



Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 56 Spring 2022

Electrification is best: give us the wires!

Electrification is still best for climate protection, says VDV, the association of German train companies, as [Railway Gazette International](#) reported recently. German rail is 60% electrified, compared with the UK just under 40%. VDV wants to get to at least 75%. In the UK, Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy seems at least as ambitious. In both cases these are rail's desires, not government policies. But there is confidence rail can cut wiring costs. Full electrification will certainly cut costs of purchase and running trains, and increase revenue so the money will be repaid. **Tell HM Treasury!**

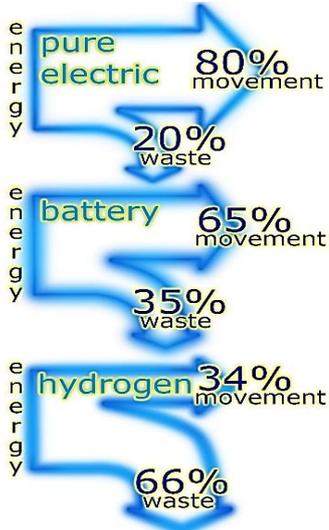
The Northern Sparks task force in 2015 proposed a first 5-year plan of 12 routes, following (laughably now) TransPennine and Midland lines. In Yorkshire, Calder Valley, Harrogate, Northallerton-Middlesbrough, Selby-Hull, and the routes from Sheffield to Leeds and Doncaster were listed. Seeing no progress, activists on the Calder Valley Line launched the Electric Railway Charter (2018), supported by Yorkshire and NW Railfuture. Find us on Twitter with lots of input from industrial and campaigning sources (twitter.com/ElectrifyCalder) and on-line (www.electriccharter.wordpress.com). Bradford gets a mention in the Integrated Rail Plan and there are hints in the North West of wiring to Rochdale. But there's no plan yet to fill the gap.

Efficiency is the energy you want divided by the energy you have to pay for. See our "Sankey" diagrams (right). Hydrogen will have a role in storing electrical energy generated from renewables and nuclear at night. But overall hydrogen trains are inefficient; they waste lots of energy in conversion processes. Can't we try and be less profligate in future? Multimode trains also reduce efficiency – extra mass – and are costlier to buy and maintain. **Pure electrification is best.**

Northern are considering buying diesel-battery bimodes, reducing fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions by 25%. Good headline. **But only a quarter of the way to zero-carbon.** A similar type is running on Chiltern Railways, adapted from an older pure diesel. Tempting to suggest their lines could have been electrified in the time taken to design that. And it's about as advanced as a hybrid car built 20 years ago. **Just give us the wires** – JSW



Electrics at Leeds, local and inter-city. But where is the 195 diesel in top picture?



Welcome to Yorkshire Rail Campaigner, Spring 2022. See inside for our Chair's column, updates on reopening ideas and local group reports. And **timetable cuts** on Northern (other TOCs are affected) – pray this is not permanent.



Yorkshire branch

President:
Alan Whitehouse

Vice-Presidents:
Mike Crowhurst, Alan Williams,
Chris Hyomes

Chair's column:

by **Nina Smith**, Railfuture Yorkshire branch chair

There is a climate emergency

WHEN will the government get a grip on the climate crisis? Rail was almost ignored at COP26, despite being the most environmentally friendly form of mechanised transport¹. Go-ahead for any kind of rolling railway electrification is still awaited. Transport for the North's core budget has been cut by about a third, which will lead to redundancies. At time of writing, there was a real risk bus services would be heavily reduced in April, unless the Government continues the Covid-related grant until passenger numbers have recovered.

Meanwhile air passenger duty on domestic flights has been reduced, no frequent flyer levy has been introduced, and the Government remains committed to airport expansion. Some 15,000 "ghost" flights were made during the pandemic, so that airlines could retain slots. There is no proposal for either workplace parking levies or road pricing. Of course, HM Treasury may well insist on the latter as the increasing percentage of electric cars and vans causes revenue from fuel duty. Electric road vehicles by themselves will not be sufficient to enable transport to play its part in reaching net zero by 2050.

Good and bad news from Northern

Northern plans to order bi-mode – diesel plus battery – trains similar to their CAF diesel and electric trains. The bad news is that, like the existing class 195 and 331 units, these are expected to have only one toilet per two or three car set. Northern have told me that it would take too long to redesign the interiors – yet Transport for Wales's 3-car class 197 trains with similar bodysells will have two toilets. So I fail to see why Northern cannot simply adopt the same provision. On journeys exceeding 30 or 40 minutes **one toilet is not acceptable**, given that one may be out of order. This issue has become more important given the increased importance of leisure travel – especially by families with children, and by older people, both of whom tend to use toilets more than commuters. **Minimum standards for carriage interiors** must be laid down – perhaps by safety and standards board RSSB. We need a minimum of two toilets per 2 or 3-car unit, with correspondingly more for longer sets.

