


# English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

	<b>Patrons:</b> Sir Edmund Verney, The Rt Hon. the Lord Newby OBE, Mr George Bathurst, Professor Andrew N Williams BA, BM BCh, MSc, PhD, MRCP, FRCPC, FRHistS, Mr Trevor Garrod, <b>+ Others welcome of professional, business or other acumen and of good repute.</b>	
	<b>Chairman:</b> Position Vacant. However, we appoint or designate a 'Chairman' for our meetings to give people experience. Members can volunteer for the post.	
	<b>Association Secretary and General Coordinator, Media and Marketing Officer, Executive Committee Member, Bedfordshire Area Rep, Newsletter production Events Sales Provider, General Advisor:</b> Mr Richard Pill, 24c St Michaels Road, Bedford, MK40 2LT T. 01234 330090 E. <a href="mailto:richard.erta@gmail.com">richard.erta@gmail.com</a>	
	<b>Vice Chairman, Railfuture Liaison Rep. Executive Committee Member, Westminster Team Member, Berkhamsted and Hertfordshire Area Rep,</b> Mr Colin Crawford, 21 Clunbury Court, Manor Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 2FF T. 01442 870904 Mobile 07836-693977 E: <a href="mailto:colin.crawford1@btconnect.com">colin.crawford1@btconnect.com</a>	
	<b>Leafleting, Field Officer, Great Central Corridor Support Officer, Executive Committee Member:</b> Mr David Ferguson, 25 Virginia House, 19 Kingston Lane, Teddington, TW11 9HL T. 0208 9774181 E. <a href="mailto:daferguson1212@gmail.com">daferguson1212@gmail.com</a>	
	<b>Membership Secretary:</b> Mr Tony Houghton T. 077659 77318 E. <a href="mailto:tony.houghton@keystonelaw.co.uk">tony.houghton@keystonelaw.co.uk</a>	<b>Treasurer:</b> Mr David J. Start T. 07535 641055 E. <a href="mailto:davidjstart63@gmail.com">davidjstart63@gmail.com</a>
	<b>Consultations, General Support, Events Booking Officer and Executive Committee Member:</b> Mr Simon Barber T. 0208 940 4399 E. <a href="mailto:simon4barber@gmail.com">simon4barber@gmail.com</a>	
	<b>ERTA Northern/Yorkshire Area Rep:</b> Mr Chris Hyomes, 10 Tythe Barn Road, Knottingley, West Yorkshire, WF11 9BU E. <a href="mailto:chris.hyomes@hotmail.co.uk">chris.hyomes@hotmail.co.uk</a> T. 07971766207	
	<b>ERTA Leicestershire Area Rep., Local Government Liaison Officer and Executive Committee Member:</b> Mr Kuljit Maan, Flat 4, 72A Kerrysdale Avenue, Leicester, LE4 7GL T. 07399541663 <a href="mailto:kuljitmaan74@gmail.com">kuljitmaan74@gmail.com</a>	
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**Northampton – Market Harborough Rail Link and Stations up for discussion at packed meeting 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at The Methodist Hall, Market Harborough.**



**ERTA is encouraged that people bothered to turn out to the meeting and now the tricky job of consolidating and directing that interest and support to key letters/emails and membership!**

## Northampton-Market Harborough Rail Meeting Report Continued....

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March at The Methodist Hall, Market Harborough, some 30 people assembled to discuss, explore, and debate the merits of reopening a Northampton-Market Harborough (MH) rail link.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023, ERTA and associated people convened a meeting in Market Harborough to discuss the idea of rebuilding a new Northampton-Market Harborough (MH) railway link.

Since closure in 1982 the abandoned route has been turned into many things including development over old route at the Market Harborough end, the Brampton Way (popular footpath, cycleway, and wildlife corridor), a steam preservation establishment and now a Northern Relief Road which on a flat surface, will cross the old railway route north of built Northampton. These sorts of problems are not untypical of many rail reinstatement projects across the country and need some balanced resolution.

The meeting was addressed by Cllr Peter James of Harborough Council, Cllr David Bill of Leicestershire County Council and the meeting was chaired by Mr Colin Crawford of ERTA.

### **Main conclusions were:**

1. It is a worthy cause to seek to pursue
2. It needs studying with a view of accommodation as well as a railway, making the case
3. It needs MP and Council and ultimately Government buy-in.

Future meetings will be convened and people are encouraged to join ERTA and write to their local MP.

