

South Devon Railway appoints new General Manager

May 24, 2021



The South Devon Railway has just announced the appointment of Ernest Elsworth-Wilson as the line's new General Manager, following a confidential search to identify suitable candidates. He will take up his new role in the summer.

Ernie, 27, who lives in Newton Abbot and is Devon born and bred for Torbay, is well known to most people on the railway. The SDR is delighted to have him taking the reins as we move out of lockdown and begin to look forward to building all areas of the railway's business back up again.

Ernie has been a volunteer on the South Devon Railway for over 15 years. His roles have included working in the stations, signalling and telegraph, permanent way and locomotive departments. He also spent nearly two years employed full-time in the SDR's operations management team from 2011-13 as a management trainee.

He moved to First Great Western (now GWR) as a guard based at Exeter. Since then, he has progressed to Area Operations Manager, Train Service Delivery Manager for the West of England before progressing to Lead Area Operations Manager – Central and West, with Great Western Railway. Whilst working at GWR, he

has completed an HND in Railway Operations Management with the Institute of Railway Operators.

He has been a very regular volunteer on the railway and is a qualified steam and diesel locomotive driver, guard, signaller and duty officer as well as being the Operations and Safety Director of the SDR.

SDR chairman, Jon Morton, said: "It's great to have Ernie on board as GM. He brings an outstanding level of operational knowledge to the role as well as a keen understanding of the commercial and customer service aspects of running a railway. I am sure that everyone on the railway, staff and volunteers, will welcome Ernie as our GM and give him the support and encouragement he so richly deserves in undertaking what will be a challenging, but hugely satisfying role."

Ernie added: "I'm delighted to have been offered the opportunity to help lead the SDR on a full-time basis, and can't wait to start my new role.

"Having been involved with the SDR from a very young age, I know what a wonderful railway we have and what a lot of potential it has, but most importantly know just how many excellent people we have volunteering and working for us. I'm really looking forward to working with you all on a much more regular basis now.

"We still have many challenges ahead of us as we recover from the effects of the pandemic, but I know we can overcome them and ensure our railway has a long and bright future."

[Click here for more details.](#)

Photo credit: South Devon Railway