Railfuture is a critical friend of rail. We want to see a bigger and better railway, but sometimes the industry could do better. We are keeping an eye on **TVMs (ticket vending machines)**. We are currently conducting a user survey of these. It is clear TVMs are unnecessarily complex and clunky, and it is always not easy to find the cheapest or best ticket. West Yorkshire concessionary fares are difficult to find unless you know how. It is not good enough. Of course, we all look forward to the day when the North finally gets something like London's Oyster. In the meantime, ticket machines need to encourage train usage by highlighting the cheapest fares. We hear of incidents where on-board revenue protection staff need to better distinguish between fare evaders and people who were unable to work a machine or were misdirected.

Union disconnection!

From a Yorkshire and North East perspective, the Union Connectivity Review was another disappointment. The Yorkshire Rail Campaign, to which a number of us belong, made the case for direct trains from the NE and



Not easy to use. And on this unstaffed platform you first have to find machine hidden away in a waiting shelter.

¹ See (e.g.) <https://ourworldindata.org/travel-carbon-footprint>. Bar chart lets you add modes, e.g. light rail, London Underground and coach. Remember electric rail will reduce its CO₂ output as generation goes green. Lowest CO₂ on list is Eurostar – all electric and a lot of it from French nuclear and renewables. – JSW.

Yorkshire to South Wales and North Wales (including Anglesey). This was ignored, as was the wish for through trains to Scotland via the Settle and Carlisle, taking the underused route via Dumfries – slower than the main line but opening up more connectivity. At least they kicked into touch the ridiculous idea of a very expensive Galloway to Northern Ireland road bridge!

Freight on rail – W12 capacity needed

It is encouraging to see announcement of new rail freight flows, though mostly not in our region. The Humber Express is an exception, transporting containers from Immingham to iPort Doncaster, along rails paralleling the M180. Other new flows include Tesco goods from Tilbury to Coatbridge, Toyota cars between Toton (Nottingham) to Valenciennes in northern France², and aggregates from Newhaven to West London.

Much more Yorkshire's freight should be on rail, but little can happen until there are major increases in capacity, both within to and from Yorkshire.

- The **Huddersfield line** when TRU is completed will be just a fraction of what is needed.
- **Skipton to Colne** would help – if the Government would only get on with it.
- But we also need at least one more new line across the Pennines capable of handling standard W12 containers: **Woodhead** comes to mind.

We also need a **change to planning law**, so that all future large warehouses are rail connected. These points were emphasised in Railfuture's response to the consultation on Transport for the North's generally excellent draft Freight Strategy, a response that Yorkshire Branch led on.

Great British Railways HQ – I'm backing Doncaster!

A competition to decide where an organisation's HQ should be is a novelty. The six criteria against which bidders for GBR's head office will be measured suggest that **Doncaster** is a very strong candidate:

- alignment to levelling up objectives,
- connected and easy to get to,
- railway heritage and links to the network,
- value for money,
- public support
- and the rather vague "opportunities for GBR".

York will be bidding, but I do not think it will meet the levelling up criterion. For me, four places meet those objectives – Crewe, Darlington, Derby and Doncaster. Crewe will benefit greatly from HS2. Of the three Ds, Doncaster is well-connected and in greatest need of levelling up.

Doncaster will submit a strong bid. **So let us them wish them success.**

Record rise

Rail fares went up on March 1st by 3.8%, the largest increase for a decade. It was inevitable under the ongoing policy to increase the percentage of rail industry costs paid by passengers. This policy is directly opposed to the Climate Change Act, and needs to be reversed. We need to be attracting more people to switch from cars to trains, not pricing them off rail travel. I am particularly concerned by the DfT statement that "We must now look to recoup some of the £14bn which was spent to keep vital services running throughout the pandemic in a way that is fair for all taxpayers." That £14bn was the right policy, both for the immediate need to enable essential workers to get to work, and for the longer term to ensure we have a comprehensive and thriving railway system. It was an investment and, given how high rail fares are in the UK compared to most countries, the government should not be seeking to recover any of that £14



² Southbound Corolla hybrids, northbound Aygos and Yarises. (RAIL <https://www.railmagazine.com/news/network/2022/03/07/first-toyota-cars-arrive-and-depart-by-rail-at-toton>)

Restoring Your Railway

AFTER three rounds considering “RYR” ideas, the government has given the go ahead to progress several proposed reopenings or reinstatements in Yorkshire to more detailed study. These proposals have a long way to go, with several stages ahead. The Yorkshire schemes are:

- **Barrow Hill** route Sheffield-Chesterfield (Round 1)
 - plus station at **Waverley** (separate bid – Round 2).
- **Askern line:** Pontefract-Doncaster (Round 3)
- **Minsters line:** Beverley-York (Round 3)
- **Don Valley line:** Sheffield-Stocksbridge

Just outside Yorkshire’s boundary Railfuture members will also be interested in **Bury to Rochdale** (Round 1) **Gainsborough to Barton-on-Humber** (Round 2) and **Ashton to Stockport** (Round 3).

