

Switch more freight to rail says the DfT

The government has pledged to switch more freight to rail in its "cross-modal" *Future of Freight* document published in June.

Rail is recognised as the best way to decarbonise freight, and the Department for Transport wants road and rail to cooperate to achieve a more efficient operation with less pollution and less congestion.

We know that rail is 76% less polluting than road, with carbon dioxide emissions at 27.8g per tonne kilometre for rail, 107.5g per tonne kilometre for lorries and 538.7g for air.

Network Rail and National Highways must identify corridors where roads are congested and there are equivalent underused railways to allow overall economic growth with minimum environmental damage.

Network Rail has already identified ways to boost the number of trains from the container port of Felixstowe from 37 paths a day to 40.

Great British Railways will be required to set rail freight growth targets for both the medium and short term, as well as encouraging the development of international rail freight.

Rail is already more competitive even over short distances. More rail freight interchanges, particularly in towns and cities, are necessary. GBR's strategic freight unit will be expected to promote rail freight but there are major stumbling blocks.

There are also plans for network-wide express railfreight services which will be encouraged along with more intermodal services. Technical advances, such as digital automatic coupling, may help.

Increasing freight train speeds above their current 75mph should fit them into passenger timetables more efficiently.

The UK government, however, has still not committed to a rolling programme of rail

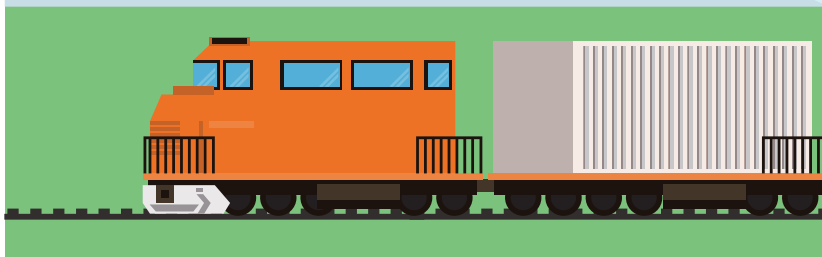
Rail freight emitted

1.8 Mt of CO₂
in 2020⁸⁹

1.4% of UK emissions.

Current CO₂e emissions estimate
for a freight train is **27.8g**
per tonne kilometre.⁹⁰

Rail freight trains
currently emit around **1/4** of the
CO₂e emissions of HGVs per tonne
mile travelled.⁹¹



The enormous advantage railfreight has over lorries is shown in these two illustrations from Future of Freight

18%⁹¹ (or 19.5 MtCO₂e)
of 2019 domestic transport
greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)
came from HGVs⁹².

Current CO₂e emissions estimate
for an average laden HGV is
107.5g per tonne kilometre.⁹⁴



railaction

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electrification, which is already under way in Scotland where there are efforts to reduce the existing unit cost of £2 million per single-track kilometre. Scotland is also examining where the loading gauge can be enlarged to accommodate more freight.

Although 38% of the rail network in England and Wales is electrified (800 miles), only 5% of freight is currently transported using electric traction.

Even on electrified routes, there are short lengths of non-electrified track which means diesels run for miles under electric wires. Only 2% of freight locos are bimodes, able to operate with electric or diesel power.

Rail is vastly more energy-efficient than lorries and a lorry's normal life span is only 12 years, compared to a rail locomotive's 30 years.

One example of road and rail cooperation is said to be where Tesco is experimenting with an electric 37-tonne lorry which will carry goods from a rail freight terminal in Cardiff to a Tesco depot 30 miles away in Magor.

The Great British Railways transition team has invited businesses "and the widest possible range of stakeholders" to suggest ways to increase the amount of freight moved by rail. More information at:

<https://gbrrt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/rail-freight-growth-target-call-for-evidence-v6.0.pdf>



Picture: DB

Britain's rail fares fifty times more expensive than Germany

Railfuture issued a press statement in early June highlighting an initiative in Germany which introduced a new bargain ticket to entice people back on to railways, making it possible to travel by rail in Germany 50 times cheaper than in the UK. For nine euros (less than £8), German rail travellers were able to buy a whole month's travel during June, July or August throughout all of Germany, using local regional trains, trams and buses.

