



British Regional Transport Association

(BRTA)

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+ others welcome of professional, business, or other acumen and of good repute.

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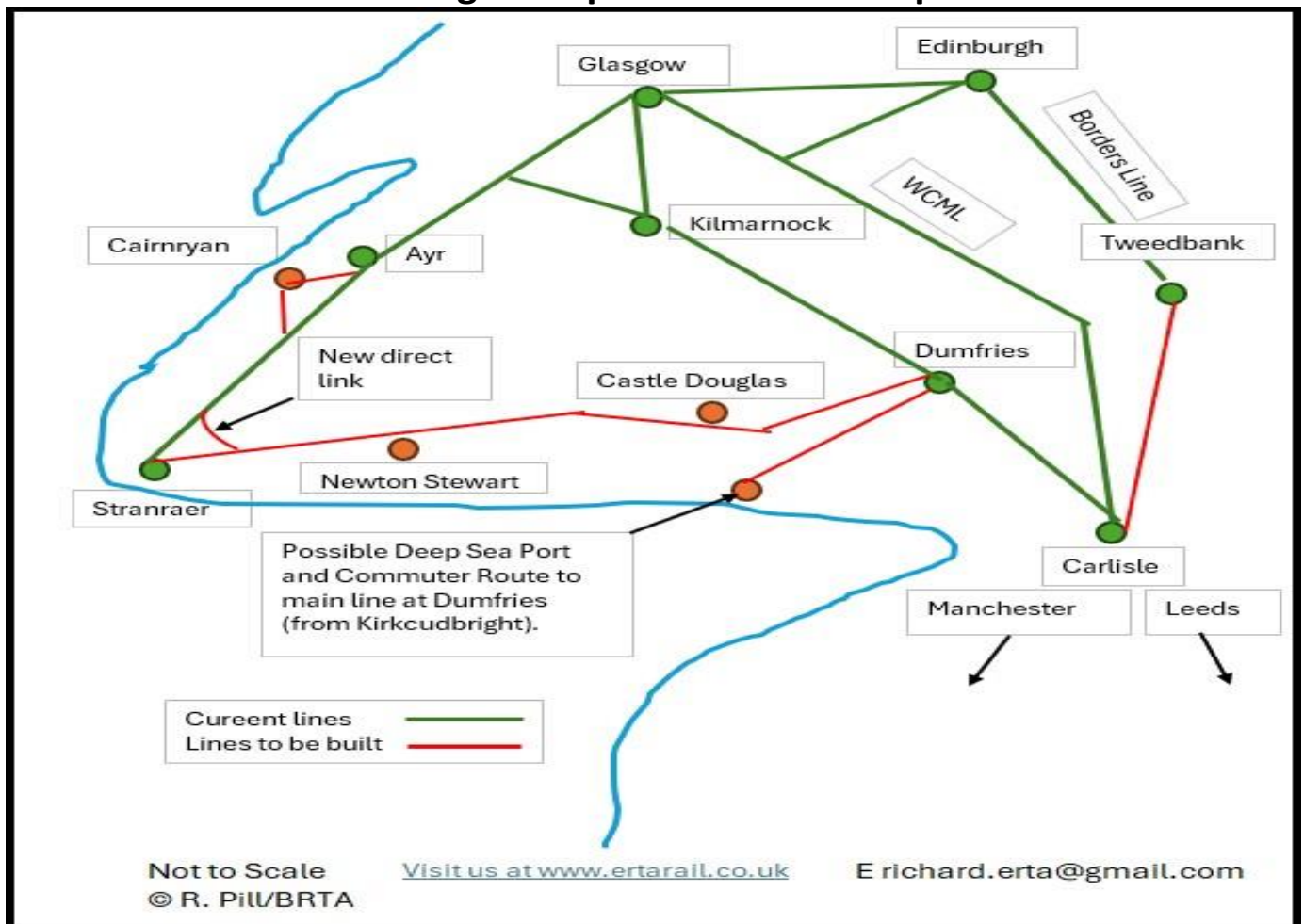
<https://brtarailvolunteer.blogspot.com/>

Newsletter No. 58

November – December 2024

£1.50 where sold/Donations welcome.

