

# raillfuture

Annual Review 2015

## CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

<http://www.raillfutureScotland.org.uk/bordersrailway.php>



Banner used to promote the reopening of the Borders Railway, which was hung from the roof of Edinburgh Waverley station.



Lord Steel, who as a young MP had fought strongly against the closure of the Waverley Route in 1969, arrives at Edinburgh Waverley station having just travelled on the reopened Borders Railway.

In 2015 the railway eyes of the world were on Scotland as never before when the longest rail re-opening in 100 years came to fruition on 6 September, the first day that the Borders Railway came into service. It's fair to say that it has been intensively used since then, with extra carriages having to be added to cope with tourists, workers and shoppers in both directions and, for the first time in nearly 50 years, Midlothian and Scottish Borders are now connected to the rail network.

This shows what dedicated local campaigners can achieve with political support. Railfuture members are proud to have been founder members of Campaign for Borders Rail, the local and extremely effective champion of the Borders Railway.



The other opening of the year – Oxford Parkway



Raillfuture Scotland @RaillfutureScot · 1h

More than 500,000 journeys on #BordersRailway reached on 28 January in under five months of operation. Goal was 650,000 journeys in 1st year



Raillfuture on Twitter



Railwatch on Twitter



Raillfuture on LinkedIn



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Raillfuture on YouTube

**Our mission is to be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users**



**Railfuture President Christian Wolmar is an award-winning writer and broadcaster specialising in transport, who has had a fortnightly column in RAIL since 1994.**

What a year it has been for the railway. The successful reopening of the Borders Railway, together with the enormous investment programme, progress with HS2, the advent of new rolling stock and a wide range of other improvements mean that the boom in rail usage has ensured that investing in the railway is now seen by all parties as an essential prerequisite for modernising Britain. Railfuture has over the years played an important role in demonstrating the vital role of the railway and in pushing for reopenings like the Borders line whose success will ensure that others will follow.

## VICE CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

chris.page@railfuture.org.uk

Sadly our Chairman, Chris Brown, had to retire half-way through 2015 for medical reasons, so it falls to me to review the progress we have made during the year.

The election of Stewart Palmer, a previous managing director of South West Trains, to our Board to join Ian Brown has raised our profile further within government and the rail industry. The Department for Transport and Transport for London hold us in high regard due to the quality of informed opinion in our consultation responses, prepared by a number of Railfuture members.

The Board endorsed the following vision for Railfuture:

*'An independent organisation whose views are respected by the rail industry, to which decision makers come for advice, and which rail users are proud to join.'*

and to achieve it agreed the

strategy included in our 'Aims for 2016' on page 15.

We have defined media guidelines for our members to ensure that when we speak to the press or post on social media our message is consistent, realistic and well informed, and that whilst we may criticise where appropriate, we do not cause offence. We have revised our existing code of conduct for directors and agreed guidance for members on working together, and are working to produce a Members' Handbook which will better define the rights and responsibilities of members so that our governance will become more open and transparent.

Our membership is stable, whilst numbers are increasing in our more active branches. We have reached a collaboration agreement with Young Rail Professionals, an organisation that aims to encourage a wider cross-section of young people to consider a career in rail, which will bring us more members from within the rail industry.

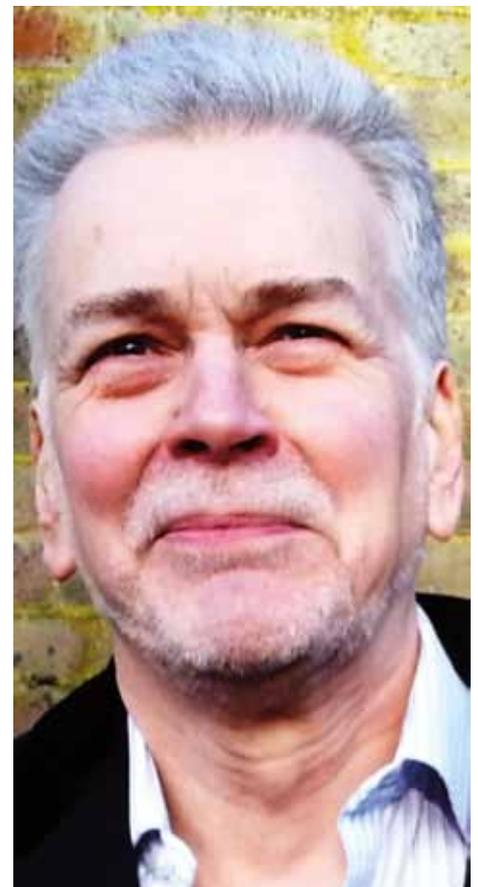


Photo courtesy [Uckfield News](#)

Our vision is for:

*‘A railway system that provides services which travellers and freight forwarders want to use, and which offers more journey opportunities to more people and more freight.’*

Network Rail has had a torrid year, with the delay in handing back King’s Cross after engineering work at the beginning of the year, ongoing planned disruption as part of the Thameslink programme, and the well-publicised ‘pausing’ of the electrification programme. These problems were primarily caused by the rapid ramp-up of rail development work creating a lack of skilled engineers and project managers with rail experience. On the other hand, Network Rail successfully delivered many major projects on time, for example the Reading area upgrade which created substantial extra passenger capacity, fully restoring the listed Wakefield Kirkgate station, and of course reopening the Borders railway. The Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme is progressing well, and the Crossrail programme completed tunnelling on schedule. At the end of the year lessons appear to have been learnt and all went well with engineering works over the Christmas period.



***Bicester Village customer support lounge - the poshest station waiting room in Britain, where customers can collect their purchases.***

Despite the problems, the programme changes revealed by the Hendy report, and the structural changes which may result from the Shaw report, the government – influenced by a continuing year-on-year growth of 4.2% in passenger numbers and 4.5% in passenger kilometres - continues to show faith in the future of rail transport by maintaining Network Rail’s budget for Control Period 5 (2014-19) and approving franchise commitments for significant new rolling stock and service enhancements.

The ‘Gold Card’ area was expanded to include most of the West Midlands and



***Railfuture campaigns for increased capacity of both trains and stations to make travelling by train a good experience. There is no congestion on the great expanse of the passenger deck above the platforms at the new Reading station.***

East Anglia, coming one step closer to our objective of a National Railcard. The Todmorden curve was opened, enabling direct train services between Accrington, Burnley and Manchester; and the Bicester curve was opened, creating a second route between Oxford and London. The first scheduled service for 47 years was started between Yeovil Junction and Yeovil Pen Mill. New stations were opened at Ebbw Vale Town, Newcourt, Cranbrook and Apperley Bridge. Commitments for 1753 new carriages were made by new and existing franchise operators during the year, including Northern (281), TPE (220), GTR (150), GWR (173), Caledonian Sleeper (75), London Overground (180), Porterbrook (80), and Crossrail (594).

