



## Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership

# MINUTES Annual General Meeting

23rd<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 6.00pm – 8.00pm

**Abbey Theatre**, Westminster Lodge,  
Holywell Hill, St Albans. AL1 2DL  
Nearest train station: St Albans Abbey

### Present

#### *Steering Group*

Cllr. Sandy Walkington (SW)  
Cllr. Steve Cavinder (SC)  
Robert Varney (RV)  
Kate Swindells (KS)  
Val Male (VM)  
David Yates  
Kate Riches  
Robert Yorke (RY)  
Kevin Ambrose  
David Parry (DP)  
Cara Higgs  
Colin Burcombe

Chair (standing down)  
Chair (elected)  
(Vice Chair) Communities 1<sup>st</sup>  
CRP Officer  
Hertfordshire County Council  
St Stephens Parish Council  
St Albans City and District Council (SADC)  
Bricket Wood Station Heritage Trust  
ABFLY – Rail User Group  
Independent Member  
London Northwestern Railways (online)  
Community Rail Network (online)

#### *Other*

Cllr. Susan Griffiths  
Alex Robertson  
Stuart Pile  
Cllr. Terry Douris  
Edna Woname  
Paul Spelzini  
Richard Burton  
Paul Norman  
Avni Lakhani  
Sarah Burgess  
Karen Lilly  
Steve Peters  
Chris Blanch  
Trevor Gurd  
David Charlton  
Robin Hall

St Albans' Deputy Mayor  
Invited speaker: Chief Exec, Transport Focus  
Former Chair ALCRP  
Former Chair ALCRP  
Former ALCRP Officer  
ALCRP volunteer  
ALCRP volunteer  
ALCRP volunteer  
ALCRP volunteer  
ALCRP volunteer  
ALCRP volunteer  
ALCRP volunteer  
St Albans Arts Team and ALCRP volunteer  
ABFLY – Rail User Group  
Watford Rail User Group  
Watford Rail User Group

Amy Trotter  
Emily Theobald  
Joy Mendelsohn  
John Crowhurst

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust  
West Herts Hospital Trust  
Park Street Residents Association  
Alban Trains

### Apologies

Derrick Ashley	Former chair
Andy Smith	Steering Group -Watford Borough Council (WBC)
Jenny Swatton	SADC
Joanna Buckley	Steering group - Avanti West Coast
Pedro Ubeda	ALCRP volunteer
Leslie Freitag	Watford Rail User Group
Anna Addison	Watford and Three Rivers Friends of the Earth
Elected Mayor - Peter Taylor	HCC and WBC
Cllr. Dawn Allen-Williamson	WBC
Cllr Ian Stotesbury	WBC
Cllr. Tim Williams	WBC
Cllr. Paul Zukowskyj	HCC
Steve Clark	St Albans Cathedral
Sarah Lane	West Herts College
Sandy Norman	ALCRP Volunteer
Gill O'Sullivan	ALCRP Volunteer
Elaine Rainsford	ALCRP Volunteer

Agenda item	Notes	Action
<b>1. Welcome, Introduction &amp; Apologies</b>	<b>SW</b> Chaired the beginning of the meeting and led the introductions.  Apologies as noted above.	
<b>2. Approval of Minutes of Previous AGM</b>	<b>SW:</b> Minutes from the AGM on 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 – were approved by members	
<b>3. Election of Partnership Chair and Vice-Chair by Partnership Members</b>	As per the ALCRP constitution, each year a Chair and Vice-Chair must be voted in and only members of the Steering Group can vote. One vote per organisation. Email votes are accepted for those eligible to vote but not present.  <b>SW led:</b> Candidate for Chair: Cllr. Stephen (Steve) Cavinder (SC) Proposed: DP    Seconded: RY Result: Cllr. Steve Cavinder elected as Chair for 2025/2026	

