



Representing users of the Barnstaple to Exeter rail line

The Tarka Rail Association, representing rail users on the Exeter to Barnstaple 'Tarka Line' is fully supportive of the aims and objectives of ACE Rail in their campaign to re-open the former rail route from Barnstaple to Bideford combined with an enhanced 'Tarka Trail' for walkers and cyclists alongside the track. This would have the dual benefit of encouraging greater use of the already popular 'Tarka Trail' by providing improved infrastructure to increase active travel and leisure visitors.

As one of the UK's oldest and most successful rail user groups we are well aware of the value of local rail services to the rural economy and the importance of good connectivity to regional centres and the national rail network. We fully support the logic of re-opening the route as a straight forward eight mile extension of the existing Tarka Line to provide regular through services between the growing residential areas of North Devon, Barnstaple and the regional hub of Exeter.

We have achieved great success in growing the number of passengers travelling on the route between Barnstaple and Exeter for employment, leisure and educational purposes with growth rates well above the national average. We see no reason why this level of usage and growth might not be achieved from the more isolated communities beyond Barnstaple.

We are committed to working with ACE Rail to support their campaign and to share our experience of working with the rail industry to maximise growth and support to the local economy.

Signed: Mike Day,
Chair, Tarka Rail Association.

President : Cllr Andrea Davis

Vice Presidents :

**Geoffrey Cox QC MP, Dr Ian Harrison BSc PhD C.Eng,
Peter Heaton-Jones, Cllr Andrew Leadbetter, Julian Crow MBE**

