

Railfuture Limited - Election of Directors for 2020/21

The Board of Directors is legally liable for the running of the company. Railfuture Ltd must abide by the Companies Act, General Data Protection Regulation, Insurance Act, Health and Safety at Work Act, Lobbying Act and many other pieces of legislation. It also has a legal duty to act in the best interests of the members, which primarily means ensuring that Railfuture is financially well-run, is not exposed to unnecessary risk, and satisfies our insurers and banks. Candidates must be committed to performing this role if elected. Primarily, of course, they must work constructively and harmoniously as part of a team.

Although Railfuture exists to campaign for a bigger better railway, the directors' responsibility is managerial and strategic. They manage the company to enable high-quality, modern, professional and effective campaigning work, where relevant to the company's aims, to be done by Railfuture volunteers, and to make available funds where beneficial to members, properly focused/managed, and value-for-money. It is not the immediate responsibility of the directors to campaign, although many do so within their branch activities, and it is not necessary for every director to have a deep understanding of the railway.

The board needs a variety of knowledge, understanding and skills amongst the directors that include company management, project management, finance/accountancy, corporate governance, data protection, legal, human resources, information technology (especially websites and databases), marketing as well as railway matters, both as rail users and professionals working within the rail industry.

There are three vacancies: all for a three-year term. These vacancies arise from the end of term for three directors, and the co-option in June 2019 of Stewart Palmer, which only lasts until the following AGM. Graham Ellis has decided not to stand again. The other two directors, Jerry Alderson and William Whiting, are standing, as is Stewart Palmer.

As there are only three candidates for three vacancies then no election will be held in 2020. However, the directors wish to express their disappointment that no new candidates have decided to stand and urge suitably-qualified members to consider doing so in 2021. Please contact Chris Page, national chair, to find out more about taking part.

Details of the election process can be read at www.railfuture.org.uk/Elections.

Candidates have an opportunity to an informal meeting with two Vice Presidents to discuss what the role involves.

List of current directors (three-year terms with chair appointed from amongst the directors):

Chris Page – Chair

Jerry Alderson – Finance & IT Director *

Roger Blake – (Rail) Infrastructure Director

Stewart Palmer – portfolio TBC *

William Whiting – Governance Director *

Allison Cosgrove – Vice Chair and Passenger Director

Ian Brown CBE – Policy Director

Chris Hyomes – no portfolio

Wendy Thorne – Membership Director

Allison Cosgrove also has responsibility for supporting Railfuture's 14 branches, aiming to visit around half of them each year. Those marked "*" are seeking re-election. No elected directors stepped down during the year.

Although there is no election in 2020, the election statements submitted by all three candidates are shown on the following two pages.

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Candidate Details and Election Addresses

All candidates were asked to answer questions 1 to 7 and submit an election address of not more than 300 words.

- 1) Length of membership the Railfuture Ltd
 - 2) Current and previous Railfuture Ltd branch membership and committee Service
 - 3) Current and Previous Railfuture Ltd national group service
 - 4) Relevant qualifications and work experience
 - 5) Current and previous membership of other relevant organisations with details of positions held
 - 6) Participation in other organisations as Railfuture Ltd representative
 - 7) Nature and Duration of any association with a rail user group (whether or not affiliated to Railfuture Ltd)
 - 8) Election address
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JERRY ALDERSON – Proposed by David Harby; seconded by Lloyd Butler

Personal Details

- Q1. 20 years
- Q2. Committee member East Anglia branch since 2002.
- Q3. Director since 2005. Vice Chairman 2006-13. Now Director of Finance & IT. Member of European Passenger Group and Railwatch Editorial. Former chair of Networks Group. Former acting chair of West Midlands branch.
- Q4. Owner director of a small business consultancy company specialising in growing revenue in telecommunications, banking and retail sectors throughout Europe
- Q5. Founding CAST.IRON executive, attempting to reopen Cambridge to St.Ives Railway. Grew membership of 1,150 in 12 months
- Q6. CfBT until 2007.
- Q7. Occasional volunteer on Mid-Norfolk Railway. Member of Fen Line Users and other railway user/campaign groups. Shareholder in Wensleydale Railway amongst others.

Election Address

Active rail campaigning (reopening the Cambridge-St Ives line, sadly now a guided busway) brought me to Railfuture in 1999. I joined the Board of Directors in 2005 intending to steer Railfuture in the right direction and secure its future. I feel that I have achieved this, putting our finances onto a sound footing by building up reserves and seeking value for money, ensuring that we are compliant with legislation and increasing our professionalism. I have agreed to stand for election again because of a lack of new people coming forward. However, I would like to handover my Financial Director responsibilities quite soon. I also welcome offers of help from people with good IT technical skills, as the amount of ambitious website development work planned far exceeds my available time.

I encourage members, particularly those who have joined in recent years, to become more involved with Railfuture and consider standing for election next year. It is not financially rewarding – we are all unpaid volunteers – but definitely satisfying and can give a great sense of achievement. Railfuture experience can look good on your CV.

