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One more year to go Playing Our Part

The Borders Railway Project should be handed over for testing in May 2015.

That means that there is one year left on the construction programme, which the construction partners have hailed as a great milestone.

It does mean of course that construction work is now at a peak, which means for those living along the line there is considerable disruption still to be

experienced. This is where the Campaign for Borders Rail has a really valuable role in taking the positive message of the Borders Railway Project out to the general public, and raising the profile of our organisation at the same time. Members can play a part, especially during this period, in helping advocate the benefits the line will bring.

As with any major construction project, and there are few that are more major than this one, there are inconveniences experienced. They range from the utter pointlessness in washing your car, if you live in any of the A7 communities, to

the extensive construction works taking place along residential corridors and in the open country.

Help the Campaign by emphasising the benefits the railway will bring, not just travel opportunities. For example, the economic activity and regeneration the project already represents, and the wider exposure and interest generated in the Borders. Even for communities not directly on the Railway, these represent benefits already bearing fruit and bringing business to the Borders.

What your membership is making possible

The Campaign depends on your continued support for future achievements

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2014. Of course, we have not been out of touch. In the past year, we have launched our social media channels, which have allowed us to engage with hundreds of people on a daily basis, and helped us reach a growing proportion of the membership, at a time when mailing out this newsletter has proved too expensive for the Campaign to do as frequently as we would like.

Funding is an issue we are addressing, as you will read later in this bulletin. As you will also see, we have been busier than ever on many fronts. We have been engaged almost daily on issues arising from the Borders Railway Project. The Campaign has been leading an application to establish a Community Rail Partnership, which

has been very time-consuming. We have also shifted our emphasis to concentrate on the next phases of our campaign, that is the re-establishment, phased or otherwise, of the remainder of the former Waverley Route mainline between

Come forward and help with the day to day running of this highly successful organisation.

Tweedbank and Carlisle. All of this is only been possible because we have the credibility of our wide and growing membership. Campaign for Borders Rail members represent every community, up and down the line, and every walk of professional life throughout the Borders and far beyond. Make no mistake, simply carrying the membership card,

either physically or as a state of mind, represents a huge contribution to the work of the Campaign. You should be proud of the service you are doing to the community at large. Of course, it would be wonderful if you could step up and do more actively for the running of the Campaign. In this newsletter we are making a heartfelt appeal for more members to come forward and help with the day to day running of this highly successful organisation.

Get in touch and play an even bigger part in bringing the railway, and a huge legacy of social inclusion and economic regeneration to our fast swathe of Scotland, and opening up opportunities for so many people to enjoy all that this region has to offer.

Vacancies

Ask not what your Campaign can do for you...

What can you do to help? Do you have an hour or two a week to really get involved and get into the heart of the Campaign, just in time for the most exciting chapter in our fifteen year history? All you'll need are some basic email and computer skills, and articulate and outgoing personality. Some experience of committee and team working would be helpful, as would any skills or experience in organisational roles. The Campaign needs your help now.

Membership Secretary and Treasurer - urgent requirement.

Due to overseas posting and necessary resignation of current post-holder, this joint post is vacant. We send our very best wishes to Stuart Middleton as he embarks on his new career, but we sorely miss his sterling efforts in modernising our membership and treasury. So the Campaign needs an able and immediate replacement for about two hours a week. To manage our membership list of over four hundred and growing. To keep on top of renewals and encourage recruitment. To manage our simple accounts and help keep us in the black - will require to be a cheque signatory. Spreadsheet proficiency vital, comfort with online banking an advantage. Would suit an individual, a couple, or friends living nearby one another.

Newsletter Content Editor

About two hours a week. To manage and originate content, seek contributors, edit and publish our newsletter in both digital and print versions. In liaison with Membership Secretary to distribute printed copies as required. Contribute to social media channels. Aim for quarterly publication. Must be proficient with word processing or publishing packages, and very organised. Some media or

journalism experience would be valuable. Pulitzer prize winners medal not necessary, but if you've got one - great.

General Committee Members

About an hour a week. Willing to take on adhoc duties that help the Campaign run smoothly and to help spread the workload as necessary. Members outwith the immediate area could be representatives and contacts in other parts of the UK, with opportunities to fulfil public engagements.

