

# Developing partnerships with the tourism sector

Advice for community rail partnerships and groups



**AC:RP**  
New life for local lines

 northern

## Advice for community rail partnerships and groups

The guidance booklet aims to provide ideas and advice for community rail partnerships and groups on how to develop partnerships with the tourism sector. Further support on this topic and discussion on any of the below points is available from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) for our members. Contact [info@acorp.uk.com](mailto:info@acorp.uk.com) or **01484 481053**.

### What are the benefits?

Sharing best practice.

Tapping into an already established visitor audience that may be greater or different from your own.

Greater awareness of the railway line, its stations and the community rail partnership (CRP).

Financial benefits to the community rail partnerships, community and general economy.

Sharing tourism knowledge, visitor statistics and research.

Providing a high-quality visitor experience from start to finish.



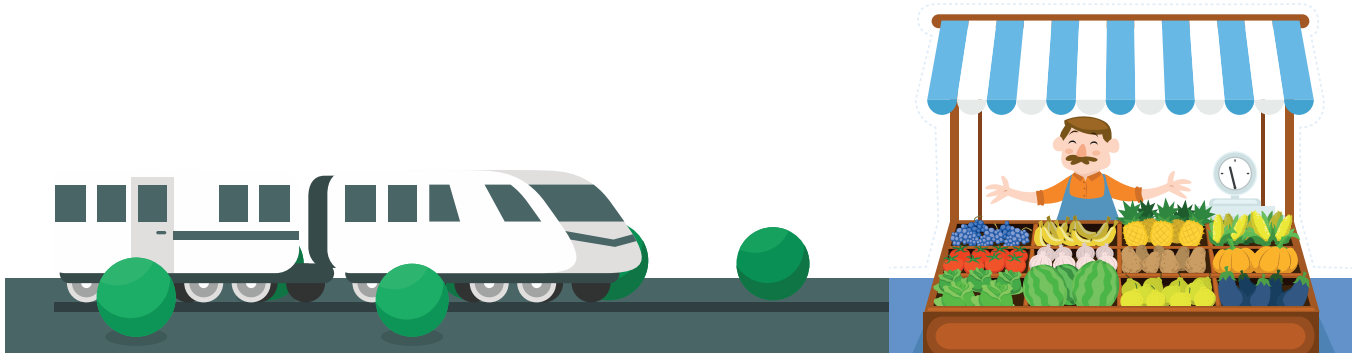
## Key partners to engage with

Effective partnerships can play an important part in encouraging visitors to travel along your line. Once initial contact has been made you may find this opens future opportunities to promote your line to a tourism audience on an ongoing basis. This guidance can help you identify key partners and focus on building relationships whether you are new to tourism or have some experience of the tourism sector.

Are you already in contact with tourism partners or just starting to get in touch? You may like to make use of the worksheet at the back of this guide to help you keep a record of contacts and actions following meetings with attractions/businesses.

### Tourism attractions and businesses

- Think of the major attractions and tourism businesses that can be accessed from your line. Don't just think about those that are within walking distance from a station, go further afield and there may be attractions that can be accessed by bus or taxi. (See section below on onward travel partners.)
- Tourism businesses can include hotels, B&Bs and guesthouses, campsites, pubs, cafes and restaurants.
- Does the area boast a food, craft or specialist market?



### Local tourism offices / local authority tourism teams

- Ensure local tourist information centres have copies of your leaflets and printed literature. Build a relationship with the staff and encourage them to travel along your railway line for themselves so they can tell people about it.
- Speak to the local tourism officer (employed by the local authority, although in some instances an area may have outsourced their tourism work to an external marketing agency). They will likely have many contacts among tourism attractions and business in the same area. The tourism officer may have free promotional opportunities they can share with you.
- Look at local tourism websites. Do they have a 'getting here' page? Could they be improved with your input?
- Don't be afraid to get in touch with all the tourist information centres and tourism offices along your line. Every little helps to spread the word.

## **Regional destination marketing organisations**

- These organisations can help you reach a wider tourism audience. However, many charge an annual fee for member benefits including regular promotional support. Each region is different so it is worth getting in touch.

## **Onward travel partners**

- Are there tourism attractions nearby that can only be accessed by bus or taxi? Get in touch with the bus company that travels the route.
- Contact local taxi offices: they may be willing to offer passengers a discounted rate especially if someone shows a train ticket.
- Always keep in mind the easier the journey is to visitors the more likely they are to visit, especially if it saves them money.

## **Heritage railways**

- Do you have a heritage line nearby that could benefit from joint promotion?

## **Event / festival organisers**

- Is there an event/festival that takes place along your line that you could work with?

## Developing relationships

Every partnership is different, but you might find it helpful to follow these tips to develop successful relationships with the tourism sector:

- Conduct a tourism audit of your line identifying nearby tourism attractions/businesses. Don't just limit this list to places that are within easy walking distance to stations; think about further afield and how visitors may get there from the station.



- Prioritise these attractions/businesses into ones who you could work with immediately and those who you could work with on future projects. Then get in touch with your priority partners to arrange meetings.
- Be persistent. If someone doesn't respond to your request for a meeting, get in touch again a few weeks later and be more specific about why you want to meet. Make it clear that you're wanting to give them promotion in return for their support.
- Do your research before attending meetings, making sure you have specific suggestions to make and aims you would like to work towards, and thinking about how both parties would gain from partnership working:

What audience is the attraction / business aimed at? Families, adult, couples etc.

Does the attraction / business mention how to get there by train on their website or leaflet?  
Could this information be improved?

Do they work with any other transport operators?

- Always follow up the meeting with an email. Include the actions that were discussed in the meeting, making clear who needs to do what, and don't be afraid to give deadlines.
- Use the worksheet on the back of this sheet as a guide to record contact with each tourism attraction and business. It should help you to see at a glance who you've contacted and the actions that have arisen from meetings.

## Further help and information

More information and advice for those working in community rail, and industry, public sector and third sector partners, can be found at [www.acorp.uk.com](http://www.acorp.uk.com). This includes further reports and resources, information on forthcoming events, and signposting to our partners.

ACoRP offers all members additional support and information specific to your needs and circumstances. If you're a member please let us know how we can help on [01484 481053](tel:01484481053) or [info@acorp.uk.com](mailto:info@acorp.uk.com). If you're not a member, find out about joining us at [www.acorp.uk.com/about-us/membership](http://www.acorp.uk.com/about-us/membership).

This guidance sheet was produced by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, thanks to funding from Northern. It is part of a growing range of resources produced for community rail partnerships and groups, helping them to engage and benefit their communities. If you have any suggestions of how we can further develop our resources and support, please let us know at [info@acorp.uk.com](mailto:info@acorp.uk.com).

# Tourism worksheet

The following worksheet has been designed to help you keep a record of contacts with attractions / businesses.

Please use extra sheets as needed.

Attraction / business name / contact	Follow up / actions
<b>Walking distance to station? (yes / no)</b>	
<b>If not, how can it be accessed? (taxi / bus / other)</b>	
<b>Meeting arranged?</b>	

Attraction / business name / contact	Follow up / actions
<b>Walking distance to station? (yes / no)</b>	
<b>If not, how can it be accessed? (taxi / bus / other)</b>	
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