



Personal statements from candidates standing for the Community Rail Network board

STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION: Jeremy Whitaker

Proposer – Richard Watts, Chair and General Manager, Community Rail Lancashire

Seconder – Garfield Southall, Chair, North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership

I am currently Chair of the Board, having previously served as one of the two vice chairs. I was elected to the Board in 2018.

I have been active in community rail for over 25 years and was made an Honorary Member of CRN (ACoRP) in 2005.

I bring a unique perspective, impartiality and independence to the Board as an Honorary member. As Director of my own transport consultancy I am currently working with clients that include several Train Operating Companies. I have also worked for DfT and TfW. This experience enables me to provide the Board with up to date insight of the industry.

Prior to working independently I held a number of senior commercial posts in the UK rail industry, including Deputy Bid Director for TUK's (previously Abellio) UK rail bid team working on bids for DfT, TS and TfW. Before that as a TOC Commercial Director I held statutory Directorships for Wessex Trains, Wales & Borders Trains and National Rail Enquiries. I have also held senior commercial positions with InterCity and Regional Railways. Outside of the rail industry I served on the management board of Falmouth University as Director of Marketing & External Affairs.

I have experience in the charity sector as a director, trustee and chair of a small animal welfare charity.

Professionally I hold a Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing and am a Fellow (FCIM) of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION: Karen Hornby

Proposer – Marion Atkinson, Chair, Women in Community Rail

Seconder – Roy Chapman, Board member, Crewe-Manchester CRP

I have over thirty years of rail experience with Network Rail and I have been on the Community Rail Network Board for the last two years. When in Network Rail I led the Community Rail Team and since retirement I have been the Community Rail Partnership Officer for the Calder Valley Line for the last two years.

STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION: Richard Burningham

Proposer – Prof Jon Shaw, Chair, Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership

Seconder – Mick Stone, Secretary, Purbeck Community Rail Partnership

I have been a Community Rail Partnership Officer since 1998, running the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, and both I personally and we as a Partnership have always been great enthusiasts for the Community Rail Network and particularly its role as a vehicle to encourage CRP Officers across the country to meet and interact and share ideas, case studies and experiences.

Where we can work together on joint initiatives, that is even better.

My ethos has always been to encourage everyone who wants to get involved with the railway and I strongly support encouraging more station Friends' groups and all of us, in the Community Rail Network and CRPs, helping them achieve what they want to achieve at their local station.

I am a past Chair of the Community Rail Network and a past Chair and Vice Chair of ACoRP.

As a very experienced Community Rail Partnership Officer and long standing member of the ACoRP and CRN Board, I believe I bring a lot of experience and insight to my role on the Board. I hope you will support my nomination and will allow me to continue serving. Thank you.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: Catherine Kingdom

Proposer – Richard Watts, Chair, Community Rail Lancashire

Secunder – Karen Bennett, Education Development Officer, Community Rail Lancashire

I have worked at Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) for almost two years, and I am passionate about steering the Community Rail movement to a positive future. I am currently part of the education team at CRL where I project manage the Try the Train programme. Prior to my current role I was a primary school teacher for 20 years and would be happy to bring my skills and expertise in this area to the board. Try the Train is a programme which gives vulnerable and underrepresented groups travel confidence – I would therefore be happy to provide guidance in this area too.

In my previous career in Education, I was an assistant headteacher and member of the Senior Leadership Team so I therefore have prior experience of governance, working through difficult situations, managing budgets, finding ways of working differently to ensure things worked for both the pupils and staff within my team. I have not been a member of a board before and would welcome the opportunity to gain new skills whilst shaping the future of Community Rail.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: Christopher Kimberley

Proposer – Garfield Southall, Chair, North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership

Secunder – Mark Barker, Chair, Crewe to Manchester Community Rail Partnership

I had a management career in the railway industry which stretched 50 years, and included senior leadership roles that included strategy development within the context of customer needs, and responsibilities for stakeholder relationships generally, and specifically the development of early Community Rail partnerships:

Commercial Director, Northern Rail (2004 – 2006), Non-Executive Director, Merseyrail (2013 – 2015), Director, Railway Operations, HS2 Ltd (2015 – 2017)

I have as an independent evaluator undertaken reviews for the DfT (2021 – 2023) on the performance of various Train Operating Companies in the development and deployment of collaborative behaviours including those with the community sector and understand both the challenges and successes that are possible.

Having recently moved with my wife to live in Frodsham, Cheshire I am engaging in a number of community based volunteer activities. In addition to the North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership these include supporting the Frodsham, Helsby and Elton Together umbrella voluntary sector support to the NHS and Social Care prescribers, and have taken a personal interest in health and well being and the need for collaborative partnerships, especially in engaging with hard to reach communities.