More to follow on these schemes but here are updates on **Minsters Line**, the **Haxby** station scheme just outside York, plus progress in **Upper Wensleydale** where campaigners refuse to give up.

Minsters Line moves forward...

by **David Pennie**, secretary of Minsters Rail Campaign

A future rail service from Hull to York via the Minsters line is still a very long way ahead, but a significant step has been taken towards much improved rail connectivity and resilience for Hull and the East Riding.

ROUND 3 of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund in March 2021 attracted 89 applications. Thirteen were successful, three in Yorkshire. Beverley to York line, known as the Minsters Line, was perhaps an unlikely winner. New alignment is needed in five places where the original has been built over. It is not a “quick win” project like the Northumberland line. It is “reinstatement” rather than “reopening”.

The line, 32 miles from Beverley to York, provided Hull to York services. Modernisation of the route was under way, but the line fell victim to the Beeching cuts, and closed to passengers in November 1965. The Minsters Rail Campaign (MRC) was established in 2001 to promote the reinstatement.

In 2004 the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) commissioned a report from the Carl Bro Group to investigate feasibility. New housing and other development meant five new alignments were needed:

- north-east of York with a junction with the York-Scarborough line near Haxby;
- around Pocklington, Stamford Bridge and Market Weighton;
- and a new route out of Beverley in order to join the original route.

Value for money

The Carl Bro study found benefits to opening the line for passenger traffic, for both commuter and leisure use, but did not consider that it had any value for freight. The report recommended a double track route

providing a Hull-York service with two trains per hour, with intermediate stations only at Market Weighton, Pocklington and Stamford Bridge (but not Haxby). End-to-end journey time would be just under one hour. Estimated project cost was £239M (2005 figure). Fare revenue was not expected to cover operating costs, but taking into account environmental benefits, time savings



for passengers, benefits to traffic on the A1079 and A166, and other non-user benefits gave a favourable benefit/cost ratio. Value for money.

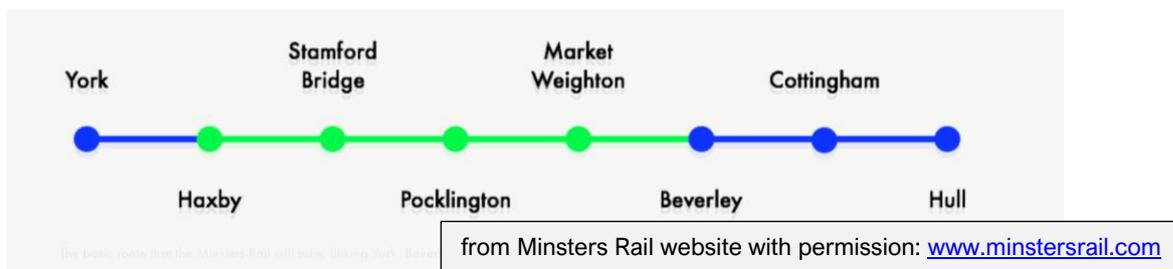
The Carl Bro study recommended that the route should be protected in ERYC’s local development plan. ERYC’s 2011 local transport plan identified the line as a long-term goal. However, in the East Riding local plan for 2012-2029, formally adopted in 2016, ERYC saw no obvious prospect of funding to reinstate the line within

the plan period, and felt that it could not justify protection of the whole route including the alternative routes round the built-over areas. However the local plan did include a firm statement of support for the reinstatement, and ERYC continued to offer support in principle.

Campaigning for connectivity, resilience – and carbon reduction

In October 2016, thanks to a meeting organised by Graham Stuart, MP for Beverley and Holderness, rail minister Paul Maynard asked the Department for Transport (DfT) to commission a “desktop study” of infrastructure considerations for the reopening of the route, to be conducted by Steer Davies Gleave (SDG).

MRC reformulated its case to include both the economic benefits of reconnecting the central East Yorkshire, but also the need to provide an alternative link from Hull and the East Riding to the rest of the rail



system. The main rail route from Hull to the west is subject to flooding and sea level rise – hence our strapline “Connectivity and Resilience”. We also put more emphasis on the line’s potential contribution to carbon reduction.

Success!

In 2020 the DfT launched its £500m Restoring your Railway *Ideas Fund* to develop proposals for closed lines. At the end of February 2020 an ERYC’s full council meeting passed unanimously a motion committing it to work with Government and partners to assess the feasibility. Aim was to secure DfT funding for an updated study. An initial RYR bid in June 2020 jointly from MRC and ERYC, with Graham Stuart MP (Beverley and Holderness) as sponsor, was not accepted, but the feedback encouraged a revised bid.