**Influencing the rail companies**

Railfuture meets frequently with Network Rail, the rolling stock companies and the rail operators, building relationships and gaining insight which helps us to influence decisions and to support the rail industry in

our contact with the media and the public. For example, our cordial relationships have helped create real improvements to facilities at stations such as Newmarket. Briefings from Network Rail on the North Lincs resignalling scheme and from First Group on the rail replacement plans for the scheme commissioning gave Lincolnshire branch chairman David Harby the information needed to do media interviews about the planned closure.

The main focus of our Northern branches this year has been to influence the content of the new Northern Rail and TransPennine Express franchises due to commence April 2016. Railfuture facilitated meetings between the various bidders and affiliated rail user groups. We believe that the consistent message that we were able to help get across resulted in several improvements above the Invitation to Tender, including the good news of new rolling stock in the franchise announcements. We now plan to work with the successful franchisees to seek further improvements during the course of their franchises.



***A South West Trains service departs Yeovil Junction for Waterloo; some services now take the left hand divergence to Yeovil Pen Mill.***



*Following talks with Network Rail as the rebuild of Birmingham New Street was underway, two members spent some time looking at the new station through passenger eyes and brought some suggestions for improvements in signage, where to find onward bus travel and clearer arrival/departure information for the passenger, which they will take back to Network Rail.*

Similarly East Anglia and London & South East branches had separate very lengthy meetings with the bid teams for each of the three East Anglia franchise preferred bidders, and attended workshops organized by DfT. We will not know the outcome until the winning bidder is announced but our message was clear and understood by the teams.

We have engaged with Virgin over replacement bus services particularly in the north of the region where we think that more rail services could be diverted over the Settle and Carlisle line when the WCML is closed, and to discuss fare evasion, announcements on trains and whether passengers were using the two services from Shrewsbury to London introduced recently.

West Midlands branch has raised on-going issues with Cross Country Trains, including lack of capacity leading to over-crowding and their much criticised Reservations-On-the-Day service. We believe we have contributed to Cross Country evolving their systems to address stakeholder concerns. We also contributed to the development of aspirations for the extension of their

franchise by direct award.

West Midlands branch also met with London Midland (LM) to discuss the level of overcrowding on the Hereford-Worcester - Birmingham service via Bromsgrove. Whilst there is no spare stock until the Chase line electrification is complete in December 2017, LM accepted our offer to undertake passenger counts on trains to provide factual evidence of the need to enhance the route's capacity and frequency.

At local Network Rail Electrification meetings with Community & County councils in Wales, Railfuture Wales member Phil Inskip obtained agreement that additional Network Rail land will be given up to provide compensatory parking places for those lost due to the larger 'footprint' of the Access for All footbridge at Severn Tunnel Junction; and that continued direct pedestrian access to Caldicot station would be provided while the station road bridge is renewed, instead of the temporary three quarters of a mile detour originally proposed by NR.

Our Rolling Stock Strategy Group has met with a number of TOCs, Transport Focus

and Rolling Stock Companies (ROSCOs) to look at new trains and refurbishments. They reported on good practice and highlighted issues such as the lack of facilities and the unsuitability of new trains for their planned usage.

Through the auspices of the European Passenger Federation, we ensured that Railfuture's views were made known to the Union International des Transport Publics, the Community of European Railways and Eurostar. We also met Interrail managers and took part in meetings of the Association of European Rail Agents to discuss sales and promotion of rail travel to and throughout Europe.



*Dog Spend Ahead at New Street*

Railfuture campaigns for new trains to increase capacity, new services to increase journey opportunities, and a better journey experience. Our criteria for deciding whether to campaign for a reopening or a service improvement are:

- it is reasonable and feasible
- it has political and public support
- it has a good chance of success
- there is a demonstrable demand
- it supports economic development

**Disruption**

[www.railfuture.org.uk/disruption](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/disruption)

We started a survey of disruption in 2014, engaging with passengers and rail companies to identify the key concerns and examples of good and bad practice, so that good practice can be spread across the rail industry. The main emphasis is that the industry must do more to explain why disruption is happening, and what they are doing about it. Our report will be published in 2016 for rail industry partners and passengers.



**Improved services**

[www.railfuture.org.uk/Improved+services](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Improved+services)

A six-year campaign to improve services on the Castle Line went a stage further on 17 May when a much

improved service was introduced. Lincolnshire branch are a member of the stakeholder board that procured the funding necessary to introduce the service.

Our support for the campaign to extend Robin Hood line services to Ollerton in Nottinghamshire resulted in two campaign group members joining the East Midlands branch committee.

**Electrification**

[www.railfuture.org.uk/Electrification+programme](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Electrification+programme)

When the electrification from Liverpool to Wigan and Manchester was delayed, North West branch kept the pressure up on Network

Rail to get this finished and the lines finally entered service in March 2015. We discovered that NR were planning to sever the connection to the mothballed Fleetwood line on the Preston to Blackpool line as part of the upgrade and joined with the local

user group to protest against this unnecessary change.

Campaigning by East Midlands branch has centred on line speed improvements and the ‘unpausing’ of the electrification of the Midland Main Line.

**Oxford – Cambridge**

[www.railfuture.org.uk/ox-cam](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/ox-cam)

The first step in restoring services between Oxford and Cambridge came with the opening of Oxford Parkway Station on 26th October 2015 by the Prime Minister. This project has been a massive learning



Services will be extended from Oxford Parkway through Wolvercote Tunnel to Oxford in December 2016.

process for members; we have been involved since the two Public Inquiries into the Transport & Works Order and are keen to share best practice. The scheme has faced venomous opposition from those opposed to sustainable transport, in a way no-one expected when it was launched.

The link between Bicester and Bletchley is progressing with much work behind the scenes by Network Rail (NR) with landowners, those adjacent to the line, and level crossings. East Anglia Branch met with NR to discuss progress and planning of East West Rail Phase 2 between Bletchley and Cambridge. We expressed our desire for as much construction work as possible to be done under NR’s current permitted development rights, so gaining time, the balance of work depending on

a new Transport and Works Act Order. We also suggested starting a full public consultation programme early so that the project is not delayed by sudden objections during construction. NR now appear to be acting along the lines suggested.

The choice of route has been narrowed down to two potential corridors by NR, each with high benefit-cost ratios. The best is a new route west of Cambridge and the second using existing infrastructure via Royston. This latter corridor will need substantial extra works to overlay EWRL services onto it. The Central Section Board will establish its preferred corridor early in 2016. Once the route is confirmed we will produce and distribute a booklet that outlines all the advantages that the new railway will bring to the South Midlands and East Anglia.

## Uckfield – Lewes

[www.railfuture.org.uk/Uckfield+Lewes](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Uckfield+Lewes)

Our objective is to build a partnership of influential stakeholders who will promote the case for reinstating the link between Uckfield and Brighton via Lewes. This link will support the economic growth of Brighton and East Sussex and provide a diversionary route that will enable substantial enhancement of the Brighton Main Line.

