

Spring Update

Informing our rail community

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR, PAUL ROBINSON:



So much has happened since our last Quarterly Update it's hard to know where to begin other than to say I hope that you are all safe and well. The industry we serve has played a key role keeping

public transport routes open during a global pandemic whilst having to deal with passenger numbers dropping to around 5% of the norm with the consequent impact on fare revenue. Emergency Measures Arrangements have been put in place to support the TOCs and city metros and light rail systems have also agreed government support packages. Throughout the pandemic Network Rail, the train and freight operators have continued to operate supported by their supply chains. Some of our members have remained busy whilst others have furloughed many of their staff or closed their premises on a temporary basis.

Your Rail Forum team has been working tirelessly since the start of the pandemic and since the lockdown arrangements were put in place. Working from home of course they have kept members abreast of government

advice and information and have been in constant dialogue with officials raising issues on your behalf and seeking answers to a plethora of practical questions. They have also moved swiftly to introduce a range of online events replacing the planned schedule. At the time of writing and since the 1st April we have held some 20 events on Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Feedback from members has been hugely positive and I know the team are grateful for your support and enthusiasm for the events they have delivered. We do, however, miss being able to see you all and we hope that it won't be too long before we can start to plan some 'real' rather than 'virtual' events.

RFM News

More New Members!

Since our last quarterly update, we have had several new companies join our railway family. We are delighted to welcome the following:

[Acres Engineering](#), [Alliance Procurement Solutions](#), [Dyer Engineering](#), [Expleo](#), [Fenix Signalling](#), [Flip Up Seat](#), [Henderson Taylor](#), [Loughborough University](#), [Luxfer Superform](#), [Nufox Rubber](#), [Opinsta](#), [Permaquip](#), [Power Saving Solutions](#), [Pure Ideas](#), [Rentokil](#), [Servotech](#), [Trelleborg Antivibration Solutions](#), [TBM Rail](#), [TVS Supply Chain Solutions](#), [UXCentric](#), [WH Davis \(Gold\)](#)

Reports from RFMs Delivery Groups

Reporting into our Board are our four Delivery Groups (DGs) each chaired by a Board Director, supported by 2-3 other Directors and other volunteer members. Our delivery groups provide additional tactical support to the RFM team to allow us to do more for our members.

**Business Growth DG
(Chair: Nicola Phillips, Siemens)**

Prior to the Covid19 outbreak and following the workshop held in January the group had been developing an action plan. This work has been temporarily put on hold so we can review and adjust to best support members as we come out of the current pandemic. We will be regrouping in the next few weeks!

**Events, Communications & Networking DG
(Chair: Donna Bickley, Inside Out Group)**

The 2020 schedule of events has been totally reviewed and a number of our March-June events have been replaced with online events. These are proving popular and we are currently developing ideas for some further events for over the summer. We are keeping our longer term events under review and are developing contingency plans in case we need to move or rearrange these.

**People, Skills & Diversity DG
(Chair: Laura Cawdell, TÜV Rheinland)**

RFM's flagship iRail event took place in early March attracting a record number of industry sponsors and great feedback from the participating schools. We had hoped to take part in the Midlands Big Bang event but sadly this had to be cancelled. We are now starting to consider what our schools engagement should/could look like for the next academic year – clearly the current circumstances provide some challenges and opportunities on this!

During the pandemic the RFM team have been in constant contact with government officials and departments on members' behalf. We are currently developing a response to the National Infrastructure Commission's call for evidence for Rail Needs Assessment for the Midlands and North.

Members Step Up to Support the NHS and the Wider Community

Over the last several weeks we have become aware of a number of member companies that have supported the national effort in the fight against Covid19; be it producing PPE for the NHS, adapting production to manufacture new/different items to help fight the virus or developing new products/services that will be required as the country starts to rebuild. We have featured those we are aware of below. If we have missed you we apologise – please share your positive news stories so we can share them with colleagues.

Several companies including Angel Trains, CB Frost, DB ESG, EPS (UK), National Composites Centre, Ricardo Rail, TRB Lightweight Structures, University of Derby and ViatorRail have been designing, manufacturing or providing specific components for face shields and face masks for the NHS. Datum Composites was involved in manufacturing parts for the Nightingale Hospitals whilst Dyer Engineering have been making beds. Rentokil, TBM Rail and Ward have all extended their hygiene, sanitising or waste related services. Meanwhile Acres Engineering have designed and produced a range of products to support staff screening and social distancing, Solo Rail have been cutting material for hospital gowns and Ricardo have been working in partnership to scale up production of patient monitoring systems. Finally, East Midlands Railway have been supporting their local communities with donations to food banks.

A **massive thank you from the wider rail family** for all the efforts you have made! No doubt over the coming months there will be more great examples of new products and services from members to support our new ways of working.

We have one further very special example of the fantastic work being undertaken to support our communities – this is in our Gold Member feature below.

GOLD MEMBER FEATURE



2019 was a special year for Morson marking 50 years since the company was established by CEO Ged Mason's late father, Gerry Mason. Established in Salford in 1969 Morson was launched as an innovative recruitment solution to meet end-to-end talent needs and demands. From humble beginnings - the office was just a desk under the stairs in the Mason home - the company has grown to a network of 14,000 contractors across the UK.

During the Covid19 pandemic Morson has been proud to respond to a specific and complex PPE need. We have a long history with the [Seashell Trust](#), a North West based charity which provides a happy and secure environment for children and young adults with complex learning disabilities and additional communication needs. As well as day learning, Seashell provides accommodation for students and young people accessing short breaks; many of whom are some of the most vulnerable in society. Care workers are wearing the required PPE whilst interacting with students, however, with both deaf care staff and students at Seashell, traditional PPE is particularly problematic, as the blue, fluid resistant surgical masks make lip reading impossible.