BRTA has a bold plan for Scotland, rebuild the Dumfries-Stranraer rail link and a branch to Kirkcudbright for potential new Deep-Sea Portal access!



Any reopening of Dumfries-Stranraer must include:

1. Reopening of the Kirkcudbright branch with shared use of deep-sea port (part of which is used by the Royal Navy) - to bring freight into Northern England via contra flow capacity to optimise paths and free up the Southampton-Manchester corridors for more and other freight won to rail/expansion.
2. A west to north curve Stranraer end for direct running to Cairnryan and the Ayrshire Coast.
3. Castle Douglas and Newton Stewart are principal towns which could benefit from the railway rebuild as well as winning people and goods off the busy A75 corridor. There is currently no rail competition.
4. Dumfries end we need north and south curves with the main line for direct running to Glasgow and Edinburgh respectively and south to Carlisle and beyond.

Could someone write to Dumfries and Galloway County Council as an opening starter and get a statement of their view, which can inform our assessment of what more needs doing/lobbying?

The success of Borders shows what may be done and achieved.

If you want more and better, then join BRTA as a member: brtarail.com volunteer time and talent to make it so please = the only way to achieve more and better x nationwide. Key qualities are reliability and basic honesty and a willingness to compromise and be part of a team.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/campaign-reinstate-dumfries-stranraer-railway-29636505>

We hope to convene forums at Dumfries, to gather support and galvanise actions commensurate to a proper tabling of the proposition and seeking to encourage progress towards a full implementation.

We are grateful to our volunteer David Childs for his help in working up the diagram for us.

Any member who wishes to be our Scotland Area Rep to pro-affirm and work towards reopening this vital rail potential laden railway please email richard.erta@gmail.com You must be a paid-up member and reliable.

English-Welsh Borders Forum at Shrewsbury – Getting off to a good start!

~ By Simon Barber: T: 0208 940 4399 E: simon4barber@gmail.com ~

On Saturday 8th June I attended the ERTA Shrewsbury Forum which was held at the Montgomery Tower which is a Wetherspoons pub and there were people there - our members David Ferguson and Daniel Newton, plus 2 Shropshire Borough Councillors, three members of the Shrewsbury-Chester Rail Users Association and an ASLEF member.

The following items were discussed:

Wolverhampton-Telford-Shrewsbury - Electrification should be top priority since we are in a climate crisis, together with twin-track railway and re-signalling.

Baschurch Station (Shrewsbury-Chester): In 2023 the local MP, Helen Morgan told parliament there was still support locally for reopening and urged Minister of State for Transport, Huw Merriman, to take this up. In December 2023 Baschurch Parish Council commissioned a preliminary study of the feasibility and business case for re-opening by a professional consultancy; this will form the basis for formal application to Shropshire (Unitary) Council and the Department for Transport for funding to proceed to detailed re-opening plans since there are housing developments in that area.

Ruabon-Llangollen: This should be a separate campaign to re-open that line which should not go on to Corwen. Two bridges need to be rebuilt, but there could be a deviation to that old route since some houses have been built east of Llangollen on the relevant track-bed.

Oswestry-Gobowen: The Department for Transport had approved this subject to 'caveats'. We should pursue a Light Rail scheme for that option, since Oswestry is also the site of the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital which is very important and is a social benefit for both Shrewsbury and the whole of Shropshire, and the first UK's outpatient centre for the Armed Forces veterans. The proposal for the line to extend to Welshpool is feasible, but expensive.

Cambrian Links (Shrewsbury – Aberystwyth/Pwllheli) <https://sarpa.info/> In 2015, the Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth Rail Passenger Association released an aims document that mentions the possibility of reopening **Hanwood** station (4 miles south-west of Shrewsbury).

