



# Community Rail Awards 2019

# Winners

Awards presented at Telford International Centre, Telford, Shropshire  
Thursday 3 October 2019

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# Congratulations

## Congratulations from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships



This booklet showcases the winners of our Community Rail Awards 2019. It demonstrates the array of work being delivered by community rail partnerships, station friends, and other groups around Britain – so it offers inspiration for those working in community rail, and those thinking of getting involved. It also adds to the growing evidence of the importance of community rail to communities, helping people to derive maximum benefit from their railways and stations.

Our congratulations go not only to our 2019 award winners, but to everyone who contributed to the amazing 210 entries we received.

The Community Rail Awards celebrate the passion and hard work of those involved in community rail. But they also play a critical function. They help us to share good practice and champion community rail. They also help to build understanding of community rail's role, making a vital contribution to social inclusion, sustainable development, and health and wellbeing.



If you are reading this booklet to find out more about community rail, we hope you enjoy learning about what can be achieved through positive, collaborative work to engage communities in relation to railways, stations and sustainable transport. We encourage you to get in touch with us, the umbrella body for community rail, to explore how we can work together.



**Jools Townsend**, chief executive, ACoRP

# Involving Children and Young People

sponsored by Merseyrail

# First

## Community Rail Lancashire for Stand Clear of the Closet Doors

### Concept and aims

Confident and safe use of public transport is a right that must be available to all people within our communities. However, in a London-based survey, 40% of LGBT+ people said they avoided using public transport because of fear of assault or actual assault. Therefore, it is vital to facilitate the sharing of ideas from all within society, including LGBT+ people, to assist with efforts in this area and promote diversity.

Community Rail Lancashire worked to promote and enable this representation through 'Stand Clear of the Closet Doors!'; a writing and art project which shared the views and knowledge of young LGBT+ people via rail-linked information. The scheme was delivered in partnership with the Proud Trust, a Manchester-based life-enhancing organisation that helps young people empower themselves to make positive changes for themselves and their communities.

### What happened

The project was launched to around 300 LGBT+ young people at Manchester Metropolitan University, with participants delivering speeches and distributing booklets and stickers to guests. The partnership, Northern and the Proud Trust then put the work on display at Manchester Victoria, distributing further resources and receiving "excellent feedback" from passengers. Booklets and stickers were also given out to thousands of attendees of Manchester Pride, many of whom had a limited understanding of rail and reacted very positively to learning more about the project. The booklet even featured acting legend Sir Ian McKellen, who praised it as being "such an inventive idea".

Through the booklet and accompanying artwork, Community Rail Lancashire and the Proud Trust engaged the public on LGBT+ topics and also the LGBT+ community regarding rail access. They were able to influence perspectives and assist in the creation of allies within rail, community rail and the general public, particularly by providing information regarding LGBT+ friendly vocabulary use and challenging existing perceptions.

The partnership noted that one of the project's major successes was ensuring that hundreds of young LGBT+ people became connected to and confident in using rail, thanks to ongoing work towards making rail and community rail a fully inclusive environment. Those taking part said they had met and made new friends, developed confidence in group and teamwork, had experienced a much-needed LGBT+ safe space, and travelled to places in the North West they wouldn't have had the knowledge or money to visit before.



One participant said: "This is undeniably an awesome project. People from all over the country will see this art! I am so happy to have created art together that will impact on so many people. It can brighten their day, be relatable to LGBT+ people and associates, be a nice distraction, and even be very educational!"

The success of the project saw it delivered as workshops for both ACoRP and the Department for Transport, and led to the development and approval of a new and exciting project for 2019/20, 'Ticket to Pride', which will look to combat LGBT+ hate crime on public transport through education, youth engagement and artistic installations.

# Involving Children and Young People

sponsored by Merseyrail

## Second

### Hope Academy, Merseytravel and Northern for History Making History on the Chat Moss

This project was designed to encourage children and young adults to understand and appreciate the historic relevance of the Chat Moss Line and showcase the newly refurbished Newton Le Willows Station.

More than 20 students from Hope Academy researched, designed and produced a piece of art using images depicting the history of the Chat Moss Line from the 1830s to 2019. The piece formed part of their GCSE coursework and was officially unveiled at the station in March. At the same event, local primary school pupils buried a time capsule they had created thinking about what future technology and transport might look like in 2069, the year the capsule is due to be re-opened.

Alongside creating an impressive 20-metre piece of public art, the students also developed skills in art, photography, painting, editing, and research, as well as learning how stations can be used by communities to access leisure, education and employment opportunities. They were so proud of their achievements that they decided to build a replica of the timeline and artwork in the academy reception.



## Third

### Sussex Community Rail Partnership for Active Access for Growth

East Sussex County Council was awarded £1.4 million in 2017 from the Department for Transport's Access Fund to invest in active travel initiatives. As part of the Active Access for Growth programme, Sussex Community Rail Partnership delivers activities promoting safe, independent rail travel to young people aged 16-25, particularly those with special educational needs.

After speaking to young people, employers and education providers, it became clear that certain groups looking to transition to college, apprenticeships, or into employment were experiencing accessibility issues. To overcome this, the partnership developed classroom-based workshops, accompanied by group station visits and 'Try the Train' trips. The resources were developed directly with special needs colleges and the young people themselves, alongside input from Southern Rail.



The training has filled a gap which schools and colleges were struggling to deliver and has aligned with the curriculum needs of special schools focusing on life skills.

Ten schools and more than 100 young people have been involved in the project so far, with 98% of participants stating they were 'highly satisfied' with the programme.

# Involving Diverse Groups

sponsored by **Great Western Railway**

*First*

## Cumbrian Coast Line Community Rail Partnership for Broken Lives Mended

### Concept and aims

The film 'Broken Lives Mended' sets out to illustrate how involvement with rail has had a profound and lasting impact on individuals, and how it is now deeply embedded in structured programmes of recovery from drug and alcohol dependency. Using the video, the Cumbrian Coast Line Community Rail Partnership wanted to unequivocally demonstrate that community rail has no boundaries to its operation and reach.

The aims of the project were to:

- demonstrate the transparency of this unique project and explain its impact to other organisations in the field of social care;
- convey the possibility of potentially extending the geographical reach of the project beyond West Cumbria, promoting it to other organisations, community rail partnerships, and train operating companies;
- dismiss any preconceived ideas that drug and alcohol dependency is limited to the most vulnerable or marginalised members of society;
- highlight that station adoption is not only limited to environmental improvements to the station itself, but can also enhance personal attributes such as the pride, confidence and self-worth of those individuals involved.

### What happened

The partnership deliberately created a documentary-style video that was more than simply a series of talking heads. As well as interviews with residents from Stanfield House – operated by the national charity Turning Point – who had been involved in the programme, they also used illustrative background footage to maintain viewers interest and support the film's narrative thread. The filmmakers stated from the outset that the video should capture a 'journey', starting with the residents describing their personal battles with addiction and finishing with their hopes for a substance-free future.

The residents were involved at every stage in the film's production. Even those who were reluctant to face the camera took part by suggesting new ideas, choosing which inspirational quotes to incorporate, and deciding on the drone-based images and footage to appear in the final edit. The finished film shows how the rail project has helped individuals to overcome their fear of people, their anxieties of travelling alone, and allowed them to reconnect with latent skills and find new interests and relationships.



