

Southern Electric Group – Management Committee report on 2025

Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Management Committee to members of the Southern Electric Group. This report reviews activities and events during the calendar year 2025.

The Group has maintained its benefits to members with “Live Rail” appearing quarterly and with the more topical “Regional Review” notes appearing monthly on the website. Local meetings continued through 2025 with the South Hants Branch managing a slight increase in attendance and also securing its venue, which had been in doubt, for some time ahead whilst in Sussex the joint meetings with the Tramway & Light Railway Society under the brand “Sussex Groups Together” has ensured a continued local presence after the SEG’s Sussex Branch was wound up as a stand-alone body.

The Management Committee has continued to meet via Zoom which has been found to be effective and flexible. We still meet in person at the AGM and sometimes at Group events.

The Group maintains its social media presence on Facebook and with both Instagram and X accounts although the former has attracted very little interest and is currently inactive. The Facebook group is busy and receives many images, questions and comments; this is moderated by several members to whom we extend our thanks to ensure the content remains appropriate.

The Group also continues its custodianship of the preserved 4-Cor rolling stock managed through our associated company SEG (Preservation) Ltd. and the Brian Juniper Trust. 2025 has seen ongoing progress although volunteer numbers remain very small and much more help is required. One vehicle has been available for traffic on occasions.

With very few volunteers available it has not been possible for the Group to be widely represented at Rail200 although our sales department attended two such events as noted below. Whilst this is disappointing the Management Committee is aware that the age profile of members is slowly increasing and attending such events is not within the range or means of all.

The Management Committee is grateful to all members who have continued to renew their subscription during 2025 and welcomes those who have joined for the first time. It remains as always our duty to preserve the interests of members to the best of our ability however numbers have shrunk to a level where continuing as we are will not remain viable. The 2026 Annual General Meeting will be asked to vote on some fundamental changes which will impact the Group one way or another although there will still be the opportunity to be a part of an organisation using the name “Southern Electric Group”

- Rick Squirrell

Management Committee

Your Management Committee has continued to handle the day-to-day operations of the Group and met four times during 2025. Any day-to-day matters are handled through informal contact between officers as required. Membership of the Management Committee is 9 however one officer currently fills two roles. Meetings also extend a standing invitation to John Goodrich as the former Company Secretary of Southern Electric Heritage Ltd, now the SEG CIO, and to others for specific contributions. The officers and the number of meetings they attended are:

Rick Squirrell (Chairman & General Secretary)	4/4	David Morton (Web Administrator)	1/1
Ian Rudkins (Treasurer)	2/4	Stuart Hicks (Visits; Minutes Secretary)	3/4
Peter Watson (Membership Manager)	4/4	John Piper (Sales Manager)	4/4
John Shepherd (Vice-Chairman)	3/4	Ashley Saunders (Preservation Manager)	4/4
Also attending:			
John Goodrich (Company Secretary SEH)	4/4	Colin Duff (Interim Web Administrator)	1/1
Bryan Rayner (Vice President)	1/1		

David Morton did not seek re-election as Web Administrator and was therefore entitled to attend only one meeting during 2025; Colin Duff assumed the role on an interim basis in the absence of any other volunteers or nominations. His long-standing role as Modelling Officer is not a Management Committee post.

One third of the Committee retires annually at the AGM and whilst they may seek re-election any adult member of the Group may stand for committee or other officer roles. Meetings take place online on a weekday evening with the day, which varies, being that most convenient for members. In addition to the Management Committee there are tasks for anyone with a little time to spare including (but not limited to) sorting and cataloguing the Group archive, supporting the sales stand at events and in conserving and maintaining the preserved 4-Cor rolling stock

- Rick Squirrell

Live Rail

Currently there is no Editor or Live Rail Manager. "Live Rail" has however appeared as scheduled four times during 2025 despite a mailing problem with one issue which was consequently reprinted meaning some members eventually received two copies. No additional costs were charged to the Group; the printer has sought compensation from Royal Mail.

Live Rail remains produced on an interim basis which cannot continue indefinitely and would have a much more secure future if it was a team effort rather than being the responsibility of, mostly, a single person. There may be ways in which members would be willing to help without taking on entire responsibility for Live Rail. If such an arrangement could be established we would be happy to support that team particularly in dealing with Regional Review/Roundup.

A key issue for the Committee is the fragility of the current set up. At present, there is no clear alternative if one person became unable to produce Live Rail or Regional Review. Our proof-reader may be able to offer only limited support in such an eventuality. If Live Rail was more of a team effort this risk is greatly reduced, if not eliminated. In addition very little material has been submitted during 2025 by members or others meaning the content is largely the work of one person.

Thanks are due to Colin Duff, John Goodrich and Stuart Hicks for the information and photographs that they provide for the "Regional Review" sections and to Greg Beecroft for ensuring members receive their magazine.