For any voluntary roles, get in touch now, with chairman Simon Walton, at Chairman.bordersrail@uwclub.net or call 01578 760686

Opening Event Planning Committee Members

About an hour a week - growing as September 2015 approaches. To take a lead role in planning the Campaign's involvement in any planned opening ceremony and events. Willing to take on adhoc duties and to help spread the workload as necessary. Will require significant liaison with business, civic and government bodies.

Area Representatives Hawick / Galashiels / Tweedbank / Melrose / St Boswells / Selkirk / Newcastleton / Carlisle / Midlothian / Edinburgh

About an hour a week. Resident in the area. To be the Campaign's contact - take an active interest in promoting the Campaign, the 'Onwards to Hawick' or Hawick Southwards to Carlisle (HS2C) efforts. Engage with the community at large (including civic bodies - city and county councils). Probably represent the Campaign on the future Borders Railway Community Rail Partnership.

Fundraising

Keeping the Campaign in the Black

We want to thank and acknowledge the continued support of members, who have responded and rallied to our efforts to bring memberships up-to-date, and has boosted funds sufficiently to help us engage with government bodies, elected representatives, business and community organisations - all of whom are crucial in helping us to play our role as independent champions and watchdogs for the Borders Railway Project, and to campaign for full mainline restoration to Carlisle.

Much of the work carried out by the Campaign is paid for by the voluntary service of the active

committee. Our very modest membership fees, set at a level to encourage the widest possible engagement across the community, help us pay for overheads such as our AGM, and make a contribution to the expenses of fulfilling meeting and lobby obligations at locations in Central Scotland, Midlothian, in the Borders, and in Carlisle and Cumbria.

So that we can continue with the Campaign's work, we will soon be launching a brand-new fundraising initiative, which will help underwrite the Campaign's activities for the foreseeable future, without us having to increase subscriptions.

On behalf of the Campaign, the chairman will be in touch with members shortly. If you agree with us, that there is still sixty-odd miles to go until we've achieved our ultimate aim, then the Campaign will need to be around for a while yet.

See Page 8 for current committee details...

Campaign Diary 2014

Since the overwhelming success of the AGM in Hawick in November, CBR has been as busy as ever. The enthusiasm of the eighty-five who attended has given us new energy for the "Onwards to Hawick" phase of the Campaign.

AGM 2013 Onwards to Hawick

See following pages for full minutes

Campaign Communications

We've contributed as usual to media, including BBC TV, STV, Black Diamond FM, Radio Forth, Radio Borders, The Scotsman, Edinburgh Evening News, Herald, Daily Mail, Southern Reporter, Border Telegraph, Hawick News, and a variety of trade and specialist publications. The Campaign always emphasises three advantages of the railway - social inclusion, economic regeneration, and tourism potential.

Waverley Main Line

We met with the First Minister, Alex Salmond, to seek a feasibility study for reopening the line from Tweedbank to Carlisle. We lobbied Scottish Borders Council, and met with Cumbria County Council and Carlisle City Council, to seek protection from development along the entire route - this being a first step in safeguarding the aspiration of reinstatement.

we will soon be launching a brand-new fundraising initiative, but donations are always welcome and greatly appreciated: cheques payable to 'Campaign for Borders Rail', and sent to our address on page 8

We submitted a comprehensive answer to the consultation on Scottish Borders Council's Local Development Plan - emphasising protecting the line and land around it. This follows up our consultation submissions to Network Rail, and preceded our submissions to Carlisle City Council. We are working to convene a political and economic consensus from Cumbria and the Borders in support of reopening

Public engagements included

December Presented to Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors at Tweed Horizons;
January Presented to Border Chamber of Commerce in Hawick;
March Presented to AGM of RailFuture in Newcastle;
March / June - presented to the quarterly meeting of the Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership management group.

ScotRail Franchise

We've been consulted by all five bidders for the ScotRail franchise. We have participated in meetings with all the bidders and the individual

expertise of our experienced members has been sought on a consultation basis.

Borders Railway Project lobby

In January and February CBR delegations have been to Holyrood to accompany Claudia Beamish MSP to meet with Parliamentary and Transport Scotland representatives over railway infrastructure and reliability issues.