This second joint bid was compiled early in 2021 with input from the consultants AECOM, and was submitted in March 2021. Julian Sturdy MP (York Outer) became a second sponsor.

It was announced on 27 October that the bid had been successful.

Now the DfT will fund 75% of costs, up to £50K, for a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC); ERYC will fund the remaining 25%.

In view of their previous work on the successful bid to the DfT, AECOM were invited to submit a quotation for the SOBC, which has been accepted. So MRC and ERYC are now at the stage of commissioning AECOM to undertake the SOBC, which will build on the RYR bid, as well as the Carl Bro and SDG studies.

Freight potential

The proposed line could benefit freight in two ways:

(a) If in future most services use the Minsters route to York via Beverley, this could free up paths on the main line. Traffic via Hull Docks is set to increase following major investment by Associated British Ports. Moving more docks traffic from road to rail will assist further in carbon reduction.

(b) Longer term given lack of resilience of the main rail route to Hull from the west, it would be beneficial if the reinstated line had the potential to serve as an alternative freight route to the port of Hull. The recently approved Humber Freeport will further increase docks traffic.

Haxby

The question about whether the line will serve Haxby still remains. The successful RYR bid included proposed Haxby, on the York-Malton line, near where the Minsters Line would join in, as benefiting from the project. However, the likely location of Haxby station is now slightly north of the village, off the proposed route of the new line. That is a problem, but perhaps not insoluble. The SOBC will look at it in more detail. (Not to include Haxby will in fact bring the scheme back to how it was envisaged in the Carl Bro study.)

MRC and ERYC are now working closely with AECOM and will be part of regular meetings with specialists from the DfT RYR team and Network Rail as work on the SOBC progresses. Many of the aspirations of both MRC and ERYC can only be met by a heavy rail solution, but the SOBC must examine all options. It will be completed by August 2022 and submitted to the DfT. If the SOBC recommends a rail solution, and if this is accepted, it will go forward to the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline for more detailed analysis.

... Haxby progress...

by **Graham Collett**, Vice-Chair, Railfuture Yorkshire

A bit of history: Haxby station, along with the other intermediate stations between York to Scarborough, closed to passengers in 1930. I have lived in York since 1994 and for all that time there has been a campaign to reopen the station to serve this growing area of the City of York. The total population of the Haxby and Wigginton Ward was estimated in 2020 at 11,769.

Reopening of the stations at Haxby, Strensall and Copmanthorpe (on the East Coast Main Line south of York) and the building of a new station to serve York District Hospital (also on the Scarborough line) were included in the City of York Council's plans for several years, but changing administrations and difficulty in raising the funds caused these plans to be scaled back.

The focus then moved to Haxby as having the strongest case.

York – Scarborough rail service: One of the issues with Haxby is the extra time needed for trains to call at the new station. This was deemed unacceptable by the rail operator who argued that this had to be made up by costly speed improvements on the line. This damaged the business case.

However, since the original proposals were put forward, Northern – as part of their franchise – were committed to provide an hourly service from York to Scarborough to supplement the current TPE service. If this additional service is provided it could serve Haxby. Of course, Northern has come under the control the Department for Transport as an Operator of Last Resort (OLR) since the franchise agreement was drawn up and we are seeking clarification on their Scarborough service commitment. Recent proposals by TPE seem to assume that they will be providing this service themselves. (Service frequency is not yet clear – Ed.)

Latest: A new Liberal Democrat/Green administration was formed following the 2019 City of York Council (CYC) local elections. Following funding from CYC and extensive lobbying efforts by local councillors, in June 2020, the Council submitted a bid for the Department for Transport's New Stations Fund, making the case for Central Government funding to unlock the delivery of a new station in Haxby.

After reviewing this bid and seeing the clear potential for the scheme, the Council secured £400k to further develop proposals for the station. The Department for Transport (DfT) indicated their support of this project and said that they would expect to decide in 2022 on awarding full funding for delivery of the station.

Two sites were considered for the station. One was the original site in Station Road, which would of necessity have very limited parking and there were concerns about localised traffic and parking impacts. The other site is just to the north of Haxby along Towthorpe road, between Haxby and Strensall. This is attractive as it would offer larger parking facilities, but would encourage car use, and is not on an existing bus route. It is more likely to attract funding from DfT as it could offer a better business case.

After much consideration, the council executive approved the acquisition of the freehold interest of the Towthorpe Road site as their preferred location. This could be used as replacement allotments in the case that the Station Road location were in the end to be chosen.

A public consultation - which will need to include traffic impact assessment, car parking and travel implications - is yet to be held.