Our lobbying was successful in persuading the government to establish the London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study, which will focus on transport demand and potential schemes in the London – South Coast corridor. We put the



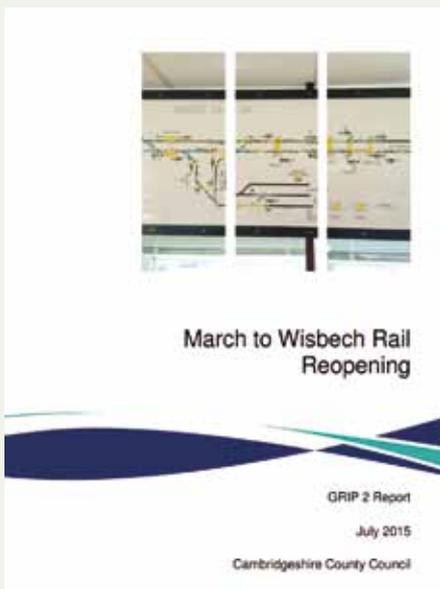
*Bridges wait quietly for new rails from Uckfield to Lewes*

case for these travel demands and their potential solutions to the consultants

carrying out the study and await the publication of their report by DfT.

## Wisbech

[www.railfuture.org.uk/wisbech](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/wisbech)



Cambridgeshire County Council through Mott MacDonald is continuing to develop the final engineering costs to GRIP3. This is funded. The

business case to GRIP2 is complete and shows a high benefit-cost ratio for two trains per hour between Wisbech town centre and Cambridge, in spite of timetabling concerns leading to more new infrastructure being required than first planned for. The Wisbech 2020 team (made up of representatives of the County, the LEPs and private industry) and Railfuture East Anglia met the East Anglia franchise bid teams to propose that the scheme be included in the projects which the new franchisee will deliver.

Whilst waiting for Wisbech to progress, East Anglia branch have helped collect signatures for the petitions conducted by the Haverhill Rail campaign, and worked to engage the rail industry in the Cambridge City Deal. Without our lobbying, meetings and letter writing the case for rail would not be being made.

## West of England

[www.railfuture.org.uk/Dawlish](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Dawlish)

Railfuture works with the Peninsula Rail Task Force to campaign for reopening the Okehampton route to Plymouth. Our Devon and Cornwall branch held a public meeting in Crediton to promote the reopening of services between Exeter and Okehampton as a first step. The branch also join Devon and Somerset Metro meetings with the local

authorities to pursue reopening of Cullompton and Wellington stations between Exeter and Taunton.

One of our Wessex branch members, Bruce Duncan, pioneered a Railfuture campaign for improvements to the West of England line with the creation of a Station User Group and the imminent implementation of a Community Rail Partnership covering all stations from Tisbury to beyond Yeovil Junction.

## MetroWest

[www.railfuture.org.uk/MetroWest](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/MetroWest)

MetroWest phase 1 is progressing; site clearance for Filton Bank quadrupling began early in 2015. We joined forces with Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways and other local groups to press the case for a Henbury loop service. Whilst the West of England Partnership did not agree to include this in MetroWest Phase 2, it appears to have accepted that a phased approach to the project is desirable.

## Ashington Blyth and Tyne

[www.railfuture.org.uk/](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/)

[Ashington+Blyth+and+Tyne](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Ashington+Blyth+and+Tyne)

Some ten years on, our persistent campaigning with South East Northumberland Rail User Group (SENUG) for the return of passenger trains to the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne system is now bearing fruit. In October Northumberland County Council approved the sum of £850,000 for Network Rail to proceed with GRIP 2 study for completion by summer 2016, which will define the feasibility of the scheme.

## Wolverhampton – Walsall

[www.railfuture.org.uk/West+Midlands+Branch](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/West+Midlands+Branch)

West Midlands branch campaigns for the reinstatement of rail services from Wolverhampton to Walsall,

meeting and agreeing with Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and Wolverhampton City Council to

promote the Wolverhampton-Walsall rail link given the traffic congestion between the two urban areas.

## Scotland

<http://www.railfuturescotland.org.uk/campaigning.php>

Following the publication late in 2014 of our plan for 50 new stations in Scotland, our achievements include:

- Contributing towards Beattock Station re-opening – a pre-STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) assessment has been agreed after contributory funding was provided by Beattock Station Action Group and Railfuture
- Working with Rail Action Group East of Scotland (RAGES) on a postcard campaign to the Scottish

Transport Minister, reminding him to Get our Stations Back on Track

- Supporting St Andrews Rail Link (StARLink) where intensive media work in the local papers has kept this re-opening firmly on the agenda in Fife
- Supporting and attending Levenmouth Rail Campaign events – where politicians across the board came together with a well-resourced campaign profile in southern Fife
- Attending meetings of North Line Action Group, achieving a meeting with Scotrail where a long list of improvements were proposed for action

• Contributing to RailQwest's media coverage on the campaign for Glasgow Crossrail

• Continuing to recognise the importance of Freight on Rail in both environmental and economic terms and oppose the adverse commercial effects of Government's massive financial support for road haulage – highlighted by the recent closure of the Forth Road Bridge

• Commenting on a consultation on the Buchan transport study supporting the re-opening of the rail lines from Dyce to Ellon, Fraserburgh and Peterhead.

## LOBBYING

### A manifesto for a bigger, better railway

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/2020Vision>

Key issues in the 2015 election were the economy, education and skills training, social inclusion and health. Provision of a growing and effective transportation system and investment in transport infrastructure are highly effective ways of addressing these issues. Railfuture, through its branches located throughout the UK, keeps in touch with important transport issues both nationally and locally. We published our manifesto, distilling the electorate's wishes and expectations for a developing railway for Britain, for delivery during the life of the new parliament.

### National

Our branches take every opportunity to develop a relationship with national politicians and government officials to press for better rail services, and to encourage affiliated groups to do the same.



*Our director Roger Blake briefs Rail Minister Claire Perry on our campaign to reinstate Uckfield - Lewes by incremental development, leading to our longer term proposals for Thameslink 2 which will release capacity on the Brighton Main Line.*

For example, East Anglia branch members met Ben Gummer MP who acts on behalf of a large group of MPs working for a better railway. We sought his support specifically for the enhancements to the Felixstowe to Birmingham via Bury St Edmunds route to be protected in the Hendy

review. Other contacts include Steve Barclay MP on Wisbech reinstatement and shadow transport minister Daniel Zeichner MP on rail provision in the Cambridge area, whilst East Midlands branch members met with MPs in their area to press for the line speed upgrade and electrification of the Midland Main

Line, reopening of the National Forest Line between Leicester and Burton, and the extension of the Robin Hood line to Ollerton.

One of our members regularly attends the All Party Parliamentary Freight Committee, whilst others met with MEPs on the Transport & Tourism Committee of the European Parliament. Railfuture Wales members met with Welsh Assembly members and candidates on the future of the Welsh rail franchise and the Railfuture Wales Development Plan.

