

President: Alan Whitehouse Vice-Presidents: Mike Crowhurst & Alan Williams

Response to Trans-Pennine Chaos

By Mark Parry



Photo by Mark Ashmore. Marsden on a cold wet November day where there is a half-metre gap on a slant so only one door has been opened which often has to be forced open. Passengers have been unable to alight at other stations such as Mossley because the doors won't open and have ended up at either Huddersfield or Stalybridge.

Following the chaos on the introduction of the May timetable, the Office of Road and Rail conducted an Inquiry. Their terms of reference were identifying factors behind the failure to implement an effective timetable; drawing conclusions about the management of operational risks created by major timetable changes; and making recommendations to the industry and government in advance of future major network changes. One of our Rail User Groups most affected by the changes is SHRUG, the Stalybridge, to Huddersfield Rail User Group, who have experienced some shocking problems on the Trans-Pennine line. The Inquiry had two phases and overleaf is an extract of the group's response to phase 2, provided by Mark Ashmore.

Railfuture, Yorkshire Branch Annual General Meeting

David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director at Transport for the North

12:30 to 15:50 hours, Saturday, 19 January 2019

St. George's Conference Centre, 60 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3DL

See flyer for more details

1) Franchise Specification - The idea for four fast trains on a clock-face 15 minute interval originated back in about the year 2000 by "The Northern Way" which was the joint body of the three Regional Development Agencies of the North-West, Yorkshire & Humberside and the North-East. These bodies were abolished by the coalition government but this idea took root with the Department for Transport and business leaders. The idea in itself is great but no-one really asked how feasible was it if the planned infra-structure improvements, in particular electrification and platforms 15 & 16 at Piccadilly were not ready in time. As with the introduction of the May 2018 timetable there would seem to be no point at which a decision could be made as to whether to go ahead or be less ambitious.

2) Franchise Bids - The Department for Transport encouraged (to use their own terminology) "ambitious" bids even though many thought a better word would be unrealistic. From all accounts First Group were very determined to win the bid for the Transpennine Express franchise they were already operating and so their bid was also "ambitious". In order to win and operate the franchise with the trains that they had it was necessary to operate to a very tight timetable with very short turnaround times at many destinations. Examples SHRUG is aware of are just seven minutes at Manchester Piccadilly on a train from Hull and just ten minutes at Manchester Airport on trains from the North-East. These timings would have been "ambitious" on their own but with the extra planned Northern trains they were nigh on impossible; this opinion is substantiated by the fact that many trains have been turned back short of their destination on a daily basis. First Transpennine Express have also had shortages of guards and drivers which is surely an internal problem and not one for which that they can blame Arriva Rail North. The Department for Transport and the Treasury were clearly impressed by the bid from First and it is perhaps possible that the possibility of premium payments in the latter part of the franchise meant that once again meant no-one felt able to say "hang on is this a realistic bid and if it is not achievable what is the fall-back position?"

3) May 2018 timetable - Most of the criticism around the introduction of the May '18 timetable has been levelled at Northern, and Transpennine Express have managed for the most part to avoid criticism even though they signed up to the impossible timetable and had a shortage of Drivers. In the Transpennine Express "Invitation To Tender" there was the following: *5.4.1.1.iv. Take due account of the needs of passengers travelling to and from intermediate stations between Manchester, Huddersfield and Leeds, as well as the needs of longer distance inter-city passengers*; It soon became clear that this requirement was ignored and the "needs of passengers travelling to and from intermediate stations" were subservient to "inter-city passengers". If this requirement had been given the weight that it deserved then it seems likely that the ambitiousness of the proposed timetable would have been more apparent.

4) Recovery Plans July '18 and December '18 - SHRUG's understanding is that First Transpennine Express at first blamed everyone else. They blamed Network Rail because their trains were routed onto platforms behind a Northern train that was either, not due out until after their own, or was a stopper on the same route; on occasion the Northern train was abandoned without crew as the Northern staff had reached the limit of their shift. SHRUG understands that First Transpennine Express were given their own platforms at Manchester Victoria which did give a significant improvement. The recovery plan instituted in July '18 was clearly deficient in that Transpennine Express trains continue to be turned back short of their planned destination. This deficiency has particularly affected passengers at the stations between Manchester and Huddersfield who had no alternative but to wait a full hour for the next train. Many Transpennine Express trains have not run due to lack of train crew. Early morning trains into Manchester from Huddersfield are being cancelled because they relied on a Northern train conveying the crew to Huddersfield and if the Northern train was cancelled then so was the Transpennine Express train so doubling passenger's misery. Other trains are cancelled due to a lack of a driver or guard for which no reason has been given but is likely due to cost-cutting measures as First Transpennine Express have budgeted for a £106million loss as a result of their ambitious bid.

