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Where's The Plan?

Esk Valley Community Rail Partnership Press Release



Photo: Token exchange at Glaisdale. By Alan Williams.

**New Report
exposes County
Council's lack of
consultation or
progress in five
years on
proposed Esk
Valley line
upgrade.**



North Yorkshire County Council is not properly equipped to manage a rail infrastructure project and their consultants “were either not prepared or not sufficiently informed to explore innovative solutions as requested”.

That's the conclusion of a hard hitting report 'Where's the Plan?' published today by the Esk Valley Railway Development Company, the Community Rail Partnership for the Whitby – Middlesbrough Esk Valley line.

The Report claims that there has been almost no progress or proper consultation in the five years since the Partnership, along with the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and other local groups, persuaded Sirius Minerals to provide £4.5million of funding to improve the infrastructure on the Esk Valley rail line to enable the doubling of the service. ...continued overleaf...

Two forthcoming Railfuture joint branch webinars:

- Saturday 30th January 2021 @ 14:00 Tony Baxter, Regional Director, North East, Northern Trains – “Challenging Times”
- Saturday 27th February 2021 @ 14:00 Phil Smart, Railfuture Freight Group - "Freeing Up Castlefield Paths - New Freight Routes Around Manchester"
- Saturday 17th April 2021 @ 14:00 Railfuture Yorkshire Branch Business Meeting online.

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Despite the delay, there is still no agreed plan but astonishingly North Yorkshire County Council are proposing a 'quick and dirty' scheme to simply install additional restrictive and time consuming Victorian-era token machine signalling.

Outdated system would extend journey times

The Esk Valley Railway Development Company has consistently opposed this plan, which it has demonstrated would further extend journey times for all trains on the line, even when no other trains are running, and condemn it to continue to use the present outdated 19th century signalling. The Esk Valley line is already among the very few on the national network still relying on this Victorian era system.

New digital system proposed within existing budget

Instead, The Esk Valley Railway Development Company has proposed replacement with installation of the modern, much more flexible cab-based digital Radio Electronic Token Block system. Already successfully in everyday use on several lines in Scotland, it would both enable more trains to run and offer significantly shorter journey times.

Crucially, The Esk Valley Railway Development Company says that, contrary to North Yorkshire County Council's constant claims, its own research has established that such a scheme could be delivered within the funding already available.

Dithering and delay

"This dithering and delay by North Yorkshire County Council is distinctly unhelpful and in total contrast to the support enjoyed by almost all 70 Community Rail Partnerships elsewhere" said The Esk Valley Railway Development Company Treasurer and recent General Manager of the Community Rail Network (formerly ACoRP) Neil Buxton.

"North Yorkshire County Council needs to recognise that this funding was provided by Sirius Minerals to improve the rail service in response to lobbying by the Partnership and others. It is not public money. North Yorkshire County Council is merely the fund manager and should be listening to and supporting the Whitby and Esk Valley communities, not prevaricating and blocking progress".

North Yorkshire County Council must explain

The Esk Valley Railway Development Company, with the support of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and others, has challenged North Yorkshire County Council Chief Executive Richard Flinton to explain why it has not responded to repeated requests to explore innovative signalling solutions such as Radio Electronic Token Block as installed on five lines in Scotland and why it continues to refuse to publish the findings of its own £50,000 consultancy report.

The Partnership is also concerned that North Yorkshire County Council has declined to support proposals to apply for additional sources of funding, including the Department for Transport's 'Restoring Your Railway' fund, for an even more comprehensive upgrade of the line.

"The Esk Valley Railway Development Company is being encouraged to apply for this aid by the Department for Transport and such action was specifically provided for in the initial funding agreement" said the The Esk Valley Railway Development Company Spokesman. "Network Rail says it wants to 'Build Back Better'. But North Yorkshire County Council appear to want to build back worse instead. They must explain their continued failure to support The Esk Valley Railway Development Company and the communities along the line in their attempts to use the funds they won to improve their railway."

South Yorkshire Update – Online Branch Meeting

by Mark Parry

28 people plus our speaker attended our online branch meeting on 26 September where we heard the latest on rail developments in South Yorkshire. Our speaker was Peter Kennan who is the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership Private Sector Board Member for Transport. Peter also chairs the Transport Group in the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce. The South Yorkshire Mayor, Dan Jarvis, has the development of rail transport, especially the Sheffield to Manchester route, as a priority. Electrification is also a top priority, indeed it was confirmed that the upgrade of the Midland Mainline includes electrification to Sheffield, but there is some doubt as to when this will happen. A north Sheffield network of electrified lines is an ambition, with Parkgate to Doncaster a possible early win. Network Rail have produced a report on the area which can be found at:

<https://cdn.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Sheffield-Area-Study-2019.pdf>

South Yorkshire has many rail lines on its Key Rail Projects list, including the East Coast mainline upgrade and the Hope Valley line where they are working to get three fast trains per hour by December 2023. They hope to see the Northern Powerhouse rail line include the Dearne Valley and Rotherham and to see improvements for Sheffield to Leeds. The Doncaster Sheffield Airport link is on the list, but the Department for Transport has rejected this despite local support. Tram trains are seen as a way of reducing congestion on the heavy rail lines, but at the expense of creating congestion on the light rail lines.