Wrexham-London prospects. This is an Open Access scheme and the Department for Transport has applied paths. The original scheme which ran from 2008—2011 had been focused on Business Travel. Meanwhile several members of Chiltern Railways are reviving the scheme, and Alstom are backing new trains.

Freight by Rail. Shrewsbury-Cardiff and Shrewsbury-Chester/Crewe needs to be electrified with the help from the Welsh Government since many of the freight flows will cross into Wales e.g. Cardiff-Crewe.

Bridgnorth-Shrewsbury Corridor: That part of the route (which closed in about 1963) has been subject to landslips and that a tunnel had collapsed. However, the Ironbridge branch (which originated at Madeley Junction) must reverse at Shifnal Junction due to housing developments at Madeley, and that could be a possibility by using a Light Rail.

West Wales North-South Proposals: We reckon that Builth Wells (on Heart of Wales Line)-Moat Lane Junction (on Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Line) could be more feasible than Carmarthen-Aberystwyth. However, Caernarfon-Bangor is relatively unobstructed.

Incidentally Transport for Wales has also now involved with buses, which should link trains and electric buses is also now 'on the cards'. Meanwhile I would like to hold a delegated meeting with Transport for Wales, and both Ken Skates and Darren Millier from the Welsh Government.

Ed. Laudable and thank you Simon for convening the meeting and I do hope it snowballs with new members and ultimately a new Area Rep for BRTA in that part of the world. However, this default obsession with Light Rail being the answer always, needs to compare and contrast with feasibility and compulsory purchase. 1. Is Light Rail always cheaper than conventional rail? 2. Heavy rail can handle passenger and freight, Light Rail remains to be seen, how much freight uses existing light rail construes? We are not talking container railways, but pallets, parcels and post for example could if allowed.

Pictures below taken by Simon Barber – one of our long serving members and Executive Committee Officer.



Caption Left: These sorts of trains, which to all extents and purposes are extensions of the 'Sprinter' design seem laudable enough. However, questions are asked whether there are enough of them and whether enough length of trains/number of coaches are adequate to demand, if not overcrowding highly likely. BRTA handles reopenings, by getting and growing teams to delegate and advise for grassroots workings. However, we also take an interest in buses and existing rail user matters in delegated form.

Caption right: BRTA's Summer Forums are growing in attendance and as they say 'a crowd attracts a crowd'. The next goal is recruitment into membership as that helps us pay our way and do more and better x nationwide. We may not always agree on every minutia but growing the rail network is essential for greater connectivity, more modal shift choices, making development more environmentally sustainable and enabling more by rail generally. Join us!



" Please support The Independent Brigg Line Rail Group.

The Brigg Line, formally on the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire railway line between Manchester and Cleethorpes via the Woodhead Route.

The Brigg Line which represents the 72 miles between Sheffield and Cleethorpes, to say has fallen on hard times if the understatement.

For 30 years, the passenger service via Brigg ran just on a Saturday with mainly 3 round trips.

Due to COVID, the passenger service was withdrawn altogether with the train operating company refusing to put on a replacement bus, this incredibly lasted for 54 weeks!

Services returned in January 2023; in May 2024 the service was reduced to a 1 round trip Monday to Friday one.

The present timetable is attached below, as is details how you can support this group via social media "

The Independent Brigg Line Rail Group, was formed in 2012.

We are made up of volunteers from a transport background, many of which don't actually live on this line.

Our aim is to promote, and try to increase the current passenger service via increased footfall, to benefit the forgotten railway communities of Brigg and Kirton-in-Lindsey. We are not associated with NNLCRP.

thebrigglinegroup@gmail.com

Social Media. X @IBLRG.

Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/briggline

YouTube www.youtube.com/@IBLRG

Instagram www.instagram.com/brigglinegroup

The Independent Brigg Line Rail Group



Valid from 3 June until 13 December 2024

Promoting Brigg's unique train service - the line's no longer Saturday only but Monday to Friday only!