The "Transpennine Express Service Recovery Arrangements" agreed between First Transpennine Express and Network Rail is clearly designed to maintain the timetable between Manchester and Leeds without any consideration of the needs of passengers, in spite of its protestations that it is designed to "protect the needs of the majority of passengers". A particular example of this was a recent Thursday when a Transpennine Express train due into Piccadilly just after 17:00 was turned back at Stalybridge with just six passengers while at Piccadilly there were probably several hundred passengers trying to get that train to their home and family after work. The Recovery Plan also makes reference to Special Stop Orders but these do not seem to be being implemented and are certainly not being implemented under the conditions that would have caused them under Northern at the beginning of 2018.

The December 2018 changes on the local service between Manchester, Huddersfield and Leeds, which were planned with absolutely no consultation with the local Rail User Groups, almost completely wipe out the May 2018 improvements resulting in an overall service that is significantly worse than that at the beginning of 2018. Only on a Sunday is there a demonstrably better service.

TO CONCLUDE: Very little if anything worked as planned. Plans were made to cope with the reduced capacity on the peak local (semi-fast) Transpennine Express trains into Manchester and Huddersfield but in the event were not needed as the service was so abysmal that about 25% of commuters abandoned the train over the summer.

Printed timetables are useless and commuters have had to resort to looking at Live Departures on their smartphones to see if the train departed from its origin on time and then try and make a calculated guess as to what Transpennine Express Control would do if not actually not running to time

Special Stop Orders were planned and SHRUG was told on several occasions by Transpennine Express that as they would be the only operator on the line between Stalybridge and Huddersfield throughout most of the day these would be easy to arrange, but in reality, two hour gaps between trains are common and three hour gaps are not uncommon. Empty promises were made by Transpennine Express.

What was missing was the complete lack of a "Plan B" to ensure that in the eventuality of problems, passengers would not be left to fend for themselves at unstaffed stations. First Transpennine Express did seem prepared for the May '18 timetable change but the lack of a 12 week timetable finalisation period did cause major problems behind the scenes.

"The strength whole-industry planning, risk assessment, assurance and resolution processes" were clearly almost totally absent for the reasons outlined in the Office for Road and Rail phase 1 report. As happens in other large organisations, such as the NHS, no-one likes a realist who actually asks awkward questions and so they quickly learn to keep quiet or be sacked. The ethos of the NHS is taking a long time to change and I imagine it will take an almost equally long time within the Rail Industry.

What needs to change: The Transport Brief, particularly Rail, needs to be given the importance it deserves by politicians and not just be seen as a step towards higher things. The frequent changes of plan by the Secretary of State for Transport and the Treasury on issues such as Platforms 15 and 16 at Piccadilly mean that timetabling should never be planned around infra-structure changes that are not already in progress and should have a defined Plan B when things are delayed as happened on the Bolton Corridor.

The Department for Transport needs to be more "realistic" and less "ambitious" in its encouragement of bids for franchises. It does seem that the fiasco of the East Coast Main Line franchise has made the Department for Transport realise that the current system is not fit for purpose but there is still a worry that the Treasury will only look at how many zeros there are after the £ sign in the promised premiums.

Possibly because of the Kudos of Inter-City travel and that it is easier to get consensus on inter-regional travel the needs of local passengers across the North of England have been over-looked. The economic health of our regional centres such as Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and Newcastle rely as much, if not more, on people being able to access those centres by rail for work, services, retail and leisure, but this has not been given the prominence that it deserves. Hopefully the devolution to Rail North/Transport for the North will help,

To quote John Cridland about Northern Powerhouse Rail - This is "essentially an economic project", "It is using transport to generate economic growth, it is transport as a means to an end, not an end in itself.". Transport for the North is "here to raise the living standards in the North and by doing so hopefully raise the quality of life of the Northern citizen. Manchester 2/3/2017. The needs of local passengers should not be sub-servient to those of inter-city passengers, after all business passengers make up just 10% of Transpennine Express's footfall.