Using the Beeching reversal fund they hope to re-open Sheffield–Chesterfield via Barrow Hill, Waverley Station, the South Yorkshire Joint Line and other Sheffield local stations. For freight they have had success with the “i-port” at Doncaster, and are working on a freeport bid to cover this, as well as the airport and an M18 connection.

Other rail projects include debates over the Woodhead line, Dore South curve, East Midlands Railway – Liverpool/Norwich, Cross Country – Chesterfield stops, Trans Pennine Express – Manchester Airport challenges and Transport for the North’s Smart Ticketing. High speed 2 is important but not pre-eminent. £400 million is needed to replace the Sheffield trams and catenary, although cheaper battery options will be considered. A tram extension to Doncaster is being considered.

Like transport authorities elsewhere in the UK, the situation post Covid 19 is uncertain.

Barnsley was raised, during questions, as it had not been mentioned. The Dearne Valley HS2 station will serve part of Barnsley. Barnsley to Doncaster is a top priority, but as a road project!

Sheffield Station Taxi Rank Second Worst For Pollution

by Mike Rose

Sheffield Station Taxi Rank is the second worst place in England for exceeding nitrogen dioxide pollution levels, according to Friends of the Earth in July 2020. The environmental campaign group said 1,360 sites in England breached the annual Air Quality Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels. In the list of locations ranked by annual average level of NO₂, Sheffield station Taxi Rank came second at 91ug/m³. The target is set at 40ug/m³. The data is from the most recent local authority Air Quality Annual Status Reports submitted to government.

No-one should be expected to travel through such a polluted environment, and certainly not to work in this environment. Taxis drivers, cafe and shop workers as well as rail staff are working in a dangerous and unacceptable environment. Councillor Bob Johnson, then Cabinet Member for Transport at Sheffield – newly elected leader, said that one of the most significant ways of improving the air quality was electrification of the Midland Main Line. He added we are also planning for the introduction of a clean air zone, which would reduce pollution by giving drivers an incentive to buy cleaner vehicles. City Taxis, Sheffield’s largest taxi operator, plans to go all electric by 2025. However, there are many other taxi operators

The City Council plans to introduce the clean air zone in early 2021, as part of the City’s Clean Air Strategy. Ultra-Low Emission taxis would not be charged, but others would pay £10 per day. The city’s taxis are mainly elderly and would appear from observation to be highly polluting. Local politics will very likely oblige the Council to phase in these requirements, especially as low emission taxis are in short supply. The Clean Air Zone is currently under review in light of Covid.

The station was built on the river Sheaf, as it was late in arriving in Sheffield and all other suitable sites had already been built upon. This means that the station and taxi rank are low lying, and the east side of the station is a steep hillside. The result of this is that pollutants are trapped in the station, causing very high levels of pollution. The station, the 44th busiest in the UK, and one of the busiest outside London, is the second busiest to not be electrified to date, after Bristol Temple Meads. The plan was to electrify the Midland main line from London to Sheffield, but this was deferred by the Government, with the electrification proposals reduced to cover London to Corby and Market Harborough. It is quite appalling that there are still no firm plans to electrify Sheffield station. The eastern leg of HS2 is still in doubt, and building this will not be sufficient as this will only electrify the line as far as Chesterfield, the line to Derby and Market Harborough must also be electrified urgently.

The first thing about any rail service is that it should run between two significant destinations. Usually, these will be major cities or large regional towns at strategic junctions, such as Huddersfield or Doncaster. Occasionally, the end-point may be a smaller market town such as Selby, but in this case, the significance should be that of connectivity into onward travel by other services. In no circumstances (unless it is absolutely unavoidable) should services terminate at such places as Castleford or Knottingley, where there is no meaningful connectivity into the wider rail system.



A Sheffield to Scarborough Loco' hauled train in 1976 – Better times for Pontefract Baghill – photo by Peter Cookson.

At this point I would invite readers simply to look at the West Yorkshire rail map, where they will find just a few services marked by broken lines, indicating only a partial service (partial is the usual euphemism for hardly usable). Immediately, it will be noticed that these are ALL Pontefract Line services. It is as if the West Yorkshire border is sealed in this area and no usable services are allowed to pass through. This happens nowhere else in West Yorkshire and uniquely disadvantages the Pontefract area. In effect, it means that the southern part of the Five Towns- Pontefract, Featherstone and Knottingley- is cut off from the North, South and East, which can only be accessed by travel to the West (to Wakefield or Leeds) and back again at considerable waste of time and expense. This is the Achilles 'Heel of West Yorkshire connectivity and needs urgent solution.

The unsatisfactory services in question are: Leeds-Wakefield-Knottingley; Leeds-Castleford-Knottingley and Huddersfield-Castleford. These are all wasted opportunities and should be extended across the boundary to more suitable destinations to improve connectivity across the City Region and to bring them in line with all other West Yorkshire services.

Our solution is:

- One of the Leeds-Knottingley services should be extended to Goole (or even to Hull) to give connection to North Humberside.
- The Huddersfield-Castleford service should be extended to Doncaster to give access to destinations via the East Coast Main Line. This would allow a station to be built at Askern. Huddersfield-Doncaster would be a rough equivalent of the current Huddersfield-Sheffield service. The second Leeds-Knottingley service could not be extended without considerable infrastructure work at Knottingley and this is the reason for using the Huddersfield service for the Doncaster connection.
- There remains the Sheffield-Pontefract-York service, which is satisfactory in terms of its end points, but with a frequency that is inadequate for all purposes other than a day trip to York. It cannot be used for any meaningful day travel to Sheffield or for onward return day travel to such destinations as Scarborough or the Peak District. The service frequency should be raised to at least to two hourly or preferably to hourly.

This article has been prompted by the Halifax and District Rail Action Group's proposal of a Huddersfield/Calder Valley-Wakefield-Castleford-York service, which we could not possibly support. In the first place it would be a luxury not really needed, as most of the towns up to Wakefield already have a direct service to York via Leeds and second, the scarcity

of paths into York from the south would make it even more difficult to get extra paths for the Dearne Valley service, that we think should have precedence.

It should be added that we think our suggestions (subject to pathing constraints) represent the simplest and cheapest solution for the connectivity improvements we seek that are not dependent on any infrastructure interventions, but merely require the deployment of a small number of extra units. Moreover, even if our suggestions were implemented in full, it would by no means be generous provision, but would simply raise these services to the minimum standard enjoyed by the rest of West Yorkshire, and repair the damage of neglect in this area over the last 40 years.

If innovative services to enhance connectivity in the City Region are being looked for, what about Leeds-Five Towns-Scunthorpe-Grimsby-Cleethorpes? It is interesting to note that, of the two major Yorkshire cities of Sheffield and Leeds, Sheffield has direct services to both North and South Humberside but Leeds is only directly connected to North Humberside. A direct connection from West Yorkshire to the conurbations of North Lincolnshire would greatly improve connectivity across the Region, even if the frequency was only 2 hourly.

We, in the Pontefract district, are deeply concerned that after decades of neglect, the county border in this area still seems to be sealed off to through connective services for no good reason. We look to an early resolution of this anomaly and the routes to the east of the Five Towns area established for through services on the same basis as other routes out of the County.

National Railfuture Webinar

by Mark Parry

Saturday 3 October 2020 was the date for Railfuture's national conference in Leeds. Reduced to 95 minutes on Webinar because of the Covid 19 pandemic, it attracted around 200 people. Advantage was taken of using the online option by conducting two surveys of those attending, one at the end and the other at the start of this event. So, for example, some of the results from the first survey showed that members thought the Government's message about using (or not using) the railways during the Pandemic, was reasonable – 45%, but another 27% said it was negative and 23% alarmist. 35% of those attending had not used a train since before the lockdown, but 58% felt safe doing so most of the time and 52% feared overcrowding during the crisis.

We were addressed by five speakers, the first being Linda McCord, the Senior Stakeholder Manager at Transport Focus. Like our first survey, Transport Focus has also asked 2,000 passengers how they were feeling about rail use currently. 70% are avoiding using rail, 40% are using their car instead but those who are travelling feel safe. The conclusion is that those people who are using the railways are familiar with the reality, which is that rail is generally safe. More communication is needed to those who are not travelling by rail to re-assure them. Linda also mentioned the need to make rail more user friendly through more flexible ticketing for example. Industry reforms could help ease access to our railways.

The next speaker was Peter Sargant, Head of Rail Development in the West Midlands Rail Executive. He highlighted some questions which we cannot yet answer, such as: Will office workers go back to working in their offices? Will overcrowding be tolerated? He said that the emphasis needs to be on performance rather than on capacity and also looked forward to industry reforms. The West Midlands is still investing in rail but needs to be able to justify the short term financial help with the long term view. The need to decarbonise transport in general will help this need.

