



Paddington, where passenger numbers have risen by 60% over the last 15 years based on ORR figures.

Rail Britain's future strategic transport network

Chris Austin OBE FCILT, Railfuture - Head of Infrastructure & Networks Group

Over the last 20 years Britain's railways have seen a renaissance where demand has surged ahead of economic growth. Passenger numbers are up by two thirds while freight tonne-miles have increased by a half. At 1.5bn passenger journeys last year, the railway was busier than any other peacetime year – ever.

We believe this growth will continue as rail gains a greater share of an expanding transport market. This is important for Britain, because an electrified railway is a sustainable transport system, capable of drawing power from any source, not just fossil fuels. Railways are key to economic growth as well; they reduce traffic congestion, support healthier lifestyles and encourage social cohesion.

So, today's priorities are for more capacity (this is why we support HS2) and, inevitably after this year's disastrous floods, for greater resilience.

Railfuture began as a campaigning organisation fifty years ago, aiming to prevent the closure of lines listed in the Beeching report. Today, that battle has been largely won, and the priority now is to ensure that Britain's railways can expand fast enough to meet growing demand and the rising expectations of passengers and freight customers.

Railfuture is completely independent of political parties, trades unions and commercial interests, and is funded and run by its members. Whilst we support rail development in the interests of Britain, we are not anti-car or anti-aviation. We just want to make sure that the importance of rail is understood and reflected in the policies, priorities and resources that are the business of Government.

Railfuture's strength is in its local campaigning, and on Wednesday 12 March, with the kind support of Caroline Lucas MP, we will be in Terrace Dining Room B between 4.00 and 6.00pm. Come along and meet us there and catch up on our local campaigns.

Britain's railways have come a long way over the last 20 years, but can deliver so much more for Britain. Railfuture's aim is to see that potential realised.

Over the last 15 years:

- Rail demand has grown at more than twice the rate of GDP
- The annual number of rail journeys per head of population has increased by half
- Train miles run have risen by 36%

The need for new capacity is now.

Source: ATOC/ KPMG

Further information from Chris Austin
christopher.austin@railfuture.org.uk
 or on 07913 653594.

www.railfuture.org.uk
 @Railfuture