Train Times - Monday to Friday only

From Sheffield to Brigg and Cleethorpes			
Sheffield	d	0937	0954
Darnall	d	0943	
Woodhouse	d	0949	
Kiveton Bridge	d	0956	
Kiveton Park	d	0959	
Shireoaks	d	1005	▼
Worksop	d	1010	1018
Retford platform 4	d	1020	1028
Gainsborough Central	d	-	1045
Kirton-in-Lindsey	d	-	1057
Brigg	a	-	1108
Barnetby	a	-	1114
Habrough	a	-	▼
Grimsby Town	a	-	1133
Cleethorpes	a	-	1144

From Cleethorpes to Brigg and Sheffield			
Cleethorpes	d	1320	-
Grimsby Town	d	1327	-
Habrough	d	▼	-
Barnetby	d	1343	-
Brigg	d	1349	-
Kirton-in-Lindsey	a	1359	-
Gainsborough Central	a	1418	-
Retford platform 3	a	1433	1450
Worksop	a	1446	1502
Shireoaks	a		1507
Kiveton Park	a		1512
Kiveton Bridge	a		1516
Woodhouse	a		1523
Darnall	a	▼	1530
Sheffield	a	1512	1543

All services are operated by Northern. Check before you travel as engineering work could affect your journey

nationalrail.co.uk **03457 48 49 50**

Visit Brigg by train online guide

Find out more about the market town of Brigg at tinyurl.com/briggtrainguide

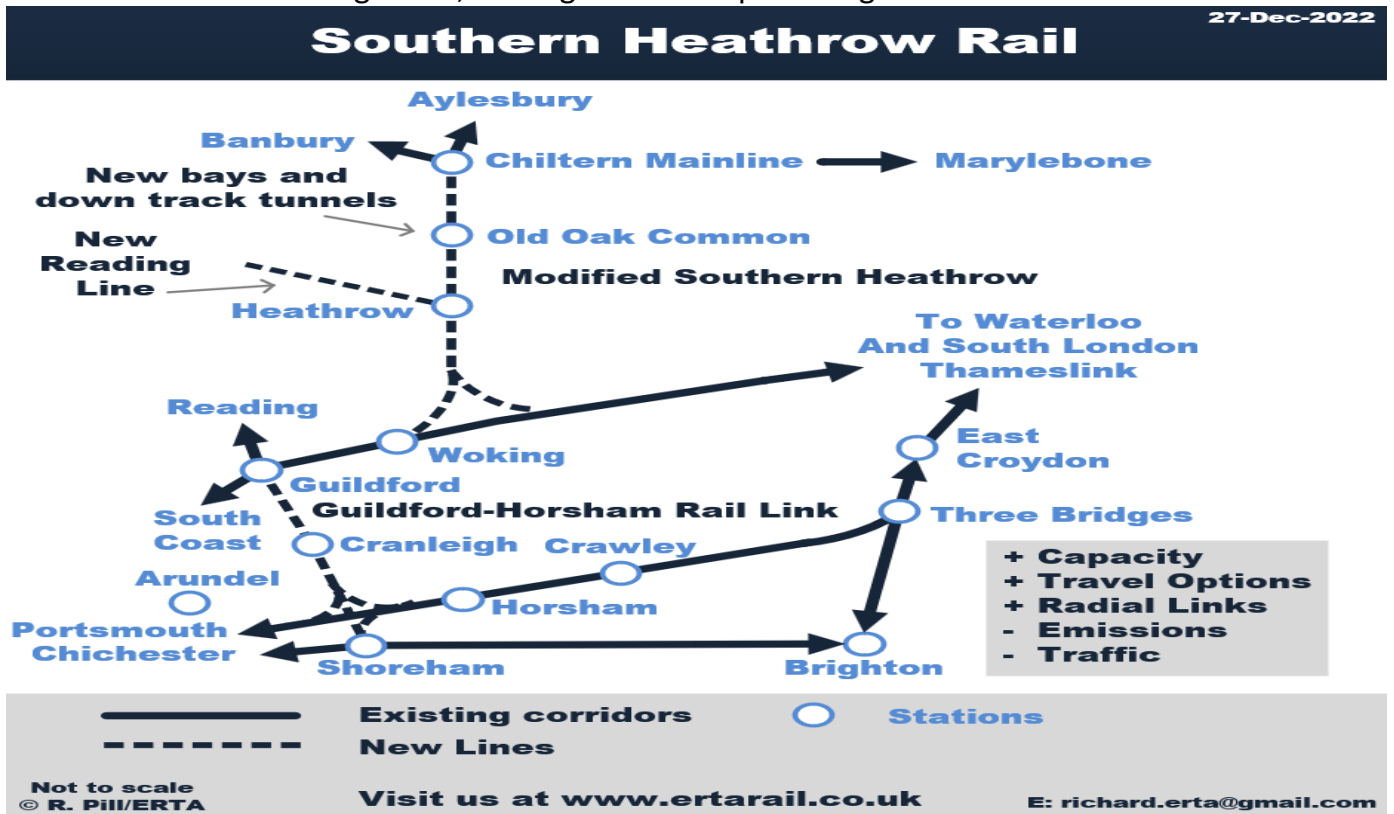
BRTA calls for any new government of whatever shade, to switch priorities from roads to rails more!

