

President: Alan Whitehouse Vice-Presidents: Mike Crowhurst & Alan Williams

### Northern's Obstacles & Optimism

By Mark Parry



We heard a refreshing review from Northern's Paul Barnfield and Peter Myers at our Branch Meeting in Halifax. Northern has had a difficult period recently, although performance has improved on last year it is still poor. Several externalities have affected performance, such as vandalism, a lineside fire, falling trees and signal problems. Leaf fall was earlier than expected and this was misjudged with delayed preventative action being taken. There were 273 cancellations in 2017. The Calder Valley was the worst performing route. More wheels required re-profiling, taking many trains out of service in 2017.

Paul Barnfield – photo by Mark Parry

There have been 15 days of strikes since March 2016, but locally, relations with the RMT Union are positive. Modernisation will deliver major changes by 2020 and staff will be made more visible. All jobs and pay have been guaranteed and 460 new people have been recruited since April 2016. Northern are working on accessibility issues on both trains and stations. Currently they have no trains that facilitate driver only operation. 1,324 out of 2,630 scheduled services ran on the last strike day on 12 January 2018, plus some buses replaced train services. The option of having drivers open doors and conductors close them does not satisfy the contract they have signed. Staff at stations will not be automatically withdrawn.

By 2020, Northern will have 243 refurbished trains and have withdrawn all the Pacers; all trains will be accessible. Phase 2 of the refurbishment will include new seats, security cameras, USB sockets and wifi. The interior design of the new trains has been finalised and the bodysells now exist. They have agreed the cab design with the drivers. Test track work is taking place in the first quarter of 2018 with the new trains expected in service by December 2018. ....continued overleaf....

Railfuture, Yorkshire Branch Spring Meeting

Speaker: Lucy Hudson, Lead Officer, Freight & Logistics, Transport for the North

13:00 to 16:00 hours, Saturday, 14 April 2018

The Yorkshire Children's Centre, Brian Jackson House, Huddersfield HD1 5JP

**See flyer for more details**

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... continued from front page ... £60 million is being invested in small stations, with ticket machines, new seats, waiting areas, information points and improved access all included.

From May 2018, advantage will be taken of the Ordsall Curve in Manchester and new electrification in the North West, which will release diesel units for elsewhere. Unfortunately, delays in electrifying the Bolton corridor will delay this cascade of diesel trains. The timetable changes will have to go ahead though, as dictated by the rest of the rail network, leaving Northern 50 trains short. Solutions to this are being considered, with news expected late February.

From December 2019 there will be extra Sunday services and the new Northern Connect services will be introduced, mainly affecting Calder Valley services. Other improvements include the extended Calder Valley Leeds to Chester service, four trains an hour from Leeds to Harrogate, and through services retained from Bridlington to Doncaster and Sheffield. The Knottingley to Wakefield service is to be extended to Leeds and a new Sunday service introduced. The Huddersfield to Wakefield service is to be extended to Castleford. Northern is keen to work with the bus operators, and are considering linking with cycling options, car share and taxis.



Northern are hoping there will be two trains an hour stopping at Kirkstall Forge. They hope to meet with the Hope Valley Group as this involves two of Northern's Areas.

Pete Myers – Photo by Paul Colbeck

## New Committee Members

by Mark Parry

At our Annual General Meeting in Halifax on 20 January, most officers were re-elected with Nina Smith remaining as our Chair. During the year Steve Brady resigned. Three new officers were voted in with no specific post: Mike Rose, Andrew Dyson and Stephen Waring. Sadly, Tony Ross is no longer able to continue his role due to ill health. A full list of the Officers and their contact details appears at the end of this newsletter.

## Reactions

I am disappointed that the Midland Main Line is not yet to be electrified. However much dithering we must suffer, let us use the time well. We need to see the scope of this electrification developed to give us through electric Inter City trains from St. Pancras to Sheffield then forward separately to Leeds and Doncaster/York. I wrote along these lines to the Department for Transport who reckoned we did not need this as Leeds already has an electric service to London. How we need lobbyists!

