



Women in Rail Trustee Story Spotlight

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Curiosity, Change and Connection

If you know me, you'll know I'm not someone who sits still for long. I thrive on energy, ideas, and connecting people and making a difference. In my day-to-day role, I'm the Managing Director at West Coast Partnership Development, the Chair of Campaign for Better Transport and I'm proud to serve as a Trustee of Women in Rail, where I lead on SWIFT – Senior Women in (or formerly in) Transport.

I didn't start in rail, I actually fell into it. My background is in finance, and I've always had what I call an "inquisitive mind." Numbers make sense to me, but so does the story behind them.

Early in my career, I worked in Mergers and Acquisitions, helping businesses grow and transform. One transaction happened to involve a rail company, and I was instantly captivated by the sheer scale and complexity of the sector, the interplay of people, policy, passenger experience, and infrastructure. It's like an ecosystem, every part affects the whole.

I still ask myself sometimes, why rail? The truth is, I love it. I love the challenge, the people, the sense of purpose, and the potential for innovation. Rail keeps you thinking – it never stands still. And for someone like me, that's the best kind of motivation.

Curiosity and Challenge

Curiosity has always guided me. I'm both a lateral thinker and a systems thinker, always asking - why? what if? how could this work better?

Rail is an industry where curiosity isn't just helpful, it's essential. We face complex, long-term challenges, from improving passenger experience and infrastructure to advancing sustainability and digital innovation. Asking the right questions leads to better answers, stronger strategies, and ultimately, better outcomes for people.

Rail matters because it connects communities, families, opportunities, and regions. It's the backbone of sustainable transport and a driver of social mobility. Once you see that, the work takes on real meaning.

In my day job at West Coast Partnership Development, we place the customer at the heart of everything we do. Our deep understanding of passenger needs informs how we design future services, ensuring that innovation and strategy are always rooted in real-world experience. Whether it's shaping high-speed journeys or improving existing ones, our focus remains on delivering value for the people who use the railway every day.

Why Women in Rail, and Why SWIFT

When I became involved with Women in Rail, I recognised an organisation that embodies what I care most about, people, purpose, and progress.

I've always said strategy can't sit on a shelf. It has to be lived, owned, and delivered. That's why I lead SWIFT, a network within Women in Rail that's focused on driving real change.

SWIFT is about asking the bigger questions:

- How do we make transport more inclusive at every level?
- How do we ensure senior women leaders support and create the pipeline for others to follow?
- How do we move from talk to action, and measure the results?
- How can we discuss the most important issues in a safe space affecting our business?
- How can we ensure sustainable change and progress?

SWIFT brings together exceptional women from across transport, women who've faced challenges, worn the T-shirt, and achieved remarkable things. We share lived experiences, connect leadership insight, and work to create lasting change.

We're not here just to "empower" women. We're here to reshape the system so that empowerment is built in, not added on. Change takes time, but when you stick with it, the benefits are real and lasting.

True inclusion goes beyond representation - it's about ensuring diversity of thought. At SWIFT and across the transport sector, we're committed to creating spaces where a wide range of voices are heard. That means filling the room with people from different disciplines, experiences, and perspectives, because that's how we unlock better ideas and stronger outcomes.

This year for SWIFT promises to be one of connection, collaboration and tangible progress. We will continue to build on our solid foundations, a network of senior women across transport who bring expertise, courage and turn that collective insight into action.

We'll continue hosting thought-leadership sessions and discussions that challenge the industry to think differently. Expect honest conversations about strategy, inclusion, and transformation.

Real change doesn't happen in isolation. SWIFT will keep partnering with transport groups, working across regions and with key industry bodies to build momentum. Allyship is critical, and we're engaging men and leaders across the sector to be visible advocates for change.

SWIFT isn't just a network, it's a movement. We're focused on delivering results, building stronger connections, and driving measurable progress. Together, we'll keep asking questions, finding solutions, and making sure the change we create today becomes the foundation for tomorrow.