Commenting on the film's content, a partnership spokesman said: "Capturing the essence of why individuals become dependent on substances or alcohol is no easy task. Articulating the loss of self-respect, personal dignity, family breakdown and feelings of guilt and shame in front of a video camera takes bravery and courage. The completed video portrays this in every frame, and recounts individual stories with integrity and sensitivity."

### Results

As well as praise from the public, who described the video as "moving" and "eye-opening", the film has also made practical impacts in a number of areas, including:

- recognition from local mental health teams in West Cumbria, who on viewing the film are picking up parallels with their own clients, particularly those suffering from self-imposed isolation through depression;
- due to the "extraordinary" reaction to the video, discussions are now underway with directors and senior management of Turning Point, with the aim of extending the reach of the project to other parts of the UK where community rail partnerships exist;
- screenshots from the video are being used for an accompanying brochure about the crucial role of rail within the recovery process, due for publication this year;
- the inspirational quotes highlighted in the video are being used as the basis for a series of thought-provoking artworks planned for installation at Green Road Station;
- as a result of the video, an increasing number of service-providers referring clients into the rehabilitation and recovery programmes at Stanfield House are now asking for more details of the rail project.

To view the film, visit [vimeo.com/318196829/a51fa18f42](https://vimeo.com/318196829/a51fa18f42)

# Involving Diverse Groups

sponsored by **Great Western Railway**

## Second

### **Community Rail Lancashire for On Track to Train**

'On Track to Train' is Community Rail Lancashire's comprehensive employment programme tailored specifically to young people who belong to underrepresented groups in rail, including young women, those with additional needs and disabilities, and those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

Delivered in partnership with Mid-Cheshire Community Rail Partnership, Merseyrail, Merseytravel, Northern, Virgin, TransPennine Express and Network Rail, the programme provides opportunities for in-depth learning and dialogue across a wide range of roles in rail and community rail. Participants assess their current skills in detail and then match their attributes to potential future careers.



Each scheme involves high levels of partnership working across rail groups and operators to deliver meaningful work experiences, culminating in a presentation to industry partners, in which participants outline their learning and next steps, as well as their own recommendations for encouraging diversity within rail.

Between November 2018 and June this year, eight schools and colleges took part in the programme, with 75% of participants saying they would consider applying for a job in community rail or rail as a result.

## Third

### **Kent Community Rail Partnership for Five Acre Wood Project**

The aims of this project were to provide students with severe learning difficulties from the Five Acre Wood special school opportunities to have a voice in their community, to promote social inclusion, cohesion, skills and mobility, and to improve their health and wellbeing through station adoption, travel training and line meeting membership.

After train trips to promote and encourage independent travel and a performance as part of a choir on Tonbridge Station, the main part of the scheme saw the students complete an audit of Snodland Station and suggest a programme of improvements to the site.

After presenting their ideas to Kent Community Rail Partnership and Southeastern, they spent two days at the station, clearing gardening areas, building planters and creating a mosaic.

To continue their involvement, the students have become station adopters at Snodland, giving them a great sense of pride and achievement, and will also provide a vital voice as a new member of the Medway Valley Partnership.



# Community Art Schemes Permanent & Larger Projects

sponsored by **Abellio**

# First

## Friends of Rose Hill Station for Inter-generational Community Art Project

### Concept and aims

The Friends of Rose Hill Station, in Marple, recognised that their area had an ageing population, with younger generations consisting mainly of families who had moved into the town. There was perceived to be a lack of inter-generational engagement and active participation in local life, resulting in a gap in the transfer of local knowledge. In addition, there was also no platform through which the different generations could connect.

The friends group identified an art project as a way of both increasing community cohesion and improving the station environment. They felt that using Rose Hill Station as a base could result in the community coming together, encourage greater use of the station, highlight rail safety, promote sustainable leisure activities such as walking and cycling, and improve the appearance of a bare concrete station wall.

### What happened

After writing and submitting a successful bid for a £10,000 Awards for All grant, a working group was formed consisting of friends group members and local artists. One of the artists used her contacts with local schools to inspire children to get involved and create part of the artwork, which was designed to portray life in Marple, past and present. More than 300 people painted circular discs to form a huge mural, with the community involved in the design, development and delivery of all activities.

The project involved people of all ages and abilities, with the youngest artist aged under five, and the oldest aged 100! Many contributors also took part in three workshops developing themes around 'You, Marple Life and Trains', 'Marple People – Then and Now' and 'The Story Behind my Artwork'.

The friends group volunteered their time to help create the mural, and provided project management and engineering expertise in relation to developing its backing board hanger system. The group was also instrumental in raising approximately £5,000 in additional funding to develop the site. Members also used Twitter, Facebook and local media to raise awareness of the project, publicising the workshops, an open day, and the launch of the mural.



### Results

The mural was officially unveiled at the station in November 2018 in front of more than 200 guests. All of the artwork on display had a specific connection to the local area, with references to its natural and industrial landscape, its canals and railways, and its history and modern-day interests. Paintings included images of Marple's local cake shop, a shoemaker, Market Street, the Cotton Mill, Middlewood Way, Rose Hill Station, train tickets, rail safety messages, vegetation, wildlife and significant buildings and locations, all generated in either school sessions, community group meetings or in people's own homes. A resource booklet is to be produced as a lasting record of the inspirations behind the project, intended to help continue to promote and strengthen inter-generational relationships, and to further the understanding and appreciation of Marple as a place.

Commenting on the success of the project, a friends group spokesman said: "We are proud to have been part of the Inter-generational Community Art Project, which has furthered our aims of enhancing the station as a community resource and establishing a permanent legacy. The involvement of local schools and many community groups of differing artistic skills gave life to communicating the stories of Marple. People of all ages who would not normally meet came together to work, eat, chat and laugh together. Feedback has been very positive, including appreciation of the workshops, the importance of bringing people together, and benefits to mental health and wellbeing."

# Community Art Schemes Permanent & Larger Projects

sponsored by **Abellio**

## Second

### Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for Gunnislake Tile Project



In the late 1990s, tiles were installed at Gunnislake Station telling the story of the railway and the local area. Over the years, many had become damaged and in some places were falling away from the walls. The Gunnislake Tile Project was designed to replace the tiles using ideas and designs from the local community.

Working with a local artist, the partnership held community drop-in sessions and workshops at two primary schools, where each child was given the chance to take part in the project. In total, more than 200 people created tiles for the station, reflecting their views on life in the Tamar Valley and the importance of the rail link.

The improvement to the station environment has helped to create further pride in the railway and local area, and has led to the commissioning of a similar project based around local mining history to be erected in the centre of Gunnislake village.



## Third

### Friends of Irlam and artist Rachelle Cleary for Station Park Rust & Steel Artwork

Due to an embankment leading to Irlam Station being in a very neglected state, the Friends of Irlam group, in partnership with local artist Rachelle Cleary, decided to transform the land into an accessible park, built to reflect the industrial heritage and history of the local area.

The park was created around the concept of Rust and Steel, paying homage to the area's former steelworks and the industry and hard work that helped build the thriving communities of Irlam and Cadishead. Alongside murals of people who have lived and worked in the area, the park also features sculptures, a 'hobbit-style' workers cottage, floral displays, and space that can be used as a performance area, for picnics, or for events.

The park has proved extremely popular with the public, with the group seeing increased footfall at the station as a result. The Friends of Irlam regularly show people around the new area and have now planned a second phase of the project, which will see the installation of more statues, cottages, and a signal box.