Our Scottish members participate in the Cross Party Rail Group of the Scottish Parliament, giving a first-hand opportunity to raise our concerns to MSPs, have met the Scottish Transport Minister, Derek Mackay MSP, and have secured the assistance of Willie Rennie MSP, Leader of the Lib Dems in Scotland, on behalf of StARLink's campaign in St Andrews, resulting in a meeting with Transport Scotland officials. This was followed up by a meeting with the local MP and MSP who are preparing a statement for the group to use. Rhoda Grant MSP has been supportive of the North Line Action Group activities; Iain Gray MSP has joined RAGES' campaign in East Lothian and Berwickshire. Local councillors across all parties are supportive of the Levenmouth campaign and have taken this to Fife Council. Throughout Scotland, members are seeking and gaining support from elected representatives on issues including Glasgow Crossrail, Glasgow Airport link, Ayr and Kilmarnock rail extensions and station openings throughout the country.

Chris Austin OBE (formerly of ATOC and the SRA), head of Railfuture's specialist Infrastructure and Networks Group, met with Department for Transport officials on making better use of links with heritage railways and on facilitating reopening schemes - ideas will be taken forward during 2016.

## Local

When the government is deciding whether to progress a rail development, it looks to see whether the development is supported by MPs, Local Enterprise Partnerships and local councils. Therefore our relationship with local authority councillors and officers is just as important as that with Ministers, MPs and government officials. Where we have built relationships, we continue to be well received; whilst low key, there is no doubt that getting our message across (even if others take credit), is the way forward.

For example, East Anglia members met extensively with council leaders and officials concerning rail development and the Cambridge City Deal, leading to agreement that rail would be part of future solutions, and attended all the Norfolk Rail Policy meetings and Suffolk County Council rail conferences. East Midlands members are very active with the East Midlands local authority councillors group LANRAC, writing jointly to DfT regarding the pausing of the electrification programme, suggesting resumption of the project to Corby. DfT initially rejected this suggestion, but included it as part of the unpausing two weeks later. David Harby of Lincolnshire branch has talked to so many local politicians about the Robin Hood line extension and Castle Line services that he can't remember them all, but both are progressing!

Freight Group members supported rail freight planning applications, for example in East Cambridgeshire and Broadland District Councils, for East West Rail, Wisbech reconnection, and the Felixstowe to Nuneaton section of Strategic Freight Network.

In Wales, we helped formulate rail aspects in Monmouthshire Council's Local Transport Plan and its response to the National Transport Plan,

gaining agreement that their Head of Operations would respond to the Western Route Study calling for extra carriages to meet the growing demand. We met with Bridgend County Borough Council councillors and officials to discuss rail services on the Maesteg Branch.

## Other stakeholders

We work with national organisations such as the Campaign for Better Transport, Transport Focus and the Rail Freight Group, and local organisations such as the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership and the Brighton Transport Partnership, to lobby government with a common message for rail investment.

We have engaged with the National Horse Racing Museum in Newmarket that has brought the racing industry back to the railway, helping recognition that the station and train service levels require huge improvement. This has led to growing support for our ideas for enhancing the track layout around Newmarket and increased car parking.

West Midlands branch meet quarterly with CENTRO to discuss issues relevant to the rail user, for example through ticketing when Midland Metro opens to Birmingham New Street, progress on electrification schemes to Bromsgrove and the Chase Line, rail devolution, the 'NUCKLE' scheme for extra stations and service improvements between Nuneaton, Coventry and Leamington Spa and the enhancements to be included in the extension by direct award of the London Midland franchise.

We are a member of the European Passengers Federation, through which we discuss services with European rail companies and staffing with the European Transport Workers Federation.

Before making major policy decisions government and government agencies, both national and local, will run formal consultations to find out what the public think about the issues. Our realistic, informed responses to these consultations are an excellent way for Railfuture to get its viewpoint on rail issues considered and so influence those policy decisions.

Perhaps the most significant consultation from the Department of Transport this year was the Scoping Study for the Shaw Report, which will consider the future structure for Network Rail. Our response aimed to preserve the good safety record and enable devolution, but without further fragmentation of the rail industry, whilst providing incentives for improved performance and customer satisfaction. We also responded to the consultation by the Competition and Markets Authority on competition in rail services, citing the key issues of quality of service and economic cost for the rail industry - and therefore the passenger and taxpayer.

Our Passenger Group coordinates responses to DfT consultations during the process of franchise renewal (direct awards) and competitive bids through the liaison officers it has appointed for each operator, based on input from each branch in that franchise area. Responses this year have been to the direct awards for Cross Country and Great Western, and the franchise competition for East Anglia. The key messages have been the quality of rolling stock (Pacers and others), overcrowding, service frequency and gaps in the service, and how planned and unplanned disruption and customer service are delivered.

Railfuture Wales responded to the Welsh Government consultation on

its draft National Transport Plan, criticising its focus on road rather than rail and its lack of ambition, and calling for schemes funded by Network Rail or other rail companies to also be included. We also responded to their consultation on the new rail franchise for Wales, and to the Business and Enterprise Committee's inquiries on Tourism in Wales, the future of the Wales Rail franchise and Welsh Rail Infrastructure.

Individual branches responded to consultations by local authorities, for example on the Hertfordshire Rail Strategy, the Suffolk Rail Policy, the Cambridge City Deal, the Peterborough Unitary Authority Local Transport Plan 4, the New Anglia LEP report 'Once in a Generation', the Bristol Central Area Plan, the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan, the East Sussex Local Transport Plan, to Devon County Council on bus service cuts and to Travelwest on the Portishead reopening.

As part of their Long Term Planning Process for the next Control Period (CP6, 2019-24) Network Rail started to publish and consult on their Route Studies. Our Infrastructure and Network Group coordinated consistent responses to the Sussex, Western, Wessex, Anglia, East Midlands and Welsh route studies, coordinating input from the branches affected. Together, these are forming part of a national strategy for Railfuture on network development. We also responded to the Network Rail Improving Connectivity study, which suggests an alternative approach to planning and scheduling services. A submission was made to Sir Peter Hendy as part of his review of Network Rail projects, supporting our Freight Group and East Anglia branch campaign to upgrade the Felixstowe to Nuneaton line.

In response to the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority consultation "Movement for Growth" we expressed concern at the overriding focus on a radial system designed to move commuters into and out of central Birmingham, and the reliance on SPRINT buses which are intended to run along some very narrow key corridor routes. There should be commensurate provision for orbital travel between urban centres around the West Midlands and for journeys within the Black Country area, which has poor rail connections. We wish to see the Stourbridge-Walsall line reopened, and any light rail system from Brierley Hill to Wednesbury forming part of the route connecting with Midland Metro should not preclude heavy rail at a future date.

We have responded to a number of Transport for London consultations on Crossrail, Barking Riverside, Overground stations at Old Oak Common, and the capacity upgrade for Camden Town.

