

Railfuture Limited - Election of Directors for 2025/26

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 funds available 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 three directors (Roger Blake, Allison Cosgrove and Neil Middleton). With only three candidates for three places, there will be no election ballot in 2025. 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 no new candidate decided to stand. In 2024 Wendy Thorne decided not to stand again, so there was already a spare place on the Board of Directors. At the Board meeting on 1 March 2025 the directors had invited Mike Southgate to present the report by a three-person Working Group on the future of Railfuture. At the end of the meeting, he offered himself for co-option and the directors unanimously co-opted him – Mike has management experience that is of great value. As this decision happened well after the date for nominations ended, he has been co-opted until the AGM in July 2026 but will be required to submit a nomination by 1 February 2026 if he wishes to stand. Mike has voluntarily provided a brief biography to be included at the end of this document.

Although there are now nine directors again, the Articles allow additional directors to be co-opted to fill a skills gap. The national chair, Chris Page, would be pleased to hear from any member who believes they are suitably qualified to become a director. Please contact him to find out more about taking part as a director.

Details of the election process can be read at www.railfuture.org.uk/Elections.

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

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

Chris Page – Chair	Allison Cosgrove – Passenger Director *
Jerry Alderson – Finance & IT Director	Ian Brown CBE – Policy Director
Roger Blake – (Rail) Infrastructure Director *	Neil Middleton – Vice Chair and Communications Director *
Pete Myers – currently without portfolio	Owen O'Neill – Freight Director
Mike Southgate – Co-opted until July 2026	

Those marked '*' have completed their term and seek re-election.

The candidates standing are not under obligation to serve for three years.

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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ROGER BLAKE – Proposed and seconded in accordance with the rules

Personal Details

- Q1. Member for 40 years
- Q2. London & Southeast branch committee member since 2006 and the branch vice chair since 2007
- Q3. Director since 2009. Railwatch Editorial since 2010, Infrastructure & Networks since 2014, Passenger/TOC liaison since 2014
- Q4. Chartered town planner since 1973; Hackney Council 1985-2015 [Principal Transport Planner, Public Transport Liaison 1997-2015].
- Q5. Transport Planning Society, Spa Valley Railway, Great Central Railway, North London Railway Historical Society, Brunel Museum Rotherhithe, Bideford Railway Heritage Centre
- Q6. Transport for the South East's Transport Forum, Southeast Communities Rail Partnership Stakeholder Advisory Board
- Q7. Co-founder Cambridge Heath & London Fields RUG 1996 onwards; MarshLink Action Group 2008 onwards.

Election Address

Railfuture's Board of Directors is your national leadership team, for a Company with Objects in its Memorandum expressed as "encourage and promote", "support", "influence", "co-operate". Company Directors help ensure that Board sustains and develops a sound organisational and financial framework for Railfuture, within which that 'encouragement, promotion, support, influence, and co-operation' can be pursued, by national specialist groups, regional/national branches, affiliated groups, and individual members locally.

I once again offer my knowledge and experience on two fronts: working life in public sector development planning and transport policy and projects, especially public transport generally and rail development particularly, and a parallel lifetime of voluntarism in third sector organisations including amenity, transport and rail campaign groups, including 35 years as Trustee / Director, and interim Chair, of an international development charity. There are transferable lessons, and personal skills, in sound governance for non-governmental voluntary organisations.

I shall continue contributing to enhancing the effectiveness, credibility and positive reputation of Railfuture as a challenging supporter of the rail industry at national and regional levels, and from that foundation to harnessing and supporting informed and constructive activism of our members regionally and locally.

As examples:

- ~ I have organised all ten Rail User Group Awards, affirming the value of local activism and affording local promotional opportunities;
- ~ I co-ordinate our responses to a variety of consultations and calls for evidence;
- ~ I continue to offer strategic advice and guidance to individuals and organisations campaigning to extend access to the rail network by opening new stations and lines, such as the Windrush Line into West Oxfordshire and ACE Rail in north Devon to Bideford.

Railfuture and its members face strategic choices in campaigning for a bigger better railway. Our most effective contribution is, I believe, our power of persuasion, our informed and jealously-guarded independent influence.

