

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Committee, Group or Sub Group	
KCC 10th Kent Rail Summit	
Meeting Date & Venue	
Monday 14 May 2018, County Hall, Maidstone	
Report Author	
Tom Burnham	
Report	
<p>I attended this meeting, as did another Staplehurst resident. The meeting was chaired by Cllr Mike Whiting (KCC Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste) and speakers included David Statham and Ellie Burrows (Southeastern), Phil Hutchinson (Govia Thameslink) and Pierre DeLalande (Eurostar). In addition Alex Hellier (Network Rail) contributed to the question and answer session.</p> <p>A relatively low-key event as far as the Tonbridge-Ashford line was concerned with few announcements of significance. While awaiting the announcement of the decision about the new franchise in the autumn, Southeastern have focused on improving punctuality following completion of the works at London Bridge. Fitting WiFi equipment to Southeastern's Electrostar fleet is almost complete, and when it is the service will be made available.</p> <p>Govia Thameslink emphasised the scale of their timetable changes. Note that the through Southern service from Tonbridge to East Croydon and London Bridge will no longer run; it will simply be a shuttle service between Tonbridge and Redhill.</p> <p>Eurostar now have a through service from London to Amsterdam although (for reasons of customs checks) it is necessary to change at Brussels when returning from Amsterdam to London. The new e320 Eurostar trains are still unable to call at Ashford International. Urgent attempts are being made to resolve technical problems with the signalling and meanwhile older Eurostar trains are allocated to services which call at Ashford.</p> <p>In the question and answer session, concern was expressed that the launch of the Thameslink service from Maidstone East to Cambridge was not planned to take place until December 2019. There was also concern that the future of the High Speed service from Maidstone West to St Pancras was not guaranteed under the new franchise. An opportunity to change to Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) services at Abbey Wood was not regarded as an acceptable substitute.</p>	
Date & Venue of next meeting	