# Community Art Schemes Renewable & Smaller Projects

sponsored by **Transport for Greater Manchester**

# First

## Penistone Line Partnership for Dwell Time

### Concept and aims

Dwell Time was developed as an arts project to raise awareness of mental wellbeing and to provide a platform for people experiencing mental health issues to share their stories through art and writing. It subsequently developed into both a free publication distributed on the railway network and an online blog, allowing its content to be seen by as wide an audience as possible.

The project is curated by artists and writers who have ongoing mental health problems themselves, and is developed in conjunction with the Penistone Line Partnership. The initiative borrows its title from railway terminology, with dwell time meaning: "The time a train spends at a scheduled stop without moving. Typically, this time is spent boarding or alighting passengers, but it may also be spent waiting for traffic ahead to clear, or idling time in order to get back on schedule." Those involved saw this as a suitable metaphor for the time each contributor, participant and reader takes to reflect on their own and others' mental wellbeing.

### What happened

Organisers held an open call for contributions towards the project, with each one published on the blog and shared via social media. In October 2018, the Dwell Time curators led some workshops with Creative Recovery Barnsley, in which they created cut up poetry with recycled materials (old magazines, train timetables, etc). To coincide with National Poetry Day, the poems were read out as public performances on Penistone Line trains.

As word about the project spread within the local art community, the team were asked to present at an arts and mental health event in Leeds run by Curatorspace, where they welcomed any interested artists to collaborate on their launch programme. The open call for contributions closed at the end of 2018 and the Dwell Time team selected, curated and designed their first print issue, a 56-page publication featuring 80 contributions. A thousand copies were produced, and the inaugural issue was launched with a series of events along the Penistone Line in March 2019 to coincide with Penistone Art Week.

The events included artist Bob Clayden taking long exposure pinhole camera portraits on Huddersfield Station to mark International Day of Happiness, and fellow artist Amelia Baron performing 'Take 10', an interactive conversational performance focussing on mental wellbeing, at Sheffield Station. The curators also celebrated World Poetry Day in Penistone with performances, film screenings and discussions



reflecting on mental wellbeing, and the launch of the Dwell Time Art Trail at selected stations on the Penistone Line with performances of Dwell Time poetry.

### Results

The Dwell Time publication has been distributed at further launch events, via railway and arts networks, from the Platform 2 waiting room at Huddersfield Railway Station, and at several wellbeing events that the team has attended to promote the project. The feedback from contributing artists, partners, rail networks, the arts community and the general public has been described as "overwhelmingly positive."

A Dwell Time spokesman said: "The positivity and encouragement to extend the project further has led Dwell Time to develop a second programme of workshops and community interviews for 2019, plus another open call to culminate in a second issue of the publication. We have also been awarded a micro-grant by the Yorkshire Visual Arts Network to produce an exhibition for Huddersfield Railway Station of the work we have produced, which is a testament to not only the community support for the project, but the arts networks recognition of this as a valuable project."

# Community Art Schemes Renewable & Smaller Projects

sponsored by **Transport for Greater Manchester**

## Second

### **Rail 74 Community Rail Partnership for Remembering Rutherglen**

The Rail 74 Community Rail Partnership joined forces on this project with Grow 73, a Rutherglen-based group whose aims are to improve their community and increase footfall in the town by growing food, developing pockets of green space to increase local biodiversity, and creating art projects promoting local regeneration.

Grow 73 had previously gathered stories of local heritage and used them to create the Ruglen Rope walk in the town park. They wanted to promote the walk by encouraging more people to visit by public transport, leading to the partnership with Rail 74. Working with two young artists, they painted the Remembering Rutherglen Heritage Mural at the station, celebrating the town's history and everyday heroes. Alongside the mural, the group created a biodiversity garden, designed to make the station a greener and friendlier place.

The project is said to have helped connect people with their local railway as well as offering an immediate welcome to the town. The partnership is now looking at regenerating the wider station area, exploring the use of a station outbuilding as a community hub and as part of a local heritage trail.



## Third

### **Melling Primary School, Sefton Adult Learning Service, MerseyRail and Merseytravel for Kirkby Mosaic**

The aim of this project was to create a piece of art, produced entirely by the local community, to make Kirkby Station more welcoming and attractive to visitors.

The mosaic was designed by children from Melling Primary School, who wanted to display what made them proud of their local area, including farmland, flowers, and their school motto, 'be the best you can be'. They were supported by tutors from Sefton Adult Education Service, a local authority initiative that encourages adults back into education and learning, improving their confidence and employability skills.

The children then engaged a group of their parents and grandparents, some of whom had been out of the education system since leaving school, to actually create the mosaic, which they did as part of a thirteen-week course which also developed Maths, English, and skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.

A project spokesman said: "The social value aspect gained from the project was outstanding. The railway acted as the key driver for engagement, developing employment skills, social inclusion, and inter-generational working, whilst also improving the station environment."



# Most Enhanced Station Buildings and Surroundings

sponsored by Northern

# First

## Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership and The Bee Friendly Trust for Bottesford Friendly Garden



### Concept and aims

The Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership identified a neglected piece of land, including an old station building, next to Bottesford Station that they felt had the potential to be transformed for community use.

The line officer held forums and attended parish council meetings to ascertain what local residents might like to see the land used for, and a community garden open to all was the desired option, an idea that had been discussed in the village for some years.

After seeing the success of projects with other community rail partnerships, as well as acknowledging a gap in their own gardening knowledge, the Poacher Line successfully engaged The Bee Friendly Trust as its main partner on the project. A plan was subsequently drawn up to clear the land and create a garden, wildlife haven, and educational space.



### What happened

The transformation of the site was split into three phases; community research, permissions, planning and funding; clearing the site to create the garden; and finally redeveloping the building. Costings were made and £32,000 worth of funding was acquired. The Vale of Belvoir Lions group also donated a completely recycled plastic bench, and in-kind support in terms of volunteer time and water access came from East Midlands Trains, Network Rail and station neighbours.



Project planning was done in stages, with consultations held locally alongside communications via social media. The local primary school and Beaver group designed different aspects of the garden, with eco-friendly options, such as water butts, used wherever possible. After the land was cleared by a contractor, seven community clear-up days were held over a six-month period, attended by more than 90 volunteers. The garden was then developed with the building of raised beds and paths, a rockery, a greenhouse, a pond and a composter, coupled with the planting of wildflowers and fruit trees.

Using their initial funding award, the partnership cleared debris from the building, before having it painted, re-roofed and re-pointed. Further work to reinstate electricity and water supplies to the building is planned, with the aim of providing station adopters and users of the garden access to an education and storage space.

The grand opening of the new site officially took place in June with Her Grace, the Duchess of Rutland, cutting the ribbon in front of all those who had volunteered their time and worked so hard over the previous 18 months.

### Results

As a result of the project, the partnership now has four station adopters at Bottesford who are working together to form a 'Friends Of' group. One of the adopters works at the local secondary school, and has started a gardening club based at the station with eight students. The local Beaver group has also visited the site to install four miniature bug hotels.

The partnership launched a competition to pick the name of the garden, with the top five entries put to a public vote on social media. The winner was chosen as 'Bottesford Friendly Garden', or 'The BFG' for short.

Once the building is fully restored, the education space will be fitted out with boards containing wildlife facts and the story behind the garden's creation. The partnership also has plans to team up with 'The Friendly Bench' – a community project in Bottesford that tackles loneliness and social isolation – to develop some joint initiatives.

A Poacher Line spokesman said: "The station is now unrecognisable compared to 18 months ago. It is looking fantastic, is home to many varieties of wildlife, and is a place for the community to enjoy."

