

# Judging panel for Transform a Pacer competition announced

- the judges for the Transform a Pacer competition have been revealed
- rail entrepreneur Pete Waterman chairs the panel, which includes rail experts, enthusiasts and Trainspotting Live presenter Tim Dunn
- the competition will see 3 Pacer carriages transformed as they are removed from the rail network, replaced by new, modern trains

Pete Waterman, famed record producer and rail enthusiast, is one of 5 judges announced today (2 September 2019) for the Department for Transport's (DfT) Transform a Pacer competition. The competition, which [launched in July 2019](#), marks the retirement of Pacers from the railway network.

Community groups across the North have been invited to submit plans and ideas for how an old Pacer carriage could be converted into a vibrant public space. From a café to a yoga studio, DfT is opening the floor to ideas on how the Pacer carriages could be renovated to continue to serve communities.

The winning proposals will see 3 Pacer carriages, donated by rolling stock company Porterbrook, installed ready for transformation.

Pete Waterman will be joined by industry experts and rail enthusiasts, a community engagement and sustainability expert and a local politician in deciding the winner. The judging panel includes:

- Pete Waterman (Head Judge)
- Tim Dunn (Railway enthusiast, historian, broadcaster and presenter of Trainspotting Live)
- Mary Grant (the CEO of railways rolling stock leasing company Porterbrook)
- Jools Townsend (Chief Executive of The Association of Community Rail Partnerships – ACoRP)
- Trudy Harrison, MP for Copeland

Rail Minister, Chris Heaton-Harris said:

Pacers have connected communities across the North for more than 30 years, but they have outstayed their welcome and are being replaced by modern trains and extra services improving travel for thousands more passengers.

As they end their years of service, we are opening the floor to local groups across the North to submit their ideas on how they can be used, I am looking forward to seeing their proposals.

Rail entrepreneur and judging panel Chair Pete Waterman said:

This competition provides a fantastic opportunity for community groups to actively engage with the rail network to make a difference to their local areas.

I'm delighted to be chairing the judging panel to oversee the proposals put forward ensuring they are realistic, credible and provide a real benefit to wider northern communities

Railway enthusiast, broadcaster and historian, Tim Dunn, said:

Taking an old train and turning it into something else is tricky: it requires not just creativity, but a serious plan for ongoing maintenance too. For the right groups, this is an opportunity to create something that's unlike any other; a real bonus. I'm excited about seeing proposals that harness the unique features and heritage of Pacers, as well as ensuring that they're a true community asset going forward.

Copeland MP, Trudy Harrison, said:

Pacer trains were made here in West Cumbria and all my life I have watched the iconic carriages trundle down our Cumbrian Coastal Line carrying passengers along their journey.

Now the Pacer carriages are embarking on their new journey it is an honour and a privilege to be involved in the decision process. I love a 'doer-upper' project, looking at the creative process and engineering, coupled with community uses, so this is going to be great fun, for a great cause.

On Wednesday 4 September 2019, between 12pm and 1.30pm, a live question and answer session is being given by Pacer competition officials. Competition questions can be [submitted online](#) before the session, entering the event code 'Pacer'.

To celebrate the role of the Pacers, Northern has also produced a toolkit for schools, and is running an art competition for pupils to encourage them to think creatively about how the Pacer carriages can be refurbished.

Northern have started to retire some of their Pacer fleet and is rapidly rolling out [£500 million worth of investment](#) in new and refurbished trains, which will deliver more frequent services, comfortable seats and improved accessibility.

Most of Northern's Pacer trains will be out of passenger service by the start of 2020.

It comes as part of a significant investment by both government, Network Rail

and train operators as part of the Great North Rail Project to transform the national rail network, delivering more than 4,500 new carriages to UK passengers.

DfT is investing £13 billion through to 2020 to transform transport across the region and is focussed on supercharging transport connections.

Between 2019 and 2024, the government will also invest around £3 billion in additional funding to upgrade the Transpennine route between Manchester, Leeds and York to deliver faster, more frequent and more reliable journeys with more seats. The Prime Minister has also announced his backing for a new Manchester to Leeds line.