



Rail experts from across the country will be meeting in Birmingham this weekend to discuss the future of rail transport in the West Midlands. The conference, with the title "Railways in the Heart of England - how well are we doing?" is being organised by the independent campaign group Railfuture. "In the light of the West Coast mainline fiasco, this is certain to be an interesting meeting" said John Balmforth, one of the organisers. "Couple that with the recent London Midland driver shortages, and I'm sure we'll have plenty to talk about". One of the speakers is Nicola Moss, Head of Franchise Management at London Midland who will be talking on the subject of "Making our customers day go well".

"This conference comes at a time when railways are in the headlines right across the country, not just here in the Midlands" said Mr Balmforth

The conference will be chaired by rail writer Christian Wolmar, who is president of Railfuture, and this year's conference sees the inauguration of the Rail User Group Awards. "We've had a great reaction to this idea, particularly because it's low key, not an expensive gala dinner." said Mr Balmforth. "We're hoping to reward excellence in the rail campaigning community, so these awards give us a chance to recognise those people whose work has not been rewarded or recognised nationally"

The conference is being held this coming Saturday, 3rd November, at Carrs Lane Church Centre. For further details about the conference please visit www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences or email birmingham2012@railfuture.org.uk.

Notes to editors:

Other speakers include:

- Mick Miller, Senior Sponsor, Network Rail (talking about Progress on the New Street Gateway Project)
- Toby Rackcliff, Rail Development Manager, Centro (talking about Current Developments in the West Midlands)
- Richard Harper, Network Development Manager, Chiltern Railways (talking about Success through incremental development)
- Richard Gibson, Head of Communications, Arriva Cross Country (talking about Serving the West Midlands and beyond)
- Dr Phil Bennion, MEP for the West Midlands "Rail from an MEP perspective"

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for both passengers and freight.

Railfuture's website can be found at: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk>

For further information and comment please contact:.

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