"We are laying down the challenge for Britain to do likewise," said Ian Brown, Railfuture's campaign director. "German Railways have dramatically set out to get passengers back on to public transport. If an equivalent ticket were available in this country, you could travel from Dover to Crewe for just £7.72. Instead it will cost you £387.80 – more than fifty times more.

"We are receiving reports that German trains are packed with people rediscovering sustainable rail travel. What a contrast with the dismal state of our railways, where the service is so poor that it is effectively unusable in whole parts of Britain at many times, with passengers advised NOT to travel.

"We have a cost of living crisis and a looming climate emergency. The last thing we need is a situation where fares are so high that people are actively discouraged from travelling by rail. Railfuture challenges the government to get a grip and start to think of the people who support the industry – passengers. Time to replace advice 'not to travel by train' with a promotion to match that in Germany to get people back on our railways."

Railfuture press releases

Railfuture press releases can be read in full at

[Railfuture press releases](#)

A review of other Railfuture appearances in print and broadcast media can be seen at

[Railfuture in the news](#)

Railfuture website

The Railfuture website is a mine of information for members. You can gain access to the members area at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/Members+area

From there you can view or download the newly updated 11-page members handbook.

By using the Google search box on the Railfuture website you can discover many other nuggets of information which might help in your own rail campaigning.

Bargain book offer

Railfuture's book, *Britain's Growing Railway*, gives details of the 400 stations and over 950km of new routes which opened to passengers between 1960 and 2017.

The original published price was £9.95, but it is now available at the reduced price of £5 including postage.

You can order your copy at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/shop/books.php



Picture: SIEMENS

Egypt's £7 billion deal for high speed rail system

Germany's Siemens company announced that it has sealed the biggest order in its 175-year history to build 1,243 miles of high-speed rail lines across Egypt.

The contract includes 41 high speed trains, 94 regional trains, 41 freight trains, and eight depots and freight stations. Siemens will be responsible for maintenance for 15 years.

Sixty cities will be linked by train, at speeds of up to 140 mph, providing rail access to around 90% of the population, "the beginning of a new era for the rail system in Egypt, Africa and the Middle East".

The first stretch of new track has been dubbed the "Suez Canal on rails" and will run 400 miles from the Red Sea to Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast.

HS2 upgrade needed for North Wales main line

The North Wales main line should be electrified and upgraded so that HS2 trains can run from Birmingham, Crewe and Warrington to Holyhead, according to the business group Growth Track 360. The



government classes HS2 as an England and Wales project, despite the fact that no part of the track is included in Wales. A report by Cardiff University found that if it had been designated as an England-only project, Wales could have received an extra £514 million investment in its rail infrastructure between 2011-12 and 2019-20.

But Growth Track 360, which represents businesses in the north of Wales and Cheshire region, wants Wales to benefit from HS2 and has commissioned a series of conceptual artworks to help the public visualise the proposed improvements.

Produced by Nataliia Marchuk, a Ukrainian Fine Arts undergraduate at the University of Chester, one shows an HS2 train passing Conwy Castle on an electrified North Wales Main Line.

The full cost of the project is estimated at £750 million. Technical challenges include the Britannia Bridge across the Menai Strait between Anglesey and the mainland. Onboard batteries could power trains across gaps in the overhead line equipment.

North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council chief executive Ashley Rogers said: "As we strive for a sustainable, net zero carbon future along with economic recovery from the pandemic, it is critical for the UK government to release the funds necessary to

Updated rail map

The latest version of Barry Doe's National Rail passenger operators map is available from

www.barrydoe.co.uk/rail.pdf

Barry's Bus & Rail Timetable Directory is updated daily and is available at

www.barrydoe.co.uk

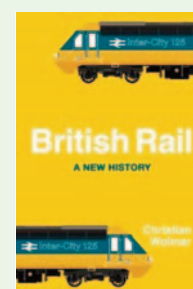
Bring back British Rail

"Why we should bring back British Rail" was the headline in *The Times* when it reviewed Railfuture president Christian Wolmar's latest book.