Rail companies also publish consultations; we have responded to timetable consultations by GTR, ATW, South Eastern and C2C, where we supported substantial improvements made to train services on the LTS line over recent years and 17 new trains to enable all peak-hour services to be lengthened. We have also contributed to industry consultation on Retail Ticketing, Penalty Fare processing, Soham - Ely doubling and the UK Government's response to European directives on passenger rights and obligations.

We contributed to European Passenger Federation responses on the review of the EU White Paper on Transport, the review of passengers' rights.

Media coverage

www.railfuture.org.uk/Press+releases



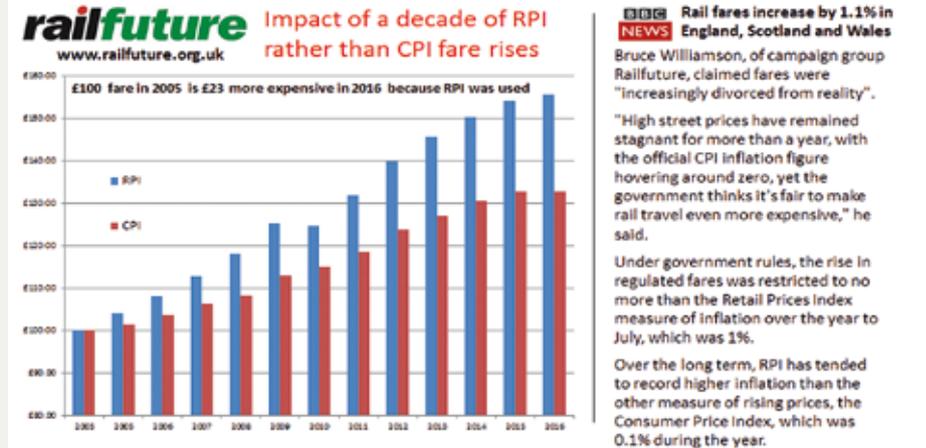
Railfuture media rep Bruce Williamson on BBC One Wales

Almost every other day on average, Railfuture is featured in the local and/or national media. These range from interviews for radio or TV programmes or articles in a newspaper or magazine. Sometimes the article is written by us but often we are contacted by journalists for a comment on a story they intend to publish.

It is difficult to interest the media in railfreight as it is something that happens without most people knowing, although there is strong public support for moving lorries off the roads and onto the railway.

Otherwise most coverage relates to passenger concerns such as fare rises, punctuality, overcrowding, occasionally badly-considered timetable changes plus lack of passenger facilities and car parking.

Fare Rises



Each year the annual regulated fare increases become newsworthy on four occasions. Firstly, in mid-August when the July inflation figures are announced; when the increases are confirmed in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement; in December when the full set of fare increases are announced (regulated and unregulated) and on 2nd January when they come into effect. Railfuture is always very busy around New Year, and the coverage we get also coincides with a burst of new members joining.

There has been national news coverage of Railfuture's long-standing policy to use the lower Consumer Prices Index (CPI) instead of the Retail Price Index (RPI). CPI is almost always lower but crucially it is used as the measure by government for almost everything including pension and benefit increases. Our own research calculated that regulated fares have risen by 23% more since

2004 because RPI rather than CPI was used.

We initiate news stories when there is good news to publish such as increases in patronage and station openings, along with publication of our aspirations and responses to consultations. We undertake our own research and were the only organisation to reveal that, astonishingly, regulated fare rises over six years by both Labour and Conservative/Coalition governments were 24% in both cases, which was quite helpful given that Railfuture is staunchly non-political.

It is an ongoing challenge to get the media to look at issues that require a greater level of explanation such as ticket complexity and the comparative reduction in the cost of motoring through government policy. We have also had a number of national and local radio interviews on passenger inconvenience when disruption occurs.

Local Coverage



John Rogers, chair of Railfuture Wales, on BBC Sunday Politics

In 2015 we managed to increase our exposure compared to the previous year, thanks to our team of press officers around the country and nationally. For example Yorkshire branch did some 50 media interviews during the year including three for regional TV (including BBC TV Look North) and two for BBC Radio 4, the rest mainly being for local radio and the regional press.

Railfuture has a good relationship with some important newspapers. In Wales

we provided, on numerous occasions, media information in English and Welsh for the Western Mail and also wrote a number of letters that were published. We gave interviews to BBC Radio Wales and HTV, and provided information for other programmes. In the specialist railway press we had a letter published in Modern Railways about the design of Cardiff Queen Street station.

The railway has never been more important in East Anglia and Railfuture

has been interviewed on BBC Look East, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, BBC Radio Suffolk, BBC Radio Norfolk, Heart Radio and Cambridge TV in addition to substantial coverage in the Cambridge News – our ideas for the railway in the Greater Cambridge area targeting the City Deal even topped an informal newspaper poll – and also the widely-read Eastern Daily Press.

We have promoted the idea of “The Dynamic Triangle” of Leicester/Derby/Nottingham as a response for East Midlands to the proposed Northern Powerhouse. This slogan seems to be gaining traction and getting a positive response from our politicians, and we plan to promote the idea, particularly for transport investment, whenever we can.

In Lincolnshire the branch chairman has written six columns in the Lincolnshire Echo covering varied topics: overcrowding, disruption survey, new Castle Line services,

ECML track access and protecting routes of closed lines. This has raised Railfuture’s profile considerably, which is reinforced by numerous interviews on BBC Radio Lincolnshire, Lincs FM, BBC Radio Nottingham and Siren FM.

We encourage members to write to newspapers to support our campaigns, but always in a personal capacity. In Scotland, The Herald and The Scotsman Railfuture have often published letters from members challenging Abellio Scotrail on counter-productive replacement of Club 55 by Club 50 (a campaign where Friends of Settle and Carlisle have joined forces with us). In fact, our continued campaigning on the cancellation of Club 55 flat rate £19 return ticket anywhere in Scotland by Abellio after they took over the franchise has resulted in the release of a new Club 50 £16 return for an eight-week period until 4 March 2016 (although formal club membership is still required). This is a positive, if

only temporary, result for Railfuture members in the North of England as well as Scotland!

Railfuture sees itself as a critical friend of the railway; it is not afraid of being critical in public where necessary. We issued an alternative press release to that provided by Abellio, on the lack of parking space at Milngavie Station seriously impeding potential travellers in the area.

Railfuture’s Infrastructure and Networks Group produced a number of articles throughout the year (two of which Railfuture paid for) that were published in specialist political magazines as part of our campaigning with opinion formers.

At a local level, Railfuture also uses the media to promote our national conferences explaining how they are relevant to the public.

## Find Out More

We’re now adding video clips of TV interviews to our [‘In the News’](#) webpage so you can see them for

yourself, as well as listen to around 100 of our radio interviews, some of

which have been downloaded more than 1,000 times.

