

Transport Scotland Rail 2014 Consultation

Response to Questionnaire from Alastair Chisholm Christie (Caithness)

Q11

When something goes wrong on a journey, the Railway Management must explain to Passengers, at length and without delay, what the situation is and what is being done about it.

Q24

No stations should be closed. In fact, more should be opened, including the long desired one at Dornoch. This would have to include a rail crossing over the Dornoch Firth. Because there is no money available at this time for such a large project, it must not be forgotten about but kept in mind for the future. It would have both economic and social benefits for this area in the far north. More people and businesses would be encouraged to use the train in preference to travel by road since the journey time would be reduced by at least 40 minutes. This alone would be a big incentive as a recent survey by DoRLAG (Dornoch Rail Link Action Group) has proved. 90% of the 500 plus passengers wrote that they would definitely use the train more often if the journey time to and from Thurso/Wick and Inverness was shorter.

Q28

Parking Areas at several stations are inadequate. At Thurso Station, especially, this has always been a problem.

Also, at Thurso Station a public address system of some sort should be set up to keep travellers informed of what their current situation is as regards their immediate journey.

Q32

Improvements badly needed to toilet cleanliness.

Improvements also to coach heating during severely cold weather.
In Winter the trains are quite often not heated enough.

People often have to travel from the Far North for treatment or evaluation of their medical condition by expert Consultants at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness.

Passengers, many suffering ill-health, have to endure the cold for, sometimes, up to 4 hours journey time. Something needs to be done about this. Caithnessians are very angry about this since this has been the position for many years.

Better leg -room is required in seating area to prevent cramp, etc.

Q35

A blanket ban on the consumption of alcohol on trains must take place.

People are turning away from travel by train and using buses because of the behaviour of drunken revellers on trains. Why are those who run the railways persisting with this? We have experienced this on many occasions. Groups of young males quite openly board the trains with numerous boxes of alcoholic drinks and none of the staff prevent them from doing so. This must be stopped! For instance, I have seen groups board the Edinburgh train at Inverness with enough drink to render them inebriated throughout the journey. They can also buy drink from the trolley service. These groups turn the carriage into something resembling a city pub on a Saturday night and this makes the environment unbearable for others in the carriage. Railway staff appear to be reluctant to ask such people to sit down and behave themselves. They sometimes suggest that WE move to another carriage to avoid the drunks. However, having battled our way to a seat in the first instance, we are reluctant to do so. In any case, the drunks should be moved elsewhere or put off the train. I suggest travellers, when experiencing extremely bad behaviour, especially on long distances by rail, should be able to contact the

Railway Police directly by phone. At the moment it appears that those who run the railway duck the responsibility for this and do nothing to stop the situation. The members of the group mentioned above were so drunk on arrival in Edinburgh Waverley Station that they felt it necessary to walk around the station to try and sober up for their onward journey to Newcastle where they were originally due to start their celebration!