

Railfuture's Annual National Conference still coming to Leeds despite strikes

March 16, 2023



Railfuture's Annual National Conference will be held in Leeds on Thursday 30 March 2023, with planned industrial action throwing one of its key themes, the needs of passengers and freight, into sharp relief.

Speakers will respond to the event's headline, 'Turning Point for the Railway', discussing the importance of attracting more passenger and freight customers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This headline reflects Railfuture's mission to drive change in the industry, making services better for both freight and the travelling public.

Neil Middleton, Communications Director of Railfuture and part of the conference's organising team, commented: "The industry can be a highly effective contributor to decarbonisation, to levelling up and as part of many wider initiatives – but only if it is successful in attracting passengers and freight to use the railway. The post-COVID railway can no longer rely on commuters who 'have' to travel to work each day – who can replace them?"

The conference will explore this question, with a variety of sessions from contributors including from the

University of Leeds (on the value of new lines and stations) and Community Rail (on engaging with young people). Family Friendly Trains will be running a workshop session to gain valuable feedback from attendees on how to make trains more family-friendly.

Other presentations will explore whether the railway is working for passengers, and how it can better support the movement of freight.

Chaired by Brian Barnsley, Deputy Chief Executive of Community Rail Partnership, the event promises to bring members, industry professionals and stakeholders together for important conversations.

Ann Hindley, Railfuture member and part of the organising team, added: "We've chosen the in-person option as it gives attendees the chance to meet others and have those informal side chats that are so useful. Despite a strike being called for the day, we've decided we will go ahead anyway, and anyone who has booked who cannot get there by other means will be offered the option of Zoom remote viewing."

A £50 ticket includes lunch and refreshments, at the fully accessible St George's Conference Centre, 60 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3DL and just a 15-minute walk from Leeds station. Leeds is well-served by bus and coach and there are Park & Ride options too for those who wish to drive. To book your place, visit www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/rbd/

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