Jacqueline Starr is the Chief Operating Officer of the Rail Delivery Group and is about to become the Chief Executive Officer; she was unable to attend. Her talk was on video where she outlined the dire Covid situation. She stressed that the primary role has to be safety and thinks the industry has responded well. She sees home working as the new competitor to the rail business, with all the advantages home working has. Again, she stressed that rail needs to be made more attractive to get people back.

The Director of Systems and Health at the Rail Safety Board is Ali Chegini. He noted that whereas rail demand was still low, road demand had nearly fully recovered. He pointed out that the difficulty for rail is distancing. He also mentioned the work done on mental well being during the Covid crisis.

Finally, we listened to Charlene Wallace, the Director for National Passenger and Customer Experience at Network Rail. Network Rail has starting to change its culture as a result of the work of Peter Haines, its Chief Executive Officer. They are putting passengers first and no longer want to be seen as an infrastructure company. Their staff are now trained with an emphasis on helping passengers. They recognise the need to resolve disruptions to services. Their sense of safety remains important and enmeshed in all of their procedures.

The remaining time was used to put to those of the panel attending, some of the questions raised by attendees using the chat facility. Fares flexibility was a key issue especially given the changing times and uncertain demand patterns of the future. The need for a more integrated approach was raised in rural as well as in urban areas. Yorkshire Branch Secretary, Stephen Waring stated his wish that there should be an end to overcrowding post Covid, especially if there is a significant drop in commuters. Another attendee noted the “command and control” approach of the rail operators during the Pandemic, unlike the softer common sense approach adopted by the German railways.

At the end of this Webinar we were left with concerns about the loss of income and the threat of cuts to come. There is an urgent need to attract passengers back onto the Railway, and rail projects need to continue.

Connectivity Chaos

by Toby Hart

It's taken two and half years of writing to Network Rail (primarily), TransPennine Express and the LNER East Coast main Line operator, and is only a drop in the ocean to resolve some of the connectivity problems in our region. Significant improvements to the situation can only come from Northern focusing on the finer detail of their timetables and Transport for the North fulfilling their responsibility regarding Department for Transport requirements on the elimination of public book differentials.

At York:

- In addition to restoring the connection from Scarborough onto the London train in most hours, except for the first train from Scarborough on all operating days from December, an hourly connection has been restored from Middlesbrough onto the same service to London from mid-summer 2018.
- No joy with northbound services as of yet – other than possibly the penultimate departure to Middlesbrough, but this may have been accidental.

At Leeds:

- Restoration of standard clock-face late evening on stopping service to Skipton, restoring the connection off the London train and giving said train faster journey time through to Bradford.
- Restoration of standard clock-face late evening to Ilkley and connection off the Cross Country high speed train from Plymouth (1E63).
- There could be some minor adjustments to the arrival of Harrogate services providing some additional journey opportunities to Nottingham, for example.

At Shipley:

- The established token London to Bradford service now connects again at Shipley with the Skipton train (Saturdays excepted).
- The equivalent token train on Saturdays now connects again at Leeds with the Skipton train by ironing out the anomaly in the standard departure times of the local service as well giving a faster journey time for the LNER service beyond Leeds, see above in under 'Leeds'.
- The 90 minute gap in connections between Leeds to Skipton and Ilkley to Bradford service have been bridged with the creation of two connections mid evening.

As I said, only a sticking plaster job – Network Rail (main culprit in my belief) keep needlessly eroding standard clock-face times - that has taken two years to achieve but I am left wondering what Transport for the North has achieved on this score. I suspect the answer is nothing.

Electrification Will Pay For Itself – tell your MP

by Stephen Waring

The problem writing these pieces is you never know when events will overtake. We are always waiting for things to happen. Waiting for or an integrated rail strategy following the National Infrastructure Commission consultation last summer. For the Department for Transport's full decarbonisation strategy. For Government policy on rail reform – aka “Williams” – now a year overdue but previewed by rumour. Maybe a sensible outcome from Williams would strengthen the case for electrification.

Meanwhile in September we had Network Rail's (interim) Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS) which must surely inform and influence the Department for Transport's overall plan¹.

Railfuture's December issue of Railwatch (www.Railwatch.org.uk) described TDNS as revolutionary. It is indeed a manifesto for **electrification of most lines that at present are stuck with dirty diesels**. By dirty I mean air toxifying, climate damaging. And by "diesels" I include diesel bi-modes, where diesel engines could in due course be replaced by battery packs (Hitachi has a plan). One way or another they must indeed go.

