

SIMON MARSH

I first volunteered on the Kent and East Sussex Railway in the early 1970s, at a very tender age. Apart from a couple of periods away, for work and family reasons, I have been involved ever since, in a wide range of roles; physical work, operating, and behind the scenes.

In 2017 I was elected to the Board, and in late 2018 I became chairman. As chairman I saw the Railway through Covid and laid in the foundations for where we are today. My focus was in developing the concept of One Railway, in getting us to realise that as well as a team of railway enthusiasts we are in fact a medium-sized tourism business operating in an increasingly demanding context, and in overhauling the governance and strategy which are necessary if we are to survive and thrive.

I decided to stand down as Chairman in early 2025; there is a shelf life in such a role, and six years is quite long enough. Organisations such as ours always benefit from planned turnover at the top to inject fresh energy and thinking.

I am now a non-executive trustee; chair of the risk committee, which independently monitors risks to the whole organisation and brings them to the attention of the Board; and a member of the new nominations committee, which helps to ensure the Board has the right mix of skills and experience to lead the Railway into the future. My K&ESR background ideally places me to do these things, and I believe I still have a lot to offer. Although I am former Chairman, I have no intention of being a backseat driver.

I am a director of the Heritage Railway Association, which provides support to the whole sector. This gives me a broader perspective, and a strong awareness of the challenges we all face.

My only agenda for the Railway is to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose in the middle of the 21st century; this will necessarily involve continuing to change and sharpen up our act.

I am 68 years old and live near Ashford. In my previous life I was a senior civil servant, mostly in the Northern Ireland Office, and currently I work part-time for the Church of England Diocese of Canterbury, providing strategic support for the top leadership.