Look out for Haxby former station en route to Scarborough. New one may be some distance away!

Nigel Thompson / *Haxby railway station (site)*,
Yorkshire / [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/)

... And here's hoping for Hawes!

by **Andrew Longworth**, Chair, Upper Wensleydale Railway

NOT FAR off Ais Gill summit, highest point on the English rail network, Garsdale was the junction for Hawes and Wensleydale. Could a reopened line become a link for visitors and locals, reducing pressure on local roads? The Upper Wensleydale Railway Association (UWR) believes the answer should be yes, and proposes reinstatement of the 6-mile former branch of the Settle & Carlisle Line from Garsdale to Hawes. The hope is for through services between Manchester, Blackburn, Clitheroe and Hawes via Hellifield, Settle and the Yorkshire Three Peaks. Connection to the national network would provide wide socio-economic benefits to the local communities as well as to visitors to that part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

UWR applied to the DfT's Ideas Fund in June 2020, with a strengthened submission in February 2021. The Ideas Fund has not made an award of funding to UWR this time, but their extensive feedback to both applications was by no means discouraging. In particular, they made a number of recommendations for further evaluation before bringing the scheme to its next stage, which would preparation of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for 'Bringing the Railway Back to Hawes'.

UWR has decided accordingly to continue both the local campaigning and the further gathering of data on which the anticipated SOBC can draw. Last October, shortly before the DfT decision, saw a gathering of UWR supporters at Hawes. More than 25 attendees took part in lively and informative group discussions of the key issues faced by the campaigners. Further meetings during 2022 are being planned. **And so the UWR team continues its investigation of the feasibility of the scheme and welcomes all expressions of interest and support.**

For further information, please visit the website: <https://upperwensleydalerailway.org.uk>. Register on the contact page for occasional email updates.

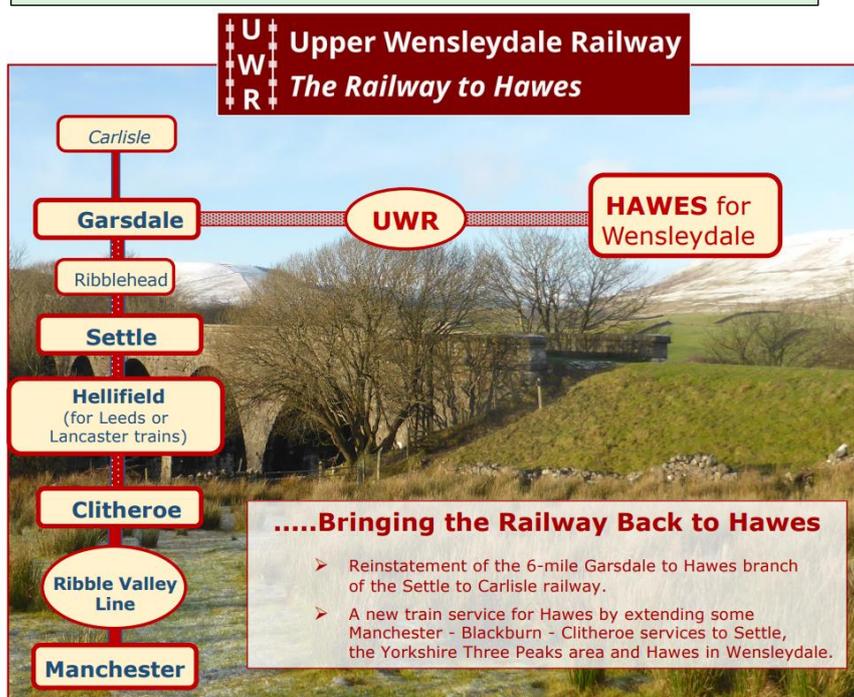
UWR is at present an informal group of independent volunteers. A formal organisation will be established at an appropriate stage in the development of the scheme. andrew@upperwensleydalerailway.org.uk

UPDATE: – Line could become a multi-user active travel route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders

under a report that was due to be considered by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, late March. Although the park local plan supports rail reinstatement, a feasibility study has concluded there is room for either railway or multi-user route, but not both. There is a commitment to creating a family-friendly cycling route somewhere in the Park. With the rail proposal rejected twice by government decision makers, the national park apparently thinks rail reinstatement very unlikely.

- What do readers think?

[Former Hawes branch line in the Yorkshire Dales could become cycling and walking route as railway re-opening plans abandoned | Yorkshire Post](#)



User group and community updates:

The plight of Baghill



PONTEFRACT Baghill station is on the route once confusingly referred to as the Dearne Valley Line. At time of writing all weekday trains are substituted by buses reflecting post-Covid staff issues. The line once carried NE-SW inter-city services, later diverted via Doncaster or Leeds.