## Social Media

[www.railfuture.org.uk/branches/?twitter](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/branches/?twitter)

Railfuture’s use of Twitter has never been greater. We have 23 accounts, six of which are national, 14 for branches and three for high-profile campaigns such as Uckfield-Lewes and Wisbech reopenings.

Activity varies on the Twitter accounts. On some we break news such as our research on fare rises or discovery of widespread deficiencies with ticket machines. On others, such as the Railfuture Passenger account (@RailfuturePsng), we raise a lot of passenger concerns and promote improvement. As the demands and expectations of passengers change, Railfuture is increasingly promoting the ‘softer’ aspects of rail travel such as the need for Wi-Fi and power sockets (both 13A and USB) on all trains and in

waiting areas at stations. On the freight side (@RailfutureFret) we generally re-tweet providing a ‘one-stop shop’ for news about railfreight.



**Combined 240v/USB power socket**

Railfuture campaigns to improve Britain’s railway but often tries to consider how things are done on railways around the world. On our International Best Practice account (@RailfutureInter) we regularly give examples of what is happening abroad, including our own photos from our foreign trips.

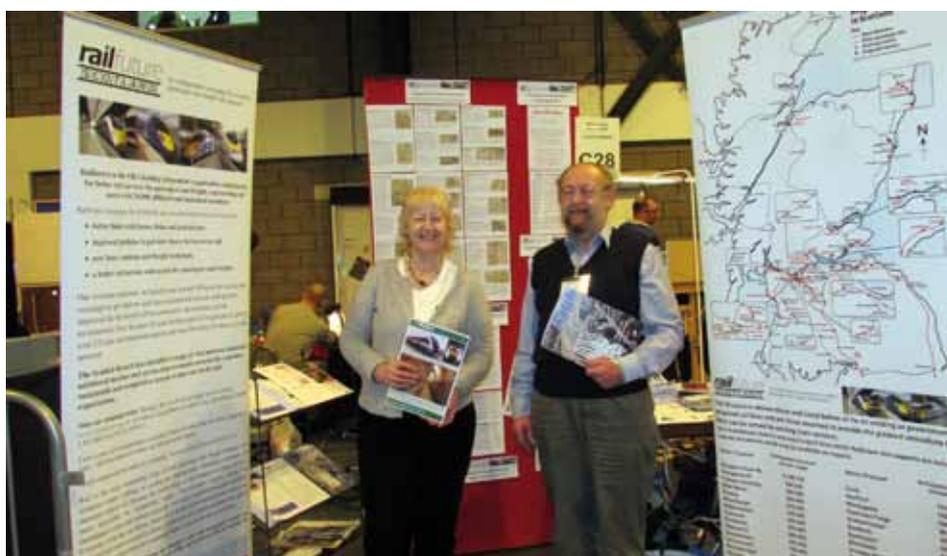
Twitter is used to promote changes to the Railfuture web-site by giving links to press releases, consultation responses, campaign documents, radio interviews, and articles. In addition to promoting our campaigns and raising awareness of Railfuture it leads to new members joining. Our increased use of Twitter has coincided with the highest number of new members in a year for a decade.

As well as members and user groups, Railfuture is followed on Twitter by many high-profile rail organisations and individuals including Managing Directors of TOCs. Our target is for @Railfuture to have 2,000 followers by the end of 2016.

## Meeting the Public

Railfuture's reputation is growing amongst the railway industry and in 2015 we were asked to give a presentation at two commercial conferences – one on Transport Policy Priorities for the incoming government on rail passenger issues and at a Rail Resilience conference on our disruption work. These were presented by Chris Fribbins, Head of Railfuture's Passenger Group.

At appropriate events where there are likely to be many rail users Railfuture often has a stall. Despite Railfuture not being an enthusiast organisation experience has shown that visitors to model railway shows are supportive of Railfuture's message of a "bigger and better railway". Railfuture Scotland had stalls at the Glasgow Model Rail Show (February); Perth Model Rail Show (June); Callander Railway Festival (July); Aln Valley Rail Open Day (August); St Andrews Model Rail (September) and Falkirk Model Rail (November). Meanwhile Lincolnshire branch once again exhibited at the two-day Grantham Rail Show and the North East branch attended the inaugural Aln Valley Railway model



*Railfuture Scotland members Allison Cosgrove and Roddy McDougall with our stand at the Glasgow Model Rail Show*

railway show, over two days, with a stand showing the branch's aspirations for 25 new railway stations. These events were ideal opportunities for discussing current campaigns as well as recruiting new members.

Railfuture literature shifts like proverbial hot cakes at public events. Members man stands at events unrelated to rail but appropriate for local campaigns, for example the Uckfield Big Day and the Oxford Green Fair. Sometimes Railfuture produces

leaflets for other groups: for example, it funded a large number of leaflets to re-establish a railway from Cambridge to Linton and Haverhill and these were used by the Rail Haverhill campaign group for many events, at which they gathered thousands of signatures in support.

Railfuture has also tried to target younger people with an interest, and possible career, in the railway. In the North East it continued to work with students at Newcastle University, attending student presentation projects.

## Rail Users and Stakeholders

[www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Groups](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+User+Groups)

Railfuture keeps up a dialogue with local Rail User Groups (RUGs) across Britain over local issues, often encouraging them to seek real improvements. In cooperation we achieve more than as individual organisations. In some cases Railfuture has acted on behalf of rail users: for example, following imposition of parking charges at Maesteg station a compromise for free parking was reached with landowners for custom and practice to continue, but with safeguards.

Railfuture also encourages these groups to come along to branch meetings and national conferences. Several Railfuture branch committees have members on local user groups and, in the case of East Midlands branch, on Travelwatch East Midlands.

Many branches have close involvement with stakeholder groups and attend events. For example, the Railfuture Wessex branch is represented at SWT, Transport Focus and Travel Watch South West Stakeholder events plus the quarterly Solent Transport

meetings and on the East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership.

In 2015 the Severnside branch saw a significant increase in membership, including three new corporate members: Minehead Rail Link Group, Salford Station Campaign and TransWilts Community Rail Partnership.

The above are, of course, all passenger groups. Railfuture also works with the Rail Freight Group, which is the umbrella representative group for the rail freight users.

## Rail User Group Awards

[www.railfuture.org.uk/RUG+Awards](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/RUG+Awards)

Since 2012 Railfuture has been staging an annual awards ceremony for Britain's rail user groups, one of the few parts of the British railway 'industry'

that otherwise goes unrecognised. RUGs can nominate themselves, or be nominated by a member or stakeholder, for a series of categories. In addition Railfuture identifies groups who have achieved success, along with its

own branches and volunteers, to give recognition.

