

# Railfuture Limited - Election of Directors for 2023/24

The Board of Directors is legally liable for the running of the company. Railfuture Ltd must abide by the Companies Act, General Data Protection Regulation, Insurance Act, Health and Safety at Work Act, Lobbying Act and many other pieces of legislation. It also has a legal duty to act in the best interests of the members collectively, which primarily means ensuring that Railfuture is financially well-run, is not exposed to unnecessary risk, and satisfies our insurers and banks. Candidates must be committed to performing this role if elected. Primarily, of course, they must work constructively and harmoniously as part of a team. They receive no remuneration.

Although Railfuture exists to campaign for a bigger and better railway, the directors' responsibility is managerial and strategic. They manage the company to enable high-quality, modern, professional and effective campaigning work, where relevant to the company's aims, to be done by Railfuture volunteers, and to make available funds where beneficial to members, properly focused/managed, and value-for-money. It is not the immediate responsibility of the directors to campaign, although many do so within their branch activities, and it is not necessary for every director to have a deep understanding of the railway.

The board needs a variety of knowledge, understanding and skills amongst the directors that include company management, project management, finance/accountancy, corporate governance, data protection, legal, human resources, information technology (especially websites and databases), marketing (including exploiting social media) as well as railway matters, both as rail users and professionals working within the rail industry.

There are three vacancies for a full three-year term. These vacancies arise from the end of term for two directors (Jerry Alderson and Stewart Palmer) and also Pete Myers who was co-opted in December 2022 following the death, in office, of Mike Rose. Stewart Palmer has decided not to stand again. In addition to Jerry Alderson and Pete Myers there is one new candidate, Owen O'Neil, who has not been on the Board before. With three candidates for three places, there will be no election in 2023. However, in the interests of openness and providing members with information about the directors, their election statements are shown in full below.

The directors express their disappointment that only one new candidate decided to stand and urge suitably qualified members to consider doing so in 2024. Please contact Chris Page, national chair, to find out more about taking part.

Details of the election process can be read at [www.railfuture.org.uk/Elections](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Elections).

Candidates have an opportunity to an informal meeting with impartial representatives to discuss the role of director.

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## List of current directors (up to three-year terms with chair appointed from amongst the directors):

**Chris Page** – Chair

**Jerry Alderson** – Finance & IT Director \*

**Roger Blake** – (Rail) Infrastructure Director

**Pete Myers** – currently without portfolio \*\*

**Wendy Thorne** – Membership Director

**Allison Cosgrove** – Vice Chair and Passenger Director

**Ian Brown CBE** – Policy Director

**Neil Middleton** – Communications Director

**Stewart Palmer** – Governance Director \*\*\*

Allison Cosgrove has responsibility for supporting Railfuture's 14 branches, aiming to visit several each year. Those marked '\*' have completed their term and seek re-election, '\*\*' are co-opted and standing, '\*\*\*' not standing.

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## Candidate Details and Election Addresses

All candidates were asked to answer questions 1 to 7 and submit an election address of not more than 300 words.

- 1) Length of membership of Railfuture Ltd
- 2) Current and previous Railfuture Ltd branch membership and committee Service
- 3) Current and Previous Railfuture Ltd national group service
- 4) Relevant qualifications and work experience
- 5) Current and previous membership of other relevant organisations with details of positions held
- 6) Participation in other organisations as Railfuture Ltd representative
- 7) Nature and Duration of any association with a rail user group (whether or not affiliated to Railfuture Ltd)
- 8) Election address

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**JERRY ALDERSON** – Proposed by David Harby (Finance Officer); seconded by Lloyd Butler (Membership Admin)

### Personal Details

Q1. 23 years

Q2. East Anglia branch committee since 2002

Q3. Director since 2005. Vice Chairman 2006-13. Now Director of Finance & IT. Member of European Passenger Group. Former chair of Networks Group. Former acting chair of West Midlands branch

Q4. Owner director of a small business consultancy company specialising in growing revenue in telecommunications, banking and retail sectors throughout Europe

Q5. Founding CAST.IRON executive, attempting to reopen Cambridge to St. Ives Railway

Q6. CBT until 2007

Q7. Occasional volunteer on Mid-Norfolk Railway. Member of Fen Line Users and other railway user/campaign groups. Shareholder in Wensleydale Railway amongst others.

### **Election Address**

I had not expected to stand again (nor when last elected in 2020), but it is a sad fact that few Railfuture members put themselves forward to run the organisation, whether at national or branch level. I am grateful to all those who do, especially the two stalwarts who have proposed me. Being a director is the most onerous role as it has legal responsibilities that can have consequences for our personal lives, but I would urge members, particularly women and younger ones, to aim to become a director in the future, perhaps initially being co-opted. It is not financially rewarding – we are all unpaid volunteers – but it can be enjoyable and give a great sense of achievement. Railfuture experience can look good on your CV.