Rail Proposals for Sheffield City Region

by Mark Parry

At our branch meeting on 27 October we had a presentation from Alex Forrest, who is the Senior Programme Manager (Transport) Executive Team for the Sheffield City Region. The City Region includes all of South Yorkshire along with Bassetlaw, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales and North East Derbyshire. Dan Jarvis is the City Region Mayor but with limited powers until completion of a devolution deal. He is to publish a transport strategy in December 2018. The City Region along with the Local Enterprise Partnership is responsible for the Transport Strategy. The Passenger Transport Executive deals with the day to day issues, including Supertram, Northern and Transpennine services, station management and local upgrades.

HS2 is expected to reach Sheffield in phase 2B with royal assent given in 2023, construction starting 2024 and the line opening in 2033. Sheffield will be served by a spur from the Midland Mainline, and this part will be electrified. The path of the HS2 north of Sheffield forms the "Northern Loop". Consideration is being given to building a parkway station at one of four sites in Sheffield and possibly Rotherham or the Dearne Valley.

The Northern Powerhouse Rail network is covered in part by the HS2 routes, Sheffield to Leeds and Sheffield to Newcastle. Sheffield to Manchester will be via an upgraded Hope Valley Line calling at Stockport. This upgrade will include extra loops at Bamford and doubling of the track at Dore and Totley. Sheffield station is thought to be able to cope with these extra services, but constraints will be relieved by tram train and by some HS2 trains running north of Sheffield.

The Midland Mainline will be upgraded to increase speeds and capacity. Bi-mode trains will be used as electrification will stop at Corby, this is disappointing as there are air quality issues at Sheffield Station through the use of diesel trains.

On the East Coast mainline the introduction of the new Azuma trains has been delayed but there is an ongoing upgrade to increase speeds. An electrified Doncaster-Sheffield Airport rail link has been proposed from the East Coast mainline and it is hoped mainline as well as local trains would use this.

Several new stations are being considered, Waverley on the Worksop line, Askern, Magna in Rotherham, Kilnhurst in Swinton and Forge Way. These last three would likely be served by tram train. In addition to these are the previously mentioned HS2 parkway stations.

The Tram train opened on 25 October and unfortunately a collision occurred later that day between a road vehicle and a tram train, but this incident was on the light rail part of the network. It is intended to expand tram train to cover Swinton, Doncaster and the Airport. The light rail network is due for both trams and track to be renewed. Aspirations for later evening and earlier morning heavy rail local services are listed, along with an increase to two trains an hour to Huddersfield. A programme of station enhancements is ongoing.

Tram Train Arrives

by Andrew Dyson and Mike Wrose



Photo by Robert Pritchard. The management of South Yorkshire SuperTram and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive were joined by senior political figures to celebrate the public launch of tram-train at Parkgate, early on 25 October 2018.

The new tram-train service between Sheffield and Rotherham opened to passengers on 25 October 2018. Sheffield City Region Mayor, Dan Jarvis and then Transport Minister, Jo Johnson formally launched the service at Rotherham Parkgate, before travelling to Sheffield Cathedral on board tram-train 204. The line to Parkgate is the first extension to The South Yorkshire SuperTram network since it opened in 1994.

The tram-train concept involves combining the flexibility of trams – the ability to access urban centres through street running, negotiating tight corners, steep inclines etc – with the opportunity to run longer distances at higher speeds on heavy rail lines. The system was pioneered in Karlsruhe, Germany in the late 1980s and has proved an enormous success. The model has subsequently been copied in cities across the globe.

The South Yorkshire tram-train scheme – the first such undertaking in the UK – is officially an experiment by the Department for Transport, which is funding the operation for its first two years. Originally due to start in December 2015, the project has been beset by delays and has seen its original capital budget of £15 million turn into an actual cost of £75 million. South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive hopes to enter into an agreement with Stagecoach to operate the service for a further four years, finishing to coincide with the end of Stagecoach's concession to operate the tramway network in 2024.