At Railfuture's autumn conference each year the winners (judged by some of Railfuture's vice presidents, such as Roger Ford, and the editor of

Rail Professional magazine, Lorna Slade) are presented their awards by Railfuture's honorary President Christian Wolmar. In 2015 there were awards for Best Campaign (won by [Harrogate Line Supports Group](#) for securing an increase in the frequency of direct services between London and Harrogate and to improve services on the Leeds-York-Harrogate line), Best Campaigner, Best New Group, Best Newsletter, Best Website, Best Social Media Promotion. The Judges'

Special Award went to [Railfuture Scotland](#) for all who campaigned to reopen the Borders Railway. The judges commented "Our national branch in Scotland must receive this year's Special Award on behalf of all in Scotland, and beyond, who have achieved this historic campaign milestone."

An article listing the winners can be read at [www.railfuture.org.uk/article1626-RUG-Award-winners-2015](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1626-RUG-Award-winners-2015).



*Allison Cosgrove receives the Judges' Special Award from Railfuture President Christian Wolmar.*

## Railfuture Publications



Railfuture's national 'house magazine' Railwatch is published quarterly to provide positive news of rail campaigning which often does not get proper coverage in either the mainstream media or the railway press.

We aim to produce authoritative news and views about railways which will be taken seriously in the corridors of power while encouraging rail campaigners to be more confident and effective. It provides news of Railfuture's campaigning activities, and the work of rail user groups, to a wider audience and allows members to learn from each other. Railwatch is also interested to hear from the rail industry.

Several hundred copies of Railwatch are sent out free as part of our campaign to keep opinion formers, for example selected MPs and peers, properly informed on rail issues. Requests to be added, and suggestions for people to

be added, should be sent to [renewals@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:renewals@railfuture.org.uk)

Each month Railfuture produces Rail User Express, which contains announcements of particular interest to Rail User Groups. This is sent by e-mail to the RUGs and can be downloaded from the web-site. At the end of 2015 Tony Smale, who has done a sterling job of editing this newsletter for many years, handed over to Roger Smith. Contributions can be sent to the new editor at [ruglink@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:ruglink@railfuture.org.uk).

Most branches produce newsletters, which are sent to the media and stakeholders as well as Railfuture's members. The East Anglia branch ensures that every Member of Parliament in its area receives a copy along with other opinion formers. Each year the branch produces an analysis of station patronage figures by route showing growth and many

regional newspapers use these figures to highlight rail usage in their area.

Numerous reports are produced by Railfuture during the year – they can be found at [www.railfuture.org.uk/briefings](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/briefings) or <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/sitemap>. One of the most comprehensive was the Development Plan for Railways of Wales and the Borders, which was sent to all Welsh MPs, AMs County Councils and also to government officials. Railfuture's Freight Group produced a Freight Terminals paper, which was distributed throughout the rail industry, parliamentarians, local politicians and officers. Our 2014 Eurostar survey results were published in a report which was sent to over 40 transport professionals and decision-makers in the UK and abroad.

Glossy leaflets are produced to publicise local Railfuture campaigns. Some relate to a larger network whilst others call for a better service. The East Anglia branch looked at the last train of the evening at several key stations and found wide variance – the last train from Cambridge to Peterborough leaves at 21:01 – and produced a leaflet highlighting this unacceptable situation.

Railfuture also seeks to provide helpful advice to travellers. We printed 4,000 copies of our 'Going Abroad' leaflet, which provides contacts for arranging rail journeys but without endorsing any particular organisations. Some of these were distributed via European Rail Timetable subscription copies.

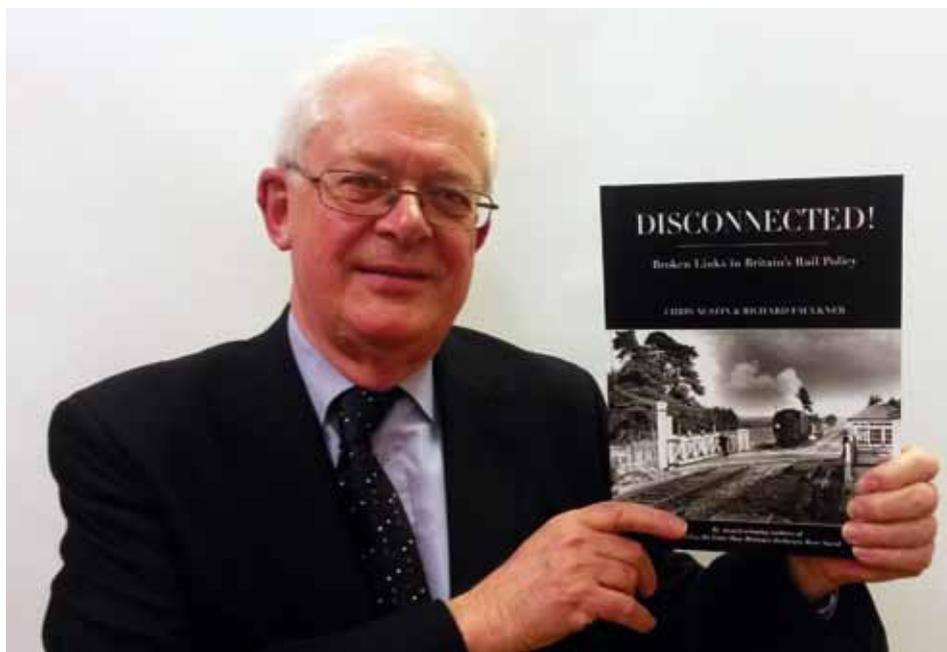
## Railfuture Websites

[www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)

The main [Railfuture](http://www.railfuture.org.uk) web-site is a treasure trove of information about the railway and Railfuture campaigns. It is continually updated - on average two 'news and views' articles are published each week. The [www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+user+help](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Rail+user+help) pages give rail users the latest tips for finding the cheapest train tickets in the minefield of the fares system.

Railfuture recognises the need not just to campaign for more of the same, where Britain's railway is doing well, but also to identify things that could be done better. Railfuture now considers how railways operate around the world, identifies international best practice and tries to see how it could be translated to work in Britain. Given our aged infrastructure and limited loading gauge it is not easy, but there are lots of ideas that could work well here. An increasing number of articles have given in-depth analysis of railway matters written by Railfuture experts. One article, [www.railfuture.org.uk/article1648-Mountain-of-Ideas](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1648-Mountain-of-Ideas), looked at how stations around Salzburg in Austria are really passenger focused.

The primary purpose of the web-site is to inform people about the benefits of the railway and why they should support a 'bigger and better railway'. However, it is also Railfuture's shop window and almost two-thirds of new



member applications were made via the web-site in 2015, along with many renewals. We identify third-party books that are specially relevant to our campaigning and sell them via our online shop ([www.railfuture.org.uk/shop](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/shop)) at a substantial discount to the cover price, with a small commission being earned for our campaigning.

Our best selling book of the year was Chris Austin and Richard Faulker's "Disconnected! Broken Links in Britain's Rail Policy", which dwells on decades of campaigning by Railfuture to reopen lines and stations that were foolishly closed.

