.

other towns. Much of this is due to outdated technology; the radio frequency used has now been taken for use elsewhere, and the manufacturers of the equipment no longer supply all the component parts.

Countdown Mark 2 plans announced

At last London Buses has issued more information about the new Countdown Bus Information system. Countdown (once a leader) has in recent years fallen way behind other systems, so London now lags way behind

Countdown continued

The new system uses completely new technology and is less reliant on the driver remembering to "switch on". From spring 2011 2,500 of London's 19,000 bus stops will have the new facility, an increase of 25% over the old system.

Later in the year mobile phone users will be able to text the bus stop reference number for arrival information — a useful facility for those living close to a bus stop on a cold or wet morning.

As usual, Ealing does not fare so well. Its 88 stops blessed with the old system will remain 88 stops using the new system and these too will be placed along the busy routes where for most people any bus on any route will do, and so waiting is never too long. Ealing had asked that stops served by solitary infrequent services should receive the equipment, or stops where a short walk "round the corner" gave a choice of bus routes. Countdown would certainly help in places such as Pitshanger Lane or Norwood Green, but these locations have not been selected.

Find out more at www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/projectsandschemes/11560.asp

Sunday 607

From 10 April, a Sunday service starts on route 607 (the express limited stop service from White City to Uxbridge). Buses will run every 12 minutes, from about 09:00 to between 21:00 and 22:00 (the same time as they currently do on Mondays to Saturdays).

There will also be an extra journey towards White City on weekday mornings and towards Uxbridge on weekday evenings.

427 to Acton Town Hall

Also from 10 April, route 427 (Acton to Uxbridge) will be extended to Acton Town Hall (instead of Horn Lane). Buses will use a new stand on Salisbury Street. The route will no longer serve Horn Lane and Steyne Road. The extension will improve links to Acton High Street — EPTUG has been campaigning for this improvement for years.

Sunday 427 frequencies will also be reduced in connection with the introduction of a new Sunday service on route 607 (see above). Buses will run every 10 minutes instead of every 8 minutes. However, routes 427 and 607 will offer a combined Sunday frequency of buses every 5–6 minutes between Acton and Uxbridge.

EPTUG meets the Minister

Members of the EPTUG committee recently met the Minister for Transport, Chris Mole MP, at the House of Commons to tell him of the intolerable overcrowding that persists on FGW services into Paddington. Passengers are frequently left behind at both Southall and West Ealing not only in the rush hour but at other times as well.

In Summer 2009, the Department for Transport announced the supply of new diesel trains for use on FGW's Inner Thames Valley (ITV) services; but this decision was quietly reversed when, a few weeks later, the decision to electrify the FGW mainline in 2017 was announced.

The Minister was also reminded that FGW had been mandated to provide an additional two trains per hour, stopping at all stations between Paddington and Slough. This would give Acton Mainline and

Hanwell four trains an hour and a much-needed six trains per hour service at Southall and West Ealing. FGW was allowed to drop this service while punctuality remained low. But punctuality has now improved; so the shortage of rolling stock is now being cited as a reason for non-compliance.

Southall MP, Virenda Sharma, who hosted the meeting, shared EPTUG's concerns and he too reminded the Minister that the proposed withdrawal of a direct Greenford to Ealing Broadway service was opposed by both residents and the Council.

Neither the Minister, nor the senior DfT representative present could offer any immediate solution although both promised to investigate all possibilities. Further meetings, supported by both Virenda and Steve Pound MP together with Hayes & Harlington member, John McDonnell are planned.



(Editor's note: Reports of passengers being left behind, of being unable to fight their way off the overcrowded trains at their stop, and being stranded at Ealing Broadway at midnight, left on EPTUG's message line (020 8998 0999) add weight to the EPTUG case).

London Overground justifies long-term closure

40 years of neglect is given as a reason why the North London Line has been closed by Network Rail between Gospel Oak and Stratford, causing major disruption to the recently improved London Overground services through Acton and the West London Line.

The line provides a vital link for freight trains crossing through London, especially those from the main West Coast Main Line to the ports of Felixstowe, Harwich and the Thames estuary. Passenger services on the line had been allowed to decline until its value as a vital cross-London link for passengers was recognised. In the 1970s it was included on the London Underground map, and usage has increased ever since.

