

SENRUG COMMITTEE 2026-27

The committee and office holders were agreed at the SENRUG AGM on Wednesday 8th July 2026 as follows:

Dennis Fancett*	Chair
Andrew Carmichael	Deputy Chair
Denise Haworth [#]	Membership Secretary
Peter Strong*	Treasurer
Marc Stewart*	Newsletter Editor
Reemer Bailey	Social Media Secretary
Adrian King	Committee Member with no specific role
Sally Milner	Committee Member with no specific role
Dave Shaw	Committee Member with no specific role
Geoff Stainthorpe	Committee Member with no specific role
Gordon Summers	Committee Member with no specific role
Trevor Watson*	Committee Member with no specific role

** Peter Strong works in the rail industry, Dennis Fancett and Trevor Watson are committee members for Railfuture North East Branch. Marc Stewart is the proprietor of the café at Morpeth Station.*

[#] Denise Haworth volunteered to take on the role of Membership Secretary subsequent to the AGM and has been co-opted to that position.

SENRUG welcomes other members joining its committee. If interested, please contact the Chair. It is very unlikely there will be a contested vote and normally anyone who wants to join the committee may do so. The requirements for being a Committee Member are given below.

Requirements of Committee Membership

1. You must be a member of SENRUG and support its aims and objectives.
2. You must have access to email and a computer which can open and read documents produced in Word or Excel (this is because most of the committee work is done by email correspondence between members).
3. You must declare any actual or potential conflict of interests (for instance if you work in the rail industry, hold or are standing for office as an elected representative, or hold office within a Trade Union or political party). Such circumstances will not disqualify you and indeed your experience will be valuable, but we need to be aware so SENRUG as a whole can be transparent and independent. Individual membership of a political party or trade union which does not involve holding a specific position of responsibility does not need to be declared.
4. You must consent to your name and any actual or potential conflicts of interest you have declared being included in the list of Committee Members published on the SENRUG website.
5. Additionally, the Chair, Deputy Chair and Newsletter Editor must agree to some contact details (eg an email address and / or phone number) being published on the SENRUG website and other SENRUG literature.

The draft minutes of the 2026 AGM and the various Reports to the AGM are on the following pages. It is anticipated the draft minutes will be ratified at the 2027 AGM

SENUG
Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held at Morpeth Town Hall on Wednesday 8th July 2026

1. Agenda

The Agenda for the meeting was announced verbally and was agreed.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Chris Calver, John Brierley, Christine Bell, Reemer Bailey, David Hilton and Gordon Summers. These were duly noted.

3. Minutes of Last AGM

The minutes of last year's AGM held on 8th July 2025 were agreed.

4. Thanks to Membership Secretary

Dennis asked those present to thank Ronald & Elena Hunt for their work as Membership Secretary over the last 20 years, as they were now standing down, and a small token of appreciation was given.

5. Reports to Members

An updated version of the accounts was made available, this included the Verifier's signature and minor change to the presentation, but no changes to the figures from the draft version circulated by email.

6. Questions on Reports to Members

There were no questions on the Chair's Report, Treasurer's Report, Membership Secretary's Report, Newsletter Editor's Report or Social Media Secretary's Report, other than to point out there were some typos in the Chair's Report.

7 General Discussion and Questions.

Dennis asked for suggestions of how we could widen the distribution of our Newsletters. Ashington & Newbiggin libraries were suggested, as was Mackay's of Morpeth (contact Brad).

Christine Telford asked if we could / should print the Newsletter on recyclable paper. Dennis said he was under the impression the paper was recyclable, and he quite liked the shiny feel to it, but the point would be discussed further with the Newsletter Editor. *[Note: Newsletter Editor's response below these minutes].*

Lynn Bickle (Exhibitions Officer) asked for suggestions of exhibitions and events (eg Town Fairs) which would **not** charge a significant amount to exhibit to be forwarded to her. Members could do this by advising the Chair (chair@senrug.co.uk) who would forward on to Lynn.

8. Election of Officers

Dennis asked if anyone wished to join the Committee, either to take up one of the vacant roles (Membership Secretary, Public Meetings Officer, Minutes Secretary) or simply to be a general Committee

Member. There were no volunteers.

Dennis pointed out this left the crucial role of Membership Secretary vacant. He invited people to talk to him after the meeting if anyone wanted to explore any of these roles in private discussion before committing.

