

South East Northumberland Rail User Group

CONSTITUTION

John Swift, the rail regulator, said in 1997:

"The effective operation and regulation of the railway depends on an active and strong voice for passengers and users. The railway industry is unique in having available to it an extensive informal network of rail user groups"

1. Name

The name of the group shall be South East Northumberland Rail User Group (SENUG), referred to in this constitution as 'the group'.

2. Aims

- a. The group exists to provide a forum for rail users and other interested parties concerning the operation of, and improvements to, rail services throughout South East Northumberland.
- b. The group will develop working relationships with Network Rail, train operating companies, statutory bodies such as Rail Passenger Committees, local authorities and other agencies (e.g. transport partnerships) to pass on concerns and proposals for improvement to local rail services.
- c. The group will campaign for improved rail services for South East Northumberland and represent the concerns, opinions and aspirations of rail users and would-be rail-users. In particular we seek:
 - (i) Better mainline services to both north and south.
 - (ii) Better local services, including Sunday services.
 - (iii) Extension of train services to later in the evening.
 - (iv) Much better services between towns in Northumberland.
 - (v) Improved reliability, punctuality and safety.
 - (vi) Better stations and facilities, including better information and access.
 - (vii) To improve services in South East Northumberland by re-opening existing lines and former stations for passenger use.
- d. The group will organise activities and events to achieve these objectives by:
 - (i) Promoting the line and services available;
 - (ii) Lobbying central government, the Strategic Rail Authority, local authorities, and other relevant groups for improvements in service provision and performance;
 - (iii) Collecting information, e.g., on service performance, station facilities, opinions of users and communities served by the line, etc;
 - (iv) Engaging in activities promoting rail services throughout South East Northumberland
- e. The group will maintain close links with the T -2000, Railway Development Society (*Railfuture*), and other rail campaign groups and Getabout Rural Transport Partnership. It may also forge links with other groups (e.g., ADAPT and Sustrans) where this is to our mutual benefit.

3. Membership

Membership of the group shall be open to all members of the public interested in or concerned with the operation of, or improvements to, railways and rail services in South East Northumberland, whether resident in the area or not. An annual subscription charge shall be set at the AGM.

4. Officers

A committee comprising the following officers and at least two ordinary members shall be elected annually at the group's Annual General Meeting:

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Membership Secretary

The committee shall serve until the next AGM (other than by mutual agreement) when all posts will be reviewed and opened for election. The committee may co-opt other members with relevant expertise, e.g., in publicity and marketing.

Sub-groups, focus groups or sub committees may be appointed in the event of their being advantageous to the operation of the group and its declared aims. Groups representing the interests of particular types of user (e.g., commuters, cyclists, long distance travellers etc.) will be particularly encouraged. A representative of each sub-group or subcommittee will become a member of the main committee. Sub-groups and subcommittees will report back to the main committee at least once every two months.

5. Meetings

All meetings will be minuted and the minutes will be made available to all members.

The main committee will meet at least monthly and such meetings will have a quorum of at least two officers and one ordinary member. Such meetings will be open to all members at the discretion of the Chairman.

Subgroups and subcommittees will meet as and when their workload requires.

The group will hold occasional public meetings with speakers, debates and/or discussions held to further particular aspects of the group's purpose.

Policy decisions and the general management of the group will be conducted at regular plenary meetings of the group. The committee will report to these meetings. Such meetings will be held every three months. Notice of these meetings will be given to all members.

Decisions will normally be made by a consensus of those present. In the event of a vote a simple majority of those present will be required (except on matters relating changes to the group's constitution when a two-thirds majority will be required). In the event of a tie the Chair will have a second and final casting vote.

An extraordinary general meeting shall be convened by the secretary on the direction of the committee or as soon as practicable after receipt of a written request to that effect from 20% of the members.

Four members will constitute a quorum for ordinary plenary meetings and six (including two officers) for AGMs.

6. Annual General Meetinas

An AGM will be held every year in Spring with no less than 14 days notice given to all members with agenda and financial report made available in advance. It shall be open to all members of the public and be publicised in the local press.

The AGM will receive and comment on:

- (i) Reports from the Chair & Secretary.
- (ii) A financial report from the Treasurer.

The AGM shall elect the committee for the coming year as detailed above.

7. Finance

All monies raised by, or on behalf of, the group will be used to further the aims of the group *and for no other purpose.*

Cheques and similar orders shall be signed by any two officers:

The Treasurer will .be responsible for keeping up to date accounts of income and expenditure, which will be made available at each meeting.

The Treasurer will produce for the AGM a set of audited accounts for the past financial year.

8. Alterations to the Constitution

Any proposal to vary the constitution in any way must be made in writing to the secretary who is required to inform all members of the proposal at least 14 days before the meeting at which it will be considered. Any proposed alteration to the constitution must have the support of at least two-thirds of members present at the meeting at which the proposal is considered, (See paragraph 5 above)

9. Winding Up

The process of winding up the association shall be instituted only if a resolution to this effect is carried by a majority of at least two thirds of the valid votes cast at an AGM or EGM. Any outstanding monies and assets will be transferred to a neighbouring Rail User Group or a local organisation with similar objectives. In the absence of any such organisation, they will be transferred to the Regional Branch of *Railfuture*.

Constitution adopted by Committee: 22"d March '04

Chairman: Ken Allott

Secretary: John Earl

Treasurer: Dennis Fancett

Consititution ratified at Inaugural General Meeting: