

Railfuture near you

Some of the campaign successes that Railfuture branches achieved in 2017.

Scotland. Railfuture Scotland has visited events and rail user groups throughout the land, spreading information about how we can assist local campaigning. Our efforts culminated in a Members Day in Perth, at which 7 different rail user groups from the Borders to the Far North Line shared campaigning strategies. Our efforts have helped bring about studies into rebuilding the Buchan line and re-opening stations in the south west (which directly led to funding agreement for the next part of the STAG evaluation), as well as ensuring that other campaigns receive regular press coverage.

North West. Our support for our affiliated Mid Cheshire Rail User Association helped to achieve a doubling of the train frequency between Chester and Manchester and to safeguard the alignment of the proposed Manchester Airport western link.

Wales. A contribution from Railfuture's Fighting Fund of up to £10K has helped a community group to secure a GRIP3 study to determine the best high level design for a proposed 'walkway' station at Magor near Severn Tunnel Junction, which will encourage passengers to arrive on foot or by cycle. Our funding partners are Monmouthshire County Council and the Welsh Government. In its half yearly report the National Assembly for Wales Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee recognised that Railfuture Wales had influenced its Rail Franchise and Metro Report recommendations.

West Midlands. Discussions with officers from Walsall Council on the reinstatement of Walsall - Wolverhampton passenger services has led to the new operator seeking to provide service in 2019/2020. We organised a successful Mayoral Transport Forum at Birmingham Council House prior to the election of the West Midlands Mayor and held a one day recruitment stall at Birmingham New Street in November where we were able to help rail users.

Severnside. Bridgwater station now has an Onward Travel poster with relevant information about bus stops and services. It is on the outside of the main building and therefore visible at all times of day. We also supported member David Wood who successfully campaigned to get the platforms at Parson Street cleared of vegetation.

Wessex. After an intervention by Railfuture, travellers using the West of England line to London via Salisbury have received an assurance that fares on their route will continue to offer good value. The Competition and Markets Authority upheld our complaint that awarding the South Western franchise to First Group, which already runs Great Western services via Reading, would result in a loss of competition, forcing the operator to concede that fares via Salisbury would remain better value than using the GW route.

Devon and Cornwall. Our second public meeting on 25th November 2017 brought together those campaigning for daily Okehampton to Exeter trains, which has led to the Secretary of State for Transport instructing Great Western to prepare plans for running all week, all year trains to Okehampton.



North East. Several years' lobbying has resulted in timetable improvements by Northern, increasing train frequency on the Bishop Auckland branch. Sunday trains now run all year between Middlesbrough and Whitby and between Metro Centre and Morpeth. Morpeth has also gained more East Coast and Cross Country services thanks to campaigning by our affiliate SENRUG (SE Northumberland Rail User Group). TransPennine Express have reinstated some direct Manchester Airport to Newcastle trains.

Yorkshire. Low Moor station near Bradford finally opened on 2nd April 2017. Railfuture and the Bradford Rail Users Group had been campaigning for this for many years, so this was a very welcome event. Railfuture was one of the organisations whose strong arguments resulted in the post 2016 Northern and TransPennine Express franchises being more ambitious than the initial proposals in the DfT consultation.

East Midlands branch hosted Railfuture's Autumn Conference in Leicester on 4th November. Titled 'Dynamic Triangle' – a reference to Nottingham, Derby and Leicester – it brought together a range of speakers from the rail industry and local authorities to draw attention to the importance of railways to the East Midlands.

Lincolnshire. No matter that Sunday shopping has been with us for years and the City of Lincoln now has a large University, anyone wishing to travel by rail to Lincoln on a Sunday found that depending on the route they wished to use the service was either sparse or non-existent. After many years of campaigning and lobbying by the branch, Sunday rail services on two routes have been transformed in 2017 with all day services introduced from Nottingham and Sheffield.

East Anglia. Railfuture helped shape the outcome of a number of positive developments, including the new station at Cambridge North which opened in May. The Government's Autumn statement confirmed a commitment to East – West Rail, and a study into future rail infrastructure needs around Cambridgeshire. Following our 2016 station audit at Whittlesford Parkway station, a recent planning application for a major research park near the station has included funding for station improvements mentioned in our report.

Thames Valley. This year the final link of the Oxford - Marylebone service was completed, exceeding all estimates of usage; Oxford Parkway is now achieving over 1m passengers annually. Railfuture supported Chiltern every step of the way through the government's Transport and Works Act Order process and Public Inquiry and thereafter. At the end of the year we welcomed the final go-ahead for East West Rail to Cambridge and for Reading Green Park station.

London and South East. Railfuture's decisive influence secured an innovative solution to the demise of Ashford-Brighton through services. Instead of splitting at Hastings or Eastbourne, Railfuture advocated two new overlapping services, maintaining connectivity while adding capacity and increasing frequency. Locally six RUGs were convinced and two MPs persuaded. Negotiations saw the idea adopted for GTR's May 2018 timetable!