



Memorandum: Media Guidelines and Policy

Dear Railfuture Media contact,

You are receiving this memorandum as you are named on the current list of Railfuture media contacts.

The name Railfuture is the Intellectual Property of Railfuture Ltd.; but just as important, it is also that which identifies our organisation to the rail industry, government and the public, and as such those who speak on our behalf must be mindful of their role and duty to protect our property and our reputation.

In order to ensure that we remain within the parameters of our corporate insurance and to protect the company and its members, the Board has asked National Media Officer to restate the position regarding who is authorised to issue written press statements, participate in Radio or TV broadcasts, publish material on our websites or use on-line Social Media on behalf of Railfuture, and about what.

Other than Directors, **only** those people specifically authorised in writing, by the Board, are able to speak to the media or make press or Social Media releases using the Railfuture name. Thus, your written acknowledgement of the receipt of this memorandum will constitute your agreement to abide by the guidelines contained herein, and therefore, your authorisation to continue in your current role as a media contact.

1 Press, TV and Radio Guidelines

- a) You must not write or say anything that could be in any way offensive or defamatory to individuals, government departments/agencies, corporate bodies (inc TOCs) or political and trades union organisations. Whilst you may criticise the actions or ideas of individuals or organisations, you must not criticise the individuals or organisations themselves, and you must not write or say anything which could bring Railfuture into disrepute or damage the relationship between Railfuture and any individual or organisation. Similarly you must not write or say anything that could be construed as support or bias for any individual, political, commercial or trades union organisation, directly or indirectly.
- b) You must not contradict official national Railfuture policy. For guidance on policy, refer to the Railfuture website campaigns and policy pages.
- c) You must contact your Branch liaison director or the National Media Officer if the subject relates to any aspect of national and/or policy issues, e.g., any and all issues affecting more than one branch and/or an issue of national significance, such as:
 - Roads
 - Aviation
 - Franchising

- Nationalisation or Rail Ownership
- Fares
- High Speed Rail
- Electrification
- Freight

Statements on these and all other core policy issues are reserved exclusively to the Board or National Media Officer. Obviously if, for example, it occurs in mid-interview, please be extremely cautious, do not let yourself be drawn and keep within points a-c.

- d) You are perfectly at liberty to issue statements on strictly local branch issues providing they do not in any way conflict with points a-c above.
- e) If you are contacted by the media, try and ascertain as much detail in advance as possible; exactly what they want to talk about, who the reporter is, their deadline etc., and if possible 'buy time' in order to consult as necessary with the National Media Officer or with your Branch liaison director.
- f) If you don't know the answer to a question don't be forced to guess or speculate. Simply respond, "I don't know, I'll check and follow it up with you". You can always provide an answer later but it's hard to purge an inaccurate answer you've already given. The moral is don't be afraid to say, "I don't know...", and don't allow yourself to be forced or goaded into saying something.
- g) Don't feel obliged to answer poorly or vaguely worded questions, simply respond "I don't know, I'll check and follow it up with you", or try to get them to clarify.
- h) Don't comment on areas outside your expertise, simply say "I'll consult colleagues and get back to you".

2 Social Media and Web Guidelines

These guidelines are to help you make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, and LinkedIn, or on YouTube. These guidelines apply equally to branch or group contributions to the Railfuture family of websites.

In addition to our family of websites, Railfuture has an active presence on Facebook, YouTube, X and LinkedIn.

All social media accounts in the name of Railfuture are the property of the company and as such only they may display logos, names or other corporate identification. They must be linked to a designated Railfuture email account, not a personal email. Branches and Groups intending to create a new social media account must request

approval from the Communications Director or National Chair before proceeding. A Railfuture social media account would not normally be created for an individual member.

Only branch/group members authorised by the National Media Officer are permitted to post material on any form of social media in our name and on our behalf.

On all forms of social media account, the profile logo, background pictures and profile text must be in Railfuture's corporate style. These must not be altered or added to; neither must passwords be changed.