Graham Lund [Graham.Lund@Hotmail.uk](mailto:Graham.Lund@Hotmail.uk)

Comments are welcome and can be sent to the editor, contact details on the back page.

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The Halifax and District Rail Action Group is leading a campaign for electrification and have issued a draft Electric Charter – a copy of this is overleaf. Stephen Waring, chair of the Group and a Branch Officer, has also written a paper stating the advantages of electrification along with Richard Lysons of STORM “Support The Oldham Rochdale Manchester rail lines. At the time of going to press, a public launch was planned soon. An extract is below:

**Summary:**

In July 2017 three electrification schemes were cancelled: Cardiff-Swansea, the Midland Main Line (Kettering to Sheffield) and the Windermere branch. Further comments cast doubt on aspects of The Great North Rail Project, including additional platforms at Manchester Piccadilly station designed as part of the “Northern Hub” to maximise advantages of the new Ordsall Chord railway, and electrification (continuous or discontinuous) of the Stalybridge-Huddersfield-Leeds route as part of the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU), with related capacity improvements. We believe the capacity projects should proceed and the TRU should deliver a clean, sustainable electrified railway. Earlier commitments should be honoured and a rolling programme should move forward, not least in the North of England based on Northern Electrification Task Force recommendations.

*The arguments for electrification remain clear and enduring:*

- Economic and business case – compared with diesels, electric trains are cheaper to build, more reliable requiring less maintenance, cheaper to operate and longer-lasting. Lighter weight means more passengers can be carried, acceleration is better and journey times can be shorter even with relatively frequent stops. The passenger experience is improved in terms of cleanliness, air quality and noise levels both in stations and on trains (particularly in comparison with diesel/bi-mode units that have under-floor engines). The “sparks effect” means electrification invariably increases demand for travel on the line, promoting good growth.
- Environment and resources – to improve air quality, reduce noise, combat climate change and reduce wastage of resources, objectives that can only ever be partially achieved with diesel traction. Even with non-renewable electricity generation, electric trains have 20-30% lower carbon emissions than diesel, an advantage that is already being exceeded with the current renewables mix. As electricity generation moves towards zero-carbon, so will electric transport. The commitment to stop the sale of diesel/petrol cars and vans on UK roads by 2040 must be matched by a commitment to a zero-carbon, zero-emission railway over a similar or shorter timescale.
- Consideration of alternatives – bi-mode trains carrying both diesel and electric traction equipment are inherently heavier, more complex and materials-hungry, less energy-efficient and more expensive to procure and operate than pure electrics. Reliability is unproven and performance unlikely to match that of pure electrics. Diesel bi-mode trains commit the railway for a generation to polluting technology which is planned to be phased out on UK roads. Prospects for hydrogen technology on rail are likely to be limited. On short sections of discontinuous electrification where wiring is difficult, the gaps may be bridged by using electric trains with moderate battery or other energy-storage – but not, surely not, dirty diesels.

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# Electric Railway Charter 2018

This is declaration of support for a growing, sustainable railway that will promote good growth whilst protecting and enhancing the local and global environment. The Charter is both a call for rail businesses and local regional and central government bodies to take action, and a commitment by its authors to continue to campaign in pursuit of railway electrification. The Charter has been drawn up by campaigning rail users' groups along the Calder Valley Line in the North of England.