Tram-trains operate from Cathedral tram stop in Sheffield city centre along the existing 'yellow route' tram line towards Meadowhall, as far as Meadowhall South. Here, they diverge onto a new Tinsley chord, which connects the tram line to the adjacent former Great Central Railway line from Woodburn Junction to Rotherham Central. All tram-trains pause briefly on the chord while the driver changes from tram mode to train mode (and vice-versa in the reverse direction), before proceeding to Rotherham Central. Two new low-height tram-train only platforms have been added at the south end of Rotherham Central station, essentially extensions of the heavy rail platforms but numbered 3 and 4. Tram-trains continue for just over a mile further to a new terminus at the Parkgate retail complex, on a short spur to the north side of the former Grand Central line.

Service consists of three trams per hour, timed to depart at xx.01, xx.27 and xx.39 from Cathedral; xx.09, xx.31 and xx.59 from Parkgate, Monday to Saturday. Three tram-trains per hour also operate on Sundays, although at slightly different timings. The slightly irregular intervals are because of the need to fit around Northern heavy rail services and occasional freights on the section through Rotherham Central. Journey times between Cathedral and Parkgate are 26/27 minutes, giving scheduled turn around times of 2–5 minutes. Tram-trains operate from around 0530–2230 from Monday to Saturday and 0900–1800 on Sundays. Although colours are used to denote existing tram routes (yellow, blue, purple), the Parkgate route is described simply as TT both in the timetable and on tram-train destination indicators.

Seven new tram-train vehicles were built by Vossloh (now Stadler) in Valencia, Spain in 2015–16. Numbered 201–207 (Network Rail 399 201-207), they have a maximum speed of 50 mph in tram mode and 55 mph in train mode. Three tram-trains are required to provide the service to Parkgate, plus one spare; the other three vehicles supplement the original network. Whilst of similar appearance to the original Siemens trams, being articulated in three sections, the tram-trains can work from both 750 V DC or 25 kV AC 50 Hz overhead supply. At present the entire route is wired at 750 V DC, but 25 kV AC capability future-proofs the route should Network Rail ever wish to electrify through Rotherham Central. Much of the escalation in cost can be put down to this element of the scheme.

The tram-trains are divided into two separate operating pools. Street sections of SuperTram have grooved rails that cannot be negotiated by the broader wheel profiles required by Network Rail, and conversely, narrower tram wheels are not compatible with Network Rail switch blades. Hence, the four tram-trains fitted with Network Rail-compatible wheel profiles can only operate from Sheffield city centre as far as Shalesmoor and Spring Lane on the blue and purple routes, to where the grooved rail has been replaced. The other three tram-trains cannot venture from the original tram network. Tram-trains can only move between pools by having their bogies switched; there is a spare set of Network Rail-compatible bogies. Initially tram-trains 201–204 were allocated to the Parkgate route, but following an unfortunate collision with a lorry on the first day of public service, 204 has been replaced by 206 using the spare set of bogies.

It should be noted that SuperTram bylaws are applicable to the tram-train service, rather than the national rail bylaws. As such, dogs (other than assistance dogs) and bicycles cannot be carried on tram-train services.

Although the Department for Transport is still regarding this project as an experiment, developments are already taking place elsewhere in the UK. Greater Manchester has aspirations for tram-train extensions to the Metrolink network and Transport for Wales has recently ordered 36 new 'Metro' vehicles intended for on-street running to a new station in the Cardiff Bay area. We await further developments with interest!

We must celebrate the historic opening of the first tram train in the UK and hope it will be the precursor of many. It is unfortunate that the cost and timescale became so inflated, much of this being down to the problems with running on 25Kv AC power, when it seems unlikely to be electrified at this voltage for the foreseeable future. However, when HS2 comes to Sheffield the main line through Rotherham will be electrified at 25Kv, so extension of 25kv through Rotherham would then make sense.

I was there on the opening tram train to see the plaque unveiled by the minister, with a good turnout of dignitaries – it is good to see the establishment take this project seriously and this must auger well for future developments. The accident later in the day was unfortunate, but must not be allowed to detract from this major achievement.

Alternatives to HS2 in South & West Yorkshire

by Robert Burrows

HS2 is a distraction from other railway developments that could be implemented, and I've suggested some below.

There is a stopping service from Sheffield to Leeds via Moorthorpe and also a very poor service from Sheffield to York. These services are provided by Pacer trains of 2-car formation. The Sheffield to Leeds service is hourly calling at all stations whilst the Sheffield to York service is 2 trains per day. Electrifying the Sheffield to Leeds via Moorthorpe line

and replacing the stock with Class 319 or Class 321 stock would allow much faster and frequent services and enable a new service which is non-stop to enable a fast connection between the cities. Also, a decent service to York could be implemented within the new schedules. These improvements will also provide decent service for the Yorkshire area at a much reduced cost. A line also exists between Doncaster and Leeds which is well utilised and hence gives no reason to introduce another HS2 service.