Community Rail Partnership (CRP) workstream

The Campaign is leading a bid for a CRP for the Borders Railway. We're working to finalise an application for submission. Tourism is a major part of the railway, and a central part of our application. We are collaborating with representative tourism bodies, including Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership and VisitScotland. In February we took part in CRP workshop hosted by Transport Scotland in Stirling.

In May and June, under the chairmanship of ACoRP, we convened well attended general meetings (at the National Mining Museum in Newtongrange) to introduce the Community Rail Partnership concept to as many potential stakeholders as possible. This event was very successful, not least because of the

very significant work already done by CBR in raising awareness and debating the merits of the Borders Railway.



And coming up...

We will continue lobbying for good bus/rail integration and through ticketing options; continue to contribute to the CRP setup; work with the ScotRail franchise winner; keep our dialogue open with Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Network Rail, the media, the community and our members; making plans to mark the reopening to Tweedbank; continuing dialogue with planning officials and elected representatives in the Borders and Cumbria about extending the line; start to think about Newsletter 46...

Wrong Kind of Wayleaves on the Line

CBR urges Councils to protect land corridor for Borders Rail extension

Earlier this year we urged Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to ensure that its Local Development Plan properly protects the alignment of the former Waverley Route south to Hawick and Carlisle from the Tweedbank terminus of the new Borders Railway. In our submission to the Council, we welcomed SBC's strategic support for 'future extension of the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Carlisle via Hawick', but drew attention to the failure to specify protection of a future rail route against prejudicial development in its detailed 'Settlement Proposals'.

The Council's high-level support for protecting a railway line-of-route south from Tweedbank is very welcome, but we were very surprised to find that the proposed extension of the railway towards Hawick and Carlisle is not shown on any of the Settlement Proposals maps in the Development Plan. There is nothing on any of these maps to indicate that the route is safeguarded, and many of the Settlement Profiles for towns and villages which will be affected by a railway extension make no mention of it. This is a major error which must be corrected before the Development Plan is finalised.

The failure to properly protect the line of route from breaches by housing and roads from the 1970s to the 1990s added up to 40% to the cost of the Borders Railway opening next year. We must ensure that southwards extension from Tweedbank is not made more difficult by a lack of proper planning today.

Amongst the key omissions highlighted by CBR are:

- At Tweedbank, the trackbed immediately beyond the new station has been earmarked for industrial development.
- In Newtown St Boswells significant sections of the former railway alignment have been proposed for development without any stated requirement for safeguarding.
- Through Hawick the route remains largely unobstructed, yet the line is not marked on the plan's 'Settlement Proposals Maps' and no land has been set aside for a station.
- At Newcastleton land that would be needed for a new bridge to replace the former level crossing has been allocated for a housing development.

Scottish Borders Council is currently collating all the consultation responses. The Campaign will be closely monitoring the process and we will seek any opportunity to ensure the strongest possible safeguards are put in place. ***In the longer term there will be a need to maintain a 'watching brief' on planning applications that could threaten the alignment of the railway. Members can help in this regard by bringing anything they become aware of to the attention of the committee.***



AGM outcome

Campaign votes for extension to Hawick

The 2013 Annual General Meeting on 27 November heard renewed calls for the Borders Railway to be extended 17 miles from its planned terminus at Tweedbank through Melrose and St Boswells to Hawick.

A year after Transport Minister gave the green light for 30½ miles of new railway from Newcraighall in south east Edinburgh through Midlothian and Galashiels to Tweedbank, we argued that Hawick suffered more than any other town in the Borders from the loss of its railway in 1969 and needs a return of trains to reverse decades of economic difficulties and population decline.

You can read the full minutes of the AGM, published on our website at www.campaignforbordersrail.org.uk

In a statement, Chair Simon Walton, said: "The Borders Railway project will give the region a tremendous boost, but for the Borders' economy to realise its full potential the line needs to extend to Hawick, and then on to Carlisle. We want the Scottish Government, together with Scottish Borders Council and local authorities from Carlisle and Cumbria to commission a new and broad-based feasibility study, properly taking account of both the strategic and local benefits that reinstatement would bring."