The prospect of a new station for Desborough on the MML was raised. South of MH, it would be part of an attempt to get Stations North of Bedford and a local service restored between Bedford and Leicester for example. Currently people from Bedford must change to go north at Kettering and that is an inconvenience involving crossing over the bridge either way. Desborough and surrounding areas of a 3–5-mile radius has a growing population and again a study is needed to make the case and court popular support. Richard Pill said that Wixams in south of Bedford is now being built, to serve outlying new development and this is a 2-platform station with modest facilities on the slow lines, enabling fast services not to be involved and this principal pattern could be replicated North of Bedford at various places including Desborough and Kibworth, providing a site could be identified and retained for a station and associated access.

Over all, it was a successful meeting, but the next steps practically are to translate these meetings to more members, income generation and enabling a coherent and comprehensive collective push for courting more and wider strategic support. Please offer to work with us as part of a team. For notes taken and assembled at the meeting, please email [richard.erta@gmail.com](mailto:richard.erta@gmail.com) for a pdf version.

## Northern Lights continued from previous recent newsletters:

### Minsters Rail: The Campaign to reopen the York to Beverly Railway Line

In 2021 the Minsters Rail Campaign (MRC) and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) acting as partners were successful in obtaining DfT Restoring Your Railway funding towards a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the reinstatement of the Beverley to York line. Consultants AECOM were engaged in January 2022, and the SOC, the result of eight months' work in close collaboration with representatives of MRC and ERYC, was submitted to the DfT at the end of September.

The SOC is an initial outline study, identifying the transport need and objectives, making the economic and social case for intervention to meet that need, and identifying options. For heavy rail it has looked at several possible alignments, all from different points of view (e.g., lowest cost, lower property impact, lower environmental impact, highest catchment opportunity etc.), but it has not recommended any one of them. All of them would be in effect "new build" as most of the former trackbed has either disappeared or is not usable. As required by the DfT the SOC has also looked at non-rail options, e.g., improved bus services. But having done that, it has come down in principle in favour of heavy rail - which would be the highest cost transport option but is the only one that would meet all the main transport objectives.

It's for the DfT to study all the detail in the SOC and its many appendices and respond. It's likely that this may take at least six months. If they accept the SOC, the next step would be for the project to proceed to a full business case, perhaps costing hundreds of thousands of pounds, which would look in more detail at specific options. In the context of impending cuts in government spending, it would be unwise to be too optimistic about the project progressing much further at present.



Ed. ERTA supports all these projects as well as Skipton-Colne, Keswick Re-Rail, and completion of the Borders Line to Carlisle for example. We would prefer these local solutions to some expensive and much ado road agendas or High Speed, which of nature leaves a swathe of communities out. Getting tracks back is not easy, but every practical and environmental reason to do just that! Write to your MP and ask for these schemes to be made easier, like cycleways and footpaths can be diverted, railways of nature cannot always be. We think of Matlock-Buxton/Chinley for example. Would link Derby-Manchester direct. Think what support and interest you can show and give and let us get delivery under way! We need a nationwide plan and transfer funding from new roads and road widening to local rail solutions more for people and goods. It can be done if the framework is made easier, cost-effective, and do-able. See: <https://www.memrap.org/> and give support!

**The Railway Industry Association (RIA) North has published a new plan for how the North’s railway should be electrified, to improve journeys and help decarbonise rail freight and passenger lines across the region.**

RIA North’s plan, entitled 'Greener, Faster, Better', sets out a long-term vision for which passenger and freight routes should be prioritised for electrification, and other low-carbon technologies such as battery and hydrogen, to remove polluting diesel trains from the network.

Electric railways are one of the greenest modes of transport and enable trains to run faster and more services to operate.

Looking ahead to 2050, the report identifies strategic freight lines, intercity corridors and suburban networks across the North which should be top of the list to be electrified. According to RIA North, the Midland Main Line (MML) and Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU) offer the greatest decarbonisation benefits – both of which the Government announced it will electrify as part of the Integrated Rail Plan.

It also highlights a range of connections between major towns and cities in the North as ‘first priority’, including:

Sheffield to Doncaster/Moorthorpe

Manchester Victoria to Leeds via Bradford Interchange

Northallerton to Saltburn via Middlesbrough

Manchester to Sheffield (Hope Valley)

Leeds to Hull

Justin Moss, Chair of RIA North, commented: “Rail will be essential for the UK to reach its Net-Zero transport targets, as a clean form of mass transit. However, many of the North’s major freight and passenger routes continue to rely on diesel trains and critical connections between some of our largest cities need major upgrades.