We welcome Prime Minister Boris Johnson's announcement of a new and improved target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 68% (compared with 1990) by 2030. The [Electric Railway Charter](#) (click the link or Google us) has said this must be the cue for a rolling programme of electrification, cutting costs but by 30 to 50% according to Railway Industry Association work².

Answering a question at the Yorkshire Post Great Northern Conference Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport, admitted that hydrogen as an alternative fuel "takes a lot of energy to produce" and said (slightly *sotto voce*, I thought) that the Government would be electrifying more railways. I think that Grant Shapps gets the science, realises that overhead wires are the most efficient way of getting energy to trains – over 80 percent "grid" efficiency, compared with less than 50%, maybe as little as 30% for the multi-stage process of generating hydrogen, transporting it to fuelling points and then getting the energy out again in very expensive fuel cells. He knows that electric trains are simple, reliable, high performance, cheap to buy and cheap to run compared with fuel-based alternatives. Energy is more physically real than money and must not be wasted.

We still have to convince the Treasury. An over-view is needed balancing costs of wiring against future benefits in cost savings, revenue benefits and of course the goal of zero-carbon transport.

Electric Charter partner HADRAG (the Halifax & District Rail Action Group) wrote to Grant Shapps after TDNS came out back in September. We received a reply from the Department for Transport two months later. Yes, wrote an officer in the Rail Infrastructure North team, TDNS "will inform Government decisions about the scale and pace of rail decarbonisation", noting that TDNS suggests "electrification should play a major role... alongside the use of alternative traction technologies like hydrogen and batteries"³. I'm enough of an optimist to find encouragement in that. Batteries – ever-improving incentivised by road vehicle demand – could indeed be a game-changer if trains with modest storage can bridge wiring gaps through difficult tunnels and bridges. Again, it's about balancing present costs with future benefits.

The letter from the Department for Transport said the £589M of funding announced last July for the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) "enables design and development work to upgrade and electrify" the Manchester-Huddersfield-York line. They are "assessing the case" for full electrification (as opposed to leaving gaps Stalybridge-Huddersfield and east Leeds-Church Fenton) and **"to determine the most optimal approach... by mid-2021**. That will be the 10th anniversary of the original announcement of TRU, which envisaged full electrification.

TRU and Midland Main Line full wiring were assumptions when the Northern Electrification Task Force (all-party, chaired by Harrogate MP Andrew Jones) reported in March 2015. (That's a sixth anniversary coming up.) Railfuture's joint meeting of northern branches in November 2020 received a report⁴ that matched "Northern Sparks" proposals with TDNS recommendations. The table (next page) gives examples from the proposed initial 5-year plan, intended to be the 2019-24 control period - Ha! Some interesting later stage schemes are also shown.

Note the Tees Valley "hydrogen hub" where there is a recommendation of eventual full electrification but a hydrogen option notably for Saltburn as an "interim or permanent" solution. Freight traffic often strengthens the case for electrification and that seems to apply here. At the Yorkshire Post conference Grant Shapps suggested the Tees Valley hub was about "buses, trucks and ships". Another hint?

In conclusion Northern Sparks is very much alive. In its submission to the National Infrastructure Commission⁵, West Yorkshire Combined Authority calls for electrification starting with the Calder Valley Line – the top Northern Sparks scheme and focus of the Charter.

Could "Williams" make a difference? Is franchising of train-operating units really at an end? Could we re-establish integration across the wheel-rail interface so that the railway is seen as a single machine? Could that make it easier to balance the cost of infrastructure investment including electrification, against future train cost reductions and increased business benefits? (Like British Rail did in the 1970s and 1980s when it electrified the East Coast Main Line?) Those benefits will accrue to the passenger and freight customer, and to government finance.

¹ [Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy – Executive Summary \(networkrail.co.uk\)](#) and full report <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Traction-Decarbonisation-Network-Strategy-Interim-Programme-Business-Case.pdf>

² https://www.riagb.org.uk/RIA/Newsroom/Stories/Electrification_Cost_Challenge_Report.aspx

³ <https://electriccharter.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/dft-resp-2020-11-18-1.pdf>

⁴ <https://electriccharter.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/electrification-etc-report-nov2020.pdf>

⁵ <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s16325/Item%207%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20NIC%20-%20final%20response.pdf>

The railway repurposed and rebuilt after this pandemic must be a “sociable railway” that serves the whole community through better services, reduced road congestion, better physical and mental health, and a better global environment. In the new year we must hope that events overtake us in a good way. Meanwhile let us keep up the campaign. Railway electrification will pay for itself. **Tell your MP to tell the Treasury.**