There is no need to decimate any community with a vast new depot as other land is available with rail links. With the closure of both Ferrybridge C Power Station and Kellingley coal mine and the mothballing of Eggborough Power Station the amount of rail traffic through Knottingley has drastically reduced, allowing many more paths for passenger traffic. The redundant land at Ferrybridge and Kellingley would be very suitable for the new depot, and the existing depots at Knottingley and Crofton could be incorporated in this too. There are sidings just beyond Eggborough at Sudforth Lane which are currently largely unused and could be used for berthing trains if necessary.

A complete refurbishment of Pontefract Baghill Station along the lines of that at Moorthorpe would benefit Pontefract too. A relocated station at Knottingley back into the triangle of lines would give easy transfer to all routes without having to go to Wakefield or Leeds to interchange. The line from Knottingley to Goole could even see more than one train each way per day and give access to Sheffield and Leeds for the east coast area. This line from Knottingley to Goole sees only one train per day currently so the track may require re-doubling for this improved service if it is implemented.

All this should bring more employment and finance to this otherwise seemingly forgotten part of Yorkshire and this is my recommendation and alternative to a proposed HS2 line with limited use to the County and which will cause major disruption for a long time.

Selby & District Rail User Group

by Terry French

Campaign for Lifts at Selby Station: For many years Selby and District Rail User Group (SADRUG) has been campaigning for lifts to be installed at Selby Station, and has submitted a strong letter in support of an Access for All bid made by TransPennine Express in November. In addition, SADRUG helped to spread the word about a survey that had been set up for individuals, businesses and other stakeholders to show their support and explain how step-free access to platforms is so badly needed for this increasingly busy, interchange station. A decision on the application is expected by April 2019.

Proposal for Increased Ulleskelf services: Following meetings with representatives of the SOS - Save Our Station, Ulleskelf Group, SADRUG has drawn up a document after researching into how the poor level of services can be increased for the May 2019 timetable. Residents in Ulleskelf and surrounding areas are demanding much better links to York and Leeds for commuting, medical, educational and leisure purposes. Northern has agreed to evaluate the proposal, and it is hoped that eventually Ulleskelf rail users can benefit from a regular service.

Lengthening of Platforms at South Milford Station: On the 10th of September work started on lengthening both platforms at South Milford Station, and was due to be completed on the 14th December. SADRUG is delighted that this work will enable rail users to benefit from longer trains and more capacity.

Rail User Group Award Winners

by Mark Parry

The Railfuture Annual Rail User Group Awards were presented at the Railfuture national autumn conference in Reading. Two of our branch members won awards – well done!

The Clara Zilahi Award for best campaigner was won by Graham Collett, co-Vice-Chair of our own Yorkshire branch. The award specifically paid tribute to Graham's lead on behalf of Railfuture in responses to two important consultations, both by the Office of Rail and Road. The first was on Improving Assisted Travel, leading to his subsequent participation by invitation in a follow-on Office of Rail and Road workshop on the subject. The second response was on the impact of the May timetable on Northern and TransPennine services and their passengers, and again an invitation for Railfuture to participate in a workshop on the Office of Rail and Road's interim report and contribute to their final report.

The best newsletter award winner was 'Track Record' from the Huddersfield Penistone Sheffield Rail Users' Association. Vice-president Paul Abell, a former editor of Rail Professional magazine, was so impressed that he visited their Chairman in person.

Pass this newsletter to a friend when you've finished and help advertise Railfuture.

Where do I start this quarter? There have been positives and negatives.

TRAIN SERVICE WOES.

