



Personal statements from candidates standing for the Community Rail Network board 2025/26

STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION: MARION ATKINSON (Chair, *Women in Community Rail*)

Proposer – Sheila Davidson, Membership Secretary, Women in Community Rail

Second – Richard Lysons, Board member, Women in Community Rail

I have been involved in community rail since the early 2000's whereby I brought the concept of station adoption into the Liverpool City Region. I am currently employed as a rail support officer at Merseytravel and have worked in local government for 30+ years.

I have served as a board member on Community Rail Network for a number of years and was elected as Vice Chair approximately five years ago. I was also Chair of the award winning West Lancashire Partnership for 12 years until 2021 and also took the Cambrian line out of special measures.

I currently Chair *Women in Community Rail (WiCR)* and support members of WiCR with training, advice, guidance, whilst promoting inclusion and diversity to improve representation within community rail. I led on the introduction of the code of conduct which now forms part of the designation process recognised by DfT.

My skill set includes the ability to respectfully challenge, political awareness, good communication including listening and interpersonal skills whilst also being able to make effective decisions. I promote collaborative working and strive for an inclusive and tolerant community rail family which I believe we have made lots of progress, but there is still more to do.

I am also the first female leader of Sefton Council and work to promote inclusion and diversity in public life.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: PAUL GODDARD (Chair, *Crowborough Community Hub* and Director, *Southeast Communities Rail Partnership*)

Proposer – James Firebrace, Treasurer, Crowborough Community Hub

Second – Zoe Murphy, Secretary, Crowborough Community Hub

As a voluntary Director of SCRP, and volunteer Chair of Crowborough Community Hub, which is creating a community space for the community by the community in the disused part of Crowborough train station, I have a great interest in the work of CRN. It has been a pleasure to attend conference for the last two years to network and find out more about the work of CRN, and the wonderful work being done in the community, by the community, with the community.

I am also registered blind, and a guide dog owner, and I would like to represent disability, especially vision impairment, on the board. At present, disabled and vision impaired people are underrepresented, and to maximise diversity and inclusivity, we must change this. Through lived experience, I can bring the voice of the passenger as well as the voice of the partner body working with CRN and CRPs.

I currently serve as Deputy Mayor of Crowborough and having recently given up membership of one of my volunteering opportunities, I now have capacity to work with you and enhance the important and valuable work of CRN and its members.

We can only succeed by working together but together means everyone. At present, disability, especially vision impairment is not represented.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: FAYE KEANE (CRP Officer, Severnside CRP)

Proposer – Heather Cullimore, Partnership Manager, Severnside Community Rail Partnership

Seconder – Sally Wilcock, Operations and Community Engagement, Strawberry Line Café and Cycle Project CIC

I have worked for Severnside Community Rail Partnership (SCRP) for 10 years, developing a passion for Community Rail and advocating for the impact it makes. In my previous role as Creative Programme Lead for a city-wide youth charity, I greatly valued the opportunity to collaborate closely with the board of trustees, and I am eager to bring that constructive experience to the Community Rail Network (CRN) board.

As a Community Development Officer working across a broad geographic area and demographic of communities, I understand the sensitivity and diplomacy required to communicate ideas and make progress, as well as the importance of bridging the gaps between our communities and the rail industry. A key part of my role is looking for opportunities for partnership working, funding and development beyond the industry. These are all skills I would like to bring to the board.

I lead SCRPs 'Days Out By Train' programme, which improves travel confidence for those who face barriers to rail travel. This scheme has enabled me to build strong relationships with vulnerable groups, co-produce the project with diverse communities and advocate for their lived experiences. With these learnings, I can support Community Rail Network to make sure they are an inclusive employer. I have qualifications and experience of project management, working with multiple stakeholders, seeing projects through from conception to completion on time, in budget and evaluating impact. I thrive from working collaboratively and I am keen to further develop skills in governance and contribute to the board's strategic direction.

STANDING FOR ELECTION: NEIL SCOTT (Chair, Cambrian Railway Partnership)

Proposer – Claire Sterry, Host (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations, Cambrian Railway Partnership

Seconder – Owen Griffkin, Community Rail Officer, Heart of Wales Community Rail Partnership.

The role of a Director of Community Rail Network requires someone with passion, insight and vision to help CRN develop its strategic goals.

My career in the professional railway sector gives me a strong understanding of the importance of the challenges of industry at an important time in its existence. I have worked for Network Rail in senior management roles and in the Train Operating Company sector.

I understand the difficulties that the change to the UK railway structure will bring for community rail when Great British Railways is created in England and what the impact will mean in Scotland and in Wales. In Wales, we recognise the new challenges that the industry restructuring will bring, and we have already developed a different relationship with our funding body.

I have led the Cambrian Railway Partnership since the beginning of 2024 and have changed how we governed ourselves, how we interact with our stakeholders, improved our relationship management with community groups and overseen a significant change in how our CRP functions. I understand, deeply, the challenges that CRPs face in funding, development of their Partnerships and Community Rail Officers, establishing sound governance and looking at how CRPs should be structured to meet new legislative and oversight challenges.

As a Director I would leverage my managerial and leadership experiences for the benefit of Community Rail Network and offer my knowledge of chairing and developing the Cambrian Railway Partnership as an example of my commitment and expertise in acting in a senior and strategic role.

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