



14 October 2014

Dear Chris and Roger,

Below is the summary report from the away day on Saturday, it contains a high level summary of the day and its purpose, a list of the key issues that were raised and the 30-60-90 day plan.

I will forward you the complete report with all the output from the day by the end of the week. As Chris knows, I am also forwarding this to David Harby as he has deadlines to meet with regards his newsletter.

Hopefully, that all looks in order. If not or if you have any questions, please do call on 07595 702878, or e-mail me on paul.kaerger@pkms.co.uk.

Regards

Paul Kaerger

Summary

Thirty representatives from Railfuture's Groups and Branches as well as members of the National Committee met in Birmingham on Saturday, 11th of October, to start a process of re-invigoration for Railfuture, Led by Chris Page and an external facilitator, the day brought together key members of Railfuture to identify ways of increasing membership and increasing the effectiveness of how Railfuture operates.

The scene was set early on with contributions from David Harby, Chris Page, Jerry Anderson and Roger Blake on the current state of the organisation. Together, they provided delegates with a snapshot of an organisation that had a declining and ageing membership that was no longer in line with the demographic profile of the majority of rail users. This was having an impact on revenues, on its impact, its ability to campaign and its relevance in a booming industry.

However, the feedback from the "Have Your Say" consultation showed that the members were willing to get involved in supporting Railfuture's aims. The rail industry has been booming over the past decade with an upward trend on rail usage and rail investment. So the need for an independent and nationwide voice to represent the views of rail users from a wide range of backgrounds has never been more important.

What is also positive is that the delegates had a shared view of what Railfuture stood for and what its achievements have been over the past few years.

The afternoon session was focussed on what to do next; looking at ways in which Railfuture can develop and grow in the forthcoming years and take on new challenges. The list of options were wide ranging and further work will be undertaken to identify which opportunities to grasp, but the day did end with agreement to a 90 day plan to kick start this change process.

The 90 day plan

The agreed action plan split actions into those to be completed in the next 30 days, those to be completed within 60 days and those to be completed within 90 days. The action plan will kick into effect on the 1st November. (Post Meeting Note – owning groups have been identified in brackets for each issue below by Chris Page.)

30 DAYS

Delegates will contact all the members within their branch and set them the target of introducing one new member each to Railfuture (we didn't set a date, but shall we say by the end of March 2015?)

Delegates will circulate the output from the Away Day to all of its members either via presentations or via their newsletters.

Details of the Away Day will be posted onto the Railfuture website and will appear in the next edition of Railwatch. (Owner – Marketing, Media and Communications /Railwatch Editorial Groups)

Delegates will add a new standing item "Raising membership numbers" to the agenda of their Branch and Group meetings.

Delegates will ensure that they highlight the value of national groups to their branch membership to increase awareness and encourage members to volunteer.

Each Branch and Group will submit high level plans for the next financial year to David Harby as part of their budget submission. This will contain high level details of any activities or campaigns they wish to run in the year along with a broad estimate of costs. This is to help David in the financial planning for next year.

60 DAYS

Each Branch and Group is to set out a Branch Development Plan for the new financial year, including a set of measurable objectives for the year.

Each Branch and Group is submit a training plan for its members for the next financial year, identifying areas where skills are lacking or need improving, for instance in areas such as website, social media, managing accounts and campaigning.

Owners of risks and issues to have submitted an action plan to deal with their risk/issue by 29 November, in time for the next national Board meeting.

A high level plan with timescales for re-writing the Memorandum of Articles to be submitted in time for the next Board meeting. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

A high level plan with timescales to take some of the organisational structure issues raised will be submitted to the next Board meeting. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

90 DAYS

Each Branch and Group is to identify and establish contact with their key stakeholder based on the work done in the meeting on identifying the benefits of their relationship with Railfuture. The aim is to re-engage with any stakeholders where contact may have dropped off over time and to re-invigorate healthy relationships by outlining the benefits of Railfuture to that stakeholder.

Delegates are to identify the key campaigns they wish to run in the 2015 financial year.

Delegates (or a subset of them) are to identify the cultural issues that are stopping people joining Railfuture.

Delegates (or a subset of them) are to define an agreed selection criteria for choosing campaigns (Owner - Infrastructure and Networks Group)

Delegates (or a subset of them) are to develop an agreed high level campaign process (Owner - Board)

Chris Page and Roger Blake are to the overall owners of the plan and will be the ones working with the delegates to ensure actions are on track and providing additional resources to help completion of the actions where necessary.