There are more than a thousand documents on the website. It holds copies of branch newsletters for the

last few years, such as Rail East, Rail Lincs and Yorkshire Rail Campaigner (click on the relevant map on [www.railfuture.org.uk/branches](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/branches)), and all of our submissions ([www.railfuture.org.uk/submissions](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/submissions)) to consultations by the rail industry, transport authorities, governments and local authorities.

There is a separate web-site for Scotland ([www.railfutureScotland.org.uk](http://www.railfutureScotland.org.uk)) and a bi-lingual one for Wales ([www.railfutureWales.org.uk](http://www.railfutureWales.org.uk)). These only contain content about the respective nations. The reopening of the Borders Railway led to a special page being created with many photos.

The [www.railwatch.org.uk](http://www.railwatch.org.uk) web-site has more than 15 years of back issues of Railwatch in PDF format.

## INVOLVING OUR MEMBERS

### Conferences

[www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/)

Each year Railfuture holds an AGM, which is only attended by members, and organises two national conferences, in spring and autumn respectively, that are open to everyone. Railfuture has a well-deserved reputation for organising high-quality and informative events that attract key speakers from the rail industry but are affordable to rail users.



*Lincolnshire branch chairman David Harby organised the Newark conference, which was opened by the town's mayor.*

The key note speaker at our June conference in Newark was David Horne, then recently-appointed Managing Director of Virgin Trains East Coast, whose presentation was entitled 'The future starts now'. Our November conference in Bristol focused on the Metro West series of major improvements to the railway in the region that will be delivered over the next decade.

Details of future and past events are on the Conferences page of the website, where online bookings can also be

made. More than half of bookings are now done this way.

Most branches held multiple meetings during the year for both members and the public, often at varying towns and cities within the branch area. Attendance is always free. Some attracted well-known, respected and highly knowledgeable guest speakers such as Adrian Shooter, who spoke at the Thames Valley branch AGM. Later in the year Stephen Barker, from Chiltern Railways, spoke about the work needed prior to the opening of Oxford Parkway station and the rail link to London Marylebone. Meanwhile the Wessex branch AGM listened to Phil Hutchinson, Head of Timetable Development at Govia Thameslink Railway. He explained the plans and aspirations of the new franchise combining Great Northern, Thameslink and Southern services. The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) provided speakers for North East and East Anglia branch meetings. Branches have lined up good speakers for 2016 as well, such as Andrew Jones MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State.

Just a few weeks after the long-awaited reopening Railfuture Scotland had a packed-out meeting in the new Galashiels Station Interchange, when Dr Ann Glen gave a wonderful presentation on 'The Rebuilding of the Borders Railway'.

## AIMS FOR 2016

Railfuture is unrecognisable from where it was a decade ago. This is not just because the world has changed but we have too, attracting some of the railway's best talent to support our army of volunteers and willing members.

Our strategy for the future is take realistic positions on the key issues of the moment for the rail industry and passengers, focus on key campaigns which have a realistic chance of success, and promote our position and our campaigns professionally with stakeholders and the public.

Every year we hold a 'Branches



*Railfuture members including Thames Valley branch secretary Andrew McCallum and Vice President Chris Green inspect the D-Train prototype – photo courtesy John Elvin*

### Site Visits

Members from Thames Valley, East Anglia and the London & South East branches visited Vivarail at Long Marston to inspect the D-Train project. It was fair to say any sceptics were converted and members were quoted on various media outlets following the visit, so overall it was very worthwhile.

### Events for members

[www.railfuture.org.uk/events](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/events)

A list of events relevant to members and the more-interested rail travellers are updated on a daily basis on the [Events](#) page of our web-site.

Groups and members need to know that there is a benefit in being part of Railfuture. However, because of the geographic nature, quality of transport links and size of a branch area this can be challenging. Railfuture Scotland has been out and about visiting rail user groups in Thurso, Inverness, Edinburgh, St Andrews, Levenmouth, Beattock, Ayr, and a potential group in Callander. A new group in Dunoon has just been formed and has asked for our involvement. A revised and updated PowerPoint presentation is being prepared for user groups.

and Groups Day' at which members learn from each other so that they can campaign more effectively. This year we will widen the attendance to include all our most active members and use the day to agree our position on some of the key issues.

We will continue to promote Railfuture and recruit new members by attending rail events and engaging local rail user groups and other interested organisations.

We will seek to learn from international best practice, working with organisations such as the European Passenger Federation, and combine

that with the knowledge of our UK experts to provide the informed opinion which we give stakeholders both informally and through our consultation responses.

Network Rail is continuing to publish its Route Studies for consultation as part of its Long Term Planning Process for Control Period 6 (2019-24). One of the key rail industry events of the year will be the publication of Network Rail's draft Initial Industry Plan, setting out the options for the developments to be included in Control Period 6. Railfuture's campaigns aim to get their proposals included in that Initial Industry Plan.

## JOIN US

Railfuture is the independent campaign for better passenger and freight services over a bigger network. We campaign for less crowded trains, fairer fares, quicker journeys, efficient customer service, new stations and lines, and shifting freight from road to rail. Railfuture welcomes new members to share practical ideas.

**yes** I want to join Railfuture!

The more members we have, the stronger our voice will be. You can choose to play an active

role in our campaigns, meet fellow campaigners your local branch or our national conferences, and you will receive the quarterly magazine Railwatch free.

Subscriptions start from as little as £14 per year.

Join online at [www.railfuture.org.uk/join](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join)

or contact us at:

Railfuture Membership, 1 Queens Road,  
Barnetby le Wold, North Lincs DN38 6JH

Email: [membership@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:membership@railfuture.org.uk)

## HOW MEMBERS CAN HELP Railfuture

Almost all Railfuture campaigning is funded by our members. As well as making a donation with your subscription there are other ways of helping Railfuture.

Can you recruit a new member? Online enrolment is available or a membership leaflet can be downloaded from [www.railfuture.org.uk/join](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join), or by contacting the Membership Secretary,  
1 Queens Road, Barnetby le Wold,  
North Lincs DN38 6JH  
[membership@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:membership@railfuture.org.uk)

Why not volunteer to take an active role in national or local branch activities?

When you no longer need this review, please pass it on to a friend, relative or colleague who travels by rail and may be interested in Railfuture.

Try to attend one of Railfuture's national events. Full details (and online booking) available at [www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences)

Join the Railfuture Lottery. 50% of the net receipts are paid out as prizes each month, with the remainder allocated to our Fighting Fund.

Details can be obtained from the Railfuture Lottery Organiser, 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingsstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND or visit [www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery)

Consider making the Railway Development Society a beneficiary of your will. Please consult your solicitor for advice on how to do this.

## Railfuture Branch contacts

Devon and Cornwall

East Anglia

East Midlands

Lincolnshire

London & South East

North East

North West

Sevenside

Thames Valley

Wessex

West Midlands

Yorkshire

Scotland

Cymru/Wales

Northern Ireland

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