“Electrification is the solution to many of these challenges. That is why we have published a roadmap for how our railway network can be not only decarbonised through electrification, but also deliver faster journey times. We also identify where other decarbonisation solutions such as battery and hydrogen trains will be most appropriate.

“Whilst we have seen some progress with commitments from the Government in the Integrated Rail Plan, these do not go far or fast enough to reach our climate targets. To ensure they can be delivered at good value to the taxpayer the industry needs a long-term programme of electrification work starting immediately, which would also help support thousands of green jobs in the sector and drive economic growth around the country.

“We look forward to continue working with Transport for the North and our partners in government to build a world-class, Net-Zero railway not just for the North of England but for whole of the UK.”

Julie Carrier, Decarbonisation Lead at RIA North, and co-author of the report, added: “We know the North has ambitious targets for Net-Zero emissions from transport by 2040, and the railway industry is eager to play its part in this. Not only do we need to decarbonise our industry, but we need to increase the capacity of our railways to take even more passengers and freight through a pipeline of electrification projects.

“We hope that our proposals will help inform the debate about how the industry can deliver these, providing the greatest benefits to passengers and the North’s economy.”

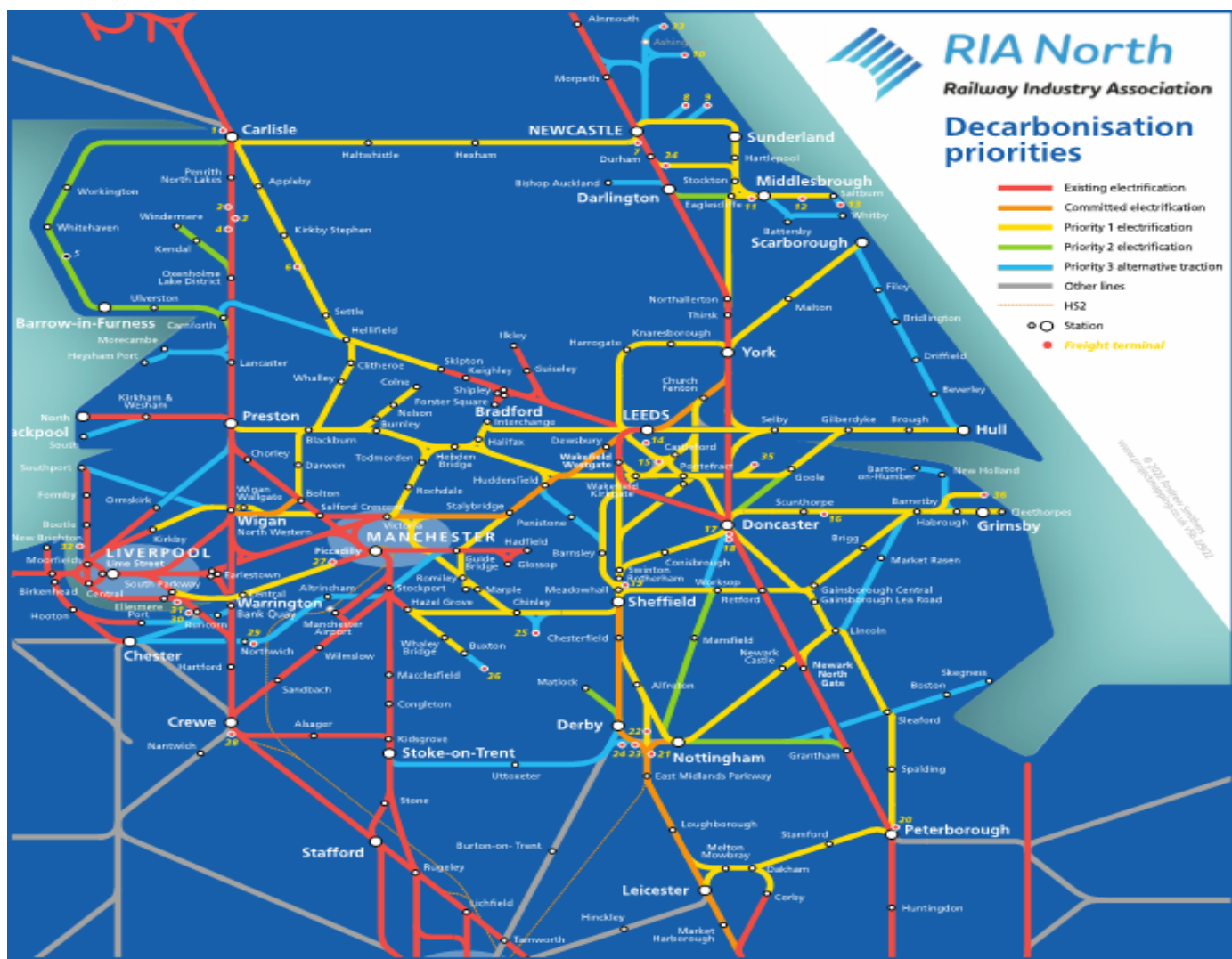
The Electrification Route Prioritisation Plan was written by RIA North’s Decarbonisation working group, made up of cross-industry experts, and forms part of their ongoing engagement with partners in the supply chain, Government, Transport for the North, and Network Rail.

