

rail*future*

campaigning for a bigger, better railway

Devon and Cornwall

15.04.2026

Braunton Caen
Rotary



Devon railway station poised for fresh burst of character

A new wave of funding is turning it into a vibrant hub of colour and history



Comments 1

WHAT'S ON By Lewis Clarke

06:00, 29 May 2025



View Image

Friends Of Barnstaple Railway Station

- In 2025 The Friends Of Barnstaple Railway Station (FOBRS) successfully applied to GWR's Customer and Community Improvement

Has permission previously been granted?

In 2024, FOBRS signed a license with Network Rail to carry out environmental enhancement work at the station – including new features.

Location applied for:	Barnstaple Station	License Ref:	CR LR 001
Date Licence completed / signed:	21/10/2024		
Community group name:	Friends Of Barnstaple Railway Station		
Name and contact details of individual who is completing the risk assessment:	Tim Steer [REDACTED] 20 Linden [REDACTED] [REDACTED]		
Number of volunteers:	9		
Site / Work Area(s):	Disused platform 2 and track bed 3 at Barnstaple Station		
Description of access location (Including parking and entry to site):	From Barnstaple Station platform area		
Description of work(s): (please detail all the tasks that you will carry out in the work area)	Area to be used for gardening, vegetation clearance, general maintenance and installation of items such as waterbutts, bird boxes and bug houses if approved by Network Rail		

OFFICIAL

4. Community Rail Scheme Volunteer Register

Name of Community Rail Scheme:	Barnstaple Station		
Scheme Reference Number:	CR LR 001		
License Area	Disused platform and track bed 3 at Barnstaple Station		
Scheme Lead/Contact:	Tim Steer	Contact No. :	[REDACTED]
Signature:	[REDACTED]	Email:	[REDACTED]k
Network Rail Community Rail Lead:	Harriet Sergent	Contact No.:	[REDACTED]
Signature:	[REDACTED]	Email:	[REDACTED]

The redundant footbridge base on platform 2 is an ideal location for two new Wagon planters. The station volunteers have partially made the area into a rockery.

The station volunteers would look after the new wagon planters with seasonal plant displays.



Signal box bug house

Signal Box bug house



1.3M

1.3M

Signal box bug house location



Signal box bug house will be constructed on a base of bricks and timber frame. 1.3m is in keeping with the height of the locomotive planter on platform 2. We would like to call it Barnstaple Junction for historic reasons if agreed.

Interpretation boards

Interpretation boards

Ideal location is to install the boards on posts that are concreted in to the access path to platform 2. The boards would face the car park so the public can safely read the boards on the footpath in the car park.

Each interpretation board will be 400mm x 600mm



Board designs will be made by Barnstaple Town Council's heritage team.





THE HISTORY OF BARNSTAPLE STATION

North Devon was linked by rail with Exeter and the rest of the country in **1854** with the opening of this station and the North Devon Railway from Crediton. The railway had opened between Crediton and Exeter three years earlier and on **1 August 1854**, starting at Fremington, ran between Barnstaple and Exeter along the same route as they do today.

Trains to **Bideford** followed in **1855**. This Barnstaple station became **Barnstaple Junction** in **1874** with the opening of the line to Ilfracombe, the addition of a second platform and footbridge, and another station across the River Taw at Barnstaple Quay, renamed Barnstaple Town in 1886 and relocated in 1898.



A train from Ilfracombe calls at Barnstaple Town Station.



A train from Ilfracombe arriving at Barnstaple Junction.

Trains from **Taunton** reached Barnstaple at **Victoria Road** in **1873** then on to Barnstaple Junction in **1887**. In 1924 the station was expanded with platform 2 becoming an island to add platform 3. With the **closure of passenger services to Bideford in 1965, Taunton in 1966 and Ilfracombe in 1970**, Barnstaple Junction reverted to Barnstaple in 1970.



A train from Torrington arriving at Barnstaple Junction.

In the days of steam hauled trains, Barnstaple Junction was the **main base for steam locomotives in North Devon**. It was a substantial depot which had a turntable and for many years, **employed over 100 people** including engine crew, cleaners, boilermasters and fitters.