	<b>SC led:</b> Candidate for Vice-Chair: Robert Varney Proposed: VM    Seconded: DP Result: Robert Varney re-elected as Vice-Chair for 2025/2026																																											
<b>4. Approval of New Steering Group Members</b>	<p>As per the ALCRP constitution, new Steering Group members can be approved by being voted in by members of the Steering Group. One vote per organisation. Email votes are accepted for those eligible to vote but not present.</p> <p>Candidate for new Steering Group member: Pedro Ubeda Proposed: SC    Seconded: RV Result: Pedro Ubeda approved onto the Steering Group</p> <p>Confirmation of ALCRP members is as follows: Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership members and representatives 25/26</p> <table><tr><th>Member Organisation</th><th>Representative</th></tr><tr><td>Independent member</td><td>Cllr. Steve Cavinder (Chair)</td></tr><tr><td>Communities 1st</td><td>Robert Varney (Vice-Chair)</td></tr><tr><td>Hertfordshire County Council (Host Organisation)</td><td>Val Male</td></tr><tr><td>London Northwestern Railway</td><td>Cara Higgs</td></tr><tr><td>Avanti West Coast</td><td>Cleo Lindo</td></tr><tr><td>St Albans District Council</td><td>Jenny Swatton</td></tr><tr><td>Watford Borough Council</td><td>Andy Smith and Sam Parfitt</td></tr><tr><td>St Stephen Parish Council</td><td>Cllr. David Yates</td></tr><tr><td>ABFLY Rail User Group</td><td>Kevin Ambrose</td></tr><tr><td>Bricket Wood Station Heritage Trust</td><td>Robert Yorke</td></tr><tr><td>Partnership Officer</td><td>Kate Swindells</td></tr><tr><td>St Albans BID</td><td>Vivian Cannon</td></tr><tr><td>Watford BID</td><td>Kara Mesiano</td></tr><tr><td>Independent member</td><td>Cllr. Sandy Walkington</td></tr><tr><td>Independent member</td><td>David Parry</td></tr><tr><td>Independent member</td><td>Pedro Ubeda</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Key Stakeholders (non-voting members)</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Community Rail Network</td><td>Colin Burcombe</td></tr><tr><td>Network Rail</td><td>Marianne Flint</td></tr></table>	Member Organisation	Representative	Independent member	Cllr. Steve Cavinder (Chair)	Communities 1st	Robert Varney (Vice-Chair)	Hertfordshire County Council (Host Organisation)	Val Male	London Northwestern Railway	Cara Higgs	Avanti West Coast	Cleo Lindo	St Albans District Council	Jenny Swatton	Watford Borough Council	Andy Smith and Sam Parfitt	St Stephen Parish Council	Cllr. David Yates	ABFLY Rail User Group	Kevin Ambrose	Bricket Wood Station Heritage Trust	Robert Yorke	Partnership Officer	Kate Swindells	St Albans BID	Vivian Cannon	Watford BID	Kara Mesiano	Independent member	Cllr. Sandy Walkington	Independent member	David Parry	Independent member	Pedro Ubeda			Key Stakeholders (non-voting members)		Community Rail Network	Colin Burcombe	Network Rail	Marianne Flint	
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<b>5. New Chair Address</b>	<b>SC</b> focussed his address on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Thanking the previous Chair, Steering Group, Stakeholders and Volunteers</li><li>- Being an invested partner due to councillor role in St Stephen’s ward and previously at Hertfordshire County Council</li><li>- Highlighting our flagship projects – Garston Station Community Garden</li></ul>																																											

	and Watford Junction Walkway Gallery – and our growing numbers of volunteers (including supporting the formation of Station Adopter groups)	
<b>6. CRP Annual Report Overview</b>	<p><b>KS</b> thanked those present once again and to all involved with the Partnership.</p> <p>She:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asked everyone to take a copy of the Annual Report which covers the period from 2024 to 2025</li> <li>- Gave a brief overview of our financial position</li> <li>- Reiterated the Partnership’s achievements and progress, mentioned in the Chair’s address</li> <li>- Highlighted our decision to prioritise accessibility at Abbey Line stations</li> </ul> <p>More information can be found in our <a href="#">annual report on our website</a>.</p>	
<b>7. Speaker</b>	<p>Alex Robertson, Chief Executive of Transport Focus, gave an enlightening talk on passenger wants and needs, and what the future may hold as the train industry transitions to Great British Railways. Transport Focus is the independent watchdog for transport users.</p> <p>The presentation is available on the <a href="#">ALCRP website</a>.</p>	
<b>8. AOB</b>	<p>John Crowhurst brought to everyone’s attention a recent review of the two St Albans train stations by Roger French on the <a href="#">Bus and Train User website</a>.</p>	
<b>9. Railway 200 and 20th Anniversary Celebrations</b>	<p>A thank you presentation was made to outgoing Chair, Cllr Sandy Walkington.</p> <p>The Abbey Line video-short was played and the two former Chairs (SP and TD) addressed the meeting, praising the progress that the Partnership has made over the 20 years it has been running.</p> <p>A commemorative 20-year anniversary leaflet was provided to all attendees and is available on the <a href="#">ALCRP website</a>.</p>	
<b>10. Close</b>	<p><b>SC</b> thanked all those present, and the meeting was closed by the Chair at 7.30pm.</p>	