BRTA is concerned that the track-record of previous governments over decades has left the existing rail network depleted, rationalised and run-down and poured £billions into new roads and upgrading roads (A27/A24) which attracts increasing volumes of traffic, makes for more rat-runs across country to join other queues, increasing pressure on land use allocation for endless parking spaces, when we need environmentally and socially to make using public transport (especially more rail journeys) more amenable, affordable and accessible.

Key Rail Projects we want support for:

1. Guildford-Cranleigh-Horsham, the Arundel Curve and a Phase 2 look at the direct line to Shoreham from Horsham with linking bridges and curves included in modern designs.
2. Polegate-Stone Cross direct line reinstatement/realigned new-build to shave 20 minutes end-to-end Brighton-Ashford transits by trains giving more capacity for Eastbourne specific services and challenging the appeal of endless road use.
3. A new curve from the Tonbridge line towards Gatwick which could link to a host of existing services more than having to change at Redhill all the time.
4. A study to look at linking Tonbridge with the Guildford Line direct at Redhill and
5. Electrification of the North Downs Line to enable semi-fast Thameslink services into Guildford and possibly Reading as they do likewise to access Horsham.

BRTA believes these projects need a switch from £27 billion new roads fund to pep up the Rail Reopening Fund which was pitted at a mere £500 million for all Great Britain, which is, given a need to cut emissions and congestion, a meagre and unequal recognition of what rail can offer.



BRTA Sheffield Forum Saturday 29th June 2024 by Simon Barber of BRTA:

I attended the Sheffield Forum which was held at the Benjamin Huntsman pub (Wetherspoons), and there were also our members David Ferguson and Christopher Hyomes. Four other attendees came (as per our Attendance List) - Andy Faulkner (Minsters Rail), Chris Bell (Don Valley Railway), Nigel Kavanagh-Brown (MEMRAP) and Dr Jonathan Coghill. The following matters were discussed:

Don Valley Railway and Woodhead - One freight train every day to Stocksbridge steel works and the line is in very good condition. However, tram-trains could be up-graded for Stocksbridge, and heavy rail in the long-term also from Stocksbridge to Penistone. There is pressure to re-open Sheffield Victoria, since Sheffield Midland is heavily congested.

Peak Rail (Matlock - Buxton/Chinley) - These could be used for both fast and slow



trains, plus stone traffic. The new East Midlands mayoralty covers both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (but not Leicestershire) and they are now in favour of Peak Rail. The Peaks and Dales Railway (MEMRAP campaign) now has links with local universities.

