

Hopes Barton Could Get Improved Rail Service

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Cllr Neil Jacques

RAIL experts in Barton say they want an hourly train service for passengers in the town.

Trains currently visit the station every two hours, but there are hopes it will change in 2017.

The chairman of the Barton and Cleethorpes Community Rail Partnership, Mike Gathercole, says the town deserves an hourly service – and is hopeful of a change being made.

He said: "In 2017 the Barton line is being remapped and will be part of a different franchise.

"The goal for the partnership is to have an hourly service, as it was in the 1980s. Patronage has increased by 100 per cent from then, which justifies an hourly service.

"It is a realistic goal if all the major players want to take part. The passenger numbers justify an hourly service and we have around 120,000 people using it each year."

When bids are being considered for the new franchise, in 2017, Mr Gathercole wants it included in the conditions that the service for Barton will be hourly.

The issue was raised at the latest meeting of Barton Town Council by Councillor Neil Jacques – their representative on the community rail partnership.

"This is something I was asking the town council to support," he said. "The community rail partnership for Barton is a statutory body set up to support development of local lines.

"An hourly service will make travel by train a far more realistic proposition. If you are relying on connections to other places your options are far more limited.

"It would most definitely help the infrastructure of the town to have this and will be much better for all the services we have got here.

"We currently only have a service every two hours, and it only operates on Sundays in the summer months. I would like to see that improved.

"People come into this town to work, a lot of them at weekends, and this can stop their method of getting to work using public transport."

Mr Jacques would also like to see new electronic signs erected at more train stations – to keep passengers better informed about delays and cancellations.

He said: "North East Lincolnshire Council has agreed to fund one matrix board a year in their region. If they are doing one a year, my suggestion is to have some from North Lincolnshire Council.

"Trains can be cancelled and a matrix board would flag that up to passengers. I'm obviously very keen for public transport to improve, to help reduce carbon emissions."

A North Lincolnshire Council spokesman said: "At our meetings with the Community Rail Partnership (CRP) they have raised the issue of information boards being provided at stations on the CRP line between Barton and Cleethorpes.

"The council has agreed to look into the possibility of supporting these (one station per year) from 2016, however no commitment has been made as yet. We will continue to discuss this with the CRP."