All photos courtesy of: Roger Joanes.

THE HISTORY OF BARNSTAPLE STATION

THE OPENING CEREMONY

When the station opened in 1854, the accompanying opening ceremony was an **elaborate, town-wide affair**.

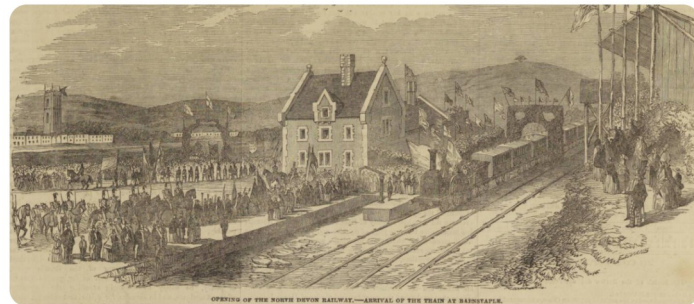
"Wherever the eye turned nothing was discovered but life and gaiety."



The town was decorated with **triumphal arches, flags**, "an infinite deal of **bunting**", **banners, shop window displays**, and **evergreens** at every turn. At the ceremony inside the Guildhall, a **two-foot tall cake resembling the Tower of Babel** was presented to 'liberal applause', along with "a great variety of the most tempting articles in cake, jellies and confectionary." The Mayor also greeted guests with the well-known toast and spiced ale typical of civic ceremonies.

THE TALE OF THE MISSING CARRIAGES

During the opening ceremony, dignitaries, including the Lord Mayor of Exeter, travelled on the new railway line to Barnstaple. Upon arrival, **half the carriages**, including the one with the Lord Mayor and civic regalia, **were left behind in Umberleigh**. The engine hurriedly returned to retrieve them and the ceremony proceeded as planned once they arrived.



All illustrations from the Illustrated London News, Saturday 29th July 1854, page 5.

What is Railfuture?

- Railfuture is Britain's leading independent organisation campaigning for a bigger better railway.
- The campaign voice for freight and passenger services.
- Supporters of rail investment to bring sustainability and prosperity to industries and communities in Devon and Cornwall.
- Railfuture is not affiliated to or funded by train companies, political parties or trade unions, and is funded solely by members' subscriptions and legacies.
- We observe all government and industry guidance, eg DfT's Transport Appraisal Guidance and Treasury's Green Book, in development of business cases to support our campaign projects.

What is Railfuture supporting?

- The Fighting Fund contributed to Connect Bude's initiative to investigate enhancing the bus service between Bude and Okehampton, as reported on Connect Bude website in April 2024 and March 2025.
- Initiated the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance.
- Transformational modernisation of the North Devon – Exeter to Barnstaple passenger service. The line that services North Devon, Mid Devon and Exeter. This line is also used by Torridge, West Devon and North Cornwall residents.
- The North Devon line extension to service a new to rail market in the greater Bideford area in the Torridge district.

