

Rail Plant Association Update

RPA Acting-Chairman Darren Matthews reports on the current initiatives of the association for road/rail plant owners.

Hello RPA article readers and welcome. I hope you enjoyed our last article, which focused solely on the Association's history and the story lines of our very early articles for *Rail Infrastructure*, dating back to the early 2000s. For me, it showed just how far the Association has progressed and developed its On-Track Plant (OTP) community. Moreover, looking back has shown that most of those original players are still here today. The significant difference is in their increased fleet size and the technology/innovation improvements their OTP has undergone over the years.

The 2022 AGM meeting

From the past to the present day and our future. On 22nd February, the RPA held its 21st Annual General Meeting (AGM) as a face-to-face event at the Nuthurst Grange Hotel, Hockley Heath. And, I have to say, what a great feeling it was to be back actually seeing colleagues in person as opposed to virtually on a computer screen via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

The event went very smoothly with thanks to all who helped in the preparations. As per our usual protocol, the RPA Directors meeting took place first thing to discuss accounts, etc. Numbers aside, I thought the new publication format for the annual report was very professional and in keeping with the new RPA publications available to members to download from the RPA Website.



The AGM commenced with the election of a new committee and, this year, it comprises of the following persons:

- Paul Helks - A.P. Webb Plant Hire.
- Jim Nabarro - Balfour Beatty.
- Ian Morgan - McCulloch Rail.
- Graham Pirson - Quattro Plant.
- Darren Matthews - Readypower Rail Services.
- Liam Ledger - SPL Powerlines.
- Steve Wadham - Total Rail Solutions.
- Richard Romaszko - TXM Plant.
- Andrew Shipley - VolkerRail.
- David Richardson - XYZ Rail & Civils.



Collective Mark

The mid-morning session was the main event where our members all networked and listened to the great line up of guest speakers. This was also the time where members could put themselves forward to be on the Management Committee. This year, Andrew Shipley from VolkerRail was successfully voted onto the Management Committee. We welcome you aboard, Andy.

Guest speakers included Olufemi (Femi) Okeya, Technical Head of Plant, Network Rail; Robert Shaw, Supplier Manager, Network Rail, and Rob Killen, Business Development Director, TXM, and the Chair of the RPA POS Terms and Conditions Working Group.

For those of you reading this who know Femi, you will probably be aware of his presentation skills. As per his typical style, Femi's AGM presentation was another masterclass of sharing a story. Femi is relatively new in his position, taking over from Malcolm Miles who has now retired. The presentation focused on Femi's role, the plans for his team, and the expected service they can provide following yet another devolution change in Network Rail. All in all, a great presentation with plenty of valuable content.

Rob Shaw was our next guest speaker who discussed the project he is managing for Network Rail, regarding its strategy for carbon reduction in the supply chain. I think Rob has his work cut out with this long-term strategy. The spirit of the project is to capture how many litres of diesel each road/rail vehicle produces in a typical shift, so that he and his team can calculate a carbon evaluation on that asset. Later down the line, there may be potential for the assets' carbon data to be incorporated in the Rail PPS system.

The last, but not least guest speaker was Rob Killen. He spoke at length and in clear detail about the outputs from the POS Terms and Conditions Working Group. He was supported by David Smith, Legal Manager, CPA/RPA, who was able to respond to any legal bias questions during the session. In summary, the RPA and CPA already have well established terms and conditions, but these do not capture the nature of work where the plant provider is responsible for the Plant Operating Scheme (POS) provision. These new terms and conditions now offer RPA members that support.

The RPA wishes to thank all three guest speakers for their attendance and excellent presentations. They made the day really interactive and we are very appreciative for your inputs and support.

Showtime!

The Rail Live exhibition is back at Long Marston on 22nd and 23rd June. It is always a well attended event and a great place for suppliers to show off their new goods and

services. The RPA is exhibiting once again and we hope to see you all there.

Time for a change

This is the bit where I give you an update on the RPA Acting Chair position that I have held since September/October 2020. As some of you may know, I stepped in to cover for David Simmons, who is the official Chairperson for the RPA, when he was taken ill back in Autumn 2020. I am pleased to report that David is making a recovery from his illness, but is not yet fit enough to come back into the post. Unfortunately, my 'day job' as Readypower Group's Compliance Director is increasingly more demanding and, as a result, I feel it is now time for me to step down from Acting Chair to make way for someone else.

I am now genuinely delighted to inform you all that Paul Helks, Compliance Director, A.P. Webb Plant Hire, has offered to take up the position as Acting Chairperson. Paul has been on the RPA Management Committee for many years and proved a valued contributor to the working groups both within the RPA and for the railway industry. I would like to offer my personal thanks to Paul (and Andy Webb) for stepping up and allowing me to step down. The role does take up time and energy on top of the 'paid' day job and is a personal commitment to the membership. So this is very much appreciated, Paul, thank you. A final thank you to the Management Committee members for their incredible knowledge and support. The Chairperson cannot function without you.

Signing off

This is probably a good place to stop and disembark. I appreciate you all for taking the time to read my articles over the past couple of years. I will still be working as an RPA Committee Member and supporting our new Chairperson and RPA members going forward. But, for me, this exciting journey must end. It has been a real privilege to write these articles in this great publication and I look forward to reading the future features on the Association's activities. Good luck, Paul.



Darren Matthews, Acting-Chairman, RPA.