Ed. Please can all our friends, contacts and associates with existing members, rally behind these projects in the North and ERTA and recruit / join ERTA to be under an umbrella and work together to foster them accordingly? Yes, we have Railfuture, but ERTA has links and reach and range they do not have and we can at very least help highlight to wider audiences. Only by our membership also growing can we hope to demonstrate real support and grow our presence. If you want more and diverse news, please be willing to be part of the production of it. TX.

**All enquiries via our Northern Area Rep:** Mr Chris Hyomes, 10 Tythe Barn Road, Knottingley, West Yorkshire, WF11 9BU, E. [chris.hyomes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chris.hyomes@hotmail.co.uk) T. 07971766207  
Produced and submitted to us October 2022.

**Northern Lights – What ERTA also wants and needs:** ERTA aspires to be ‘nationwide’ in aspiration, agenda, and coverage. Our Northern Area Rep, Mr Chris Hyomes is doing sterling work but ideally, we wish to build a team of volunteers. As a southerner I have to tread carefully, but believe in one nation, one railway and a fairer deal for rail users. Lines we want rebuild include **Woodhead** (Hull-Sheffield-Manchester-Liverpool), **Leeds to Northallerton via Harrogate and Ripon** (take on A61 corridor traffic flows), Matlock-Buxton/Chinley for East Midlands-Manchester/North West direct and vice versa. Keswick (top tourist destination), York-Beverley (Minsters Line), Scarborough-Whitby (needs a study at least). Get that little lot done and rail can do more, enjoy more market share and declutter places like York, enable more freight by rail and check and balance congestion, emissions and provide better rail access. Always more, but on business cases, those who demand such, should have the obligation to provide such as for many lay people they are costly and out of reach, despite a Climate Emergency!

**Write to your MP!** Some cynically think the act of writing ‘futile’ but did you know that we need people within constituencies of specific MPs to write as they will only tend to act if letters/emails come from their constituents not outsiders. Indeed, if an MP gets about 5 such letters like calling for reopening of a rail link, they must act or investigate it. We need MPs to take-on getting councils involved and once councils get involved, they have more contacts and access to resources to get studies underway. Either ask us or consult this web link: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons> Help make a difference!



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Disclaimer: Views expressed in our newsletter are not necessarily ERTA policy per se.

**Other Association News:** It is with regret that due to a lack of public engagement and support and the adamant and vehement opposition to the station proposal at Amphill by members of the town council, that we have reluctantly decided to shelve this project until further notice. It need not stop others making the case and post local elections trying again. But the July meeting has been cancelled and unless we get more support in local interest, membership, and engagement volunteering (chicken and egg) we have many other projects nationwide requiring our attention, time, and limited resources.

Any offers to take an interest, be a team player, join ERTA via: <https://ertarail.co.uk/become-a-member/> or see form at the back page of every newsletter and flyer. A growing membership and willing people to fill niches and gaps to make us able to cover more and do better is just what ERTA needs to better fulfil its mission. **Amphill Station needs a reliable, regular volunteer to pioneer it.** Step forward please! All enquiries via [richard.erta@gmail.com](mailto:richard.erta@gmail.com) Not more work for Richard, but shared engagement with him more for more!

## Dates for your diary

**Saturday 20 May - Sheffield.** - Benjamin Huntsman, 12-18 Cambridge Street, Sheffield, South Yorks. S1 4UD <https://www.jdwetherspoon.com/pubs/all-pubs/england/south-yorkshire/the-benjamin-huntsman-sheffield>. T. 0114-263-9500. 1pm Lunch; 2-4pm business.