British Rail: A New History criticises the cliches about stale sandwiches which were "trotted out by Tory politicians banging the drum for privatisation". Christian describes the long ideological campaign against one of Britain's last nationalised industries.

In fact, BR was one of the most efficient systems in Europe, with lower subsidies than France, Germany or Italy. Under BR, railways got faster, leaner and safer.

Christian's book was published in June by Michael Joseph. 416 pages. £30.





Picture: GROWTH TRACK 360

Conwy Castle as it could be with an HS2-style rail service

accelerate the long overdue investment programme for our region’s rail infrastructure network.”

A project described as “partial electrification” has started in Scotland for battery electric trains to replace diesels on Fife Circle services. Onboard batteries will allow trains to run through non-electrified sections. The initial £55 million scheme will electrify eight miles from Edinburgh (Haymarket) to Dalmeny, just south of the Forth Bridge. The scheme will clear the way for electrification of lines north of the Forth Bridge.

Railfuture president Christian zooms into AGM at Bristol

Christian Wolmar, who was suffering from Covid, gave his president’s address to the Railfuture annual general meeting near Bristol Parkway station in July by Zoom from home in London, thanks to technical input from communications director Neil Middleton.

Christian said the past year had been an exciting one for the railways. There had been the Okehampton reopening but rail finances are in a chaotic state, London is experiencing a stop-go funding crisis and rail franchising has collapsed.

He said London’s Crossrail (Elizabeth line) is a great success but the government does not seem able to recognise it as such.

Christian said he had visited England’s North East and accompanied Dennis Fancett of the South East Northumberland Rail User Group to look at the soon-to-be-reopened Northumberland line.

In many other parts of the country there is a real appetite to get rail reopenings and improvements to rail services.

Big changes in government policy, however, are expected and it is not certain that Transport Secretary Grant Shapps will remain at the Department for Transport.

Railfuture is good in discussions with train operators but it seems they will have less scope to introduce improvements, even minor ones such as providing new waiting rooms. Much more will probably be decided centrally and by Network Rail.

Railfuture’s board remained unchanged after the AGM but chairman Chris Page encouraged members to stand for election. This year, there were no new candidates

What’s on

Many rail-related events are listed on Railfuture’s website:

www.railfuture.org.uk/events

Railfuture conference

The next Railfuture conference will be in Leeds on Thursday 15 September 2022.

More information is available on page 8 of this *railaction*.

You can book your place at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences

Rail investment being scrutinised

Network Rail is in the process of producing its investment plans for control period 7, which will inevitably involve intense scrutiny from the Treasury. We are now half way through CP6, which runs from 2019 to 2024.

At present, the Aylesbury link to East West Rail is not funded.

By contrast the enormous £27 billion road building continues apace, which will worsen climate change.

The National Highways Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) was approved without a proper examination of its effects.

for election, but three existing board members, vice-chair Allison Cosgrove, Neil Middleton and Roger Blake, were re-elected unopposed.

Scottish Parliament Member Paul McLennan, who represents East Lothian for the Scottish National Party, became a vice-president of Railfuture in 2022.

Chris Page's report highlighted Railfuture's successes over the year but warned that the government is unlikely to release large funds for railway investment, so Railfuture would be trying to recruit more members while looking for value-for-money incremental improvements to the railways.

He added: "We are now taking a more critical stance on the government's attitude to rail."

Financial director Jerry Alderson reported on Railfuture's healthy financial reserves but warned that the 52 new members recruited in 2021 was the lowest number for 20 years.

Railfuture's websites were migrated to a new system in 2022, with a more competitive hosting fee.