The big negative is that the train service in much of Yorkshire, especially in peak periods, has been unacceptable. Late trains, cancelled trains, short trains, trains with passengers crammed in like proverbial sardines. This has come about for several reasons and these include:

- The chronic lack of investment in Yorkshire's railways from the early 1990s until recently, characterised by the no-growth Northern franchise awarded to Abellio/Serco in 2004.– but there is a long way to go before there is a reasonable equalisation between supply and demand, not least if demand grows significantly in the 2020s;
- An unforeseen surge in demand for rail travel since the mid 2000s, due to a number of related factors regarding the economy and employment issues.
- Network Rail approving a May 2018 timetable that had been designed assuming that infrastructure improvements and rolling stock cascading had taken place. Overruns on electrification projects on Great Western and in the North West prevented cascading when due
- The Department for Transport making it a franchise commitment that Northern must complete the refurbishment of all its train sets before 2020, resulting in several units always being out of action for a week whilst being refurbished.
- Department for Transport awarding the First Group a TransPennine Express contract that included six trains a n hour between Leeds and Manchester, with some trains re-routed to Victoria. This has been at the expense of the frequency and usability of the trains serving intermediate stations between Huddersfield and Stalybridge, and represents an unwarranted bias for inter-city travel over travel to work and other commuter journeys.
- The failure of the Department for Transport to authorise the full completion of the Northern Hub by not four tracking between Oxford Road and Piccadilly and not increasing station capacity at Piccadilly.
- The slow arrival of units being cascaded from Scotrail to Northern due to a design fault in Scotrail's new Hitachi trains delaying their entry into service by several months.
- Shortages of trained staff.

It's not just commuters who have suffered. Weekend travellers have had months of disruption due to the RMT conductors' strike. After months of failure by the two sides to reach an agreement, surely it is time for the Secretary of State to intervene as Driver Only Operation is part of the franchise specification. Well, it seems he may have. Literally as I was typing this, an email came through from David Brown, Managing Director of Northern stating that the government has given public support for a second person to be retained on-board trains, inviting the RMT union to suspend their strikes and to get back round the table with Northern at ACAS. Let's hope that by the time this issue of Yorkshire Rail Campaigner comes out, this damaging dispute has been settled.

As well as the problems experienced by Northern and TransPennine Express, there have also been problems with the long distance operators. LNER have had to reduce their Leeds timetable due to issues with new Hitachi class 802 units, whilst both Hull Trains and Grand Central have had major reliability problems with the Class 180s. These are being addressed.

NEW TRAINS.

More good news. The new units ordered by Northern and TransPennine Express are undergoing their acceptance trials and staff are being trained on them; we should be seeing them in service by the Spring, although a fault has been found on the loco' hauled carriages for the Scarborough and Middlesbrough services that requires rectifying. But are the new units all good news? I have yet to sample them, but that the 3 car Northern units designed for long distance Northern Connect routes have only one lavatory. I feel someone has made a bad mistake because the prospect of a train on a 2-3 hour journey with one, possibly out-of-commission, lavatory does not bear thinking about, and is probably in breach of human rights legislation. In South Wales, I have read that non-mobility standard train lavatories are to be locked because keeping them open would be against anti-discrimination legislation even if there are no other lavatories on the train. As someone who 30 to 40 years ago was a leading campaigner for making public transport accessible to disabled people, I have to say that no-one I know thinks this is a good idea. It's time for a bit of common sense, and let's remember that most disabled people are not wheelchair users, but those with other disabilities including weak bladders!

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Some welcome news, albeit not before time, is that the tram-train service from Rotherham to central Sheffield is now operational. I travelled part of the route two days after it opened and passenger loadings seemed good. One grouse though – the seat design is uncomfortable and a backward step compared to the 20 year old Supertram fleet that in many respects they are similar to.

Continuing in South Yorkshire, Railfuture Yorkshire Branch held a very successful meeting in Sheffield on 27th October, with Alex Forrest Senior Programme Manager (Transport), Sheffield City Region as our speaker. The meeting had a very positive outcome in developing communications between Railfuture and both Sheffield City Region and South

Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive. Two meetings, facilitated by new Committee Member, Mike Rose, took place subsequently and the Hope Valley Rail Action group have also had a meeting with Alex. The decision of the Branch to elect two South Yorkshire members onto the Committee at this year's Annual General Meeting has proven to be very beneficial. The other South Yorkshire Committee Member, Andrew Dyson, stepped up into the vital role of Membership Secretary in the summer following Paul Colbeck's resignation, and he is doing a sterling job. Andrew has also agreed to take on the lead Railfuture Liaison role with TransPennine Express.

RAILFUTURE'S ACTIONS.

The expanded committee is working very well, and we have now shared out responsibility for liaising with a range of statutory bodies, Train Operating Companies and other Railfuture Branches.