I am a passionate advocate of the principles and aims underpinning the Community Rail Network's work, can bring the business experience as a critical friend to helping the Board assess and appraise the challenges and opportunities that it will be asked to take decisions on, with the benefit of a deep knowledge of how the railway operates as a system.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: Dawn McGough

Proposer – Karen Hornby, CRP Officer, Calder Valley Line CRP

Seconder – Marion Atkinson, Chair, Women in Community Rail

As Community Rail Manager for Community Rail Cumbria, comprising three CRPs, I offer a wide range of knowledge and experience of Community Rail including station adoption, working with local communities and businesses, strong relationships with our local authorities from county to parish level and extensive partnerships with rail industry partners.

With over 20 years experience working in the transport sector in local government, 10 years focussed on rail, I am passionate about sustainable public transport generally and particularly the joys, convenience and independence rail travel offers (when it works!).

Community Rail has given me such a rewarding career, with so many new friendships and an ability to make a positive difference - I would love the opportunity to support Community Rail Network and CRPs across the UK to develop effectively going forward.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: Himali Patil

Proposer – Dr Robin Hutchinson, Chair, The Community Train CRP

Seconder – Mick Stone, Secretary, Purbeck CRP

As a lover of public transportation and community engagement at a grassroots level, I am excited to run for the position of Board of Director at the Community Rail network. With a background in Visual communication and Service Design [over 9 years], I have been directly engaging with communities at a local level, to improve access to the arts, culture and public services while fostering stronger connections within local communities.

Throughout my career, I have worked closely with various stakeholders, including local government, community groups, and local residents, to ensure that public spaces are inclusive and reflective of the needs of the people they serve. I believe in the power of community rail as a means to enhance mobility, reduce environmental impact, and stimulate local economies.

I believe in the power of the railways and the impact it has on people's lives. I am an advocate of sustainable policies, improving station accessibility, facilities and making public transportation and nearby spaces inclusive and for all. My approach is collaborative, and I am committed to working with fellow board members to ensure the voice of the community is always at the forefront of our decisions. Additionally, I will actively seek opportunities to engage with the public to better understand their needs and challenges.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: Kevin Boorman

Proposer – Tim Barkley, Chair, Southeast Communities RP

Seconder – Fiona Morton, Chief Executive Officer, Southeast Communities RP

I retired last year after working for 46 years, over 20 in the rail industry, and over 25 years in local government, where I was head of communications & marketing at Hastings Borough Council.

I have had a lifelong interest in railways, founding The Railway Society at school; I only left the rail industry because of privatisation, holding a number of supervisory, management and senior management roles there, dealing with tactical, operational and strategic issues. This included chairing meetings with the NUR/RMT and ASLEF, and community and stakeholder groups.

At the council I managed the marketing and internal and external communications functions, acted as spokesperson for difficult broadcast media interviews, and led on community engagement. I returned on a part-time casual basis earlier this year to help with crisis management.

I have been involved with the Marshlink CRP since its inception 20 years ago - I actually sat on the funding body which gave it its first grant – and have chaired it for over 10 years. I sat on the SCRP board as observer for 10 years, becoming a full director once I retired.

I am a director of two local charities (I chair of one of those).

I am passionate about rail transport. I would like to use my experience dealing with staff at all levels of an organisation, the community, and stakeholders, trades unions and the media and working with volunteers to help further the work of the CRN, whose aims and objectives I very strongly support.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: Michel Lintermans

Proposer – Ian Dinmore, Member, Community Rail Norfolk

Seconder – Hannah McDonnell, Executive Director, Gloucestershire CRP and Oxfordshire CRP

The reason why I want to sit on the board of Community Rail Network is as follows; Naturally, Community Rail Network is very supportive. As a non-British person, I would also like to join to give my Dutch perspective on the organisation and provide a breath of fresh air. I have more than 10 years of experience with a community station under the name of the Stationspark Deurne Cooperative. So, I would appreciate it if you would give me a chance.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: Shahiesta Raja

Proposer – Richard Watts, Chair, Community Rail Lancashire

Seconder – Katie Douglas, Inclusion Officer, Community Rail Lancashire

I am an Education Officer at CRL. I have been in this position for five years after being a secondary school teacher for twenty years.

Working in this field has helped me to engage with local communities and introduce many people to rail travel that may not have done so otherwise. As well as working with schools and colleges to produce artwork for stations, I have worked with adult community groups to encourage and promote safe and confident rail travel. Working with people new to the country has helped me to understand the obstacles many people face when navigating their way around public transport. I have written and presented best practice papers for CRL and have introduced new initiatives such as World Hijab Day. I presented the Refugee Support Programme by Community Rail Lancashire at the DfT and have lead workshops at CRN and Northern Community Rail conferences.

I started a Muslim women's station adoption group at Accrington Station known as Stations of Welcome. This is the only adoption group of its kind in the country and has been featured in Lancashire Life Magazine and BBC Sunday Morning Live as well as Rail Track Magazine as a great example of diversity within community rail.

I am a thoughtful, patient person and extremely enthusiastic about the benefits of community rail. As one of very few Muslim women in community rail, I feel I can bring a new perspective to the role of board member and encourage more diversity within community rail.

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