# Most Enhanced Station Buildings and Surroundings

sponsored by **Northern**

## Second

### **Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership for Waking Up the Whistlestop**



The aim of this project was to restore the old railway station booking hall at Matlock Bath Station and create an eco-friendly café and visitor centre, offering a welcoming gateway to the town. Built in 1849, the grade-II listed 'Whistlestop' had previously been used by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, but had been closed for more than a decade and fallen into disrepair.

Working with the Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership, the Trust consulted local communities about how best to bring the building back into use, and found demand for a tourist information point, a heritage centre, and a café and shop. After securing funds in the region of £150,000, the group set about transforming the building and re-opening it to the public.

The fully restored Whistlestop was unveiled in April at a celebration event attended by project partners and local media, with the Trust sharing every stage of the journey to their 20,000 followers on social media. The busy café and shop, which is open all year-round, has provided jobs for local residents, and the site is maintained by a growing army of volunteers proud to support the building as a true community hub.



## Third

### **Station Regeneration East, East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership, Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership for Lowestoft Central Project**

The main roof of Lowestoft Station was removed in 1992, leaving a concourse surrounded by derelict or unused buildings, cut off from the town centre by closed doorways. What remained of the structure and its location showed huge potential to be explored, leading to the formation of the Lowestoft Central Project group.

Since 2018, the group have made significant progress on a number of projects, installing heritage features and lighting, new parking bays, information boards featuring maps and tourist guides, and floral displays. A separate community interest company, Station Regeneration East, was established to take on the lease for the station's old parcels office, which had been left unused and derelict for more than 30 years. The building was officially opened as Lowestoft's new Community Exhibition Space in June, and is already being "inundated" with requests to stage events.

Thanks to more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time, the partnership has re-connected the station to the town centre and created an events space placing it at the heart of the community. Anti-social behaviour at the station has also been reduced, and the site is now a real tangible asset for people to take pride in.



# Small Projects Award – Under £500

sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

# First

## Community Rail Lancashire for Bringing the Sunshine to Morecambe

### Concept and aims

Research suggests there is a strong link between high poverty levels and low educational attainment. According to figures from the National Literacy Trust, one in three children from the Bradford region left primary school with low reading skills last year, and in some areas, nearly half of adults (47.2%) had literacy skills lower than those expected of an 11-year-old.

Community Rail Lancashire is supporting the National Literacy Trust in promoting an early love of reading with Bradford families and encouraging parents to engage in activities to improve literacy skills. The Trust has set up a programme, 'Inspiring Parents', that aims to improve literacy attainment for children by supporting parents to be more involved in their learning at school and at home. It is run by 'parent champions', volunteers from the local community who are best placed to understand, and help overcome, the challenges facing families in the area.

To coincide with the launch of the programme, the partnership organised day trips to Morecambe for the parent champions, who are asked to try and inspire their peers to spend more time on literacy activities with their families. The trips were designed to encourage parents to sign up to volunteer on the programme, but also to demonstrate to families how enjoyable it is to spend time together playing games on a journey, and to promote rail travel as a cheaper and more environmentally friendly alternative to taking the car.

### What happened

The trips took place during the 2019 Easter holidays, one featuring a group from Keighley and the other a group from Tong and Bowling, two of the most deprived wards in the Bradford district. The families were invited by project organisers based on their suitability to become parent champions.

To encourage the positive experience of reading together as a family, the National Literacy Trust provided each child with a book, which most read on the journey. Activity packs for the children to complete while on the train were also donated by The Bentham Line. Karen from Community Rail Lancashire spoke to the parents about the benefits of a Friends and Family Railcard, comparing how much the trip would have been for a family of four with and without the card.

After becoming friends while on the train, highlighting the social benefits of train travel, some families then chose to spend the day together on arrival in Morecambe. On the second trip, the Bradford group were sadly not blessed with good weather, but many said they would like to return on a sunnier day, and now they knew how easy it was to take the train, they would!



### Results

Feedback from those who went on the trips was extremely positive, and for some, it was their first-ever experience of train travel. One family accustomed to travelling by car said they would now consider rail travel far more frequently, as "going on a train was a different kind of entertainment." One parent who suffers from anxiety said the day had impacted positively on her mental health, with the chance to speak to others helping her to relax, and the trip giving her valuable time to spend with family and friends.

A spokesman for Community Rail Lancashire said of the day trips: "Now that the parent champions have been on a rail journey, they can inspire their peers to do the same. Therefore, further trips have been planned with other families in the area so they too can see the benefits of rail travel and gain new ideas as to how to do literacy activities as a family!"

The project required no direct funding, with travel for each family provided by Northern, books given by the National Literacy Trust, and picnics donated by Morrisons supermarkets.

# Small Projects Award – Under £500

sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

## Second

### Friends of Spondon Station for Creature Comforts at Spondon

To complement an existing garden area at their station, the Friends of Spondon Station group wanted to deliver a project that successfully combined art with the natural environment. They decided to create a rainbow pathway consisting of brightly coloured painted cobbles featuring flowers and minibeasts, produced by children from three local primary schools during National Children's Art Week.

The group provided the schools with cobbles and paint, teaching folders containing Derbyshire Wildlife Trust worksheets, Thomas and Friends 'Stand back' rail safety materials, and Derwent Valley Line activity books. In return, they received 350 cobbles from the schools.

The pathway was constructed during various community action days and completed in June at a teambuilding event for East Midlands Trains. The garden now acts as a haven for wildlife such as birds, bees and butterflies, and the group have raised their profile in the local community, generating support for future projects.



## Third

### Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership with the Rotary Club of Skegness for Welcome to Skegness – a Rotary Schools Project

The Skegness Rotary Club approached the Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership to develop a project to deliver rail safety to eight schools, as well as getting pupils to create some artwork at Skegness Station. Several large boarded up windows at the station were identified as perfect places to display the artwork, and a location was also identified for a defibrillator to be installed.

Alongside Network Rail, Poacher Line staff delivered rail safety assemblies to more than 280 children, after which, each school was given the task of producing a piece of art depicting a landmark of the town, such as the beach or clock tower. All the artwork was collected and digitalised, with the finished piece unveiled at an RAF event over the August Bank Holiday weekend.



As part of the project, a separate rail safety session was delivered to more than 900 students from Skegness Academy, and reports of anti-social behaviour at the station have since reduced. Visitors have praised the artwork, and the partnership have since been approached by the local business development group to work on filling all remaining empty window spaces at the station.

# Best Community Engagement Project

sponsored by **Rock Rail**

# First

## Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for CreativiTea Trains



### Concept and aims

During the Spring of 2019 a number of community engagement projects called 'CreativiTea Trains' took place on branch lines across Cornwall, coordinated by the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership. The concept gives communities the chance to come together in a creative way via a tea party on the train, complete with cupcakes, bunting, arts and crafts and more.

On the Looe Valley Line, the CreativiTea Trains were linked to a wider heritage project and were used to tease out memories of local history and culture and educate young people about the history of the railway. On the Atlantic Coast Line, which runs from Par to Newquay, the concept was linked to social inclusion by working with the Eden Project.

### What happened

As part of the Looe Valley Line Heritage Project, CreativiTea Trains had been used to gather memories of the line from local people, but the partnership also wanted to develop a way of engaging young people. Two local schools along the line were keen to be involved, and children enjoyed workshops learning about the history of the line using old photographs the heritage project had unearthed.