2.1 General points applying to all forms of social media

- a) You are free to hold views, which differ from Railfuture policy, but if they do, you should refrain from actions which might enable followers to link personal views to Railfuture, e.g., by giving your name in Railfuture tweets or re-tweeting or linking Railfuture tweets to or from your personal social media account(s) or linking your Railfuture postings in any form of social media to yourself.
- b) Comments must not be libellous, defamatory, insulting or offensive, directly or indirectly. Whilst you may criticise the actions or ideas of individuals or organisations, you must not criticise the individuals or organisations themselves.
- c) Comments should be constructive and positive creating a polished professional image.
- d) All comments must be in line with Railfuture policy.
- e) All posts must be relevant, as must the impression given by the totality of posts on the account
- f) Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of us as an organisation. You must not post anything which could bring Railfuture into disrepute or damage the relationship between Railfuture and any individual or organisation. Similarly you must not post anything that could be construed as support or bias for any individual, political, commercial, trades union or lobby organisation, directly or indirectly. If you make a mistake in a contribution, either delete it immediately or be prompt in admitting error and correcting it.
- g) You are personally responsible for content you publish on social media – be aware that what you publish might be public for many years.
- h) Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.

Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset, return to it later when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner.

- i) If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then you shouldn't do it. If in doubt, always discuss it with your Branch liaison director or me.
- j) Do not publish your contact details in any form of social media, and never publish anyone else's contact details.

2.2 X specific

- k) All tweets must be concise and relevant to the branch or group Tweeting; we would not expect to see the Freight group tweeting on Passenger matters or the Yorkshire Branch Tweeting on matters directly affecting the West Midlands Branch, for example.
- l) The re-tweeting of other branch or groups tweets is encouraged, but re-tweeting of tweets by individuals (be they members or otherwise) or other organisations should only be done after careful consideration. While they may be relevant, topical or the starting point for wider debate they may not be in line with Railfuture policy and could be seen as an endorsement of the views of other organisations. If such endorsement is relevant, the Board or I will make that decision.
- m) Do not tweet too frequently. There is no hard and fast rule as to how frequently is too frequent, but if you look at your time line and your messages are showing up more often than everyone else's you are probably tweeting too often.
- n) Avoid using text speak (txt spk). Although X is limited to 280 characters (including spaces and punctuation) it can be very tempting to abbreviate words to fit everything in. The occasional easily understood abbreviation is fine, but routinely adopting text speak will irritate your audience.

2.3 Photos

If we wish to post photos on social media or any website, including our own, we have to make sure that we have permission from the copyright owners to do so. Some copyright owners are very aggressive in pursuing fees, so we cannot afford to ignore this requirement. To avoid copyright infringement, we should only use photos/images in our websites, social media accounts, newsletters, leaflets and publications that are from the following sources:

by Railfuture members

with a Creative Commons licence eg from Wikimedia or Flickr (note most photos on Flickr are not Commons)

Publicity photos and images eg from networkrailmediacentre or government websites

for which we have sought and received permission

for which have purchased an editorial licence assigned to Railfuture, eg from Alamy or iStock

All photos and images should be attributed. For the website, this should be both on the webpage/article and in the gallery description. Details of any permission or licence purchase should also be given in the gallery description or, for article headline photos, in a tiki comment following the attribution.

Examples of format for attribution:

Our members: 'Photo by Chris Page for Railfuture'.

Commons licence: 'Photo by Ed Webster, CC BY 2.0
<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons'

Publicity photos: 'Photo by Network Rail'

With permission: 'Image supplied by Ilkeston Advertiser'

With licence: 'Image by iStock'

Examples of format for permission or licence:

With permission: 'Image supplied by Ilkeston Advertiser with permission in email from phil.bramley@jpress.co.uk to chris.page@railfuture.org.uk of 5/2/2018'

With licence: 'Image by iStock. Stock file ID:516358680. Licence purchased by chris.page@railfuture.org.uk on 10/10/2018 order number 2056407676 and assigned to Railfuture.'

3 Conclusion

In order for you to continue as a media representative for Railfuture, the Board requests that you acknowledge receipt of this memorandum, and welcomes constructive discussion and comment.

Bruce Williamson



National Media Officer
Railfuture

1st August 2024