**Saturday 10 June - Bristol.** The Commercial Rooms, 43-45 Corn Street, Bristol BS1 1HT. <https://www.jdwetherspoon.com/pubs/all-pubs/england/bristol/the-commercial-rooms-bristol> T. 0117-927-9681. 1pm Lunch; 2-4pm business.

ERTA is doing a 'get out more' Summer Wetherspoons-based Forum style get together to reach out to parts of the country we do not usually visit. If you wish to join us, please notify Mr Simon Barber T. 0208 940 4399 E. [simon4barber@gmail.com](mailto:simon4barber@gmail.com) All welcome, an agenda will be issued.

**Guildford Meeting Success!** On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April some 30 people gathered at St. Nicholas Church Hall, Bury Street, Guildford to hear Zoe Franklin, Lib Dem Prospective Parliamentary Candidate speak about transport related matters in and around Guildford, a major centre in Surrey bordering between urban and rural balances with a plethora of rail links and transport issues including congested roads blighting town and rural areas. Traffic management and addressing pedestrian priority, integrated bus and rail and cycle-ability safely in and around Guildford, including getting safely to local railway stations. Zoe gave a lively talk followed by questions, answers, and discussion. **The matter of reopening the rail link to Cranleigh, Horsham and beyond was raised by several people.** Protecting the route, studying the prospect with a 'how to' not 'if but...' approach is required. Through journey choice both to and from Guildford, decluttering trunk roads and urban blight as well as more freight by rail were raised. Dunsfold and elsewhere development is going in but the infrastructure is less-than what is required. Richard Pill, ERTA Secretary also spoke after Zoe and stressed that local MPs are more likely to take an interest and act if local people get galvanised and write to them encouraging support for reopening the rail link. Likewise, local councillors and councils. It needs a concerted effort and membership of ERTA acting as a bridge to bring people together is recommended.



**Photo above:** One-half of our audience, sorry the other half are not represented! But the count and attendance list confirms 30 present. Thanks to all who came.



**Photo above:** Richard Pill, ERTA Secretary chaired the meeting and said a few words to rally people to wholesome thinking and get galvanised to reopen Guildford-Cranleigh-Horsham rail link and beyond!

**From the Secretary:** So, summer is once again with us, long hot days, the fields of corn starting to ripen and thoughts to holidays, relaxing after a calamitous year and the busy Coronation period, time to relax but not for complacency? Veteran campaigners will tell you to be alert in holiday periods, particularly summer holidays July to August and Winter, December. That is when Government and others tend to bury bad news, the unexpected, the controversial, the planning application, schemes, and lengthy consultation. We are in a civic fight. We have opponents to local rail solutions and especially reopenings, rebuilds and select pieces of local new-builds as well as rival bids for the same routes and land, be it canals, cycleways, walk-ways, other development, or road expansion. Whilst the voice of the so-called 'green-lobby' is larger all the time, it is so diverse, getting a coherent message beyond platitudes is hard for a deaf or opportunistic government. One example was that people want innovation, growth, and more freedom to get on with local rail expansion, whilst others wanted renationalisation and more government control. The test is whether private or public deliver results. East-West Rail 35 years in asking; is being delivered now (Oxford-Milton Keynes/Bedford) for a date when I am approaching 60 years of age. Clearly the main benefit will be for future generations and those who come after, but if we want more and sooner, we need systems, understandings, and appreciations to deliver more and faster of whatever 'the right type of railway' is! Jury is out on the precise details! Here is an example of a forest of bureaucracy and anathema to lay-people when it should be self-evident: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-business-case> If one accepts the view that the closures went too far and were ill-judged in many cases then and retrospectively, reopening optimising should be a "no-brainer"! This is where our endeavours really matter.

Please Join ERTA Help us help you! <https://ertarail.co.uk/become-a-member/>

Tick if a New Member:  \_\_\_\_\_

Membership of ERTA costs £15 per annum. I/We wish to join  \_\_\_\_\_

I/We wish to explore volunteering opportunities (optional)  \_\_\_\_\_

**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 ERTA and its purposes compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)  \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send completed form and payment to ERTA: c/o**

T. 077659 77318 [tony.houghton@keystonelaw.co.uk](mailto:tony.houghton@keystonelaw.co.uk)

**Postal address** is still 24c St Michaels Road, Bedford, MK402LT

Join our free email loop for news and views: E. [richard.erta@gmail.com](mailto:richard.erta@gmail.com)

and see our website: <https://ertarail.co.uk/events>