The pupils were then tasked with coming up with good questions they could ask to find out more about older people's memories of the line, such as what type of trains they remembered travelling on. They also designed toppers for cakes printed onto edible sugar paper ready to be served at the tea party. Services were run with Duloe Primary School in the morning and Looe Primary School in the afternoon, with 120 people taking part across the day.

On the Atlantic Coast Line, the innovative nature of CreativiTea Trains captured the interest of the Eden Project, resulting in the scheme being included in Eden's annual Big Lunch programme, aimed at getting people together to share food, interact, and tackle social exclusion and isolation.

The partnership again engaged a local primary school, where children created a song called 'What's your cup of tea?'; which was all about finding out about people likes and dislikes and getting to know one another. A local Age UK group also got involved as many of their users had not been on a train trip for many years. The children and adults spent the train journey eating and chatting, with the pupils also performing the song they had written in class.

### Results

On The Looe Valley Line, the events re-engaged many local people with their railway, with many of the older generation commenting on how long it had been since they had been on the train, but what fond memories they had of it from their youth. The trips also brought to light brand-new information for the heritage project, such as the fact that in the past flowers had been picked in Looe and sent to London by train for sale in Covent Garden, something which had always been suspected but never proven.

This type of information was included in the heritage project's mobile phone app for the line, on new interpretation boards at stations, and on the project website. An accompanying project film was also shown in front of a 100-strong audience at a premiere evening at Liskeard Public Hall, see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewl1Ng\\_wrnw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewl1Ng_wrnw)

On the Atlantic Coast Line, the atmosphere on the train was described as "incredible", with a partnership spokesman adding: "The elderly people particularly commented on how much fun they had, and how surprised they were at how much they had to talk about with the children."

The project featured heavily in local media, with items shown on BBC TV and radio throughout the day, and the event was also filmed by Great Western Railway and subsequently shown as a case study at their annual community rail conference.



# Best Community Engagement Project

sponsored by **Rock Rail**



## Second

### Sussex Community Rail Partnership and Southern for Commemorating the First World War on the Railways

In 2018, Southern and Sussex Community Rail Partnership joined forces to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War, with the train operator sponsoring the creation of 'Silent Soldier' silhouettes at 19 stations across its network.

The partnership worked with communities, schools, parish councils and veterans' groups to create events based around the silhouettes, and gatherings were held at all 19 stations in the two weeks around Armistice Day. Each event reflected local participants' interests and history, and included poppy cascade artwork, remembrance prayers, music and videos. Organisations involved included the Royal Sussex Regiment in Chichester, HMP Ford, and Music and the Deaf, a charity which helps young people with hearing loss to appreciate music.

As a result of taking part in the events, two schools joined the community rail partnership as new station partners, and the silhouettes also raised £5,500 in sponsorship for The Royal British Legion.



## Third

### Kent Community Rail Partnership for Sea Folk Sing on the Train

The aim of the project was to create a community event to celebrate the centenary of the end of the First World War, while at the same time, promoting train travel, engaging people in community rail, reducing social isolation and improving health and wellbeing.

The group established a community choir for people aged 55 and over, who rehearsed pieces to perform at events during Armistice weekend. The choir sang while travelling on services on the Medway Valley Line and Swale Rail Line, as well as at stations including Strood, Sittingbourne and Queenborough.

The choir's performances were enjoyed by more than 600 passengers over the weekend, more than 350 of which engaged directly with community rail officers, receiving group details and information about rail travel and station adoption. The event was promoted via the partnership website, on social media, and via posters at 19 stations, resulting in positive media coverage.



As a result, the partnership has received requests to explore projects with new partners including Sheppey College, Queenborough Refurbishment Project Team, and the Heart of Kent Hospice.

# Best Marketing or Communications Campaign

First

## Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for Looe Valley Line Heritage Project



### Concept and aims

The Looe Valley Line in Cornwall has a fascinating history dating back more than 150 years. The Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership decided to use this as a new marketing angle to attract even more passengers to visit the line and to enhance the journey for all who make the scenic trip.

To achieve maximum impact, the partnership wanted to tell the story of the line in an accessible and innovative way. Ideas for this included video documentaries, a mobile phone app, a mini-website and 'augmented reality' interpretation boards at stations. Equally importantly, they wanted to involve the local community in developing the content in order to tell previously unheard parts of the story.

### What happened

The partnership held drop-in days where staff conducted video interviews with residents to capture their memories of the line, also garnering information via 'CreativiTea' outings on the train and requests in the local press and on social media.

Given the project's target audience of busy tourists and day trippers, it was decided to create a mini four-part documentary series designed to be accessible, 'bite-sized' and fun. To front the films, the partnership approached rail explorers Geoff Marshall and Vicki Pipe, also known as 'All The Stations', to take advantage of the pair's large online following and long-held affection for the line.

The group also wanted to bring the line's heritage to life and devised a mobile phone app as a companion to the trip, offering descriptions of major landmarks alongside historical images, anecdotes and videos. Interpretation boards were installed at the line's six stations that work alongside the app to enhance people's journeys. The boards at Liskeard and Looe stations were made interactive thanks to augmented reality technology. Using the app, passengers can hold up their phone and bring to life a 'talking portrait' of Horace Holbrook, superintendent of the line in 1908. The interactive portrait is also included in the partnership's Looe Park & Ride leaflet (110,000 copies) to reach another target audience. The final resource was a mini-website, [www.looerailheritage.com](http://www.looerailheritage.com)

The second phase of the project, which remains ongoing, is promotion of the new resources. The films were all unveiled at a premiere evening at a packed Liskeard Public Hall, which also featured a book signing and Q&A with All The Stations, who promoted the project via their own popular social media

channels. The documentaries were also highlighted via Facebook advertising, targeted at local day tripper audiences as well as rail and history enthusiasts in key cities including Bristol, Birmingham and London, and adverts in Railway Magazine. A key element was cross-promotion between the resources, with the documentaries concluding with a recommendation to download the app, and the app directing people to watch the community interviews via the website.

### Results

The project has enjoyed a great reception from the public and the media, featuring as a front-page splash and double page spread in The Cornish Times. The documentaries have been watched more than 10,000 times across YouTube, Facebook and other media, receiving positive comments from as far afield as San Francisco.

The app has received 100% five-star ratings, with one reviewer commenting: "Very immersive – looking forward to planning a trip to Cornwall around this app." Organisers of a local heritage walk are now inviting all their participants to download it, and when a delegation from the Department for Transport visited the line they commented: "All branch lines should have an app like this."

The project is set to expand even further, with funding now secured to develop a heritage information centre at Liskeard Station, drawing upon and promoting the progress achieved so far.



# Best Marketing or Communications Campaign

## Second

### Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership and East Midlands Trains for Communicating Derby Resignalling to Derwent Valley Line Passengers

Between July and October last year, 79 days of engineering work at Derby Station – part of a £200 million upgrade scheme – had significant impacts for passengers travelling on the Derwent Valley Line, including commuters, college students, and visitors to the area.

The Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership worked closely with East Midlands Trains and Stagecoach to plan the most effective bus replacement service possible, using local knowledge to reduce planned journey times and increase the number of services. The group then played a major role in communicating the changes, including them in an updated line guide and on local village and town train timetable displays. The partnership also gained permission to site wayfinding signage to bus stops on lamp columns and road signs, and produced a summary bus timetable for display at all rail replacement bus stops.