Following privatisation, Silverlink took over the services, but more recently TfL-controlled London Overground has taken over, and has invested heavily in improving the service.

Now Network Rail is working hard to restore four tracks where possible, enabling more trains to use the route. At the same time the opportunity to widen the gap through tunnels and past station platforms etc has been taken to

enable the new larger containers (used by shipping companies around the globe) to pass along the line. This work has highlighted the need to strengthen several bridges and repair those in need.

New signalling is being installed, to enable trains to safely run much closer to each other, a big step towards better reliability and service recovery. The existing system was designed to enable a steam engine to stop despite 40 or more heavily laden coal trucks lurching forward, pushing the train. New signalling enables the driver to adjust speeds and to approach with caution, something the old puffing billies could never do.



When the line re-opens at the end of May, some weekend closing will still be needed but by the end of the year the re-opening of the East London Line using

modern trains and the world's oldest under-river tunnel will enable passengers to travel from Dalston Junction to West Croydon, Crystal Palace or New Cross. Later the line will be extended over the South London Line as far as Clapham Junction, forming the railways' own "M25".

Chiltern announces “Evergreen 3”

Chiltern Railways has established a good reputation amongst train operators, but it does not rest on its laurels. Instead it expects its management and staff to remain “Evergreen” by introducing ambitious plans to keep the railway up to the mark.

New route to Oxford

Its latest plan, Evergreen 3, is the most ambitious yet. Chiltern has applied for permission to open a new route from Marylebone to Oxford via High Wycombe and Bicester, providing a service that will compete head-on with FGW’s Paddington to Oxford service via Ealing. The plan involves rebuilding Bicester Town Station and the construction of a new stretch of double-track line from just short of Bicester to join the little-used Oxford to Bicester Town Line. Chiltern also proposes a new station at Water Eaton, which

could tap into the growing market for park-and-ride passengers travelling in both directions, and London (Oxford) Airport at Kidlington. Looking further ahead the new line goes some way towards the long-cherished wish to unite Oxford and Cambridge by direct rail, crossing the West Coast Mainline at Bletchley.

However the plan still does not mention providing a decent and long overdue service to its stations in the London area, nor does it mention the long-awaited new station at West Hampstead which would provide easy interchange with East Midland Trains, London Underground and London Overground services. Richard Porter, our representative on the Chiltern Passenger Board, continues to remind them of the needs of their potentially large Londoner market.

News from far and wide

France has announced four more additions to its high-speed network including Dijon–Mulhouse, Le Mans –Rennes, and Tours–Bordeaux.

Rail freight on **German Railways** fell by 11.2% in 2009, attributed to the recession and falling exports.

Rail freight on the **Russian Network** fell in 2009, by 15%, but rose by 11.4% in December when compared with December 2008.

Ireland’s Western Corridor between Limerick and Galway opened at the end of March 2010 with five trains each way on weekdays, four on Sundays.

HS2 – High Speed news

In March, the government announced its plans for a new railway from London to the north of England and Scotland, called HS2 (HS1 is the new Channel Tunnel to St Pancras Line). HS2 trains would travel at over 200mph and could be operational by 2026. London to Birmingham would take 50 minutes and London-Leeds or Manchester 80 minutes.

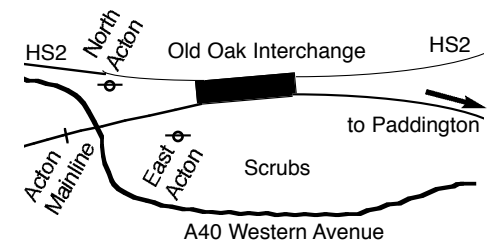
Lord Adonis, the Transport Secretary, has chosen not to run trains via Heathrow Airport but instead proposes an interchange at Old Oak Common. This would include a link to a new station on Crossrail and that the line of HS2 would follow the Central Line through Greenford to Ruislip and then past Amersham and Aylesbury.

Not via Heathrow

EPTUG applauds the Transport Secretary’s wish to prevent HS2 trains going via Heathrow. The number of air passengers requiring onward transport to the Midlands and the north is minute when compared to the total market, and routing the trains that way would detract from the end-to-end journey times. Including a Heathrow stop would simply make

Heathrow a more popular airport, attracting even more passengers and flights. It would also, as we have seen from the experience of National Express Coaches, simply draw more and more rail passengers from across the region to pick up the HS2 at Heathrow, adding further to road congestion.