Dennis therefore suggested that someone might propose the existing committee be re-elected with people continuing in the same roles, except that Membership Secretary would be vacant. Thus it would be: Dennis Fancett (Chair), Andrew Carmichael (Deputy Chair), Peter Strong (Treasurer), Marc Stewart (Newsletter Editor), Reemer Bailey (Newsletter Editor) and Adrian King, Sally Millner, Dave Shaw, Geoff Stainthorpe, Gordon Summers and Trevor Watson as ordinary committee members.

Peter Stanners proposed the motion as above.

Adrian King seconded it.

The vote was unanimous with no votes against and no abstentions.
The Committee were therefore duly elected as detailed above.

9. Any Other Business

Roger Bagnall informally proposed a vote of thanks to Dennis Fancett for his role as Chair.

The meeting closed at 21:10.

Comment Received After the Meeting from Newsletter Editor:

"Thank you for the suggestion raised at the AGM regarding whether the SENRUG Newsletter could or should be printed on recyclable paper.

We fully support the environmental concern behind this point. I am pleased to confirm that the newsletter is already printed on fully recyclable paper and is produced using sustainable methods.

Our current printer uses 130gsm silk paper containing 55% recycled material, with the remaining virgin fibres sourced from certified sustainable forests. The newsletter is also printed using vegetable-based inks, which are more environmentally friendly than traditional petroleum-based inks and make the paper easier to recycle.

The printer operates under ISO 14001 environmental management standards, meaning waste, energy use and environmental impact are actively managed throughout production. Once read, the newsletter can therefore be placed in normal household paper recycling.

We will, of course, continue to keep the environmental impact of the printed newsletter under review. Members who prefer not to receive a printed copy are also welcome to switch to the digital email version."

Membership Secretary

Subsequent to the meeting, Denise Haworth agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary. We are very grateful to her for volunteering for this role.

Chair's Report (From Dennis Fancett).

It's been a year of highlights and lowlights. The big highlight of course has been the completion of the Northumberland Line project (as it currently stands) with the opening of Blyth Bebside (October 2025), Northumberland Park (February 2026) and finally, the last station Bedlington, in March 2026. Bedlington of course is my local station. It has been nice to see the trains running backward and forwards over the Furnace Bridge, a few yards from our house. But even nicer to get on and off at Bedlington! I was able to commute to work for a few days (Bedlington to Percy Main via Northumberland Park then bus 19) before I retired at the end of April 2026.

We had a successful resolution to a surprising spat with *Rail* Magazine after they published a single paragraph saying the extension to Newbiggin could never happen, as the station infrastructure had been "flattened". (There had, after all, been no "infrastructure" at most of the other re-opened stations, so it was hardly an issue.) I wrote to the Editor and suggested they sent a journalist to walk the route with me. They did – and the result was a very positive 4-page article saying how easy the extension would be, and noting it appears to have political buy-in from both left and right.

Less positive though was the implementation of the new LNER timetable from December 2025. Morpeth does particularly badly out of this, and Berwick also receives a worse service. Years of lobbying and campaigning (since the implementation date had been put back several times) had failed to achieve any change in the rail industry's determination to impose this timetable on us. LNER and the industry as a whole must however be congratulated on a fully successful implementation of a very complex change, and LNER also responded positively in making a minor tweak from May to re-instate the Northumberland connection to the morning "Flying Scotsman" service. Also, we understand the door is open for us to sit down with LNER and take a fresh look at Northumberland's needs, though we must acknowledge the next significant timetable revision is likely to be some years away.

The new timetable also brought severance of Morpeth's through service to MetroCentre and Hexham, for no apparent reason, as trains now sit empty at Newcastle for considerable time before returning to Morpeth. Worse, the new timetable seems to have dampened Northern's enthusiasm for the Morpeth to Bedlington extension. The tune has changed from "we can do this – just let's get Bedlington station open first" to "we can do this – but at a cost".

The big issue for next year, in addition to progressing the SENRUG campaigns listed above, will be the establishment of Great British Railways, and my personal thoughts on what this could and should deliver, and what probably won't change much, are given in my article in Newsletter 45.