**We invite** business, environmental, political, workplace and community groups to declare their support for our aims.

**We declare** our belief, as explained more fully in our supporting document *Arguments for Electrification*, that:

- Rail transport is and must continue to be developed as an attractive alternative to travel on congested roads, providing economic and environmental benefits.
- Road transport will move towards zero-emission, zero-carbon over coming decades; so too must rail.
- Diesel traction (including diesel “bi-mode” trains) and other forms depending on the combustion of fossil fuels must be phased out over a timescale which is short enough to make a real environmental impact.
- Electrified railways have a powerful business advantage through lower operational, maintenance and energy costs, and user-benefits leading to the well-established “sparks effect”. The cost of electrification is recouped through operational savings later.
- Electrified railways have powerful environmental advantages – including the improvement of air quality, and the combatting of climate change by reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. As electricity generation moves towards zero carbon, so will electric railways. We must aim for a zero carbon future for transport.
- The report “Northern Sparks” produced by the Northern Electrification Task Force (NETF) in March 2015, remains a strong statement attracting broad political support, in favour of electrification of main and secondary routes across the North of England.
- Short sections of route may be left unelectrified, for example where there are lengths of tunnel. The gaps should be overcome by trains with on-board energy storage or genuinely clean and sustainable alternative fuels, not by enduring use of polluting diesels.

**We call on** the rail industry, **and on** government at all levels:

- To reassert the need for a programme of railway electrification covering main and secondary routes.
- To begin without delay a programme of electrification of routes across the North of England, based on the NETF recommendations of March 2015, with a dedicated planning team and workforce, building on lessons learnt from recent schemes elsewhere.
- To plan for early implementation of the NETF electrification schemes starting with the full Calder Valley Line (CVL), extending from Leeds via Bradford and Brighouse through Rochdale to Manchester and through Burnley to Preston, as top-ranked NETF recommendation. The CVL scheme would follow naturally upon completion of the TransPennine Route Upgrade which is focussed on the route through Huddersfield.

**Northern Sparks report**  
**March 2015:** Task force Tier 1 recommended electric rail schemes:

- Calder Valley – Leeds to Manchester and Preston via Bradford and Brighouse
- Liverpool to Manchester via Warrington Central
- Southport/Kirkby to Salford Crescent
- Chester to Stockport
- Northallerton to Middlesbrough
- Leeds to York via Harrogate
- Selby to Hull
- Sheffield (Meadowhall) to Leeds via Barnsley / Castleford & connections
- Bolton to Clitheroe
- Sheffield to Doncaster/Wakefield Westgate (Dearne Valley)
- Hazel Grove to Buxton
- Warrington to Chester

<p><b>STORM:</b>                  Support the Oldham, Rochdale Manchester rail line</p>	<p><b>HADRAG:</b>                  The Halifax &amp; District Rail Action Group</p>	<p><b>Upper Calder Valley</b>                  Sustainable Transport Group</p>	<p><b>Bradford</b>                  Rail Users' Group</p>
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A series of consultation events have been taking place across our area and I visited the one in Halifax on 15 February 2018. Responses to this consultation need to be in by 17 April 2018. Transport for the North have planned a network that they think the North needs. This includes:

- A new line between Liverpool and the HS2 Manchester spur via Warrington.
- Capacity at Piccadilly for around 8 through services per hour.
- A new trans Pennine rail line that connects Manchester and Leeds via Bradford.
- Significant upgrades along the corridor of the existing Hope Valley Line between Sheffield and Manchester via Stockport.
- Leeds to Sheffield delivered through HS2 Phase 2B and upgrading the route from Sheffield.
- Leeds to Newcastle via HS2 junction and upgrades to the East Coast mainline.
- Significant upgrades to the existing line from Leeds to Hull (via Selby) and Sheffield to Hull (via Doncaster).

They do not see HS3 as “high speed” but as part of this planned network. They want to increase the population who can travel to the Cities within an hour, from 10,000 to 1.3 million people; with a minimum service of two trains an hour between cities. All this will cost between £60 and £70 billions over 30 years. In practice the easy cheap projects maybe done first, such as speeding up Leeds to Hull. But there is no priority order for the projects needed to complete the new network.

But this isn't just about rail, they are also looking to improve roads, albeit to a lesser degree. They want to improve the roads linking the major highways to the industrial areas and improving the roads to Scotland. Some of this we may well decide to oppose.