Northern Sparks schemes 2015 – Yorkshire and Teesside examples (mainly) – Tier 1 was 5-year plan 2019-24			Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy recommendations (from full business case, Appx 8)	
Tier	Route	Score ⁶ /100	A few routes were given multiple options at this stage. (H ₂ = hydrogen.)	
Baseline	Midland Main Line	N/A	Electrification (to Sheffield, at least)	Previously committed schemes cancelled or paused by government, summer 2017.
	TRU: Manchester-Huddersfield-Leeds-York/Selby	N/A	Electrification (without gaps, obviously!)	
	Windermere	N/A	Multiple option – Battery but could be electrification	
1	Calder Valley full (Yorkshire-Manchester & Preston)	84	Electrification throughout. Except: (Colne-)Rose Grove-Blackburn Multiple option with electrification recommended (as through route) but “could operate as battery”	
1	Northallerton-Middlesbrough	73	Electrification	
1	Leeds-Harrogate-York	70	Multiple options in 2 sections: • Leeds-Harrogate: Electric recommended “to at least Harrogate” • Hgt-York: Battery recommended	
1	Selby-Hull	70	Electrification throughout (+ Doncaster-Goole-Hull)	
1	Sheffield-Barnsley/Castleford-Leeds and connections	68	Electrification (Leeds suburban network inc. Pontefract area etc. Also appears to inc. Mirfield-Wakefield)	
1	Bolton-Clitheroe	67	Electrification throughout and on to Hellifield, N Yorks.	
1	Sheffield-Doncaster and Wakefield (GN)	67	Electrification	
2	Manchester-Sheffield	59	Electrification Mentions significant freight	
2	York-Scarboro	53	Electrification (“approaching maximum capability for current battery technology”)	
3	Hull-Scarborough	38	Multiple options: • Hull-Beverley Electrification recommended • Beverley-Sca Battery or H₂ (hydrogen may be temporary or permanent solution)	
2	Bishop Auckland-Darlington-Saltburn/Sunderland	53	Electrification: Darlington-Middlesbrough/Sunderland (Durham coast). Battery: Bishop Auckland & Whitby branches (but requires adjacent sections electrified for charging; could be H ₂).	
3	Middlesbrough-Whitby	26	Multiple options Middlesbrough-Saltburn – Electrification recommended but could be H ₂ interim or permanent. (Implication here if not enough done electrification in this area to support battery charging more of it will be H ₂ .)	
2	Sheffield-Retford-Lincoln	49	Electrification (includes all N Lincs routes)	
3	Skipton-Carlisle	35	Electrification throughout (regional passenger, diversionary, freight)	
3	Skipton-Heysham	7	Electrification Skipton-Carnforth. Multiple options Lancaster-Heysham, recommending Electrification to Morecambe, battery beyond.	

⁶ NETF scored schemes /100, based on economic benefits/50, environment (diesel replacement)/20, capacity provision/30.



Photo by Ann Shadrake of Friends of the Dales, taken in 2012

A few days after suffering a stroke, Alan died on Saturday 5 September. The main cause of his death was to put it bluntly old age. He had been suffering from a number of conditions over recent years which reduced his personal mobility to almost zero, and despite the excellent, almost total care he was receiving from the staff at his residential home, Glen Rosa, in Ilkley, this caused him many privations, and loss of personal dignity.

A few months ago, when I could at last speak to him from less than 3 metres away, he indicated he was tired of living and felt that “St Peter’s Fork” was now not far away.

Throughout his long life, and indeed up to about 8 years ago when his ability to walk deteriorate markedly, Alan was a very active person. A career railwayman for many years he had been a planning and scheduling officer within British Railways Midland Region in Derby, including the Beeching years of the mid-1960s, when he had fought hard behind the scenes to retain threatened train services and helped to keep the Crewe-Derby line open, and later when he moved to St Pancras in London, even to support efforts to retain the Settle Carlisle line.

He was always passionate about Yorkshire and the Yorkshire Dales and was a keen walker. An active member of his local Sussex Rambler’s Association group he regularly led public walks. Whilst he lived in East Sussex he was a regular visitor to the Dales, joining the youthful Yorkshire Dales Society in the early 1980s - the self-styled “Sussex Dalesman”. After the death of his father in the 1990s, Alan moved back to his native Yorkshire, buying a small house in Ilkley.

Alan was a loyal supporter of several local organisations in the Ilkley area concerned with the outdoors, the environment and above all public transport. For most of his life he did not own a car but used trains and buses whenever he could. He rarely, if ever, missed a meeting of the Yorkshire Dales Society (now Friends of the Dales) or the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle line, and was soon a very active member of Friends of DalesBus (leading walks), the Dales Way Association, West Riding Ramblers and the West Yorkshire branch of the campaigning group Transport 2000 for whom for many years he was the events secretary, and for a time chair of the Rail group. He was also a member of the Yorkshire Branch of Railfuture. Every summer he spent time on the Isle of Skye where he had several very good friends.