<https://peaksanddalesline.co.uk/>

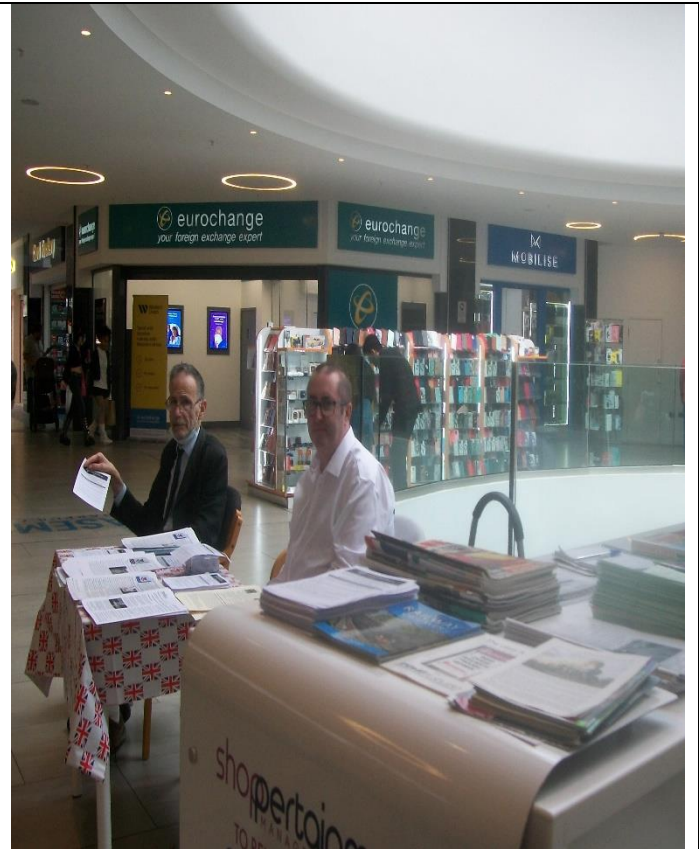
Minsters Rail - This seems to be high on the lists, whilst the Humber estuary often gets

flooded - also some of the East Yorkshire communities will be reconnected to the rail network and the A1079 York-Beverley Road suffers from traffic congestion.

Harrogate-Ripon-Northallerton: The Harrogate-Ripon should be the first stage of the reopening since many Ripon residents commute to both Harrogate and Leeds. The 1 mile of a Ripon bypass has taken track and then work on a diversion to Thirsk, since there were some developments at Northallerton - both Thirsk and Northallerton would de-clutter York.

Christopher Hyomes our BRTA Northern/Yorkshire Area Rep: had suggested that our next meeting should take place in a church hall for which Chris will search one out and then will pay for it. To keep in touch, contact Simon via T: 0208 940 4399 E: simon4barber@gmail.com and Chris Hyomes T: 07971 766207 E: chris.hyomes@hotmail.co.uk

BRTA Executive Committee works hard to keep the show afloat. Give us your support!



BRTA at the Bedford Harpur Centre (above)

David Ferguson and Richard Pill with Simon Barber did the honours. Busy place, quite a few took leaflets and stopped to chat with us and £20 was raised, all helping keep the association afloat. We would like to thank Harpur Centre Management for facilitating us and the staff for their welcome. Bedford Town Centre has suffered a reduction in quality and shopping choices to the more land-more parking out of town relocation preferences accessed chiefly by roads proliferations. It is BRTA's strong conviction that more and better rail links (East-West Rail, Bedford-Northampton, Stations North of Bedford like at Oakley and Sharnbrook and for the Retail Park at Kempston) could all help with more sustainable footfall and spend and that would close the gaps between rents, other costs and incomes.

BRTA Needs and Calls:

BRTA calls on members to write to our local Elected Mayor Cllr Tom Wootton and reinforce our view for more and better rail links for more sustainable access. Contact the Mayor
 If you would like to contact Tom, you can:
 Email him at: tom.wootton@bedford.gov.uk
 Tel: 01234 718800 Write to him at:
 Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP.
 For elsewhere, you may wish to write/email to your local parish, district/borough and/or Unitary/County Councils and local MP's and support our calls in other areas.
 Clearly, if people want more and better, they need to be willing to be active and help facilitate for us to 'turn up and go' be it public meetings, stalls, events or forums.
 BRTA needs more active volunteers and more members to inform more and better.