With a careful financial approach, Railfuture now possessed a substantial fighting fund, largely from legacies. This year there had been a £25,000 legacy from one member.

A "tidy-up" of Railfuture's company memorandum and articles to accommodate changes in UK legislation was agreed by the AGM, after Trevor Garrod questioned whether it implied a reduction of interest in Northern Ireland and European rail affairs. Director Stewart Palmer assured the AGM that it did not.

Membership director Wendy Thorne appealed for volunteers to join a working party to devise ways to attract more members. One possible approach is to take more interest in attracting younger supporters with limited cash resources who do not become members. University transport departments should be rich recruiting grounds. Many other voluntary groups now have many supporters who are not formal members. William Whiting said it was an urgent issue to recruit a more diverse membership for Railfuture. Richard Bowry said many railway clubs were increasing their membership and there was scope for Railfuture to co-operate with them, especially using social media.

Neil Middleton said Railfuture was considering organising a competition among rail user groups and other campaigners for £5,000 grants from the Fighting Fund to help with, among other things, research resources or promotional activities. Several members mentioned the importance of protecting the future services of ticket offices as well as cutting fares.

Rail User Group award winners star at Railfuture AGM

The Rail User Group Award winners were presented with certificates at the Railfuture AGM by Stewart Palmer and Roger Blake: Andy Hedges for the Tarka Rail Association, Fraser McDonald for the Friends of the West Highland Lines, Graham Ellis for Melksham Transport User Group, Kim Burrows for Friends of Reddish South Station, Mark Collins for Fen Line Users Association, Michael Ireland and Kevin Ball of OkeRail, Nick Farthing of Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership, Robert Baughan of Cooksbridge Station Partnership, and Tim Steer of ACERail Campaign.

The judges for the awards were Ian Brown, Roger Ford, Chris Green, Chris Irwin, Adrian Shooter, Stewart Palmer and Alan Williams.

Some of the winners attended the AGM to pass on their successful methods to other rail campaigners.



Fraser McDonald of Friends of the West Highland Lines

Pictures: GRAHAM ELLIS



Railfuture Campaigner of the Year Award 2022

Railfuture membership director Wendy Thorne announced that Jane Ann Liston, secretary of Railfuture Scotland and St Andrews reopening campaigner, won Railfuture's Campaigner of the Year Award 2022.

Wendy said: "The judges acknowledged that Jane Ann had gone the extra mile with her persistence in campaigning for the St Andrews rail link but also her wider contribution to raising the profile and awareness of Railfuture across the whole of Scotland, especially in the Scottish media, and helping to make Railfuture the 'go to place' for informed input and advice. She helps to promote Railfuture's vision for a bigger, better railway and is a worthy winner."

Jane Ann appeared on Zoom (above) to accept the award and said she was flabbergasted by the honour.

Fraser McDonald, who accepted the best website gold award for Friends of the West Highland Lines, said the group was set up when the Serpell report recommended widespread rail closures in 1982. He said one amazing suggestion was to close the lines from Crianlarich to Fort William and from Crianlarich to Oban because there was double the number of passengers on the section from Glasgow to Crianlarich! Now both lines are recognised as vital links and the sleeper service to Fort William is being boosted. For some stunning pictures, see the group's award-winning website at westhighlandline.org.uk

Michael Ireland of OkeRail who accepted the Judges Special Award said the successful re-introduction of a regular train service from Exeter to Okehampton followed a 14-year campaign by OkeRail which took over from its forerunner Destination Okehampton.

"Everything we said was underpinned by solid research," he said. "We worked the trains and undertook surveys. We organised special trains to London for 500 people and trips to other destinations. We met rail ministers in London and we proved there was plenty of demand. We were forceful but you must have the relevant MPs to support you."

Nick Farthing of Three Rivers Rail Partnership received the gold Clara Zilahi Award for Best Campaigner and said Railfuture should be proud of itself. He added: "The biggest message is: Don't give up. We get there in the end. I became chair of Railfuture Wessex 32 years ago.

