

AGM Liverpool 2001

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool Councillor Edwin Clein welcomed Railfuture members to the annual general meeting in his city on 5 May.

He said it was appropriate for Railfuture to be meeting in the Adelphi, a former railway hotel. He also expressed forthright views on railway privatisation, which – coupled with the current lack of government subsidy – he felt contributed to the UK's current status, in transport terms at least, as a third world country when compared with, for example, Italy or China.

Railfuture chairman Peter Lawrence thanked Brian Grey, chairman of the host North West Branch and Andrew MacFarlane for their help with the arrangements for this AGM.

He also passed on to the meeting the good wishes of former chairman Steve Wilkinson who is making slow but steady progress in his ongoing illness.

Railfuture president Michael Caton presented the Lord Mayor with a copy of the latest Railfuture publication *Have They Done Well?*

The meeting was addressed by Neil Scales, chief executive and director general of Merseytravel Passenger Transport Executive, who gave a comprehensive and witty presentation on the Local Transport Plan 2001-2 and 2005-6 for Merseyside.

The emphasis was on “developing a fully integrated and sustainable transport network for Merseyside, which supports economic, social and environmental regeneration and ensures good access for all in the community.”

Dr Caton presented him with copies of *Have They Done Well?* and *Easy Rail Travel: Fares*.

North West chairman Brian Grey welcomed members to the afternoon session.

Dr Michael Caton felt that the media must accept their share of the blame for the poor perception of the railway industry.

The constant focus on the negative aspects – while almost totally ignoring road safety issues – was eroding confidence.

Recent meetings had been held with the Conservative transport spokesman and the chairman of the Rail Passengers Council. A meeting with the Rail Regulator was imminent.

Some good news (for example, successful upgrading of the West Coast Main Line) could really make a difference to morale. He encouraged all members to lobby their local

and regional authorities to include rail in their transport plans.

Chairman Peter Lawrence thanked the constitutional subcommittee of Bill Collins, Robin Fennell and John Bigny who had put in an immense amount of work.

As a result of the extraordinary general meeting in Birmingham on 21 April, the proposed revised constitution would be put to the entire membership by postal ballot.

He said following the adoption of the railfuture name, there had been an increased level of interests from the media, including visits to our website.

Branches were also making their views known through excellent publications and newsletters.

One sad piece of news to report was the impending departure of Alix Stredwick to pastures new. Alix has made a big impact in the past two years and the profile of the society has been raised accordingly.

Luckily, Alix will still be free to work one day a week for us, therefore her knowledge and enthusiasm will not be lost entirely.

With regard to the future, the chairman believed that there was a great deal of untapped talent and he encouraged more people to come forward, either

for election or co-opting to the national executive or as active members of branches and committees.

National treasurer Tony Sheward presented the accounts. The sponsorship money from Anglia Railways had now been received.

The treasurer stressed that the national executive had made a deliberate decision to use the 1999 surplus to continue with the London office and to appoint a marketing director in the year 2000.

Fund raising had initially gone quite well but had slowed down somewhat towards the end of the year.

With regard to general income and cash flow, hard decisions would be necessary.

A fine balance would need to be struck between central RDS administration costs and branch subvention.

From the floor, a number of members present expressed their concern about the current financial situation.

The chairman acknowledged those concerns and assured those present that the national executive would be addressing these issues very seriously.

John Drake was given a vote of thanks for his seven-year stint as the society's auditor. The chairman appealed for a suitably qualified person to volunteer. Please contact him if you can help.

The following officers were elected, unopposed: chairman Peter Lawrence, vice-chairman Ray King, general secretary Trevor Garrod, treasurer Tony Sheward, membership secretary Elisabeth Jordan, sales officer Phil Morris.

The following members of the national executive were also elected unopposed: Alan Bevan, Mike Crowhurst, Andrew MacFarlane, Malcolm Parker, Richard Pout, David Redgewell and Clara Zilahi.

Only seven of the 10 positions were filled so three further members can be co-opted.

Motions were passed by the meeting calling for the clearance of trackside clutter, the legal status of the society, the plight of Central Trains passengers following the SRA's decision to delay the re-franchising, measures to contain runaway road vehicles, postal savings by the society, joint action with other groups against the road lobby, and Railfuture campaigning.

Tracking Lives on the Penistone Line

An exhibition presenting the history of the railways of West Yorkshire and its importance to the lives of individuals and communities over the years.

Old railway and old photographs are combined in an attractively produced exhibition of eight A4 size panels which is touring the region throughout 2001.

Tracking Lives on the Penistone Line exhibition programme:

Holton Museum, Huddls.	14th March to 27th April
Penistone Library	1st May to 25th May
Emergence Railway Theatre, Huddls.	26th May to 23rd June
Decease Heritage Centre	26th June to 20th July
Common Hall Museum	23rd July to 31st Aug
Hunby Oak Library	3rd Sept to 15th Sept
Hunby Library	1st to 12th Oct
Holmfirth Library	15th to 26th Oct
Kemistry Library	31st to 10th Nov

The author would like to thank the following for their help in collecting the material: Graham Taylor, Steve and Elaine from the National Society (Quinton Road).

For more information, contact the Partnership, 31 Old Colton Road, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HU6 3AF. Tel 01424 379134, email pip@penlinepartnership.co.uk

The free exhibition above is the result of two years hard work by members of the Penistone Line Partnership. From 30 June, the partnership is running buses, driven by volunteers, from Holmfirth to Shepley to connect with the trains from Huddersfield to Sheffield. The weekends-only service – until 2 September – could provide a model for other rail link services in rural areas. The bus will be marketed as The Holmfirth Branch Line as it will have many of the features of a traditional branch line train service. It is being financially supported by Kirkburton Parish Partnership and Huddersfield NHS Trust. Details: 01226