

Freight chord makes modal shift even more appealing

By Liza Brazier, project manager, Low Carbon Freight Dividend

It's always nice to get an unusual Christmas present ... and even better when you know there's another treat to follow by Easter! This Christmas, it was Network Rail's turn to deliver that rather special present, to all those involved in transport by rail.

What was the gift in question? It was the completion of the second phase of works to remove a major rail freight bottleneck in Ipswich.

Over Christmas, Network Rail and its contractors demolished and removed the old 190-tonne steel bridge over the River Gipping and replaced it with a new steel deck bridge. The old bridge was broken into three sections, old track and ballast stones were removed, concrete walls were installed on the new bridge, and the tracks and junction were installed for the new Ipswich Rail Chord, which will link the East Suffolk line and the main Norwich to London line.

The purpose? The Chord will remove the need for freight trains travelling to and from the Port of



Felixstowe to use the sidings next to Ipswich station as a turning point, thus eliminating a major bottleneck on the main line and freeing up capacity for both passenger and freight services.

"It is vital that we create additional capacity alongside other enhancements along the cross country route between Felixstowe and Nuneaton. This is a key part of our plans to take more freight off roads and onto rail and is good news

for the region's economy," said Network Rail's route managing director, Richard Schofield.

The project is due for completion by April – and includes the construction of four new bridges, two embankments, a 350 metre retaining wall, 1.2 kms of new track and signalling equipment, and improvements to overhead line equipment.

The opening of the Port of Felixstowe's new North Rail

Terminal last summer instantly doubled the port's rail capacity and led directly to the introduction of a 30th daily rail freight service – that's 60 services, if you count both ways. The 31st service is expected as soon as the new Chord is finished, with more to follow.

More capacity, more services – and, for eligible SMEs in the East of England, real money when you take advantage of the Low Carbon Freight Dividend and make a modal shift when moving your containers!

SMEs meeting all the criteria can claim up to £75 for every container they move by rail or water, instead of road, to a maximum £20,000 each. The £8.4 million LCFD project, which has £3.37 million of support from the ERDF, was set up to encourage and support long-term behavioural change in SMEs' transport choices.

So why not get greener, make the change – and be one of the first to use of that shiny new rail link when it opens?!

■ Find out more by visiting

www.lcfid.co.uk or by contacting Lisa Brazier: lisa.brazier@havent-gateway.org or 01206 713612.



Seckford: first choice for meetings

With January being a key month for businesses to start planning their events for the year, we caught up with Anne Musolino, events coordinator at Seckford Hall Hotel.

Q. How long have you been at Seckford Hall Hotel?

A. I joined Seckford eight months ago, having worked at the hotel seven years previously. I then joined the Milsoms Group at Kesgrave Hall as accommodation/front of house manger and before re-joining Seckford I worked at the White Lion Hotel in Aldeburgh as weddings and events manager.

Q. What made you return?

A. I always loved Seckford Hall and when I heard about the opportunity to return with new owners and the refurbishment plans, I jumped at the chance! It is certainly a totally different hotel from the one that I left.

Q. How many conference rooms do you have?

A. We have three now. Two in the new East Wing, the Garden Room, which is ideal for private dining, the smaller conference or training session and The Mulberry Suite, which accommodates up to 40 guests. The Lakeside Suite, which is our largest room, accommodates up to 140 guests. We also have the facility to attach a marquee to the back of this room for the larger event. Our new Taittinger Champagne Bar is also very popular for holding drinks receptions.



Q. You have fabulous gardens; can these be used for events?

A. Yes they can, we have a licence for clay pigeon shooting and acres of land for team building events. In the summer the grounds make the perfect location for a summer drinks party. Seckford Hall is a beautiful venue with extensive gardens to chill out in. After a long conference session clients can walk, jog and swim to help unwind.

Q. What can we expect from you if we booked an event?

A. I have one of the best jobs in the hotel industry, meeting with some very interesting and lovely people. I have a natural flare (so I've been told!) to help clients visualise their event with any enhancements that I feel may be appropriate. Whether it's a large or small conference, a retreat, seminar



or something a bit quirky. It is very important to listen carefully to people's needs and expectations and be able to deliver them. I personally manage the whole event from start to finish. Attention to detail is extremely important and always maintaining that professional and caring approach. I do try to encourage clients to come and meet me first hand as it is very important that the venue they have chosen is right for them and that we can work together, as some events can take a long time to organise, with lots of meetings, discussions, emails and telephone calls.

Having a great team behind me is vital, and I certainly have that. I have to liaise with all of the staff so that the event is successful, from the chefs, to the duty managers. Our Seckford team is fantastic and always go that extra mile for customers. It is gratifying and makes my job so rewarding when they come back and tell me that their event was just what they had visualised and even surpassed that.



Above, the Mulberry Suite and above left, the Garden Room. Inset below, Anne Musolino, Events Coordinator at Seckford Hall Hotel
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Seckford Hall EADT offer

During January – March 2014 Seckford Hall is offering EADT readers a fabulous buy one get one free on day delegate rates on all conferencing rooms. A day delegate rate is currently priced at £40pp.

You can also enjoy free room hire in the Mulberry and Garden Rooms for private dining. Menus start at £31.50pp for a three-course meal. Please email: events@seckford.co.uk and quote BEM Conference Offer when enquiring

www.seckford.co.uk
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