One or two external commentators have asked if SENRUG continues to keep going with the Northumberland Line now fully open. But we have never been a single-issue campaign group, and still have much to do. The Northumberland Line project may indeed be complete, but we want to see it extended to Woodhorn and Newbiggin. We also want to see the Newcastle to Morpeth service extended to Bedlington, ultimately with a new station at Choppington, and for a new Newcastle to Berwick local service to be established calling at all stations (therefore doubling train frequency at Cramlington) with new stations at Belford and possibly Beal. The service could also be extended south from Newcastle via the Bensham curve to a new station at Team Valley, opening up further employment opportunities for Northumbrians. Longer term, we also want to see passenger train services established between Ashington and Alnmouth via the Butterwell branch, and a new Metro service from Blyth Town Centre to the Airport including an additional station at Seghill. Our work also continues to re-instate and improve LNER services at Northumberland

stations, particular Morpeth, to see the Morpeth to Newcastle local service re-connected to MetroCentre and Hexham, and to see simpler fares introduced throughout the network. So, there's plenty to do, but we do ask members to seriously consider if you could help SENRUG keep up our campaigning momentum by joining our committee and providing some continuity for us as some of our older committee members are likely to step down in the next few years.

Membership Report (From Ronald Hunt)

At the end of May 2026, SENRUG had 157 memberships corresponding to 178 individual members, plus 7 corporate members.

Additional comment from Dennis Fancett: Individual memberships have stayed roughly the same as last year (pleasing to note as this follows the increase to our subscription rate), though corporate memberships have decreased from 10 to 7.

After many years of loyal service, Ronald and Elena have stood down as our Membership secretary effective from the end of our financial year, ie from 31st May 2026. We offer them a huge thank you for all they have done over the years. We are also now looking for someone else to take on the role.

Social Media Secretary's report (From Reemer Bailey)

Facebook is at 1750 members with as before, most engagement linked to pictures and photos of a local nature or specific to SENRUG. As before our demographic is older males and mainly Northumberland based. Blue sky has only a few followers. It's losing popularity across the board. I would suggest that we should set up a Reddit group related to our subject matter and from there I believe we could drive member numbers.

Newsletter Report (Comment from Dennis Fancett)

During the year, our editor Marc Stewart produced a further 2 Newsletters (Numbers 34 and 45) both 8 pages long. These were packed with interesting information and also included competitions. We remain grateful to Marc for his hard work, and are also open for ideas on articles and contributions for future issues.

Treasurer's Report (Accounts from Peter Strong and Comment from Dennis Fancett)

Our accounts for the year have not yet been signed off by our independent verifier and SENRUG members will be notified by email if the final figures are any different to those shown on the next page. Overall, our financial position is healthy, and the closing balance includes funding of £3,192.41 for the maintenance of our website and Newsletter production for the next 4 years, plus an estimated allowance for producing a further DL sized leaflet. This funding cannot be used for any other purpose. Our balance excluding this funding is £7,025.39. This is Peter's first year as our Treasurer and we are extremely grateful to him for taking on this role.

SENRUG ACCOUNTS (Provisional) For 1st June 2025 to 31st May 2026

The verified version of the SENRUG accounts are on the next page.

SENRUG**Summary of Accounts for Period 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2026**

SUMMARY OF ASSETS AT START OF YEAR	2025-2026	2024-2025
	£	£
Bank Balance	10,313.66	6,096.37
Petty Cash	46.74	-
TOTAL	10,360.40	6,096.37

INCOME		
Membership Subscriptions	905.65	842.24
Donations	20.00	-
Tea & Coffee Sales	58.40	-
Miscellaneous Income	-	4,148.90
TOTAL	984.05	4,991.14

EXPENDITURE		
Venue Hire	(351.50)	(85.50)
Website	(354.00)	(354.00)
Printing	(198.70)	(175.11)
Postage	-	(13.60)
Insurance	(71.91)	-
Miscellaneous Expenses	(150.54)	(50.00)
Multi Expenses	-	(48.90)
TOTAL	(1,126.65)	(727.11)

SUMMARY OF ASSETS AT END OF YEAR		
Bank Balance	10,116.71	10,313.66
Petty Cash	101.09	46.74
TOTAL	10,217.80	10,360.40

* The Closing Balance includes £3,192.41 restricted funding for the cost of printing SENRUG newsletters and leaflets and maintaining the SENRUG website for the period 2024-2029.

Accounts prepared by



Peter Strong
SENRUG Treasurer

Accounts verified by



Neil Rogers
Independent Verifier

Date: 05 JUL 26

Date: 5 July 2026