"We had schools making presentations about the importance of the railways and the benefits of the Waterside Railway and we had tremendous support from Mark Hopwood (of Great Western Railway) who has been a 'real gent'.

"Beware of the 2% naysayers who can undermine you while 98% of the public assume it is obvious to everyone that Southampton should have a rail service to Marchwood and Hythe Town."

Robert Baughan, who accepted the gold award for best campaign on behalf of Cooksbridge Station Partnership, said: "Our involvement with Railfuture has been very rewarding and a very positive experience. We eventually achieved a Sunday service for the first time in 55 years and improved the daily peak-hour-only service to all-day.

"We started with a wonderful facility – our station – but with trains passing through without stopping. We surveyed residents and analysed the timetable. The train operator did not want to listen at first but we worked collaboratively with the train operator's people and we never gave up."

Fen Line Users Association newsletter editor Mark Collins accepted The Paul Abell Gold Award for Best Newsletter. He said he devised a slogan based on an arrow and a semaphore distant signal as the logo for the newsletter and the logo has also been used on posters at stations thanks to help from Greater Anglia and the other two



Michael Ireland (OkeRail)



Nick Farthing of Three Rivers Rail Partnership



Robert Baughan of Cooksbridge Station Partnership



Mark Collins of Fen Line Users Association

Stoke good news?

A revamp of the area around Stoke-on-Trent station is part of a £29 million Transforming Cities plan.

A new transport hub will be created to improve walking and cycling routes. Longton station will also be improved.

One of the main aims is to cut pollution and improve air quality, which is in stark contrast to the £43 million one-kilometre Etruria Valley link road project which will attract more road traffic. Work on the new road started in October.

In 1993, Railfuture member Robert Griffiths was shocked by changes in his home city of Stoke-on-Trent which made it more difficult for people to get to the railway station.

When he started looking at other cities and towns, he discovered that Stoke was not unique.

New roads have made life difficult for pedestrians, cyclists – and rail passengers.

His *Trek to the Train* was published by the Railway Development Society (Railfuture's predecessor) in 1993 with Coventry featuring on the cover.

You can view and download *Trek* along with other RDS pamphlets at:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/RDS-pamphlets>

operators, Great Northern and CrossCountry. The association saved the line from closure 48 years ago, and successfully campaigned for electrification which eventually transformed the service from a two-car diesel to an eight-car electric train. The current preoccupation is the unsatisfactory sort-sighted rationalisation at Ely which is now a bottleneck and a deterrent to better services.

He said MPs find the newsletters very useful for keeping in touch with what is happening.

Mark said: "We work with the industry and try to keep on good terms but our message is to carry on campaigning and don't give up even though it might take many years."

But he added: "We will be looking at the award winners today for ideas to help us improve our website which at the moment would probably not win any awards."

Tim Steer accepted the Oliver Lovell Gold Award for Best New Group for the ACE Rail campaign and Tarka Rail Association. He thanked Railfuture for its support and said the ACE campaign was named after the Atlantic Coast Express which started running in 1928, with a portion of the train serving Bideford. Now the Bideford area is among the least well-off areas in Devon and is the largest community cut off from the railway in the county after the station closed in 1965. The idea for the campaign was prompted by the original locomotive nameplate being returned to the town. Tarka Rail Association and Barnstaple in Bloom set up a working party to restore the unused platform for Barnstaple, which has retained its rail service to Exeter.