New smart cards and real time information are being introduced over the next year or so. More freight capacity is recognised as being needed across the Pennines. They may not go for electrification and could consider hydrogen trains. At Halifax, the plan was criticised for not committing to a reduction in Carbon Di-oxide emissions. The large skills demand to build HS2 may well delay implementation of this “Northern Powerhouse” Rail network.

The programme for this new rail network will be worked on over the next 6 months. As Transport for the North works with a diverse group of local authorities, they are confident of a political consensus.

**Chair's Column****by Nina Smith**

I'll start this column with good news. On St Valentine's Day, the vital improvement to the **Hope Valley line** in the form of a passing loop long enough for freight trains was given the go-ahead. As work will take place in Network Rail Control Periods 5 and 6, we can hope that this should be operational no later than the very early 2020s.

The second piece of good news has been the Department for Transport's decision to fund a full feasibility study into reopening the **Skipton-Colne** line. This was announced by the Transport Secretary on Colne station on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, and Mr Grayling stated that he sees the line's potential for both freight and passengers. This major step towards the reopening of this important strategic and local route is in no small measure due to the assiduous campaigning over more than 15 years by a dedicated band of local people in the Railfuture affiliated pressure group “SELRAP”. One major benefit of reopening the line will be to reduce the time taken by biomass trains from the Port of Liverpool to Drax power station from up to 9 hours to under three. For passengers, it should provide a rail link from deprived towns in Pendle to Skipton, Bradford and Leeds, and a direct link from Ilkley, Keighley and Skipton to Manchester and Manchester Airport.

Less good is the shambles concerning the intermediate stations between **Huddersfield and Stalybridge**, an issue which highlights the conflict between fast inter-city journeys and the need for local people to have a train service that meets their needs. Basically, the increase in the number of “Transpennine” express trains between Manchester and Leeds from five to six an hour has been at the expense of a local Northern service; as a compromise, the hourly Transpennine Hull service will stop at intermediate stations between Huddersfield and Stalybridge, but with different timings and serving different Manchester stations to the replaced local service. This is incredibly disruptive to

commuters whose jobs depend on their being able to access a station convenient for their work at a suitable time. It is clearly essential that the forthcoming trans Pennine route upgrade addresses the capacity problems on this route, with four-tracking restored as much as possible. Nevertheless, with the new Northern Powerhouse rail line unlikely to be operational before the 2030s, the need for all fast Manchester-Leeds services to be routed this way will continue for many years.

The issue of **rail replacement buses** (coaches) is a long running saga. Whereas these are often the only option on local lines, this should not be the case for longer routes if a diversionary route exists. The worst example in the north of England is surely the refusal of Virgin Trains West Coast to divert trains over the Settle and Carlisle route when the West Coast Main Line is blocked. The reason seems to be a commercial one – it would cost Virgin (Stagecoach) money to run over the Settle & Carlisle whereas Network Rail picks up the tab for replacement buses. This is a classic example of where the structure and finance arrangements of the privatised railway are plain stupid. There are two solutions. One is Labour's policy of public ownership. The other is for future franchise specifications to stipulate that, on specific routes, trains should normally be diverted and not replaced by buses, with the franchisee responsible for ensuring that their drivers and guards have the necessary up-to-date route knowledge. This isn't rocket science.

It's good news that the first of **Northern's new train sets** is nearly complete in Spain, with entry into service promised from this December. It's also good news that these sets have been commissioned and internally designed by Northern as reports from their press launch suggest that these will be more comfortable trains than existing units. The same can, I think, be said for **Transpennine's new carriages** and their refurbished 185s. This is one area where we are doing better than parts of the South East; the new Thameslink trains have been severely criticised for very uncomfortable seating – and these trains were designed by civil servants! However, Great Western's new **Department for Transport specified Azuma trains** have also been criticised for the hardness of their seat design, so it seems likely that Virgin Trains East Coast's similar units will represent a step backwards in passenger comfort – unless remedial action is taken fast.