Dave Hogg, chair of Pontefract Civic Society's rail group writes:

THE LINE runs from York to Sheffield and through three different authority areas, which is great detriment when comes to planning and subsidies. The service was gradually run down in the 1980s and 90s, culminating in a 2 trains-a-day timetable. Years of hard campaigning by us led to reinstatement of a midday train, making the line viable for leisure travel. The Sunday service has just two trains, both early evening. This is totally unacceptable. And it's worth mentioning that Baghill is one of the few stations in the whole country without an undercover waiting area.

The former station building is now owned by the Arch Holdings Company, and half of the building is rented to the DVSA for use as a driving test centre. However, the building has suffered from vandalism and other safety related issues. The tenant has recently moved out and is currently operating from a local motel. The other half of the building is in a derelict condition, with a stone bay window being held up with Acrow props (see picture). We are desperate for the owners to repair and make fit the part of the building which is in use. Repairs to the rest of the building would allow it to earn more income for Arch, and hopefully secure the building's long-term future. Any work must be carried out sympathetically, as it is a great example of Victorian mock gothic architecture.

We have arranged a meeting with representatives from Arch and local councillors to try and devise a plan to revive this once great building, and make it usable in the 21st Century. We hope to be able to access funding from the Railway Heritage Trust to help do this.

It has recently been brought to our attention that there has been a gradual theft of stone from a wall outside the station. The local police and councillors are dealing with this sad development.

Pontefract Civic Society's rail group will do all it can to ensure that this treasured building receives some love and attention as its future is in the balance. We cannot let this building die.

Dronfield: retiring chair recounts story of Friends group

DRONFIELD station closed in 1967 and reopened in 1981 with a very limited service. It wasn't until the end of 2008 that it gained a proper hourly regional service. Today, as well hourly Leeds-Nottingham trains run by Northern, the station is served by several East Midlands services mainly on the Liverpool-Nottingham route. Before Covid the station was boasting about 200,000 annual passenger footfalls (ORR figures). A lot of that progress is down to the station Friends group (FoDS), who combine have successfully combined campaigning with station adoption. Inspiration was chair **Peter Haywood** who stood down this year.



Mike Penny, FoDS press officer, reports:

Dr Peter Hayward MBE has decided to step back from leading the volunteer group the Friends of Dronfield Station (FoDS). At its Annual General Meeting in February the Friends gave thanks to their retiring chair, who was presented with an engraved pewter beer tankard by member Michael Muntus. Michael paid tribute to

Peter's inspiration and calm leadership and many achievements in bringing back a regular and popular train service to Dronfield.

Dronfield station closed in 1967 under the post-Beeching axe. It reopened in 1981, but with a very limited peak-hour only service. Peter took up the story, explaining how, in 2006, a simple letter to the magazine Dronfield Eye complaining about the very small numbers of trains stopping at Dronfield, led to an avalanche of local support for the introduction of more regular services. A public meeting was held, and an action group convened to lobby rail operators and government. And so it was that an hourly service stopping at Dronfield began at the end of 2008, and the Friends group was formed. FoDS has successfully campaigned to bring about many improvements both to the train service and to the buildings and garden area of the station which in 2006 had been an eyesore – campaigning and station-adopting combined!

Welcoming gateway

Since then the station garden and the planters on the platforms have become much appreciated by local people and visitors. Annual usage of the train service from and to Dronfield has increased dramatically.

Peter added that much of the credit had to go to FoDS volunteers who have, through their hard work and dedication, contributed to making Dronfield station an attractive and welcoming gateway to the town.

Relinquishing the post of chair for health reasons, Peter has accepted the role of joint president of FoDS. The joint presidency will be shared with the current president Natascha Engel, who as Member of Parliament for Derbyshire NE from 2005 to 2017 was very involved in setting up FoDS and helping its progress. mtpenney2020@gmail.com

Good food and real ale by train at Hunmanby

COME BY TRAIN and you might – as your roving editor was – be met serendipitously by Nick Harvey...with the Friends' wheelbarrow !

"THIS YEAR," **Nick writes** "visitors have a new attraction awaiting them. The Friends of Hunmanby Station have produced a Good Food and Real Ale Trail starting the station and through the village. With growing concerns over climate change the leaflet promotes a more sustainable alternative. The message is come by train, enjoy the scenery on a 2.5 mile lovely village walk, and take your time with "slow tourism". The trail leaflet is a community project, thanking local traders who have supported the village through the pandemic and are now giving a new welcome to visitors. Artwork – see pictorial map, right – is by Margaret Crompton of Hunmanby Art Group with words by local author Jane Finnis, and photography by Paul, a wheelchair user who is a keen photographer.