Independent analysis of the campaign found that 87% of passengers using the Derwent Valley route had been aware of the resignalling project, with 73% having a fair or good understanding of the impact on their journeys. The line achieved the highest satisfaction rating with regard to information provided on the disruption, with 78% of passengers very or fairly satisfied with the details given.



## Third

### Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership for Mayflower Magic on Liverpool Street Station

The Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership wanted to develop a promotional campaign that would showcase the tourist destinations along their six branch lines and also link to Mayflower 400, a year-long celebration from November 2019 to November 2020 marking 400 years since the Mayflower set sail to America.

One of the group's partners is the Heritage and Shipping museum in Harwich, where an 18-foot replica of the Mayflower is stored. The aim of the project was to use the replica as a centrepiece for a display at London Liverpool Street Station for ACoRP's 'Community Rail in the City' event, providing an ideal marketing opportunity for the partnership to engage with rail passengers and visitors to the capital.

On the day, group members spoke to thousands of people who took the opportunity to take selfies with the boat and enjoy sea shanties and pilgrim stories. The partnership gave out information and leaflets promoting Mayflower 400 and tourist destinations accessible by train across the Greater Anglia Network.

The group used social media and their local media partners to help promote the event and say they have already had requests for the ship to return to Liverpool Street next year!



# Influencing Positive Change

sponsored by **TransPennine Express**

# First

## Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership, Northern and partners for Dementia and Community Rail

### Concept and aims

With more than 850,000 people in Britain living with dementia, including tens of thousands near the Bentham Line, the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership felt it was the right time to focus on this group to help them continue enjoying travelling and sharing experiences with others. The bold concept was to create Britain's first-ever dementia-friendly railway route on the Bentham Line.

The project group, which featured representatives from the partnership, Northern, the Alzheimer's Society, Dementia Friendly Keighley, the Forest of Bowland AONB, ACoRP and CrossCountry Trains, focused on three main aims, namely:

- to raise awareness of dementia with staff, volunteers and passengers;
- to support the journeys of those living with dementia, their carers and supporters;
- to create dementia-friendly station environments and activities.

### What happened

To raise awareness of dementia among rail industry stakeholders and partner groups, the partnership devised a pair of one-hour training sessions, one similar to a typical dementia friends session, and the other based on a series of videos within transport settings.

Partnership staff and volunteers became Dementia Friends Champions via the Alzheimer's Society, and have since delivered more than 30 workshops to around 260 people. This has included rail industry groups such as; Northern's front-line staff working on the Bentham Line, Northern's apprentices and year-in-industry students, rail revenue protection and gate-line staff, Network Rail staff, and Leeds-based staff from both Northern and LNER. Training has also been provided to British Transport Police, ACoRP, station adoption groups and neighbouring community rail partnerships, the National Citizens Service, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, and local businesses and community representatives.

The partnership carried out audits of the line's stations looking for ways of making them dementia-friendly, such as simplifying options for displaying information, buying tickets, and finding the right platform and train. A detailed report was presented to Northern and Network Rail as they prepared plans for a major refurbishment of Keighley Station, and station adopters at Bentham introduced simplified timetable posters which were well-received by all passengers.



To complement train journeys along the line, four dementia-friendly walks have been created at Morecambe, Bentham, Bowland and Saltaire to help recall memories of the seaside, countryside and industrial heritage.

### Results

Impressed by the positive feedback from the awareness sessions, Northern produced a video for their staff about how people living with dementia can be supported on the railway, and a film about the dementia-friendly walks. A Northern Class 150 train was named 'The Bentham Line - A Dementia Friendly Railway' at Leeds Station, and now acts as a roving ambassador for the project across the local rail network.

The partnership now organise visits for dementia groups and have welcomed more than 120 people on trips to Morecambe Bay and to the Forest of Bowland. Leaders say it has been "amazing" to see the renewed confidence, enjoyment and memories experienced by those involved, including one group who had not left their care home in Keighley for five years.

The partnership has assisted in the founding of Dementia Friendly Bentham and provided vital support for similar groups in Morecambe, Lancaster, Skipton, Keighley, Shipley and Leeds. They have also received enquiries from a host of train operating companies – including Grand Central, CrossCountry, TransPennine Express, ScotRail and Arriva Trains Wales – and other community rail partnerships interested in replicating the project in their own areas.

A partnership spokesman said: "We are delighted the project has reached out to so many people both inside and outside the rail industry and generated discussions within the Arriva Group and at government level. The partnership has given many talks about the project's development and is now creating information packs and toolkits, hopefully an app too, for other groups to carry on the development and enable other lines to become dementia-friendly."

# Influencing Positive Change

sponsored by **TransPennine Express**

## Second

### **Friends of Handforth Station for A 20-Year Dream of Step-Free Platform Access is Coming True**

Since their foundation in 1996, the Friends of Handforth Station have campaigned for step-free access to the station platforms. Over the years, members had talked to rail operators, organised petitions and demonstrations, and negotiated with local landowners to develop possible ramp access, all to no avail.

In 2018, the government announced an opportunity to bid for new Access for All grants. After raising £20,000 to conduct a feasibility study, the group worked with Cheshire East Council, Northern, and Handforth Parish Council to submit an application for the installation of a pair of lifts, costing at around £2 million.

After mobilising the local community to generate support for their application, the group were able to provide 73 pages of supporting evidence, including topographical and ecological surveys and a station accessibility report from a local disability information bureau.



In April this year, the then Rail Minister Andrew Jones visited Handforth to announce the award of an Access for All grant of £2.7 million, stating that the huge amount of work done by the station group was a crucial factor in the decision. Tender documents are now being drawn up for the work, which will link to other projects to improve station car parking and pedestrian access.

## Third

### **North Notts and Lincs Community Rail Partnership for Gainsborough Central Station – New Hourly Monday-Saturday Sheffield Service**

Gainsborough Central Station had seen no weekday services since 1993 – just three trains to Cleethorpes as a Saturday-only parliamentary service – seriously restricting access to education, employment and leisure opportunities in Gainsborough and neighbouring towns.

In 2017, the North Notts and Lincs Community Rail Partnership started work with West Lindsey District Council and Northern to potentially re-introduce regular services, highlighting that under the 'Invest Gainsborough' banner, the town was benefitting from new housing developments, regeneration projects and tourism opportunities.

In May this year, Gainsborough Central Station celebrated the return of its first hourly, Monday to Saturday, service to Sheffield in 26 years, greeted by a host of local dignitaries and supporters and BBC TV and radio. The train arrived at a vastly improved station environment, featuring new wayfinding signs from the town centre, a new shelter on the platform, additional seating, new running-in boards, and refreshed paintwork and planters. Gainsborough Rotary Club have now expressed an interest in adopting the station, and in its first month of operation, Northern announced sales of 3,800 promotional 25%-off tickets for the new service.



# Tourism & Heritage Award

sponsored by Transport for Wales Rail Services

# First

## Heart of Wales Line Development Company for Heart of Wales Line Trail



### Concept and aims

The Heart of Wales Line Development Company set out to create a long-distance walking trail linked to the line, known as one of the most scenic in Britain. Their three core aims were to;

- encourage sustainable tourism;
- encourage healthy outdoor activity and the use of public transport, particularly on the Heart of Wales Line;
- promote local produce and local businesses/accommodation such as B&Bs, camping, cafes and pubs as part of the visitor experience.

### What happened

Having secured a £5,000 grant, the development company commissioned consultants to carry out a feasibility study for the trail and formed a working steering group. It was subsequently agreed that the 140-mile route would run between Craven Arms and Llanelli, and would be written from north to south.