The **Transport for the North Long Term Rail Strategy** was launched for consultation 16th January (until April 17<sup>th</sup>), and it is available on their website. As I write this, Railfuture Yorkshire affiliates will be attending consultation events and developing their responses. This is very much as strategic document in that it very comprehensively highlights current weaknesses and challenges (strategic gaps), outlines a set of Conditional Outputs to meet those gaps, and describes how Transport for the North will seek to deliver the improvements necessary to realise those Outputs. Being high level, in the main it does not propose specific improvements or developments; these will be developed in due course. The favoured route for the new high speed Northern Powerhouse Rail (ex HS3) line between Manchester and Leeds is via Bradford, probably due to very effective lobbying by Bradford Council; it is not scheduled until 2035 – surely far too far ahead for a line of such economic significance. The Woodhead option, which would enable a 30 minute journey time from Sheffield to Manchester, and could also serve as the Manchester-Leeds route, is not included despite being favoured in the 2014 One North report. The Manchester- Yorkshire connections are at the heart of HS3, and much serious thought and examination of options is surely necessary before a final decision is taken. Interestingly, by the time this article is published, Transport for the North should have recruited their Northern Powerhouse Rail Director, a very senior £100k per annum post. However, despite the title, the post is much wider than the new line, as the "role purpose" is to "provide leadership....to determine and deliver the priorities for investment in the North's rail network, freight and passenger services".

I was fortunate enough to have a half hour meeting with the **Secretary of State for Transport** on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. This was arranged by my local MP Craig Whittaker, and was in my capacity as Chair of the Railfuture affiliate, the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group. Amongst the issues I raised was **electrification**, both for the Huddersfield trans-Pennine route and more broadly the implementation of the recommendations of the Electrification Task Force, whose number one priority is my local Calder Valley route. Mr Grayling stated that no final decision had been made regarding the Huddersfield route, which is currently the subject of the trans Pennine upgrade review, but I will not be surprised if the result is partial electrification, as well as a range of infrastructure improvements. On the wider electrification issue, the Secretary of State was clear that he sees the benefit of the electrification of suburban routes into major cities, which gives hope that we will see electrification of some of the Leeds and Sheffield routes by the end of the next decade. I raised some other broader issues, and he seemed very interested in the Railfuture idea of future franchises specifying that **train operators commission feeder bus services** as part of the rail timetable to towns that lost their railway following the Beeching report. I cited Pickering and Whitby from Malton, as well as Keswick in the Lake District (although, of course, that railway ought in time to be restored).

Regarding **electrification**, congratulations to Stephen Waring of HADRAG who is developing an Electrification Charter campaign, calling for the implementation of the Electrification Task Force recommendations, with particular

emphasis on the Calder Valley lines. Stephen presented an outline of it at the January Railfuture Yorkshire meeting, and the branch gave the campaign its enthusiastic backing.

Stephen was one of three **new Committee Members** elected at the Branch annual general meeting, the others being Andrew Dyson from the Hope Valley Rail Users Group and Mike Rose from Sheffield. We are very fortunate to have attracted three such able members onto the Committee, and the election of Mike and Andrew means we now have two people able to advance Railfuture's case in South Yorkshire. Retiring as a Branch officer at the annual general meeting was one of the Branch stalwarts, **Tony Ross**, who retired on health grounds as Freight Officer. In that role, Tony kept the Branch fully informed about freight opportunities and challenges. Tony has been an activist for more years than he cares to remember, and will continue to be so, especially through his being the Secretary of the Hull and East Riding Rail Association.

Finally, some sad news. Our member **Robert Starling**, who was a frequent attendee at Branch Meetings, and was an active member of both the Friends of the Settle and Carlisle Line, and the Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group, died unexpectedly in November. Robert was only 61 and we will remember him for his enthusiasm for all aspects of public transport, his politeness and his ability to ask pertinent questions to speakers. He will be much missed and our condolences go out to his family and friends. A full obituary is in the February issue of the Settle and Carlisle Railway Journal.

