

Devon and Cornwall newsletter – June 2025

The election process for a new chair for the Devon and Cornwall regional branch closed on 31st May and, as the one candidate duly proposed and seconded, Tim Steer is now in that leadership role.

Tim would like to take this opportunity to introduce himself to the individual and affiliated members.

“I am delighted and honoured to say that I have been elected as Railfuture's Devon and Cornwall regional branch chair. Some of you may already have seen one or both of my short videos on Facebook.

Firstly, thank you to those who nominated and seconded me, and to all the members who support the campaign work that I do. As local members, you will already have known that I co-write the Devon and Cornwall page in Railwatch magazine with the branch secretary Alan Clark – this will carry on.

Barnstaple born and bred, and as a former Director for Bideford Railway Heritage Centre and also a Vice-Chair of the former Tarka Rail Association, I was up to now very North Devon and Torridge centric. My ACE Rail campaign which started in mid-2021 was to upgrade the existing North Devon line so that users get a better faster service that is doubled in frequency, and then to extend the line's services to Bideford in the nationally-known deprived area of Torridge.

This work is now being taken forward by the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance that I helped initiate in late-December 2023. The professionally-drafted business cases will prove that building a better railway for the area will improve community prosperity and help lead the area out of deprivation. What the Bideford line will look like and where exactly it will go is now in the hands of independent specialist advisers and representatives of over two dozen partner and stakeholder organisations in the still-growing Alliance.

I've also set up the Friends Of Barnstaple Railway Station (FOBRs), a member of the national Community Rail Network, and I will continue the award-winning work to enhance the station as their chair as well.

As your new chair, I will now look at all rail campaigns across the region and am ready to support you. In addition I want to grow the membership so that Railfuture represents students, parents, employers and their employees, patients and other rail users, future as well as existing. That is why I am now confirming that I will represent Cornwall as well as Devon and help passenger and freight campaigns get through the national Transport Appraisal Guidance and other processes to become new regional campaigns that the public and their elected representatives can get behind. For too long, I feel, railways campaigns have often been seen as the sole preserve of train enthusiasts, so instead my emphasis will be actively campaigning to represent the wider public who already use and want to use the railway.

My Railfuture email address is below so that you can contact me. Please inform other rail user and campaign groups and potential members so that I can represent them too.”

Tim Steer

Railfuture regional branch chair for Devon and Cornwall

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