

Great British Rail Sale 2

Please see below the letter I have received from the Minister concerning rail ticket sales.

Dear Colleague

Great British Rail Sale 2

On Tuesday 23 January we are launching the second Great British Rail Sale, following the success of the last sale in 2022, offering over a million rail tickets for passengers across Britain at up to 50 per cent off. Passengers can buy tickets between 23 to 29 January for travel from 30 January to 15 March.

The rail sale will offer passengers significant savings on journeys across England and Wales, as well as on journeys between England and Scotland – allowing people to visit different places, connect with friends and loved ones, and get out and about around the country.

The last sale in 2022 previously saw over 1.3 million tickets sold, saving around £7 million for passengers, according to industry estimates.

It was also great news for the railway too. Industry estimates suggest the sale generated over £3 million in additional revenue and helped bring passengers back to rail. The Great British Rail Sale is just one part of how we're improving the passenger experience, encouraging better value fares and helping to grow revenue on the railways.

As you'll also be aware, ASLEF have recently called rolling strikes between 30th Jan and 5th Feb, with each operator striking for one day, coinciding with the first week of travel dates for the sale. Additionally, LNER drivers will strike the whole working week between the 5th and 9th of February. Operators will not offer sale tickets on strike days, including any additional dates should they be announced by ASLEF. However, with the travel window extending to the 15th March, there will be plenty of opportunity for your constituents to take advantage of discounts. It's very disappointing to see ASLEF continuing to target those who travel to work, school or important medical appointments by train.

ASLEF is now the only rail union that is continuing to strike while refusing to put a fair and reasonable offer to its members. The offer that remains on the table would bring the average train driver's salary up to £65,000.

The ASLEF leadership should do the right thing and let their members decide their own future, instead of deciding it for them. The Government has also made it clear to train operators that they should be ready to use the Minimum Service Levels regulations, a tool the Government has provided to reduce the impact of rail strikes on passengers.

The discount will be available on selected Advance or Off peak tickets from

participating train companies. Your constituents can find tickets and more information by visiting: www.nationalrail.co.uk/railsale.

Yours ever,

HUW MERRIMAN MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

[My Intervention on the Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill](#)

John Redwood (Wok, Con):

I want to see far less imported LNG. Can the Minister give us some good news on what we might be able to achieve in getting more gas out, and will he ensure that many blocks—not just one—are put up for a licence round to get rid of that LNG?

Graham Stuart (Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero):

The estimate from the North Sea Transition Authority is that a billion of barrels of oil equivalent, including gas, would be lost if we did not have new licences. That is lost tax revenue for this country, on top of the 200,000 jobs and lower emissions—[Interruption.] So far, I have not mentioned the tens of billions of pounds of tax. [Interruption.] It is not surprising, given how comprehensively easy it is to destroy the Labour party's arguments, that the right hon. Member for Doncaster North keeps up his constant chuntering. He cannot win the argument while he is on his feet, so he sits there and tries interrupting those who can. If we do not have new licensing, which is Labour's policy, we will see emissions go up in the short term; 200,000 jobs undermined; tens of billions in tax not brought into the public Exchequer; and—for those who care about dealing with the climate emergency—we will lose the very engineering skills and talent that we need to retain in this country in order to make the transition.

[Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill](#)

The government yesterday secured passage of its Bill to encourage more oil and gas from the North Sea to its next Commons stage.

It was an important policy change when the government announced it did wish more oil and gas to be produced from known fields, and wanted the quango in charge of the North Sea to license more blocs for exploration. It makes no sense to run down our oil and gas fields faster than we need do claiming that helps reduce CO₂ when the country then imports LNG instead. Such gas creates four times as much CO₂ as home gas down a pipe, given the large amounts of energy needed to compress it, transport and to switch it back into gas to go down pipe system from the seaport.

Some query whether it needs a new Act of Parliament to achieve this. Why not just instruct the North Sea Transition Authority and win a vote in the Commons if the Opposition objects? Some wonder why the requirement to hold an annual licence round is set out with a minimum of one bloc, when of course they will need to offer many blocs to an active industry. It would also help if the Treasury would review energy taxation which is higher in the UK than in many competitor countries. Far from helping our Treasury that policy drives both energy production and energy using industries away from the UK.

The UK needs to take energy security much more seriously and needs to do all it can to extract more home gas all the time people and businesses have gas boilers for their main source of heat. Using the road to net zero as an excuse to make us more import dependent on energy which entails more world CO₂ is a very bad policy favoured by the Labour, Lib Dem and SNP parties. That policy means all those well paid oil and gas jobs are in another country. it means the bulk of the taxes levied on producing oil and gas are paid to a foreign Treasury. It means the UK is made beholden to more overseas energy interests.

[Time to rejuvenate the Business department](#)

I read and hear in various places that Kemi Badenoch is out to woo the right. I know she has been very loyal to Rishi Sunak. Contrary to some briefings she sent no message of support to the sponsors and supporters of the amendments to the Rwanda Bill . The sponsors in their discussions with No 10 and the Home Office did not report back on any interventions from the Business department to help them amend the draft. She has kept out of the difficult issues preventing GB to Northern Ireland trade.

The relevant groups on the so called right that would like to help her in her important job as Business secretary include the Growth Group, the European Research Group, the NTB and the Net Zero realism group. These Groups were very disappointed when she abandoned the Jacob Rees Mogg Retained EU Laws Bill, which was designed to remove and amend bad or needless inherited EU laws.

We have offered to work with her and the other Business Ministers on a programme of better and less regulation. We have been pressing the need for more and cheaper UK produced energy. The EU carbon emissions and interconnectors framework for more imported power are particular concerns. It is leading to much industry closing down in the UK making us more dependent on imports. We await a response on how the UK can retain a basic new steel making capability. We are worried that current regulations to force Electric vehicles will lead to too rapid a decline in car industry based in the UK and to more Chinese imports.

Jobs up and pay up since Brexit

See Facts4EU. Excellent graphs and analysis today showing strength of jobs since the referendum, contrary to gloomy official forecasts.

https://facts4eu.org/news/2024_jan_brexit_is_working