- Management Committee

Membership

Membership has declined significantly again through the year. Group membership stands at 409 having been 427 this time last year and 450 the year before. Whilst this decline is in line with many other membership groups it will have an impact upon the ability to offer members the benefits they are paying their subscriptions for.

- Peter Watson

Visits

It was not possible to arrange any visits during 2025. Several are in the planning stages for 2026.

- Stuart Hicks

Sales

2025 was designated as the 200th anniversary of the start of the passenger railway. Everyone was encouraged to put on special events and a set of logos were provided for use to give them strong branding. In conjunction with the industry & the NRM a special exhibition train toured the country with free booked slots to visit. Efforts to provide a reception to visitors to the train varied enormously by the TOCs in the Southern Area. We were fortunate to be able to participate at 2 of these events with the sales stall when the exhibition train was in residence at Margate & Hastings.

We had 2 other major bonus events an open day at the SouthEastern depot at Ashford, and the 455 farewell tour run by SWR from Waterloo. Not forgetting the R200 Dover Priory event organised by James Pickering involving the White Cliffs CRP which having been nominated for an award meant a trip to Derby for the annual awards event!

In all 36 events. A fantastic result! Only been made possible by the help I have received principally from James's family, particularly his brother Richard, and his dad. I must not forget some members too, in particular John Shepherd. More help would be welcome. To help first find out where we are our going to be. Look at the SEG website. Click the Sales Stand link in the heading and on the page that opens scroll down to the link of calendar of links we plan to attend.

Here's to next year.

- John Piper

Modelling

The Modelling Officer has continued to work within the remit of promoting modelling of the Southern Electric system, writing articles for LR and the website, answering numerous modelling queries from both members and non members, and assisting model railway manufacturers with researching and developing potential new Southern Electric models – both kits and ready to run. Working in confidence over the past year there are a small number of potential new models which may or may not see the light of day eventually. With a four car EMU model now being priced at around £499.99 (DC/silent) the viability of multiple unit models is precarious as modellers are consequentially driven to prioritise their expenditure. In many cases buying fewer models is now the norm when previously they aimed to have longer trains, portraying the "M" in "EMU".

- Colin Duff

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Web Administration

David Morton chose to stand down as our Web Administrator at the 2025 AGM. The task of rebuilding the Group's website and of keeping pace with developments is huge. The requirements of maintaining a modern user-friendly and secure website have advanced at pace. Colin Duff generously offered to step up as interim Web Administrator and has found the task to be even greater than first realised.

It would cost far more than this Group could afford to have a full professional rebuild of the site. Even a makeover, which was investigated as an option, is likely to be beyond our immediate resources. Aside from the website there is the internal communications between officers, interaction between membership and finance and the emailing of members to be managed which all takes time and effort – not as simple as “just pushing a button” by any means.

The Management Committee thanks both David Morton and Colin Duff for their time and efforts in maintaining this most important portal and shop-window of Group activity.

- Management Committee

Preservation

Over the past year preservation work has continued on 4Cor motor coach S11187S and work is about to start on the re-upholstering of the seating. Work has also continued with the ceiling repairs following years of water ingress and the exterior roof repairs have been completed. We are pleased to share that no water is now getting into the coach. The coach has now passed its fitness to run exam and is now available for passenger service on the East Kent Railway for the 2026 operating season.

Work has started to investigate sending motor coach S11161S away for restoration; this is ongoing and a fundraising appeal will be launched in the very near future. The three coaches at Sellindge are checked on a regular basis, their condition has not deteriorated and they provide a useful storage space and source for spares.

We are grateful to our volunteers and those that donate towards our preservation efforts.

- Ashley Saunders

Branches

As noted above the Sussex Branch has ceased to operate independently and is now a joint gathering with the Tramway & Light Railway Society under the branding of “Sussex Groups Together”. This has allowed a program to be offered for the year and enjoyed by those attending. This new body has not sought formal recognition as an SEG Branch.

- Management Committee

The South Hampshire Branch held 10 meetings in the period covered by the Committee Report, taking its customary summer break in July and August. Attendances have remained steady at 9 or 10 per meeting. As always, new members would be welcome. The hire of the room now appears to be more secure after its change of ownership last year.

- John Goodrich

Financial matters

The Group continues to be in a sound financial position overall despite the reduction in membership. Accounts are available for the financial year ending 31st October 2025 which have been signed off by our Independent Examiner. In the light of our current financial position and with the budget for 2025-6 projecting a similar result there will be no increase to subscription rates proposed this year.

- Ian Rudkins

All members of the Management Committee and other officers are thanked for their time and efforts through the past year.

For and on behalf of the Management Committee

Rick Squirrell – Chairman and General Secretary