In May we convened a well attended general meeting in Newtongrange to introduce the Community Rail Partnership concept

Infrastructure Campaign underlined - parliamentary meetings Campaign attacks missed connections in draft timetable

Concerns about cut-backs to the Borders Railway infrastructure specification – and the knock on impact on service reliability and journey times – has been a major pre-occupation of the Campaign over the past year. At its heart is the decision – no doubt costs driven – by Transport Scotland (TS) to reduce the total double track length from around 16 to about 9½ miles. Outside the double track ‘dynamic loop’ sections all new bridge structures are being built to single track clearances only and new retaining structures have been allowed to encroach onto the former double track solum. Clearly, increasing the double track provision in future will now be very costly, if not completely unfeasible in many locations.

To begin with CBR lobbied Network Rail and TS, hoping that certain key bridge structures could be ‘future proofed’ even at that late stage. These efforts were firmly rebuffed and, overtaken by events on the ground, our focus shifted to the performance of the proposed train service.

Possibly spurred by CBR’s questioning, in private and in the media, TS brought forward a draft Borders Railway timetable for consultation. This appeared to confirm our fears with most end-to-end journeys now expected to take 55 minutes or more.

Despite their protests to the contrary, we think Transport Scotland is breaking its December 2009 promise, laid down in the Borders Railway Pre-qualification Document for a 55-

minute maximum journey from Waverley to Tweedbank. Our concern is that journey times will be barely competitive with the private car in off-peak hours, when roads are less affected by congestion.

In our response we also raised concerns about poor connections with East Coast services at Waverley and – in a modest victory for the Campaign – we secured a guaranteed connection from the first train of the day from Tweedbank to the 0625 departure to London Kings Cross.

Meanwhile, CBR continued to seek answers from TS on the infrastructure cut-backs, firstly through a Freedom of Information request, and then through a series of direct meetings convened by Claudia Beamish MSP – a long-standing supporter of the Borders Railway - led by vice-chair Tom Curry, CBR were given access to the ‘working timetable’ data, enabling some detailed analysis to be carried out. The emerging conclusion is that the current Borders Railway track layout can function well enough on its own, but it now has very little capacity to absorb delays originating elsewhere on the network. Of particular concern is the slow-speed, single line junction at Portobello and the congested tracks from there into Waverley. Addressing these is likely to become the focus of future campaigning efforts by CBR and others.

With construction well advanced and completion only a year away, the consensus of the CBR Committee is that future public campaigning on this issue will bring only diminishing returns and that the focus must now be to accentuate the positives in the build-up to reopening. We have written to TS to establish a final public ‘marker’ on the infrastructure – making it clear that we will expect urgent remedial action if train service performance falls below the expected standard. We must all hope that it does not, for reliability is the key to success, and

success is the essential pre-requisite to onward extension to Hawick and beyond.

Refurbished Trains for 2015 Campaign lobbying for best available rolling stock

CBR has urged bidders for the new ScotRail franchise to ensure that Class 158 diesel trains to be deployed on the Borders Railway in 2015 are refurbished in line with the treatment given to trains serving the scenic Highland routes radiating from Inverness. In letters to all five bidders, the we stated that the train sets – to be ‘cascaded’ to the Borders from Glasgow-area suburban routes which are currently being electrified – must be refurbished to provide a service that will convince Borders people to use the train in large numbers.

In a press statement, Chairman, Simon Walton commented “We had hoped to see the inter-city Class 170 units on the Borders Railway, but if 158s are now to be used, it is absolutely essential that these are properly refurbished like those serving the scenic Highland routes. That means brighter interiors, appropriate luggage space and bicycle facilities, and a good seat-to-window match to allow the scenery to be fully appreciated by visitors.

“First impressions will be crucial for passengers who are new to rail. First Minister Alex Salmond underscored the potential attractions of the line last August, in Hawick, when he extolled the ‘stunning scenery’ of the new railway and indicated he was committed to ensuring ‘that people have an unforgettable experience travelling along this incredible rail route’. That means we must have the best possible trains to live up to this deservedly star billing.”

Alex Salmond in Carlisle (1)

First Minister speaks to Campaign over extension

Alex Salmond brought his fight for independence south of the border, and the Campaign was there. The First Minister was in Carlisle to deliver a speech on the implications of a 'yes' vote on businesses in both Scotland and England. Mr Salmond's speech made mention of good relations between England and Scotland in this region, and emphasised cross-border travel opportunities.

