

SOUTHWOLD AND REYDON SOCIETY

MAGAZINE ARTICLE APRIL 2016

Invitation to our Annual General Meeting

Members and any other interested readers are invited to our Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is at **7pm on Wednesday 20th April in St Edmund's Hall**, Southwold. The meeting will include the ever-popular presentation of our Excellence Awards to people who have made an outstanding contribution to the community. In addition, speakers from Waveney District Council will outline the key proposals for the new Waveney Local Plan 2018-2036. This will set the framework for all Planning decisions for almost the next twenty years, including any sites and targets for new housing and business development in our area. The Society will engage fully in the consultation which is just about to begin. The presentation and subsequent discussion will allow members to identify the issues which the Society will then pursue. After the formal AGM, which should finish around 9pm, we will be providing refreshments.

All in all, a not-to-be-missed event in the Southwold and Reydon calendar....

Closure of Crossing at Halesworth Station

Network Rail is intending to close the "Barrow Crossing" which allows passengers to cross platforms at Halesworth - the only station with connecting buses to Southwold and Reydon. We have urged Network Rail to reconsider. The crossing has been in regular use for nearly 50 years and there have been no accidents reported in this period. The risk of an accident will continue to be extremely low as the twice hourly trains (one in each direction) are proceeding extremely slowly at this point, either slowing to stop at the station or moving off from it. Visibility in all directions, including from the cab of the trains, is excellent.

The consequences of closure will be considerable. In most instances the interval between rail and/or bus departures is eight minutes. The bus stop is adjacent to the South direction platform so bus passengers are required to cross the line to access the North platform and to collect pre-ordered tickets. Likewise, passengers arriving on the North platform have to cross the line to reach the bus stop. The alternative access is via a round trip of up to twenty minutes along poorly lit and badly maintained footpaths to cross from one platform to the other and return. This would be both an inconvenience and greater risk than use of the crossing.

We believe that any genuine safety issues could be addressed by a number of relatively cheap improvements, including further CCTV, new warning signs, stop boards for any through goods or maintenance trains and possible relocation of the crossing a little further from the platform ends.

Southwold Tourist Office

This is also to close and be replaced by "service points" in local shops or services. We recognise that Waveney faces continuing pressures on its budget and that this service may not be sustainable in its current form. We hope that local businesses which benefit from the tourist trade in Southwold will take up the proposals so that our visitors and services can continue to benefit from good information.

Philip O'Hear, Secretary