Tim Steer of ACE Rail campaign

Rail User Group Awards 2021-22 winners

Best New Group [the Oliver Lovell Award] – 2

- G ACE Rail campaign (Tarka Rail Association)
- C Lewes Rail Users Group

Best Newsletter [the Paul Abell Award] – 5

- G Fen Line Users Association
- G South East Northumberland Rail User Group
- S Felixstowe Travel Watch
- C Huddersfield Penistone Sheffield Rail Users Association
- C Tarka Rail Association

Best Social Media – 2

- C Friends of Reddish South Station
- C Witney Oxford Transport Group

Best Website – 6

- G Friends of the West Highland Lines
- S Skipton and East Lancs Rail Action Partnership
- S South East Northumberland Rail User Group
- B Melksham Transport User Group
- B Friends of Reddish South Station
- C Magor & Undy Walkway Station

Best Campaign – 6

- G Cooksbridge Station Partnership
- S Fen Line Users Association
- S South East Northumberland Rail User Group
- B Friends of Reddish South Station
- C Magor & Undy Walkway Station
- C Witney Oxford Transport Group

Best Campaigner [the Clara Zilahi Award] – 5

- G Nick Farthing, Three Rivers Rail Partnership
- S Andy Shackleton, Skipton and East Lancs Rail Action Partnership
- S Dennis Fancett, South East Northumberland Rail User Group
- C Graham Ellis, Melksham Transport User Group
- C Stephen Waring, Halifax and District Rail Action Group

Judges' Special Award

- OkeRail and the Dartmoor Line

Print makes a comeback

10,000 new printed train timetables have been produced to help people without internet access.

The Bittern Line and Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnerships worked on the project with rail operator Greater Anglia.

The Wherry Lines run between Norwich to Lowestoft and Norwich to Great Yarmouth and the Bittern Line serves the route between Norwich and Sheringham via North Walsham and Cromer.

Trevor Garrod, chair of the East Suffolk Travel Association, said: "We very much welcome this initiative and are supporting the distribution of the paper timetables through our membership. At a time when it is important to attract passengers back to the railway, ensuring that timetables are available to everyone in formats they can use is essential."



David Pearce of the Bittern line CRP with the new printed timetables

Picture: COMMUNITY RAIL NORFOLK

Come to Railfuture's conference in Leeds

Thursday 15 September 2022

A Turning Point for the Railways

What do we want the railways to look like in the future?

Speakers

Nick Flynn and Abby Taylor

Trains for Kids and Family Friendly Trains

Stewart Palmer vice-president of Railfuture
and former managing director of South West Trains

Is the railway working properly for passengers?

Karen Bennett, Lancashire Community Rail Education Development Officer

How young people can be engaged in the railways

Phil Smart, assistant policy manager for Rail Freight Group and Ipswich councillor

Rail's role in the future movement of freight

Anna-Jane Hunter, Women in Rail

The future role of women in the railways

Dr Manuel Ofeda Cabral, University of Leeds

The value of new railway lines and stations

Alison Smith, Head of Accessibility, Great British Railways Transition Team

The transition to Great British Railways

Conference chair: Brian Barnsley of the Community Rail Network

Venue: St George's Centre, 60 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3DL

Book by 31 August for the early bird price:

£45 Early bird (members only)

£50 General Admission

£35 Student

Includes lunch and refreshments

Programme: 0915-1015 Arrivals - tea/coffee/pastries, 1015-1245 Morning session,
1245-1345 Lunch, 1345-1630 Afternoon session includes workshop for all attendees

Book your place now at

www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/

Queries: conferences@railfuture.org.uk

Big step forward for Portishead

Major progress towards opening the rail line between Portishead and Bristol was made at the end of July when the government committed £15.5 million.

At last, it seems, passenger trains could connect Bristol to the North Somerset town of Portishead for the first time since 1964.

The reopening scheme has been dogged by delays which North Somerset Council says has caused costs to rise to £152 million resulting in a £35.5 million funding shortfall.

The council came up with £10 million, the West of England Combined Authority £10 million and the Department for Transport has provided £15.5 million.

The line may now reopen in 2026, after local authorities started planning the project in 2011. The initial budget of £116 million was secured in 2017.

The Department for Transport must still approve the business case and development consent order.

Nine kilometres of freight-only track will be converted to passenger use, and five kilometres of disused track reopened.

To read more about the scheme, go to:

travelwest.info/metrowest

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