However, none of his examples cited links between the Borders and Carlisle. Instead, Mr Salmond returned to his desire for a high-speed rail link, to connect Central Scotland's cities, and to offer an incentive to extend the HS2 project northwards more quickly.

In an open question, the Campaign's chairman, Simon Walton, questioned why Borders communities should have to wait on the success of the service to the north, before assessing their opportunities to participate in the revitalised economy.

We urged the First Minister to immediately instruct a feasibility study on the viability of extending the Borders Railway Project southwards - and potentially northwards as well to serve passenger and freight interests as quickly as possible.

Despite early indications that the First Minister would announce just such as feasibility study, his response, in later private answers to the Campaign was that this could come if the Borders Railway is a success and in the meantime to engage with Transport Scotland and Transport

Minister, Keith Brown, with the promotion of the line.

Whilst this wasn't quite what we'd hoped to hear, it was at least conditional support for the principle of further extension, while the exhortation to meet with ministers and officials may yet open a few doors.



Meeting of Minds in Carlisle (2)

Positive response from Carlisle and Cumbria

On 28 May, 2014, we met in a corner of some foreign land. Well, a seventh floor office in Carlisle Civic Centre.

Having contributed to their consultations over the future development and planning policies-for Carlisle City and District Council, a delegation from the Campaign met with local authority officials in Carlisle to discuss safeguards for the disused Waverley Route trackbed within the Carlisle District Local Plan area – which includes the whole of the English portion of the former railway – some 20 miles or a fifth of the complete route from Edinburgh to Carlisle.

City council planning and economic development officers and county council transport and highways officers gave a broadly warm welcome to the proposals and arguments put forward by the Campaign for the reinstatement of the main line between Carlisle, Newcastleton, Hawick, and Tweedbank – and our core message that their proposed safeguarding policies should be strengthened.

Subsequent developments, over the past four decades, have resulted in several serious breaches of the trackbed between Longtown and Carlisle making restoration on that alignment likely to be unfeasible. However, the long discussed possibility remains for re-establishing a connection to the West Coast Main Line via the former Gretna-Longtown branch line, most of which still survives to serve MoD Longtown. As part of the MoD land there may well be developed for new employment uses, this was a timely opportunity to alert the planners to the need to consider both the benefits that rail access could bring to any development and the need to avoid compromising the ability to reconnect the branch to the Waverley Route in the future.



Further discussions will be required before either council can make a formal statement.

We have been assured that the disused railway safeguarding policy will be included in the new plan, keeping open the option of eventual reinstatement.

There are many different factors which encourage rail development around Carlisle, not least the potential to take freight traffic off the city's roads. The sparsely populated southern end of the line does have bulk freight potential, notably timber and possibly mineral extraction.

Our lobbying on this issue has also been boosted by the very welcome expressions of support-in-principle received from Cllr. Colin Glover, Leader of Carlisle City Council; and Rory Stewart, MP for Penrith and The Border.

A view from the southern end of the line

Nick Bethune recalls family connections to the Waverley Route at Newcastleton and hopes for the day when trains run again.

When the Waverley Route closed in 1969, the village of Newcastleton, where my father grew up and my grandfather still lives, was thrust into sudden isolation. The replacement bus service from Carlisle to Edinburgh followed the main A7 road through Langholm, some nine miles to the west. Hawick, twenty miles to the north over a high and winding single track road, and Carlisle, twenty five miles to the south on roads that were only slightly better, suddenly seemed a lot further away.

Born in the late 1970s and growing up in Edinburgh, I never knew the railway to travel on but its memory loomed large in the family's collective consciousness. My grandfather was the GP at Newcastleton from 1950 to 1985 and his practice area included Riccarton Junction. As there was no road, to reach it he had a railway pass allowing travel on any train, passenger or goods, and often rode on the engine or in the brake van. My grandparents lived in a large house called Holmhead backing onto the railway in which my father, his sister and two brothers spent their childhood during the 1950s and 60s.

By the time I was on the scene, the trains were long gone but the weed-covered trackbed and derelict goods yard quickly became a major attraction, accessed by a stile at the foot of the Holmhead garden. There I would spend many hours happily hunting for 'railway relics', as I called them – rusting remnants of the infrastructure – and, in later

years, I explored long stretches of the abandoned route on foot.