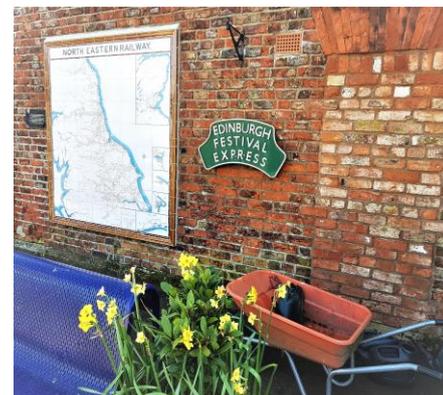


The trail celebrates the 175th anniversary of the Hull-Scarborough line. Hunmanby is on the final section that opened between Filey and Bridlington in 1847. 3000 full-colour leaflets have been funded from Scarborough Borough Councils locality budget."

[Friends of Hunmanby Railway Station \(e-voice.org.uk\)](http://Friends of Hunmanby Railway Station (e-voice.org.uk))

12th Century church, pubs, cafes and shops bring life to Hunmanby, as do the station and its Friends.

Pictures: JSW



Service and timetable concerns

TOP user-group report at Railfuture Yorkshire's February meeting was the **Askern** branch line's success in getting to the next stage the government's Reopening Your Railway scheme. The proposed Askern station has staggered platforms, to facilitate efficient level crossing operation by ensuring the train crosses the road before entering the station. Doncaster borough has gone ahead with land purchase.

Good news also for the **Hull-Bridlington** line with a promise from Northern to fully reinstate the local stopping service in May 2022. Less good, later news confirmed that Northern is doing this at the expense of the Calder Valley Halifax-Leeds-Garforth-Hull service (more on that below). Other positive items included successful introduction of half-hourly **Leeds-Harrogate-York** service. But again less positive news for the Harrogate line has been confirmed more recently.

The **Stalybridge-Huddersfield** group is pushing hopefully for half-hourly stoppers by May 2023, something that appears possible in the timetable pattern, but was removed from a recent consultation by TransPennine Express on Dec'22 changes. With a specification of six trains per hour on the TP Huddersfield line it is surely only fair that two per hour should serve Slaithwaite, Marsden, Greenfield and Mossley that serve large communities. The proposed service pattern increases connection times at Stalybridge unacceptably for people travelling between these stations and the line through Ashton.

HADRAG, the **Halifax & District** Rail Action Group, prioritises electrification. But issues with the present timetable go on. Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse have a poor service compared with stations further up the valley serving no greater population. HADRAG wants a timetable that provides connections between different branches of the Calder Valley mini-network like a miniature Swiss "taktfahrplan". How about more services between Calderdale and Huddersfield linked with Huddersfield-Manchester locals?

The present service is cut for the summer on what Northern appear to see as less important "branches". Halving the Hull-Halifax service to 2-hourly makes a nonsense of the 4 trains/hr Halifax-Leeds pattern and slashes the **east Leeds** service. Northern's briefing about the summer timetable admitted this was to allow the local Hull-Bridlington hourly service. At the same time we have hourly service now cut to 2-hourly on the Bradford-Brighouse-Huddersfield route, and a gap every 4 or 5 hours in the "Tod Curve" service. All of this just makes it more difficult to travel by rail. HADRAG says Brighouse, reopened in 2000, has never had a fair deal.

Harrogate sees early morning and late-evening service cuts. Trains at 0607 and 0633 to Leeds are suspended, axing long-distance connections as well as early commuting. First Leeds train is 0656 – a rare fast, the promise of hourly limited-stop extras now dropped. First standard half-hourly stopper is just after seven. A 2-hour gap in the Leeds-Harrogate late evening service will hit leisure, work and business journeys.

Bradford-Skipton and Ilkley goes from half-hourly to hourly.

In **South Humberside** stopping services Scunthorpe to Doncaster appear to be buses for the foreseeable future. And the **Pontefract** Baghill line is replaced by buses at present, with trains running empty stock. Buses continue into the summer, as does a gapped train service Monkhill-Leeds. **Huddersfield-Wakefield-Castleford** is replaced by a limited bus service for we know not how long. **Gainsborough Central** is back to a very limited train service, a station that should have been boosted by the most recent franchise. Central is massively convenient for shops and heritage attractions in the town, as well as local people's travel needs for work and leisure. Stations like this need to be given a chance, as do stations like Castleford, Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge. The proposed hourly Northern service **York-Scarborough** is now effectively cancelled but may be operated in some form by TPE. **Whitby** has early morning and late evening services withdrawn, though extra carriages are promised on daytime trains. Another franchise promise kicked into touch.

We are far from done with Covid, cause of staff absence and a backlog of training of drivers and conductors. Northern says services will be reinstated when resources allow. But also, as Northern's Tony Baxter and Pete Myers told RfY's webinar in March we have industrial relations disputes that need to be worked through. If you have travelled at the weekend recently you will know that TPE has been affected by strikes every Sunday. Northern also has issues over rest-day working and we have seen cancellations.