Guildford Mutterings and Stirrings? Guildford Forum Reflections:

Minutes of BRTA Guildford Forum held on Saturday 14th September 2024 at The Rodboro Buildings, 1 Bridge Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4RY. Ed. Please note that BRTA facilitates forums to bring people together, to consider more in-depth issues and recruit more active members and volunteers. They are not officiating to inform BRTA policy per se.

1. **Present:** Simon Barber and David Ferguson (BRTA), Trevor Jones (Guildford), Kathy Smyth (Waverley Friends of the Earth), Richard Porter (Marlow-Maidenhead Rail Users Association).

2. **Apologies for Absence:** Richard Pill, David Start, Leonard Lean, Adrian Chandler (BRTA), Robin Hirsch and Rob Cooke (Guildford Rail Users Group), Jeremy Hunt (MP Waverley), Cllr. Andrew Hornsby-Smith (Reading), Cllr. Stephen Hines (Guildford), Alistair Atkinson (Guildford Environmental Forum), Voluntary Action South-West Surrey, Conway Castle-Knight.

3. Guildford-Cranleigh-Horsham

a) We agree that Cranleigh town should have most support, and we should get Councils and MPs on board. We must target green organisations/groups in Cranleigh. **Ed.** People need to put their money where their mouths are! We need £100 to do more Cranleigh flyer questionnaire leafleting to cover the whole town. Donate to enable more please.

b) Another thing that we should target is **the Onslow Estates**, which will be via Clandon Estates Office. The estate has a house at Knowle Park in Cranleigh. **Ed.** Why was no-one named to do this (delegation)?

c) More flyers we will discuss at our forthcoming EC meeting. **Ed.** Yes, but unless more money be it membership or donations or both, nothing can be forth-coming.

4. **Dunsfold:** The Dunsfold Oil has ground to a halt, but the new housing development will be in the long-term. However, the Aerodrome cannot be sold since the land belongs to Trinity College, Cambridge. **Ed.** Laudable, but our wish is to recruit Dunsfold activists to help with the rail link reopening.

5. **Arundel Curve:** We prefer the curve to be at Barnham, since Ford is close to HM Prison. **Ed.** Someone needs to look at the lie of the land, take photos, do diagrams and report to EC.

6. **New Stations** – Merrow (County Hall) – to be named Guildford East. **Ed.** Laudable, but must have new members and activists for more projects to be taken on board.

This is close to a housing estate dating from the 1950s, and apart from the new Surrey County Hall there will also be a new development at Gosden Hill Farm with woodland space, plus new housing and schools which will lie just north of the Guildford New Line via Effingham Junction. **Ed.** Unless local demand translates to BRTA Membership recruitment, it is a distraction.

6. **Guildford Town Centre:** A pedestrian bridge over the River Wey has been modernised close to the Crown Court and the Odeon Cinema. **Ed.** Laudable, but needs local people to join and be the answer.

ED. BRTA needs more money to print more flyers for Cranleigh. We need more members generally and more active volunteers who share the vision without hesitation, deviation, or repetition!

All enquiries, comments, or feedback via richard.erta@gmail.com. People who join/are members and donate will be given priority!

From the CEO

BRTA wants local, conventional rail links more. We are not arbitrarily pluralistic in anything goes transport prescriptions. Rather, we want heavy rail solutions and tracks which can enable not just more on existing lines, but feeder, diversionary, duplicate, and new-build routes which can get more off roads and onto rails. Constraint in cost, designs and apprehension also exist. For example:

