

# Railfuture media contacts 2008

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## A Brief History

The Railway Development Society (RDS) has its roots in the campaigns against rail closures in the 1950s and 1960s. Campaigners fighting for rail came together to form two pressure groups – the Railway Invigoration Society and the Railway Development Association. These groups saw the need for a stronger pro-rail lobby and on 1 October 1978 merged to form the Railway Development Society which in 2001 chose Railfuture as its campaigning name.

## What we do

Railfuture works with all levels of government, train operators and like-minded voluntary bodies to promote the interests of rail users and secure improvements to rail services. We are independent of political parties, trade unions and railway management.

- Railfuture contends that if our economy is to grow in a sustainable way urgent plans need to be made to expand the railways. We need new lines, new stations, new signalling, more electrification, reopened routes and newer and longer trains.
- We monitor the activities of the rail industry.
- We campaign for better and more reliable passenger services. Good connections between services and better integration with buses, ferries and trams.
- We campaign for better facilities on stations and improved security, especially on unstaffed stations and stations that are only staffed during the morning peak.
- We campaign for better access to stations on foot, by car and by public transport.

- We campaign for more freight to go by rail to increase the viability of rail freight services and reduce the environmental damage caused by heavy lorries.
- We lobby politicians throughout Great Britain. During 2008 Railfuture delegations have met with Tom Harris MP, Minister of State for Transport, Norman Baker MP, Lib Dem Shadow Transport Secretary and Welsh Assembly Ministers.
- We respond to consultation papers particularly those issued by the Department for Transport, the House of Commons Transport Committee and rail industry bodies.
- We have campaigned to point out the benefits rail can play in Regional and Local Plans especially by helping to meet targets for sustainability and carbon emissions.
- Railfuture was a founder member of the European Passengers Federation with a Railfuture director, Trevor Garrod, serving as its first chairman.
- We hold regular meetings with other bodies representing rail interests such as meetings in 2008 with Passenger Focus and Association of Train Operating Companies.
- We campaign for the protection of disused rail routes that could be reopened in the future and against their conversion into busways or roads.
- We support the construction of light rail and tram systems.
- We campaign for more and better cycle storage facilities at stations and carriage of cycles on as many trains as possible.
- We usually organise two conferences every year. The first with a theme centring on campaigning and reopening existing, or building new, lines or stations. Our 2008 Summer Conference in Salisbury looked at transport issues in the Wessex area. Our 2008 Autumn Conference in London, "Railways in the Future", will have high profile speakers from the rail industry.
- We publish books and pamphlets targeting where the rail network can be improved and supporting the transfer of freight to rail. Our latest publication is *The Case for Rail* which details facts and figures showing the benefits of rail.

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