



BRITAIN'S LEADING PRO-RAIL CAMPAIGNING GROUP FOR PASSENGERS AND FREIGHT

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CAMPAIGNERS WANT TO COPY SCOTTISH RAIL SUCCESSES

A conference in Stirling on 16 June entitled "*How Scotland showed the rail way forward*" has heard how recent rail re-openings in Scotland have consistently exceeded passenger forecasts, leading to fears that some schemes have not gone ahead because the consultants have underestimated demand.

"The message that came out of the Railfuture-organised conference is that we're really underestimating patronage, and all the openings in Scotland have proved this. They opened Larkhall-Milngavie, and it was a success, they opened Airdrie-Bathgate, and it was a success, they opened Stirling-Alloa and it was a success. Three out of three" said conference chairman Jerry Alderson of the campaign group *Railfuture*, which organised the conference.

Jackie McGuire, former lead officer for the Stirling-Alloa reopening, explained that they predicted 85,000 when they were producing the business case, but following the experience of the Larkhall-Milngavie reopening they then revised their figures to 155,000 before they constructed the line. Once the line was opened they again revised the estimate, based on the initial patronage, to 400,000, and by the end of that year they'd exceeded that too.

"Some of the estimates have been woefully inadequate and potentially schemes have not gone ahead because the consultants have underestimated patronage." said Mr Alderson. "Our own experience backs this up. We travelled from Alloa to Edinburgh on Friday night and it was full, standing room only, and our fellow passengers told us this was a regular occurrence. The Stirling-Alloa service is currently hourly and they're proposing to make it half hourly, to cope with demand"

Geoff Cook of Network Rail explained their plans for the future. Over the next 15 years they've predicted that in the Edinburgh suburban area, patronage will increase by 115 percent, and that's partly due to the work they plan to do on what is called EGIP, the Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme.

Author and lecturer Dr Ann Glen spoke as a campaigner for Airdrie Bathgate to reopen. She took photographs of the whole period of its construction over less than 24 months and there was general astonishment that an entire railway could be rebuilt in just two years, when people thought it should have taken a lot more.

"We have the evidence of how successful rail reopenings have been in Scotland and how

quickly lines they can be built from scratch - not one of them took more than two years to construct after powers had been granted - and there's no reason why this success can't be repeated south of the border." Mr Alderson added. "A room full of people, mainly from England, came to find out how the Scots had achieved success and now want to do exactly the same in England."

Railfuture has produced several publications on new stations and lines. Britain's Growing Railway - An A-Z of Reopenings, published in 2010 and mentioning the Scottish reopenings is still available at £9.95 from www.railfuture.org.uk/books.

Railfuture organises two national conferences a year in Britain. Details can be found at www.railfuture.org.uk/conferneces.

NOTE FOR EDITORS

***Railfuture* is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society Ltd (a not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 5011634. Reg. Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattlingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND**

Railfuture is Britain's only completely independent voice on railway development. We are not affiliated to or sponsored by any political party, trade union, or private industry. We are funded almost entirely by our members.

Railfuture's President is Christian Wolmar, the well-known writer on rail issues. Its Vice Presidents include several retired train company chief executives, transport experts, MPs and MEPs from all main political parties and the former Secretary of State for Transport Lord Adonis. A full list of the *Railfuture* presidents can be found on our web-site at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/vice+presidents>.

Railfuture campaigns for Britain's railways to play a larger role for passengers and freight, calling for an enhanced and expanded network, including high-speed rail, along with light rail.

Rail is a vital part of an integrated efficient transport system serving a modern, vibrant, environmentally sustainable economy. We are pro-rail but not anti-road. *Railfuture* maintains that investment in rail travel and rail freight is vital to the future of the UK economy and environment.

Anyone supporting our aims can join online: www.railfuture.org.uk/join

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