Living 250 miles away from his brother David and family in Sussex, Alan’s “other family” were his friends in the many organisations he so loyally and generously supported (such as the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust to whom he gave a regular monthly donation). Whatever local good cause or event was being planned, you could be sure that Alan was there and supporting it. He was also an official Station Volunteer for Northern Rail at Ilkley, meticulously recording passenger numbers on trains.

Alan’s knowledge and understanding of public transport was encyclopaedic, and his knowledge of routes and timetables was legendary, earning him the nickname of “Mr Timetable”. Woe betide any bus or train company that made an error in their published timetables as they would soon receive a letter from Alan pointing out the error of their ways, even if it was only a footnote or a Saturday only variation. He was especially attached to the old West Yorkshire Road Car Company even in its post 1985 Act re-birth as the Transdev Blazefield group of companies such as Harrogate & District, and he was a constant correspondent with them and user of their services, especially the Sunday Dalesbus network. One of the great sadnesses of his life was when he could no longer walk to a bus stop to get on the Sunday DalesBus to Hawes or even the train to Ribbleshead for the bus to Swaledale. Yet even in these times he could recall details of meetings with British Railway colleagues held in the 1960s, who attended and what was said, in photographic detail, even when he became confused about more recent events.

He will be sorely missed by his friends and family.

I am typing this in the week when vaccinating people against coronavirus started. A momentous achievement that will enable people to go back to normal socialising and travelling with little fear of infection (the vaccine being 95% effective). This is brilliant news too for the rail, tram and bus industries, and should result in significant ridership gains from the Spring, increasing as more and more people are vaccinated and the prevalence of the virus recedes to small numbers. But we are not out of the woods. COVID 19 has caused increased unemployment, and we can expect that to increase when the self-inflicted disaster of Brexit takes hold. Unemployment reduces commuting, and that will impact on train usage. Furthermore, working patterns have changed during the pandemic and some of those changes will become embedded. Some people will work from home permanently. Some others will split their working week between home and office. People's working hours may change too. Some people who have changed to car commuting during the pandemic may be difficult to attract back to trains if they have memories of overcrowded trains. Winning these people back onto rail must be a priority for train operators, and they will need to proactively target these former passengers. On the other hand, there are reasons to expect leisure travel to bounce back quite rapidly, and it may quickly exceed pre Covid numbers if, as expected, many more people take their holidays in the UK – although how much this may be cancelled out by a reduction in inward tourism is an unknown. So, in the short term, the train operators will need to amend their timetables and their train formations to reflect this “new normal”. Possibly some reductions in peak hour services, but increases off peak and especially at weekends. More frequent and longer trains will likely be required to tourist destinations including the coast, rural areas and shopping and entertainment destinations. Full collaboration with bus operators would improve access to scenic and walking areas away from railway stations, and will probably require the expansion of great initiatives such as Dales Bus and Moors Bus, as well as new innovative routes.

Serious as Covid has been, and still is, a much greater challenge is facing the world for the rest of this decade and the longer future. That is the climate emergency. The world has to drastically reduce its carbon emissions to slow down and then halt the rise in global temperatures and the erratic and often destructive weather patterns that we are now experiencing. Within the UK, and everywhere else, that cannot be achieved without a major reduction in transport emissions (and also in energy production and intensive agriculture). Transport is the single biggest contributor in the UK. Achieving reductions is not just about replacing petrol and diesel vehicles with electric ones (which are not without their own significant environmental problems), but achieving major modal shifts from private cars to public and active transport, and of freight transport from road and air to rail (and also to inland waterways and coastal shipping). As I stated on one of several letters that the Yorkshire Post has published recently, that will require both carrots and sticks. The carrots being greatly expanded public transport. The sticks being increased cost of motoring, including selective road pricing and workplace parking levies, and significant increases in fuel duty. These must go hand in hand. Attracting people back onto public transport does not just mean more or longer trains and trams, and more buses, but also new tram systems (such as in Leeds/West Yorkshire), new tram routes, reopened railway lines and stations, more routings over existing track, and services running punctually, reliably and with affordable fares. Of course, it goes without saying that most of our railway system must be electrified and that should proceed apace this decade. Why are we still waiting for the Government to commit funding for a full upgrade of the Trans Pennine route via Huddersfield? Why has the Government not reversed the disastrous decision of the previous Transport Secretary Chris Grayling to cancel the Midland Main line electrification north of Market Harborough? Why has there been no movement to implement the 2015 Northern Sparks report on electrifying the North's railway lines?