Risks and Issues

The following list of issues were noted and “parked”. Owners and deadlines will be added to the list as part of the above plan and the actions added to the plan.

The first set are from the “parked” list of subjects from the Away Day. They were parked as issues to be death with at a future date because they were deemed to be outside the scope of the meeting.

1. Taxonomy

There seems to be a lot of debate about what Railfuture calls the component parts of its internal structure (Groups, Branches, TOC liaisons etc.). Although this may seem insignificant to some, finding terms that everybody buys into will help provide the appearance of a modern, cohesive campaigning organisation. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

2. Structure

One of the key subjects that was raised time and again, was the interaction between the Branches and the National Committee and the Groups and the Branches. An action is already in the above plan to begin work on addressing any shortcomings in the existing structure and to create a structure where responsibility and lines of communication are clear and agreed by all. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

3. Memorandum of Articles

It is clear that the current Memorandum of Articles is no longer fit for purpose and is adversely influencing the degree to which Railfuture can operate efficiently and effectively. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

4. Spreading the word

Railfuture does some great things, but it is not always great at communicating its successes both internally and externally. Mention was made of the challenge of getting Branches to shout about their campaign successes and work has to be done to explain why this is vitally important both in terms of attracting membership and in terms of credibility. (Owner – Marketing, Media and Communications Group)

5. Behaviours

Railfuture is made up of very passionate people and there is a balance to be kept in terms of preserving that passion but ensuring that the way people interact and work with each other is respectful and open. The ideal is to have a no-blame culture where problems are analysed in a spirit of fixing them, then making sure that lessons are learnt. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

6. National Projects

In the same way as there are tensions between national and local, there is also tensions between those running national projects and other groups and branches. It is likely that this comes under the same areas as above in this list in that each group and branch has to understand why the others exist and that everyone has a stake in each other’s success. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

Issues

The following issues were raised by delegates during the day and will be investigated as part of the plan. The aim is to have owners and action plans for each issue by the 29th November.

Railfuture branches in the North of England were upset that their response to the Northern and Trans-Pennine Express DfT consultation was amended so heavily and led the branches to feel that it had

been dumbed down and missed vital points. (Following off-line discussion during the day, David Berman will set up meeting with Northern branches to explain the bigger picture around the Northern/TPE response and to plan the Northern Powerhouse campaign.)

More training is required on how to use Twitter etc. (covered by action on Training Plan)

Training is required on the Eu and diplomatic issues. (Owner – International Group)

Branches fail to provide descriptions on their current campaigns for the website which means we have no evidence of active campaigning. (Owner – Marketing, Media and Communications Group).

Railfuture is trying to do two things at once: a) represent rail users and b) campaign for network enhancements. Can we do both adequately? (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

There is a schism between “realists” and “visionaries”, i.e. those with limited ambitions because of the lack of available resource and those who feel we must keep stressing the type of railway we want. (Owner – Policy Group)

The dilemma of getting more people involved in branch meetings is that branch meetings take time to organise and publicise. There is a limit to the number of meetings that can be arranged in a year and some members never come to branch meetings. (Owner – Board)

Railfuture achieves what it does without paid staff, unlike CFBT and PF who get a lot more national publicity. So we need to work out how to get more national publicity with the existing limited resources (Owner – Marketing, Media and Communications Group).

Are we supposed to be representing “rail users” and do we know what their priorities are? (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

Memorandum of Articles need reforming and work needs to be done to specify the role of the Branches and Groups and the national office. As part of this, more autonomy for the Branches is required within the overall aims and objectives of Railfuture as a whole and with better relationships across the board. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

We need to apply a more structured approach to using our resources for targeted and prioritised campaigns. (Owner – Board)

I would like to work with Railfuture on European rail issues as this would create massive synergy, but there is no mechanism for doing this. (Owner – International Group)

There is a lack of engagement from Branches, a lack of response and feedback from the individuals and Branches. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Governance Group)

The membership fees and overall fee structure is too cheap and there should be a way of charging the better off more. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Group)

Both the Railfuture International Group and the European Passenger Federation are not fit for purpose. For instance, I have been working to stop DB axing the overnight service from Amsterdam to Copenhagen. There is also a new EU transport Committee member from Slovakia and Railfuture should be engaging with him. (Owner – International Group)

National vs Local: We are Railfuture and should be ourselves as one body, one voice. Branches are there to facilitate the overall strategy of Railfuture. (Owner – Finance & Corporate Group)