ALLISON COSGROVE – Proposed by Peter Hillier-Palmer, seconded by Robert Cheesman

Personal Details

- Q1. 17 years approximately
- Q2. Member of Scottish branch committee for 17 years: Chair for 11 years
- Q3. Chair of Passenger Group: Current Board Member for 12 years: Board Liaison with Northeast branch: Railfuture Lottery Organiser
- Q4. Chair, East Lothian Community Rail Partnership: Chair, Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line
- Q5. Chair, Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership: VC & Transport Representative, Dunpender Community Council
- Q6. Member, Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Sustainable Transport
- Q7. Member of Rail Action Group East of Scotland, Friends of the Far North Line, Friends of the West Highland Line (all 10 + years).

Election Address

Many matters that were relevant when I last stood for election in 2022/3 are still relevant today – we still have Zoom meetings as well as in-person, although we do recognise the value of seeing each other face to face.

We still have timetable challenges as proposals are put forward for December 2025, and already in Scotland we have questioned some of these. Passenger Group will be contacting all branches to see if changes are proposed in their areas and to suggest what branches can do to change these, as the timetable changes are not yet set in stone.

We have also seen changes to LNER fares which are in danger of putting the railway financially out of reach at some stations, as well as extremely poor customer service when rail replacement buses are provided. These must be challenged so that passengers are seen to come first, and I'm sure Passenger Group will continue to do this.

On a positive note, it has been good to see re-openings at Leven, my own station of East Linton, the new Northumberland Line, and the announcement in early 2025 about Portishead. The successful campaigners are to be congratulated, and I hope to continue on the Board to support all those who work to bring rail closer to their communities.

NEIL MIDDLETON – Proposed by Peter Hillier-Palmer, seconded by Robert Cheesman

Personal Details

Q1. Since January 2017

Q2. London & Southeast Committee member since January 2017 & Herts & Beds Division Convenor since May 2019

Q3. TOC Liaison for GTR since July 2019 and informal (later formal) member of Passenger Group since late 2020

Q4. FCA (Fellow of Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales). Latter part of career spent working in operational risk management in banks, including Barclays, HSBC and Mizuho; earlier part working for what is now PricewaterhouseCoopers (Chartered Accountants).

Q5. Current member of Steering Group of Beds & Herts Community Rail Partnership.

Q6. None.

Q7. Chair of APTU, a Rail User Groups on Thameslink North since 2007; member since 1994.

Election Address

Do I call myself a Railfuture Director or a Rail Campaigner first? The answer is definitely "a Rail Campaigner". Over the last 12 months, my main campaigning focus has been fares and ticketing and in addition helping Railfuture respond to government 'positions' and consultations including last year's General Election. But my areas have extended beyond that – e.g. rail line blockade publicity.

As a current Director, one of the key things that has been reinforced for me is how, working together, we can produce much more compelling cases for a railway that meets customer needs. I am keen that Railfuture remains that – a campaigning group that seeks to use the varied opinions and knowledge of its members. In seeking to deliver effective rail campaigning, Railfuture needs to be seen as a credible and highly respected campaigning organisation that understands the context in which it operates. I want to see Railfuture as relevant to rail users, and an informed constructive, and positive force for change. Over the next few years, we need to focus on that, which will require a delicate balancing act between what is "ideal" and what it is realistic (but still ambitious) – getting that balance right is essential to creating a case that will be properly contemplated and considered by Industry and the Government.

MIKE SOUTHGATE – Co-opted in March 2025 until July 2026

Biography

Mike lives in Winchester and has extensive board experiences with commercial companies, charities and has been a local politician. He joined the RDS (now called Railfuture) in the 1990s and became a member of the Wessex Committee in 2011. He was Chair, 2012/13 and again from 2019.

He created the Shawford Rail User Group in 2003 when SWT were considering reducing the service. His efforts paid off, passenger entries and exits grew from 60k to 210k. He co-chaired with SWT the regular Rail User Group meetings and worked closely with Passenger Focus.

He has always had a passionate interest in public transport and happily refers to himself as a transport anorak. He has forty years of commuting experience to London and has used rail extensively for business and pleasure. He has developed a necessary affection for rail and the part it should play in society, to the economy and the environment.

His career was in Television Broadcast and Production as a CEO, Chair and Consultant specialising in leading business turnarounds. He was elected as a Winchester City Councillor in 2012 with cabinet responsibilities for transport! He became involved in setting up and became a trustee, sometimes chair of several charities. These included health, social action, woodlands, heritage museums and art venues. He has led several trustee and staff recruitment processes, aiming to create a diverse board and workforce. Currently his only active role is Chair of the London Transport Museum Friends.



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

web: www.railfuture.org.uk | www.railfuturescotland.org.uk | www.railfuturewales.org.uk | www.railwatch.org.uk

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