Why More Women in Rail and Transport Matters

For me, this isn't about gender for the sake of balance. It's about better outcomes for the industry. When women are represented at every level, from apprentice to boardroom, organisations make better decisions. We think more holistically, we innovate differently, and we consider the impact of our choices on people and communities.

Rail, like many technical sectors, still faces challenges around skills shortages, innovation investment, and the constant need to keep health and safety at the centre of everything. Having more women involved strengthens all of those areas. Diverse teams identify risks faster, design safer systems, and find creative solutions that work for everyone.

Bringing more women into rail isn't just the right thing to do. It's the smart thing to do. It's about competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience.

That's what SWIFT is helping to support. We're focused on creating environments where women can thrive, share, and lead, and where their experience helps shape the future of the industry.

Driving Change and Asking Questions

I believe progress starts with a question. My colleagues know one of my favourite phrases is "Ask me a question." That's because dialogue drives understanding and understanding drives change.

As a leader, I focus on taking people with me. Change isn't something that happens to people. It happens through them. Whether it's transformation at West Coast Partnership or within Women in Rail, success always depends on people believing in what they're part of.

I'm a strong supporter of Great British Railways and the reform agenda. We need to stop waiting for others to fix things. It's up to us, inside the industry, to drive the change we want to see.

My approach is simple. Be part of the team. Be part of the solution. Move the conversation forward.

Strategy, Sustainability, and Systems Thinking

Sustainability is another passion of mine. But I see it as broader than just environmental. It's also about organisational sustainability. That means designing systems that last, creating strategies that deliver, and developing people who can lead long after we've moved on.

Every action we take has a ripple effect, intended or unintended. I spend a lot of time thinking about those consequences, because great strategy doesn't just look good on paper. It works in practice, for people, for passengers, and for the planet.

My Advice to Women at Any Stage of Their Career

If I could give one piece of advice to any woman working in rail, or thinking about it, it would be this: stay curious. Ask questions. Challenge respectfully. Understand the system you're part of, and don't be afraid to step into spaces that feel unfamiliar. That's often where the biggest opportunities are.

Secondly, build your network. Nobody succeeds alone. Find people who will challenge you, support you, and remind you of your value when you forget it yourself. That's what Women in Rail and SWIFT are all about, creating that network of encouragement and accountability.

And finally, own your story. You don't have to fit anyone else's definition of success. Your journey is yours, unique, evolving, and valid. There's room in rail and transport for every kind of talent. We need engineers, communicators, strategists, thinkers, doers, dreamers, all of it. That's what makes the sector exciting.

Life Beyond the Job

Outside of work, I'm a massive foodie. I've recently discovered Indonesian cuisine and I'm experimenting with new recipes whenever I can.

I'm also a proud mum to two incredible daughters who constantly remind me why representation matters. They make me want to keep pushing boundaries, so that when they look at the world of work, they see possibility, not limitation.

When I'm not travelling or working, you'll usually find me laughing with my girlfriends over good food and better conversation, or on a Pilates mat trying to find balance in every sense of the word.

I care deeply about what I do, but I've also learned the importance of grounding myself outside it. Balance isn't a luxury. It's fuel.

Why I Stay in Rail

I didn't choose rail, but rail chose me. I'm still here because it keeps giving me new challenges, new people, and new ways to make a difference.

The potential for transformation in this industry is extraordinary. We're on the cusp of something big, from sustainability to digital innovation to new ways of working. I'm excited about the new world we're about to enter and looking forward to seeing the possibilities of Great British Railways.

Through Women in Rail and SWIFT, I want to help build a sector that doesn't just welcome women but values their contribution from the start.

My vision is simple. A transport industry that reflects the society it serves—diverse, dynamic, and determined to keep improving.

So yes, I'm still asking questions. I'm still learning. And I'm still in love with this ever-changing, ever-challenging industry.

Let's go, together.

Thank you for reading my story, and keep your eyes peeled for more SWIFT events

For more information on Women in Rail, please visit: www.womeninrail.org or contact wr@womeninrail.org