I joined the Board of Directors in 2005 intending to steer Railfuture in the right direction and secure its future. I feel that I have achieved this, putting our finances onto a sound footing by building up reserves and seeking value for money, ensuring that we are compliant with legislation, making use of modern technology and increasing our professionalism. We are fortunate to have attracted recently-retired rail professionals to join the Board – something I have always encouraged – as they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that maximises Railfuture's influence. The organisation has some structural issues that are difficult to resolve – an ageing membership – but our credibility has never been stronger.

As the railway patronage grew, costs were allowed to grow unchecked. The way out of its financial predicament is to attract more passengers, not slim down the service. Railfuture's prominent campaigns must include passenger issues (value-for-money fares, less overcrowding, fast and frequent services, good station and train facilities) and we must continue to challenge all governments and the rail industry.

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**PETE MYERS** – Proposed by Allison Cosgrove (National Vice-Chair); seconded by Chris Page (National Chair)

### **Personal Details**

Q1. Since November 2022

Q2. I currently sit on the Yorkshire branch committee

Q3. None

Q4. I worked for Northern for 30 years in a variety of roles, latterly leading our regional external relationship

Q5. I am a Board member of the S&C DevCo, the Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line (FoSCL) and the Tyne Valley CRP

Q6. None

Q7. As the Stakeholder Manager I had a day-to-day relationship with most RUGs in the North of England. Indeed, I also helped to set up many 'Friends of...' groups throughout the North.

### **Election Address**

I have an up-to-date knowledge of how the modern (post COVID-19) railways work, including the somewhat fragile funding environment that it finds itself in. I can bring this knowledge to our organisation, and while it does not make me a railway expert, I do believe that I can use this knowledge to advise on policy and help represent us with the rail industry.

My bailiwick has always been the North of England, which I do think is important, because I do understand the issues and challenges that are peculiar to the region. Not least the needs of a part of the country with the economies focused in distinct urban areas, but with a potentially lucrative (and often untapped) leisure market. In addition, I understand the 'political' geography of the North, with powerful Metro Mayors, but equally large shire counties all with differing needs.

The next few years are going to be difficult for the rail industry, costs are high and income has stalled since the pandemic. It is clear that the old-franchising system, for all its merits, has probably run its course. Equally perhaps the idea of a fully funded Great British Railways may now be too costly, so there will be change. I believe that the nation needs a body that can represent the users (and potential users) of the great asset which is our rail system. Railfuture needs to fill this void, and I am confident that I am in a position to help make this happen.

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**OWEN O'NEILL** – Proposed by Steve Jones (East Midlands branch secretary); seconded by Peter Small

### **Personal Details**

Q1. 2.5 years

Q2. Current West Midlands Branch committee member

- Q3. Sit on Infrastructure & Networks Group
- Q4. MEng in software engineering
- Q5. Welland Valley Railway Development CIC – director, Sustainable Transport Lutterworth Line CIC – director; Sustainable Transport Midlands CIC – director; CRIL - Campaign to Reopen the Ivanhoe Line - ordinary member
- Q6. Participation in other organisations as Railfuture representative:  
N/A
- Q7. Stourbridge Line User Group (2 years) (ordinary member) Lichfield Rail Promotion Group (2 years) (ordinary member)

### **Election Address**

I'm currently based in Birmingham. My interest in public transport developed four years ago via a local campaign group. This switched me on to the fact that transport is our biggest CO<sub>2</sub>-emitter. This led me to rail since it's one of the most efficient ways to move people and goods.

The mission of Railfuture matched my goals, and with the help of people I've met via Railfuture led me to create and promote a RYR (Restoring Your Railway) project in the East Midlands (Welland Valley Rail). My criterion was to create a project that connected the largest population with the smallest amount of infrastructure. Although not successful in securing funding, it has attracted considerable support among local MPs & LAs, and good engagement with the SNTB, which we hope to progress.

I have a professional engineering background, and now have a reasonable grasp of engineering design of infrastructure and operations.

Some people get excited by rolling stock and the colour of paint on the outside of it. It interests me to the extent that it is a key part of the system and customer experience. My questions about it tend towards 'does it have level boarding?', 'is it reliable?', and 'is it electric?' i.e., how does the vehicle improve the customer experience, accessibility being a key part, and through improved experience promote modal shift.

Key areas of interest for me are achieving modal shift, so to that end 'Railfuture' is not 'HeavyRailFuture'. Trams are an important part of the mix, as is integration with other modes providing the 'final mile' (including active travel). A negligible number of journeys start and end at a station.

The other area of interest for me is freight, since there are many benefits to be had from moving freight off road onto rail.



**Railfuture – run by volunteers to benefit rail users – Campaigning for a bigger better railway in Britain**

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