WEST YORKSHIRE

In West Yorkshire, Stephen Waring and I had our first meeting with the new Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Transport Committee, Councillor Kim Groves. It was a very productive meeting, and she has asked that we meet bi-monthly. There is a large measure of agreement between Railfuture and WYCA regarding train operations and railway development. I would urge interested readers to have a look at the papers from the WYCA Transport Committee's 9th November meeting, which are on the WYCA website. Particularly gratifying from a strategic perspective is that WYCA is now making the case for a new mass transit system, which maybe trams and/or tram trains.

NORTHERN POWERHOUSE RAIL.

WYCA and Transport for the North are favouring a route via Bradford for the new Northern Powerhouse Rail line; this is in conflict with the view that the line should utilise Woodhead so that both Leeds and Sheffield benefit from 30 minute journeys to and from Manchester. It would be quite feasible to combine this with a high speed spur to Bradford. Railfuture is concerned that, whether the new Northern Powerhouse Rail line eventually goes through Bradford or not, that a new major transport interchange is built in central Bradford, connecting up the two existing rail routes with a central bus station, mass transit stop and Northern Powerhouse line if it is built. That way there will be maximum connectivity.

Diary

7 Jan 2019 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB. Contact Mark Parry to check venue.
19 Jan 2019 @ 12:30	Railfuture Yorkshire Annual General Meeting in Leeds, see flyer for more details. Note earlier start time.
28 Jan 2019	Skipton East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership @ Earby
18 Feb 2019 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB. Contact Mark Parry to check venue.
11 Mar 2019	Skipton East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership annual general meeting. Lesser Municipal Hall, Albert Road, Colne.
18 Mar 2019 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB. Contact Mark Parry to check venue.
18 May 2019, a fee is charged.	Railfuture National Annual General Meeting, Bute Suite, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff CF11 9SW. Registration opens at 10:00 and conference from 11:00 until 15:00. See https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/#2019_cardiff for more details.
18 May 2019 @ 12:00	Friends of the Settle to Carlisle Line, annual general meeting, Victoria Hall, Kirkgate, Settle, BD24 9DZ.
21 May 2019 @ 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport Speaker meeting on "Rail Strategy", James Nutter from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. St. George's Conference Centre, Leeds LS1 3DL.
22 Jun 2019, a fee is charged.	Railfuture National Conference. Dolphin Centre, Central Hall, Horsemarket, Darlington DL1 5RP. See https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/#2019_cardiff for more details.
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Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group	www.avrug.org.uk
Bradford Rail Users' Group	www.bradfordrail.com
Esk Valley	http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdoc.html
Halifax and District Rail Action Group	www.hadrag.com
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Email: hlrug@live.co.uk
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	
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	www.lasrug.btck.co.uk
Minster Rail Campaign	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: MarkAshmor@yahoo.co.uk
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk
Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line)	www.yccrp.co.uk

Branch Committee and the small print

Chair: Nina Smith, 07984 670331 Nina.Smith@Railfuture.org.uk
Vice Chair and Media Relations: Chris Hyomes, 12 Monument Lane, Pontefract WF8 2BE, Chris.Hyomes@railfuture.org.uk
Vice Chair and Parliamentary Liaison Officer: Graham Collett, graham.collett@railfuture.org.uk
Secretary & Freight Lead: Dr. Mike Troke, Michael.Yorkshire@talktalk.net , 07947 062632
Treasurer: Ian Wood, ianfwood@hotmail.co.uk
Membership & Distribution: Andrew Dyson: andrew.dyson@platform5.com
Committee Member: Mike Rose 07986 458517 mikewrose@gmail.com
Committee Member: Stephen Waring. js.waring@hotmail.co.uk
Assistant Treasurer: Geoff Wood, esperanto11@hotmail.co.uk
Newsletter Editor: Mark Parry, 07941 642349, Mark.Parry294@gmail.com
Branch Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/RailfutureYorkshire Railfuture web-sites: www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk www.railwatch.org.uk http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Yorkshire+Branch Twitter Accounts: @RailfutureYorks @Railfuture
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Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 44**) will be out in March 2019. Please email material, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry294@gmail.com to arrive by **Saturday 23 February 2019**. Alternatively call or text 07941 642349. **Stories of campaigns and successes are especially welcome. Having your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email saves us time and money. Contact Andrew Dyson to request this.**