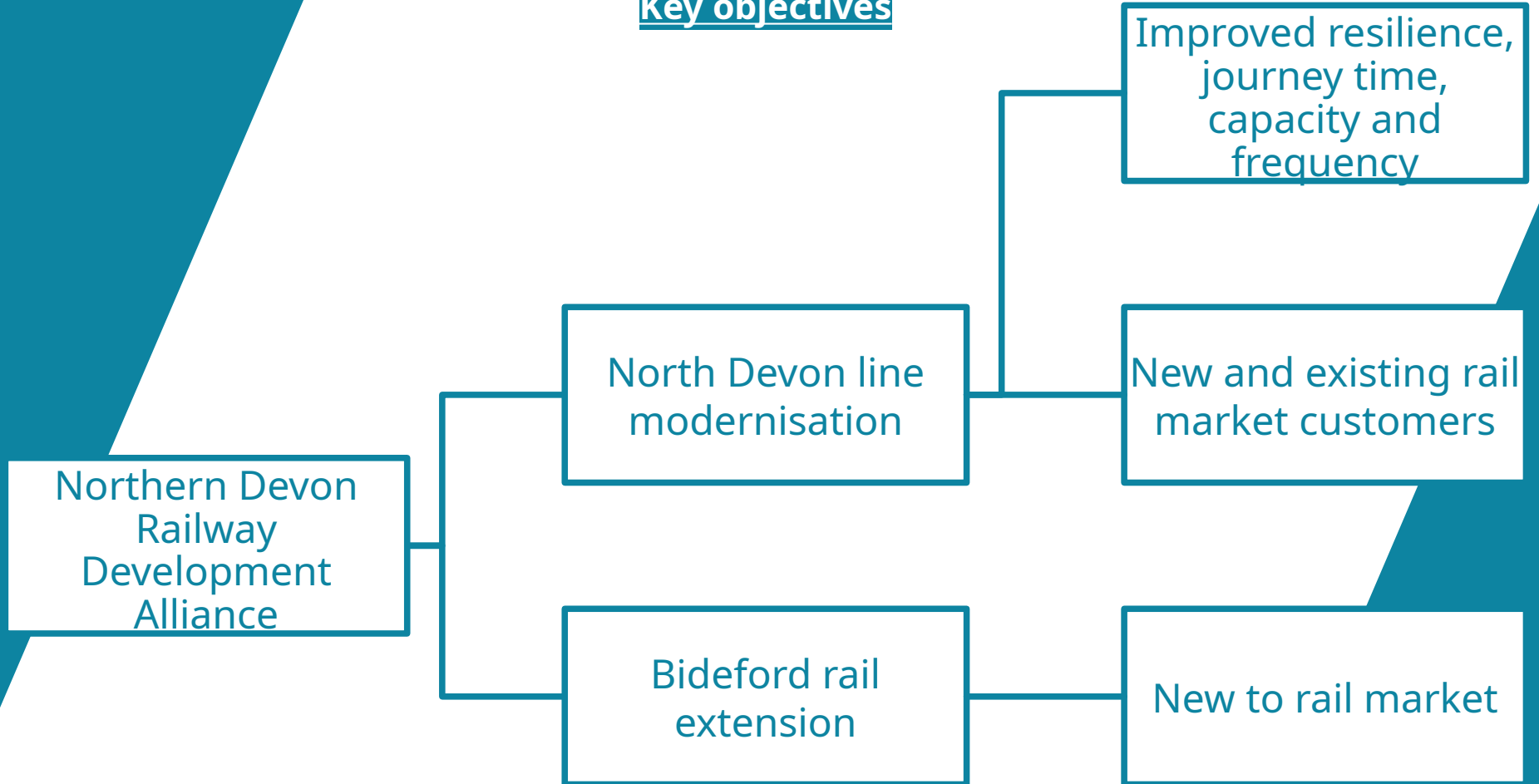
What is Transport Appraisal Guidance?

Department for Transport states:

- **Informed Decision-Making:** TAG helps ensure that transport investments are well-justified, cost-effective, and aligned with strategic objectives.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Guidance helps ensure that transport plans and projects contribute to wider strategic priorities like economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Appraisal processes, guided by the guidance, make the rationale for transport investments transparent and accountable to the public.

The Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance

Key objectives



Formal transport Business Case process

 Peninsula
Transport
Sub-National Transport Body



Strategic Implementation Plan 2025-2050

www.peninsulatransport.org.uk



 Devon and Torbay
Combined County Authority

Local Transport Plan 4

2025-2040



Alliance funded studies and workshops



Who are the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance stakeholders?

Railfuture, Navantia UK Appledore shipyard, Petroc college, South West Business Council, District Councils of Torridge and Mid-Devon,

Town Councils of Bideford, Barnstaple and Northam, Parish Councils of Bishops Tawton, Burrington, Chawleigh, Chittlehamholt Satterleigh & Warkleigh, Chulmleigh, Kings Nympton, and Lapford, Devon County Council,

Peninsula Transport / Peninsula Rail Task Force, Great Western Railway, Network Rail, Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership, Friends of Barnstaple Railway Station, South West TravelWatch, North Devon Line Rail Promotion Group, the former (Tarka Rail Association).



Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance annual meetings



Thank you for listening

Tim Steer

Railfuture

Devon and Cornwall regional branch chair

Friends Of Barnstaple Railway Station - chair