But what we are seeing defies government objectives on levelling up. Issues include:

- Loss of connectivity, attraction of services to passengers, and sustainability.
- Public wariness of Covid making overcrowding a bigger problem. Frequency, capacity and predictability are essential. We face increased pollution and climate threat as people turn back to car travel.

- Could we see station improvements (Halifax, Harrogate, Skipton, Selby...) undermined by service cuts, viability of new stations compromised (Elland on the Brighouse line, Haxby...), housing expansion on the strength of good rail services undermined?

At the webinar Northern said the full pattern would come back – cause for optimism. The website Real Time Trains shows some services, such as Calder Valley and Harrogate, being restored in mid-July. We should perhaps not expect Northern to comment on that, because not all data on RTT is confirmed. Are trains shown as running four months away only be there to safeguard the paths? Don't get your hopes up. And let's not blame Northern for all this. Maybe Northern can buy time by using a period of reduced services to catch up on that backlog of training and other issues. And Covid is still a problem.

We are seeing damage to places that should benefit from levelling up. How long will we have to wait?

This may not be Northern's fault, but what a way to run a railway! – JSW

Our March webinar with Northern attracted 54 members and friends. As this was published two more were due with Cllr Susan Hincliffe and Cllr Kim Groves of WY Combined Authority transport committee, and with David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director at Transport for the North (28 Mar). More events below.

Obituaries: Tributes were paid at our February branch meeting to two colleagues who had recently died. **Peter Davies** of Brighouse had been a past chair of Yorkshire branch. **Paul Abell** had been a national vice president of Railfuture. Two very different figures, both of them remarkable as campaigners for better transport. Both sadly missed. (A full obituary of Paul Abell appeared in Railwatch December 2021.)

Diary – to advertise in our Summer issue, please tell us before end of May. js.waring@hotmail.co.uk	
Tuesday 26 th April	Evening webinar with Gareth Dennis. Time to be confirmed.
Monday 9 May 11.00 to 12.00	Webinar: Why Doncaster should be the headquarters of Great British Railways , Peter Kennan, Private Sector Board Member (Transport and the Environment), South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership.
Railfuture Yorkshire Branch AGM (was 30 April) is postponed for reasons including continuing pandemic. New date to follow. Preference is still for in-person meeting but may be online (maybe hybrid).	
Sat 28 May 2022	Copy deadline for YRC 57, Summer 2022
Sat 16 July 2022 10:00 registration; 11:00 start	Railfuture national Annual General Meeting, The Green, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8PD. Near Bristol Parkway Station. No fee for members. Members should have received details with Railwatch 171.
Thursday 15 September 2022	Railfuture Annual Conference, St. George's Centre, Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3DL. Theme: A turning point for the railways.

Contact us!

Next issue YRC57 will be out in Summer 2022. Please email photos, news, and opinion pieces to Stephen (js.waring@hotmail.co.uk) to arrive by Monday 28 May 2022.

Having your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email saves us time and money. Please contact Andrew Dyson our membership secretary (andrew.dyson@railfuture.org.uk) to request this.

Finished with this newsletter?

Please pass it on to a friend or colleague who might be interested in campaigning for better transport or even joining Railfuture. Or you could leave with other second-hand books and magazines where these are left e.g. in station waiting rooms – please ask for permission if appropriate.

User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group	www.avrug.org.uk
Askern Station, Friends of	Contact Graham Moss on graz.moss@sky.com or 07510 555722
Bradford Rail Users' Group	www.bradfordrail.com
Esk Valley Railway	http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdc.html
Halifax and District Rail Action Group and Electric Railway Charter	www.hadrag.com and www.electriccharter.wordpress.com
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Care of billymms@btinternet.com
Harrogate Line Supporters' Group	www.harrogateline.org
Hope Valley Rail Users' Group	www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk
Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association	Email: hpsrua@btinternet.com
Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association	davidpennierail21@gmail.com
Hunmanby Railway Station, Friends of	https://e-voice.org.uk/friendsofhunmanbyrailwaystation/
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	
Minsters Rail Campaign (Beverley-York)	http://www.minstersrail.com/
Pontefract Civic Society Rail Group	https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/
Selby and District Rail Users' Group	http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/
Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the	www.foscl.org.uk
Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership	www.selrap.org.uk
Stalybridge to Huddersfield	Email: markashmore@yahoo.com
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk
Upper Wensleydale Railway	https://upperwensleydalerailway.org.uk/
Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line)	www.yccrp.co.uk

Branch Committee and the small print

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Join us! Railfuture annual subs £20 for individuals (£22 joint), £14 if under 26, £25 for rail user groups & local authorities, and £35 for businesses. See <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join/> or contact our membership secretary: andrew.dyson@platform5.com. Please let Andrew know if you join online.