During these holiday visits, my brother and I experienced Newcastleton's imposed inaccessibility first-hand through interminable and stomach-churning journeys down the twisting A7 and B6399 roads from Edinburgh. How we longed for the smooth, swift and sickness-free option of the train! Later, as teenagers, we would make the journey by ourselves on the 95 bus to Hawick, changing there for the Newcastleton minibus or, on one occasion, hitching a lift.

Mildly adventurous though such exploits seemed to us then, the sight of the empty embankments, cuttings and bridges from the window was a constant reminder that our destination might, in different circumstances, have been reached in less than half the time.

The first serious threat to Newcastleton's links with the wider world had come in the early 1960s when some mid-day services were withdrawn, leaving a large gap in the timetable.

After vociferous objections, British Railways agreed to halt the Edinburgh-London St Pancras 'Waverley Express' which previously had passed through without stopping. Soon after, a 'workers bus' was started between Newcastleton and Hawick, the railway having failed to adapt its timetable to the start and finishing times at the Hawick mills.

This caused withdrawal of the 18.15 Hawick to Newcastleton train. Then in 1962 the County Council's contract for pupil transport to the High School in Hawick was switched from the

train to the bus, leading to the withdrawal of the early morning northbound service. Such cutbacks no-doubt prompted many of the remaining passengers to make their own arrangements and a serious decline in usage set in.

When final closure came, my father remembers the stark contrast between a 65-minute bus journey to Carlisle which just a few weeks before had taken 32 minutes by rail. Imperfect though the train service had been, especially in its latter years, the promised improvements to the bus service were scant consolation. Unlike the train, it never proved to be a viable alternative to the car, except for those unable to drive, and today only a basic minibus service subsists to cater for those modest needs. Even for car drivers, the village's inaccessibility was a serious problem, and since then its fortunes have declined or – at best – largely stagnated.

Small wonder, then, that my father and dozens of others crowded onto Newcastleton level crossing on the night of 5th/6th January 1969 to delay the passage of the very last train and, through their protest, ensure that their loss was not forgotten.

The village's need for a train service is no less today and ending its isolation would be a welcome bonus from a reopened link between the Central Borders and the South. There is a good case to be made for reinstatement and it is my hope that we at the Campaign for Borders Rail can be instrumental in bringing it about.



We are social media

Facebook and Twitter add to our online presence.

Our new Facebook page is proving popular so “like” us, join in the conversations, and spread the word by following this link ([campaignforbordersrail](http://campaignforbordersrail.org))

Follow us on Twitter too. Our handle is [@BordersRail](https://twitter.com/BordersRail)

Don't forget our website and blog too, for frequent updates. Make our page a favourite www.campaignforbordersrail.org

If you have an email address, please let us know at chairman.bordersrail@uwclub.net

Email contact details

If we've posted this newsletter to you, and you have an email address, please let us know. The Campaign is much better able to communicate by email - as postal costs greatly restrict our ability to reach members more frequently. Simply get in touch (by email) to

chairman.bordersrail@uwclub.net



Recruit a friend as a new member

Help ensure the best possible railway for the Borders

Don't keep your membership a secret. Get a friend to join too.

Membership entitles you to regular newsletters and participation in CBR events, including our AGMs with guest speakers. Annual membership costs less than a single attendance at many other social and professional associations and networks.

Individual member: £5 annually (£30 Life Membership)
Corporate body: £12 annually (£72 Life Membership)

You can apply right now by cheque (to: “CBR”) or get further details from

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Campaign for Borders Rail Committee Members

Office bearers

Chair: Simon Walton

Vice-chair: Tom Curry

Treasurer: *vacancy*

Membership secretary: *vacancy*

Other committee members:

CRP liaison: Sarah Nelson

London officer: Nick Bethune

Social media: Andrew Bethune

Committee member: Allan McLean

Honorary Campaigner: Madge Elliot

Other active members include Bill Jamieson, David Spaven, Stuart Middleton, Mhairi Middleton, Robert Drysdale, Mark Annand, Tony Hill, Richard Crocket, Chris Harvie and Kim Elliot.

Committee positions are open for other Campaign members to take an active role - either 'without portfolio' or in any of the positions available on page 2.