Restoring Your Railway/Reversing Beeching

A total of 27 schemes from various parts of England and Wales have received some funding from this welcome initiative. Funding will enable the projects to advance their schemes. Yorkshire has not done very well. Schemes proceeding to the next stage are to restore passenger services on the “old route” between Sheffield and Chesterfield via Barrow Hill, with a new station at Waverley to serve a hi-tech park, and to restore passenger services between Clitheroe in Lancashire and Hellifield. There is also funding for further

feasibility work for a new station at Haxby that is 40 years overdue! Notable amongst schemes that have not so far received funding is the Minsters Rail Campaign to reopen a railway between Beverley and York via Market Weighton, Pocklington and Stamford Bridge. Reopening this route is important for several reasons. It would remove much congestion from the B1079 road caused by the large numbers commuting along this route to York and, to a lesser extent, Hull and Beverley. It would restore the railway to a large area without trains. It provides much faster journeys for leisure purposes between the minster city of York and the minster town of Beverley, important for tourism and other leisure activities. It would enable much faster and potentially direct rail travel between York and Bridlington. Perhaps most important of all in the longer term, it will provide resilience for Hull. The lines from Goole and Selby are at risk of being inundated if there is a serious rise in the level of the Humber Estuary. The new route would also provide an alternative freight route to Hull, thus increasing the options of modal shift from road to rail. This scheme will be resubmitted in the future and it is sincerely hoped it gets a more positive response. It has the enthusiastic support of local MPs. The same is, unfortunately not true of Ripon as the local MP has declined to sponsor a proposal to reconnect the cathedral city of Ripon to the rail network.

Branch News

- Yorkshire branch Joint Vice Chair, Mike Rose was co-opted onto the Railfuture National Board on 28 November 2020. Mike's term of office extends until the Railfuture National Annual General Meeting on 17 July 2021, when he will be able to stand for election.
- David Pennie, Chair of the Hull and East Riding Rail Users Association, and Secretary of the Minsters Rail Campaign, has been co-opted onto the Yorkshire Branch Committee.
- There will be no Annual General Meeting held in 2021 because of the Covid 19 restrictions. This year's accounts will be circulated to members and other matters dealt with in the 2021 meeting.

Diary Contact Mark Parry if you would like your meeting advertised here.

13 January 2021 18:30	Institute of Mechanical Engineers. "Vivarail: the class 230 variants", a virtual presentation by Steve Rowell.
18 January 2021 19:30	Action for Yorkshire Transport Rail Group online meeting – Contact Mark Parry for further details.
30 January 2021 14:00	Railfuture Yorkshire, North West, North East & Lincolnshire Branches Webinar: Tony Baxter, Regional Director, North East, Northern Trains "Challenging Times" Link to be emailed to those members online nearer the time.
27 February 2021 14:00	Railfuture Yorkshire & North West branches webinar: Phil Smart, Railfuture Freight Group: "Freeing Up Castlefield Paths – New Freight Routes Around Manchester". Link to be emailed to those members online nearer the time.
17 April 2021 14:00	Railfuture Yorkshire Branch Online Business Meeting.

Railfuture subscriptions start from £14 a year. See: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join/> or contact our membership secretary Andrew Dyson: andrew.dyson@platform5.com. Please let him know if you join online.

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 52**) will be out in April 2021. Please email photos, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry294@gmail.com to arrive by **Saturday 27 February 2021**. Alternatively, text or call 07941 642349. **Having your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email saves us time and money. Please contact Andrew Dyson to request this.**

Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

Aire Valley Rail Users' Group	www.avrug.org.uk
Askern Station, Friends of	Contact Graham Moss on graz.moss@sky.com or 07510 555722
Bradford Rail Users' Group	www.bradfordrail.com
Esk Valley Railway	http://www.eskvalleyrailway.co.uk/evrdc.html
Halifax and District Rail Action Group	www.hadrag.com
Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group	Email: hlrug@live.co.uk
Harrogate Line Supporters' Group	www.harrogateline.org
Hope Valley Rail Users' Group	www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk
Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association	Email: hpsrua@btinternet.com
Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association	
Hunmanby Railway Station, Friends of	https://friendsofhunmanbyrailwaystation.btck.co.uk/
Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group	
Minster Rail Campaign	http://www.minstersrail.com/
Pontefract Civic Society Rail Group	https://en-gb.facebook.com/PontefractRail/
Selby and District Rail Users' Group	http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/
Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the	www.foscl.org.uk
Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership	www.selrap.org.uk
Stalybridge to Huddersfield	Email: markashmore@yahoo.com
Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group	Email: Nina.Smith@railfuture.org.uk
Upper Wensleydale Railway	https://upperwensleydalerrailway.org.uk/
Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line)	www.yccrp.co.uk

Branch Committee and the small print

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Wishing our members a better year in 2021.

Railfuture: Campaigning for better services over a bigger rail network.