Engineering teams working at the Morson funded, Morson Engine Room and Maker Space in the University of Salford, had already developed a medical visor using 3D printing in

response to the needs of hospital staff fighting coronavirus, however, the visor wasn't quite right for use at Seashell. The standard design being meant to be worn with respirator masks, meaning the visors come away significantly from the face. The teams were able to adapt the design creating a visor that's shorter, comes closer to the chin and with a lip that wraps under the face slightly. This enables lip reading and easier visual contact. Following prototype approval, we will be starting production for staff at Seashell.

Throughout the pandemic, CEO Ged Mason has encouraged all employees to do their bit, no matter how big or small, to support those around them. One among many examples is, Russell Kimble, from our London branch, who has embarked on a community initiative with his local football club Chatham Town FC. As a qualified mental health first aider and long-term supporter of the club, Russell, is making himself available to anyone in the local community whose mental health is suffering, or, who simply feels like they need someone to ease their isolation.

With an eye to the future we are now partnering with REED on their 'Keep Britain Working' initiative. The campaign has a simple objective, to protect jobs and preserve livelihoods. Morson will lead the movement's presence in the North, helping match businesses with essential and key workers, to fill roles safely and in line with Government health advice. We will also spearhead the operation's mission to identify and facilitate new roles for those who have found themselves out of work as a result of the pandemic, as the northern economy looks to rebuild.



Ged Mason
(CEO of Morson)
with James
Reed

GOLD MEMBER FEATURE

We are also working with organisations to support them beyond their talent acquisition needs, with services such as workplace audits, HR and wellbeing support and have just launched our 'Fit for Work' app to ensure sites are Covid secure. This early intervention technology identifies the first signs of the Coronavirus before workers attend site allowing businesses to ensure those venturing back to employment are completely safe to do so.

If you're a Gold Rail Forum Midlands member, you can share your news with our vast network of businesses by sending your stories to elaineclark@midlandsrail.co.uk to be featured in the next Quarterly Update.

RFM EVENTS REVIEW

Practical Procurement in Infrastructure 13 February

*(with thanks to our sponsors
Quinn Infrastructure and MakeUK)*



With input from Network Rail, HS2, Highways England, DfT, CompeteFor, Contracts Finder and RSSB/RISQS this half day event provided something for all of the 40+ delegates that attended. With a focus on how to get the most from the various contract portals and a final session on writing successful bids from Railway Project Services there were also contributions from Quinn Infrastructure and Costain.

IMechE Railway Luncheon 28 February

The RFM team hosted three tables of members at the hugely popular IMechE Railway Division Lunch in February. The lunch attracts over 1000 delegates and provides a great networking opportunity.

iRail 5 March

Returning with a new student challenge alongside the firm favourites of visits to Bombardier, Resonate and Network Rail, the 12th iRail competition took place back at the start of March. Congratulations to Allestree Woodlands School and John Flamsteed School as winner and runner up respectively.

During the day sponsoring employers also had opportunity to talk to some 40 students from Derby College and the University of Derby who were given the opportunity to 'drop in' to chat about career opportunities. Teachers were briefed by recent graduates and apprentices who were able to demonstrate the array of opportunities available to students.

With huge thanks to all our sponsors in particular: **AEGIS Engineering, ISS Labour, Porterbrook and Resonate.**



Online Events

Since the beginning of April the RFM team have delivered some 20 online events. Whilst there are too many to review in detail we thought an overview was worth providing.

Hot Topics 1-7

At the start of the pandemic we kicked off with a series of Hot Topics covering issues of immediate relevance or concern to members. These included the practicalities of furlough and force majeure/contracting issues. We then added further sessions with updates from Bombardier and Siemens moving on to wider considerations including funding available to support businesses, supply chain resilience and internal communications. Thanks to all our member companies that have supported these sessions: Alliance Procurement Solutions, Bombardier, Customer Plus, Geldards LLP, Nelsons, Siemens and Smith Cooper.

Mental Wealth Café Online Series 1-10

Right at the start of lockdown we recognised that this was going to be a difficult time for all of us and for some people in particular their mental health might suffer. We have been delighted to partner with Wendy McCristal at The Mental Wealth Company to bring members a series of online events and whilst it was a bit of a leap into the unknown it's become apparent that people have really appreciated this support. Each session has had a theme: from understanding emotions and overwhelm first aid to leadership, looking after yourself and family matters. We have also explored isolation and grief.

Member Surgery 1-2

In the early days of lockdown we also hosted two open online sessions with Department for BEIS providing the opportunity for members to raise issues and ask questions.

Cat's planned May workshop aimed at those companies attending Innotrans was also moved online. This longer afternoon session encouraged delegates to plan plan for the 'greatest rail show'. With the change of Innotrans dates from September to April there's now no excuse for not doing that planning!

Post Covid Planning 1-2

As we have progressed over the last few weeks our thinking has moved to planning for coming out of the current crisis, hence our latest series of events. The first of these focussed on Workplace Adjustments and the second built on that theme looking at recently issued government guidance on safe working and how digital technologies can help in the 'new world' we are emerging into.

Forthcoming RFM Events

At the time of writing we have two further online Post Covid Planning events planned with EMR/WMT and HS2.

We are also planning to host our AGM online and members can register to attend [here](#).

Industry Events

The vast majority of major industry events have been postponed with a number now rescheduled – dates for many of which are on our [website](#).