

**SENRUG Press Release: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010**

## **SENRUG Organises Political Debate**

SENRUG, the group that campaigns for better rail transport in South East Northumberland, has organised a political debate on rail transport policy with the parliamentary candidates from the 3 main political parties for the Wansbeck Constituency.

Ian Lavery, recently appointed Labour candidate following the news that sitting MP Denis Murphy will stand down at the next election, along with Simon Reed for the Liberal Democrats and Campbell Storey for the Conservatives have all agreed to participate in the event that will be held in Morpeth Town Hall on Thursday March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Starting at 7.30 pm, the format will be that each candidate will give a 10 minute talk setting out their views on both local and national rail issues. After that, there will be opportunity for questions from the floor and each candidate will be invited to answer them.

SENRUG Chairman Dennis Fancett, who once had the opportunity to question former Prime Minister Tony Blair on rail policy on live TV, said he was very much looking forward to the event and wished to thank all 3 candidates for agreeing to participate. "This is a new venture for us and we do wish to make clear that SENRUG itself is not aligned to any political party. We seek to work with all political groups, whether in office or opposition, for the benefit of the

community as a whole”, he said. “But with a general election only a few months if not weeks away, we are providing this opportunity for the candidates to set out their views and for the electorate to ask relevant questions”

“It will be a different role for me as rather than ask the difficult questions myself, my job will be to try and adjudicate and ensure each candidate is treated fairly. I’m no David Dimbleby but I’m sure that with a little bit of goodwill from everyone we can have an informative and enjoyable evening” he continued.

SENRUG have become well known in recent years as the group behind the campaign to re-open the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne Line to passenger trains. They were also successful in their attempt to bring Cross Country inter-city services to Morpeth, which commenced in 2005. But there are additionally a number of other issues they campaign for such as Customer Information Systems at stations in Northumberland, local services to run in the evening and on Sundays, and better connections with London. The group have published a manifesto of their own which is available at [www.senrug.co.uk](http://www.senrug.co.uk)

The meeting is open to both SENRUG members and the general public, although questions will be restricted to items relating to rail transport (both local and national) and other closely aligned subjects. Those who support SENRUG’s campaigns and wish to join the group will be able to do so on the night, with subscriptions being just £5 for an adult or couple for a full year.

Ends (480 words)

**Notes for Editors.**

- 1) SENRUG is The South East Northumberland Rail User Group and campaigns for better rail transport in South East Northumberland. Our full campaign manifesto is on the website at [www.senrug.co.uk](http://www.senrug.co.uk)
- 2) Enquiries - Dennis Fancett, Chairman SENRUG, Mobile 07810 353651
- 3) Representatives of the Press are welcome to attend the meeting. It would be helpful if you could advise SENRUG in advance if you intend to come.
- 4) Dennis Fancett, Chairman of SENRUG, was invited to put questions on rail transport to former Prime Minister Tony Blair on "Ask Prime Minister", ITV Networks, 12 Dec 2000
- 5) **Unsubscribe policy:** If you do not wish to receive occasional Press Releases from SENRUG, please email back and let us know.