**Membership News: 190 as at March 2018**

**Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary**

**We welcome three new members to our Yorkshire branch:**

**F.Birrel** of Wheldrake, **C.Morgan** of Sheffield and **M.Wright** of Pool-in-Wharfdale.

**Membership by location**

West Yorkshire 83	<b>44%</b>
North Yorkshire 52	<b>27%</b>
South Yorkshire 31	<b>16%</b>
East Yorkshire 12	<b>6%</b>
Derbyshire 5 (Hope Valley)	<b>3%</b>
Elsewhere 7	<b>4%</b>

**Membership by type**

Full Member 64	<b>34%</b>
Pensioner 65	<b>34%</b>
Family (all ages) 10	<b>5%</b>
Rail User or similar 18	<b>10%</b>
Life (all ages) 13	<b>7%</b>
Unwaged/Student 12	<b>6%</b>
Supporter (S&C etc) 6	<b>3%</b>
Vice Presidents 2	<b>1%</b>

**Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch**

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.avrug.org.uk">www.avrug.org.uk</a>
Bradford Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.bradfordrail.com">www.bradfordrail.com</a>
Halifax and District Rail Action Group	<a href="http://www.hadrag.com">www.hadrag.com</a>
Esk Valley	<a href="http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdc.html">http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdc.html</a>
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Email: <a href="mailto:hlrug@live.co.uk">hlrug@live.co.uk</a>
Harrogate Line Supporters' Group	<a href="http://www.harrogateline.org">www.harrogateline.org</a>
Hope Valley Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk">www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk</a>
Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association	Email: <a href="mailto:hpsrua@btinternet.com">hpsrua@btinternet.com</a>
Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association	<a href="http://www.hullrailusers.co.uk">www.hullrailusers.co.uk</a>
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.lasrug.btck.co.uk">www.lasrug.btck.co.uk</a>
Minster Rail Campaign	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/minstersrailcampaign/info?tab=overview">https://www.facebook.com/minstersrailcampaign/info?tab=overview</a>
Pontefract Civic Society Rail Group	<a href="https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/">https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/</a>
Selby and District Rail Users' Group	<a href="http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/">http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/</a>
Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the	<a href="http://www.foscl.org.uk">www.foscl.org.uk</a>
Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership	<a href="http://www.selrap.org.uk">www.selrap.org.uk</a>
Stalybridge to Huddersfield	Email: <a href="mailto:MarkAshmor@yahoo.co.uk">MarkAshmor@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: <a href="mailto:Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk">Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk</a>
Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line)	<a href="http://www.yccrp.co.uk">www.yccrp.co.uk</a>

## Branch Committee and the small print

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## Diary

5 Mar 2018 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB. Contact Mark Parry for more details.
9 Apr 2018 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB. Contact Mark Parry for more details.
14 Apr 2018 13:00 – 16:00	Railfuture Yorkshire Branch Meeting at The Yorkshire Children's Children. Brian Jackson House, Huddersfield HD1 5JP. Speaker: Lucy Hudson, Lead officer, Freight & Logistics at Transport for the North. See flyer for full details.
7 May 2018 19:30	Campaign for Better Transport West and North Yorkshire Rail Group. Meeting at "Veritas" 43-47 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3BB. Contact Mark Parry for more details.
12 May 2018	Railfuture National Annual General Meeting will be in Edinburgh, at the prestigious Holyrood Hotel.
23 June 2018	Railfuture Summer Conference to be held in Carlisle where, the Rail Minister, Paul Maynard, will be one of the Speakers.

**Want to advertise your meeting here? Contact Mark Parry: [Mark.Parry294@gmail.com](mailto:Mark.Parry294@gmail.com) 07941 642349.**

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 41**) will be out in June 2018. Please email material, news and feedback to: [Mark.Parry294@gmail.com](mailto:Mark.Parry294@gmail.com) to arrive by **Saturday 5 May 2018**. Alternatively call or text 07941 642349. **Stories of campaigns and successes are especially welcome.**

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