The criteria used to choose the route included;

- choosing as enjoyable a route as possible with varied terrain and landscapes;
- making links to as many of Heart of Wales Line stations as possible;
- developing links to towns and stations, thus passing close to local and community-run businesses;
- highlighting links to historic sites and natural habitats;
- creating a journey that could be broken down into day sections.

The team consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, including four local authorities and Rights of Way teams, tourism and countryside bodies and local walking organisations. The route was initially researched on paper using Ordnance Survey maps and then walked on the ground using local knowledge.

Funds had to be raised for trail furniture including bridges, stiles, gates and waymarking, resulting in a successful crowdfunding campaign by the Heart of Wales Line Travellers Association entitled 'A Trail in the Making'. To complement the efforts of volunteers, financial support was also provided by Arriva/Transport for Wales, Network Rail, local and national walking organisations, local businesses and a community wind farm.



### Results

The first part of the trail was completed back in 2017, and the launches of each subsequent section have all been accompanied by professionally-led walks and talks from high-profile regional speakers. After further launches in 2018, the last Powys-based section of the route required further funds for significant new trail infrastructure. This final section, and therefore the full trail, was opened in March this year with a highly anticipated grand launch at Llandrindod Wells Station.

The steering group has liaised with the marketing and media team at Cyngor Sir Gar (Carmarthenshire County Council) throughout the project to coordinate trail walks for a number of journalists, and by late 2018 media interest in the route was high, with the Mirror, Guardian, Observer and Telegraph newspapers all publishing full colour spreads. Interest spread to Europe, and the trail featured in Conde Nast Traveller and Walk Magazine as well as being listed in The Guardian's Best Travel Discoveries 2018. It is anticipated that this media exposure will bring new visitors to the area, and the development company will be monitoring passenger footfall with the help of Transport for Wales.

A pilot project was run in Llandovery to connect local small and medium sized enterprises with the route, and explore how they could both benefit from and enhance the trail experience. A focus group discussed trail information packs for local tourist-related businesses to hand out to visitors and further information on the stations. There was also discussion around measuring impact, based on income generated per visitor per extra night spent in the town as a direct result of the trail. Tourist information packs – including a leaflet, local route descriptions and a train timetable – have now been produced and trail posters displayed on stations, with the pilot now set to be rolled out at other destinations along the line.



# Tourism & Heritage Award

sponsored by **Transport for Wales Rail Services**

*Second*

## **West Highland Community Rail Partnership, working in partnership with ScotRail and Network Rail for Glenfinnan Viaduct Trail**

The 21-arch Glenfinnan Viaduct has featured in many photographs and films down the years, but gained worldwide fame after its use in the 'Harry Potter' franchise. The small village of Glenfinnan now attracts thousands of tourists a day, leading to pressures on local infrastructure.

The aim of the £100,000 project was to build a 1.4km footpath from Glenfinnan Station to the viaduct, developing the trail to include four viewpoints, information boards – designed and produced by Glenfinnan Station Museum – and an accompanying interactive app for visitors. As well as linking the two heritage sites, the scheme also promotes sustainable tourism by rail and rail safety, with visitors warned of the dangers of trespassing on the track. The project was led and managed by the partnership, who provided on-site liaison with local tourist attractions and the landowner, Glenfinnan Estate, as well as specialist supervision of the building works.



The trail was officially opened in May amid positive media coverage, including the event being filmed for a Channel 4 documentary. The partnership says the project has received "uniformly positive" feedback so far, with Scotrail now looking at potentially improving train services to Glenfinnan in the future.

*Third*

## **Highland Mainline Community Rail Partnership for Highland Fling**

The primary aim of the Highland Mainline Community Rail Partnership is to highlight the heritage and history of the line, encouraging people to visit the area by rail. To reach a wider audience, the group created an exhibition for this year's 'Community Rail in the City' event and secured a place at London Kings Cross Station, the starting point for a direct, daily service to Inverness, 'The Highland Chieftain'.

After creating a logo and title, 'The Highland Fling', the group developed ideas with partners including the Atholl Highlanders and the Creative Team at Pitlochry Festival Theatre. A huge team of volunteers helped to coordinate the event, with a team of 53 people working on the stand throughout the day in May. Highlights included a 'flash mob' of 30 young people performing songs from the musical 'Summer Holiday', and performances from pipers and dancers from the Atholl Highlanders.

The partnership engaged with more than 6,300 travellers on the day, with 80% of people spoken to saying they would be encouraged to travel by train. Volunteers also gave out 2,500 goody bags and signed 300 people up to the partnership newsletter. The group enjoyed positive media coverage of its activities, and has seen a sharp rise in followers on all forms of social media since the event.



# Photo & Video Competition | 'Community Rail in Action'

sponsored by **Porterbrook**

*First*

'Enjoying a Break During Volunteer Working Party'  
Friends of Goostrey Station



# Photo & Video Competition | 'Community Rail in Action'

sponsored by **Porterbrook**

*Second*

**'The Wall' (film) The Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership  
and St George's Academy, Sleaford**



*Third*

**'Overcoming Loneliness with Games on the Train' (film)  
Sevenside Community Rail Partnership, Link Age and Great Western Railway**



# Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

sponsored by **South Western Railway**

*First*

**Julie Gibbon – Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership Volunteer**



## About Julie

Julie's Twitter handle, @ManyHatsJulie, says it all. She has been involved in campaigning for improvements in rail services for over 20 years, and as group secretary, was a founding member of the Tyne Valley Rail Users Group in 2000. Throughout much of this time, she has been heavily involved with major projects such as the Campaign to Re-Open Gilsland Station. In January 2017, Julie formally joined the board of Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership as company secretary before subsequently being made a director. Her knowledge of how communities work, skills in fundraising, and extensive network of contacts have proved invaluable to the group.

## Examples of her work

### Haltwhistle's Waiting Rooms

Each platform at Haltwhistle Station has a wooden building dating back to the early 20th century. Part of the buildings are used as the current waiting rooms, but most of the space has been locked and out of use since the 1960s. In Spring 2018, Julie identified a potential capital fund to kickstart the project, and within weeks had sought permission from Northern to explore potential new uses for the buildings and start work on an outline business plan.

The project, costed at around £500,000, has proved to be a massive undertaking, especially considering the complexities of the rail industry and funding targets, but Julie has driven it from the start. Her colleagues state that without her "knowledge, fearlessness and determination" to improve Haltwhistle Station, including developing much-needed business facilities for the town, the project would be nowhere near the stage it is today.

Having engaged them in the plans, Julie is now seeking to develop projects with other station stakeholders, including the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society, who themselves have ambitious plans to reconnect their line back to the mainline station.

### Promoting the area

Julie's passion for the Tyne Valley, and specifically bringing people in by rail, shines through. Seeing her on a stand at Community Rail in the City in Glasgow, or at the Northumberland County Show, is a demonstration of her commitment and energy, as she greets people and answers questions on a wide range of topics. It is her passion for the area that drives Julie's involvement in the Gilsland Station project, and she has drawn down funding for everything from people counters on railway crossings to business feasibility studies, also approaching local MPs for support and presenting to relevant managers in Transport for the North. Julie also



played a vital role in the partnership's successful bid to CrossCountry to fund a Tourism Development Intern in partnership with Northumbria University.