A fellow director, rightly, says “we need more active members and more-active members” and it is important that all members encourage others to join Railfuture. Please do.

Attracting people of working age with modern skills from a range of backgrounds must become our priority for long-term survival. More women and under 30s are needed. Our prominent campaigns must include passenger issues (value-for-money fares, less overcrowding, fast and frequent services, good station and train facilities, especially accessibility) as well as reopening and electrification campaigns. Too much railway investment seems to be solely for operational benefit, making the industry's life easier, rather than improving the passenger experience, and Railfuture must continue to challenge governments and the rail industry.

STEWART PALMER – Proposed by Tony Smale, seconded by Wendy Thorne

Personal Details

- Q1. Vice President since 2013, member since 2014.
- Q2. Wessex Branch Board liaison member, but not on committee.
- Q3. Current Board member (Co-opted), member of Governance Working Group, member of RUG awards group.
- Q4. BA (Hons) degree from Exeter University. Founder member of the Institution of Railway Operators. Over 37 years in the railway industry from junior management to Managing Director of South West Trains.
- Q5. Trustee chair of a registered charity and former chair of Finance Committee of another registered charity for over 10 years.
- Q6. Chair and speaker at several conferences in recent years.
- Q7. Advisor to Salisbury-Exeter Line RUG (SERUG) for last 4 years and the Isle of Wight Steam Railway for 5 years. Member of Railfuture RUG Awards Group for 4 years, which has involved local visits to various Rail User Groups.

Election Address (Stewart Palmer continued)

Having previously been on the Board of Railfuture, I am now seeking re-election. I spent over 37 years working in the railway industry and believe that I can continue to provide useful rail industry knowledge to Railfuture as a campaigning organisation. I have many senior level contacts in the rail industry. I believe that if Railfuture is to be successful, it has to have influence via constructive engagement with industry players, government and other stakeholders.

Previously on the Board I worked with others to encourage Railfuture to adopt modern professional standards and to try to build better relationships between the Board, Working Groups, Branches, our members and external stakeholders. I have attended many events, conferences and meetings all around the country, promoting Railfuture as an informed, constructive and positive force for change. I led the successful referral to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) concerning the potential loss of cheap fares from Exeter, following the takeover of South West Trains by First/MTR.

I am a member and adviser to SERUG (Salisbury-Exeter Rail User Group). I believe that cooperation between RUG's and Railfuture is one of the keys to future success and if elected will make improved liaison with RUGs my top priority.

Railfuture will only survive and have influence if it attracts new, younger, active supporters. To do that, we have to adopt policies and behaviours that provide a relevant, welcoming environment to new members. We must give value to our members and be able to deliver successful campaigns for change, which result in a cost effective railway that helps reduce the carbon footprint of the Country. I believe that my involvement thus far as a member, Group and Board member and Vice President, has demonstrated that I can help bring that about.

WILLIAM WHITING - Proposed by Wendy Thorne, seconded by Stewart Palmer

Personal Details

Q1. 19 years

Q2. Chair of West Midlands Branch 2013-2018.

Q3. Member of Governance Working Group, Member of Conference and AGM Working Group. Secretary to Policy Directorate 2013-2017. Board Member 2017-2018

Q4. HND Public Administration. (Bournemouth University 1978). Employed in two local authorities (1) Brent LBC 1979-1986 (2) Sandwell MBC 1986-2012. School Governor at Earls High School, Halesowen 2002 to date. Chair of Governing Body September 2018- to date. Member of Halesowen University of the Third Age 2014 onwards and currently Chair.

Q5. None

Q6. West Midlands Railways Stakeholder Meetings, Meetings with Officers from the West Midlands Combined Authority. Attended Chase Line User Group for past five years.

Q7. Stourbridge Line User Group Member and Acting Chair for past two years. Elected as Chair 2018.

Election Address

During the 18 years I have been a member of Railfuture, I have seen our membership decline and a failure to attract a younger and more diverse membership.

I have experience of being on and chairing a board of secondary school Governors at a local school in Halesowen. I am therefore well aware of the need for collective responsibility and that decisions need to be taken in the best interests of the organisation.

I also have 26 years' experience working in a large legal services department of a Metropolitan Borough Council in the West Midlands. An example of my work was to make and submit a compulsory purchase order for the removal of a level crossing at Tipton station by construction of an underpass. I co-ordinated a number of other regeneration projects in the borough.

I have a track record of organising conferences and events. In 2012 and 2016 I successfully co-ordinated two conferences in Birmingham for Railfuture. Over 100 delegates attended both of these conferences. In September 2019 I assisted with the organisation of the Railfuture Annual Conference in Bristol, which attracted a more diverse audience.

I have taken an active role in the working group set-up by the Board to examine governance including a code of practice and a members' handbook. This work is ongoing.

I have been instrumental in the setting up of the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership, which was officially launched in November 2019.

If elected to the Board I will ensure that Railfuture works with stakeholders in the rail industry in a positive way. Where we have not been successful in attracting new members we need to look at new ways of doing so, whilst still engaging with existing members.