1. London, Manchester, and Sheffield need orbital rail links with Parkway Stations to enable circumvention by passenger and freight between ports and reception depots.
2. A14 Felixstowe to Midlands has zero rail challenge except a great way round into, across and out of London or via busy Peterborough and Leicester-Nuneaton routing which is nearing capacity. Our view is the railway should parallel the A14 directly and modal shift - people and goods should be the goal. Felixstowe-Peterborough-Nuneaton-Birmingham needs electrification. Leicester is at capacity.
3. M1 - needs a parallel railway capable of Piggyback and roll-on, roll-off freight and select passenger use. HS2 unlike HS1 discounted freight - they had their reasons, but in terms of the big picture of modal shift as a goal, leaving it to default on existing lines is inadequate bearing in mind the cost it has involved. Likewise, HS2 gives the Brackley/Silverstone all the intrusion of a High-Speed Railway but no station to access it, despite A43 interchange and a growing location in development terms.
4. Freight is not just block-containers, Varamis rail <https://www.varamis.co.uk/> shows that smaller consignments can be won to rail again. But we need more x nationwide coverage and growth and to accelerate such modal shift agendas. Unless you get more local rail links and send/collect/distribute facilitations, it will have gaps and that will be exploited by roads use unless government tips the balances in favour of rail.

When heat is 'on' beet chocolate soldiers or candles melt. Realism must be measured and fortified with credibility. What I am saying is that BRTA has noble goals at its heart, but ambassadors under peer and popular pressure can capitulate to a pluralistic anything goes approach. An example is local rail reopenings. It has been 60 years or more since the 1960's closures occurred and development happens. Trackbeds have not been protected in many cases; so handling blockages or new routes or deviations must be worked on and balanced with demonstrable demand. So easy to capitulate when the going gets tough or complicated to simply say "a light rail or *bus must be the solution*" of the view they are versatile and can go on roads. But such brings its own issues. The Croydon Tram link was bitterly opposed originally but hitherto has been a roaring success. However, although from lightweight Freight by Rail vehicles have been spun, how much freight do UK Light Rail Networks carry? Heavy rail enables greater or lesser people and goods by rail and that is less traffic on roads, lower emissions, and greater versatility. Is Light Rail cheaper? (2) Is Light Rail more versatile? I would say in sorting urban transport rail-based systems out, it has merit, but in nationwide connectivity is more limited. Medium to longer distances people need more facilities including toilets. Cutting costs can infringe quality of travel and experience and so horses for courses needs to assess which is best. Could Sidmouth be better served by a conventional rail reopening or a Light Rail? If you want a seamless journey to London no, if you want to always change at a main line station, maybe and what of the glaring gap between Scarborough and Whitby? But generally, these matters need working on and an acceptance that in many cases where blockages have arisen and reopening is required, it is either a case of "here's the cheque, move please" or land-take for a deviation. Government will be loathed to engage due to risk/cost/liability issues, but we need leadership and frameworks which take the Climate Emergency seriously and commit to re-railing UK no matter what. In short bad planning allowed blockages on railway routes, now we need it to unblock those routes or find alternative

means to enable more by rail. However good HS2 may or may not be, if you live in Brackley, you get all the intrusion of a railway, but no access to it making it irrelevant!

References:

- 1. <https://www.thriftbooks.com/w/the-chocolate-soldier-heroism-the-lost-chord-of-christianity-a-deeper-christian-classic/26990539/#edition=57635492>
- 2. https://www.its.leeds.ac.uk/projects/konsult/test/private/level2/instruments/instrument002/l2_002summ.htm
- 3. Wider readers on local schemes: <https://brtarailvolunteer.blogspot.com/>

BRTA Membership Form 2024 Onwards – Join or Renew

Official annual renewal date may vary in any given year.



Tear Off and Send with Your Subscription. Please help us recruit more members!

Tick if a New Member: _____

Tick if renewing as an existing member: _____

I/we would like more information about volunteering opportunities with BRTA _____

Membership of BRTA is now as follows:

Ordinary Member/Family £15 _____

Corporate Members (Business/Organisations) £50 _____

Concessionary Membership

(Any kind of Welfare/Disability) £10 _____

Students £5 _____

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ **Tel/Mobile:** _____

Email _____

I/We hereby give consent to our data being used and stored for the purposes of communication with BRTA and its purposes compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) _____

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

