

RAIL FOR HEREFORDSHIRE P O BOX 299 HEREFORD HR1 2YE
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Carole King
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Great Minster House (05/28),
76 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DR.

May 1st 2006

Dear Ms King

Central Franchise

Rail for Herefordshire is a local rail group, campaigning for better services for the county. We have a membership of over 80 and distribute a free newsletter about twice a year to over 1,000 individuals and groups. Over the years we have written numerous letters to Central, the SRA (as was), the RPC (as was), local authorities and TOCs, with some success.

What we require from the new Central franchise is fairly straightforward:

- Standard pattern timetable (something we almost have)
- An hourly service for the main part of the day (we almost have this)
- A late evening train – 23.00 or later departure from Birmingham to Hereford (we **don't** have this)¹.
- A minimum of four carriages on rush hour trains (we **don't** have this)
- Connexions with First Great Western where possible
- More bike spaces, this is very important for a tourism area.

The Hereford-Birmingham service has improved since the 2003/4 timetable, we now have 12 through trains as oppose to 8 and the time taken is around 1hr 26min, which also represents an improvement, due largely to taking the Bromsgrove rather than the Kidderminster route. The return Birmingham-Hereford service is much the same as it was with 11 through trains but the near standard pattern timetable is welcome and the times are marginally faster. However to remove the last (22.21) Hereford-Birmingham train represents a significant down grading of the service.

Yours sincerely

GERALD DAWE
Chair, Rail for Herefordshire

¹ It is proposed to make the 22.21 Birmingham-Hereford train earlier with the June 2006 timetable which represents a worse service, we definitely need to retain this **and** have a later service.