Old Oak interchange



EPTUG will also be watching the situation at Old Oak Common carefully. Already the former GWR top link shed site has been largely vacated, with only Heathrow Connect and Express plus the occasional FGW presence. Crossrail will use the site during construction of the line through central London, and it will provide a turning point for most of their trains passing through central London (less than half the Crossrail trains serving central London are scheduled to come through Ealing). *Consultation on this project is scheduled for 2012.*

Dear J

The cleaning of Sudbury and Harrow Road Station is again non-existent and we are back to square one. For the last two weeks no cleaning has been done at all. There is vomit, chewing gum, cigarette butts, beer cans, bottles and plastic bags with food inside etc. The bus drivers of the Number 18 Bus still use the station as a urinal.

Please please please look into this immediately and resolve the problem. I was told by you and several of your predecessors that you have instructed your cleaners to sweep and wash the seating area, the stairs and the walkway and wash the area which is being used as a urinal with disinfectant. THIS IS NOT BEING DONE. I REPEAT THIS IS NOT BEING DONE.

How is it that your cleaners can get away with not doing their job

Letters to the editor
We welcome letters about transport matters in Ealing, please send to EPTUG at 3 Gordon Road, W5 2AD or email to info@eptug.org.uk
We reserve the right to edit or amend your letters. Please include your full name and address (we will withhold this if you ask).

and still get paid?

The station is not fit for purpose.

I am sure if you or your colleagues used this station on a regular basis it would be spotlessly clean. Why do we, the paying public, have to put up with this ?

We have to walk around and over filth which should be cleaned on a regular basis.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Yours sincerely

RK 12 March 2010

The letter above was sent to Chiltern (which is in charge of the Sudbury railway stations) by a traveller, and was copied to EPTUG. We will report on developments as we hear about them.

Southall gasworks plan gets Boris' approval

The National Grid has been trying to obtain planning permission to build housing units on this site for years, but their application for 3500 units was turned down by Ealing Council because it would swamp Southall with even worse traffic problems.

has now overridden the Council, allowing the scheme to go ahead, provided that the bridge by the railway station is widened as part of the scheme once 2500 housing units have been built.

So we get up to 2500 more housing units with no help towards the traffic?

But Mayor of London Boris Johnson

You've not been tough enough on this, Boris!

EPTUG committee

John Beeston (Southall)
EPTUG Chairman
johnb@eptug.org.uk

Brian Brooker (Ealing)
brianb@eptug.org.uk

Peter Chadburn (Hanwell)
peterc@eptug.org.uk

Ella Cox (Northolt)
ellac@eptug.org.uk

John Gashion (Acton)
Buses Chairman
johnhg@eptug.org.uk

Michael Mina (Greenford)
Secretary
michaelm@eptug.org.uk

Richard Porter (North Greenford)
Vice Chairman
richardp@eptug.org.uk

Simon Rowley (Ealing)
Treasurer/Membership
simonr@eptug.org.uk

Mike Tyzack (West Acton)
miket@eptug.org.uk

Peter Viggers (West Ealing)
peterv@eptug.org.uk

All EPTUG committee members are volunteers

Join EPTUG – and add more weight to our campaigning!

Every extra member of EPTUG helps our campaigning, because the more people we directly represent, the more notice the TOCs (Train Operating Companies) and TfL (Transport for London) take of what we say.

So if you see a long bus queue or some other transport problem, please tell anyone involved about EPTUG and encourage them to let us know about the problem; we want to be involved, and it will help us to make EPTUG bigger and better.

Thanks to the *Ealing Gazette* for publishing our column (usually the first Friday of each month) to keep readers in touch with what is going on in the world of local transport.

Annual membership of EPTUG remains a minimum of £5 for individuals, or £25 for organisations. If you wish to send us a cheque, please send it with the coupon below. If you wish to pay using the internet, please email your name and address to simonr@eptug.org.uk who will supply you with instructions.

Send to EPTUG, 3 Gordon Road, Ealing, London W5 2AD

I would like to join EPTUG. Please find enclosed my cheque for £ _____ made out to EPTUG.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

Email _____