### Developing relationships

Outstanding volunteers in community rail share their address books and effortlessly develop new working relationships, and the partnership has made so many links in the Tyne Valley and beyond as a result of Julie getting out and talking to people. She manages the Old Booking Hall at Haltwhistle, where she has actively encouraged diverse groups to make use of the building, such as a chair yoga class, a meditation group, and the wonderful Platform Painters. She has also been key in the partnership playing a leading role in local Christmas and Easter events.

Julie is described as a superb company secretary, producing detailed minutes with clear actions, keeping all the other directors on track, gathering agenda items and writing funding bids. She applies equal attention to detail in the role which she undertakes for the Tyne Valley Rail Users' Group with equal diligence. Away from community rail, Julie is also involved in the Haltwhistle Partnership, the Kielder Water Sailing Club, and is a volunteer for Hadrian's Wall National Trail.

Describing Julie, a colleague said: "Her voluntary work for all organisations does not stay in silos, there are connections to be made and the partnership benefits greatly from Julie's experience in these other fields. Somehow, despite a packed diary, she still finds time to make exceedingly good cakes. But then she is 'Many Hats Julie!'"

# Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

sponsored by **South Western Railway**

## Second

### Graham Ellis – TransWilts Community Rail Partnership Volunteer

Graham has campaigned tirelessly over many years to raise awareness of the issues surrounding services on the TransWilts Line. He initially formed a campaign group called 'Save the Train', which subsequently led to the formation of the TransWilts Community Rail Partnership. Graham saw his hard work pay off in December 2013, when an improved Melksham service of eight trains each way a day began, but since then he hasn't sat back. He has continued to work with the Melksham Rail Users Group and the community rail partnership to maintain the service and look for further improvements.

Graham has also brought his experience to a wider audience, and currently acts as director of both TravelWatch SouthWest and Railfuture. Colleagues say he is also often in demand to speak to other rail campaign groups to share his knowledge and best practice. Within the last year, he has helped bring together a group of campaigners in Pewsey and supported them to set up their own rail users' group, which is now self-sustainable.

Describing Graham, a colleague said: "A modest man, Graham will always remind people that much of his success has been a team effort. So it may have been, but he has been at the centre of it, cajoling, organising, encouraging, driving forward and mentoring those around him to get things done."



## Third

### Phil Thomas – Lead Station Adopter at Radcliffe Station

Phil became the first adopter at Radcliffe Station in 2015, determined to proactively engage communities with the station and raise awareness of the opportunities offered by train travel and community rail. He now acts as chair of the group, alongside being a member of the local rail user group – which incorporates three neighbouring stations along the line – and the station adopter representative on the board of the Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership.

To develop the adoption group, Phil organised a community action day at the station and used his vision for the group's future to drum up support. The 'Friends Of' group now has 26 regular volunteers, working on gardening and art projects and other schemes to improve the station for passengers.

Phil leads on the group's fundraising, working with local businesses to help support the group financially, and also regularly acts as the face of the station in the media. His relationship with the local community rail partnership has led to events such as 'Bucket and Spade' trip, which saw people travel on a special carriage to Skegness for the day.

A colleague said of Phil: "His dedication and perseverance has led to him leading one of the largest station adoption groups in the country. In 2019 the group received a civic award for their improvements at the station, and this is a true testament to what Phil has helped achieve, he really is a truly outstanding volunteer."



# It's Your Station

sponsored by **West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway**

LEAD

Platinum

## Friends of Hindley Station

The Friends of Hindley have been working on their station since 2007. They were named lead gold winner in this category in 2017, and are often visited by other station adoption groups looking to tap into their knowledge and expertise.

The group's aim has always been to make the station a nicer and more attractive place, and gardening and planting activities have continued over the past year, including the building of a wildlife garden, complete with a bug hotel and hedgehog houses, and a new wildflower garden. The site continues to evolve, and the group are now looking at the possibility of creating a small allotment and community orchard. Members are also supporting the development of a sensory garden at a local respite centre.

The group continually reach out to the wider community rail movement, and in 2018/19, liaised with other station groups including Wigan Wallgate, Bryn, Urmston and Bolton. They also regularly engage their local community via events and direct

support, which this year included; organising trips for the local cadets' group, supporting the newly-established Friends of Rayner Park community group, making poppies and memorial crosses with Skills CiC, buying 115 Christmas trees to be displayed around Hindley, and organising a 'Care to Share' lunch, serving 200 meals to people who would otherwise have been alone on New Year's Day.

Across the year, the group have given presentations on their work to Transport for Greater Manchester and various local community groups, as well as continuing to engage with schools and young people. Their philosophy is that the station environment is important to all, and by encouraging people to 'own' the work they are involved with, they foster a genuine sense of engagement and pride that continues to ensure a lack of vandalism or anti-social behaviour at the station.

LEAD

Gold

## Market Rasen Station Adoption Group

Market Rasen Station offers the only public flower gardens in the town, so the group are committed to putting on the best and most attractive floral displays they can. Mainly reliant on donations, volunteers chose this year to try and approach local shops and businesses for support, securing three new sponsors and other potential leads. In addition, advertising via the local media has brought three new individual sponsors, allowing the group to increase their budget and expand their work. The group have also created 'Ray's Triangle Garden' from a previously unkempt and neglected patch of land on the approach to the station.

During the last year, group members became aware of bats flying in or around the station so decided they should provide them with a home. They designed and constructed bat boxes from recycled timber, and these are now in place, alongside a bug hotel, which is now well-established and blending in with its surrounding wildlife area. One of the group's environmental aspirations for 2018/19 was to make the station an entirely litter-free zone, and their enhanced programme of multiple daily visits has shown some excellent results.

Volunteers have worked to improve the station environment over the past year, repairing and repainting a passenger shelter on the platform, extending the station book library scheme, and working with local schools to provide artwork, including posters advocating a rail safety message. The group offered one of its larger planters to a local training organisation that specialises in developing skills for the voluntary sector and community, and they are now planning on running a gardening course. The same organisation has also agreed to produce a large-scale piece of art for the wall of the main station waiting room, to be created as part of a course run specifically for people with disabilities.



# It's Your Station

sponsored by **West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway**

LEAD

*Silver*

## Action Stations (Bingley & Crossflatts)

Established just two years ago, the group's major project this year has been the creation of a Five Rise Locks-themed garden at Bingley Station, on a previously overgrown and abandoned patch of land. The garden involved the building of an eight-metre planter shaped like a narrow boat, along with illusion posts sunk into the ground to represent the locks, which are an important tourist landmark in the town, located on the Leeds Liverpool Canal between the group's two stations of Bingley and Crossflatts. The garden has created a tranquil and calming spot at the end of the platform, enhanced by bird and bat boxes built by the local Beaver group.

To improve the station environment, the group have developed a book swap scheme, installed new signage in partnership with The Canal and River Trust to promote Five Rise Locks, and started work on a Finger Spelling project, designed in conjunction with the British Deaf Association to aid communication and inclusion of the deaf community and provide interest for all station users. Other projects currently in the pipeline include Incredible Edible planters, artwork alphabets in all waiting rooms, and the refurbishment of a number of station buildings.



LEAD

*Bronze*

## Drifffield in Bloom

Eighteen months ago, Drifffield Station garden was unloved and overgrown. Since adopting the station, Drifffield in Bloom members have worked with volunteers from the Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership to transform the site, clearing and replanting four separate garden areas so they now boast an eye-catching array of wildflowers and shrubs. The group is aiming to continue to improve the gardens to provide as safe and welcoming an environment as possible for all station users.

To commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War, the group – in partnership with Drifffield Town Council and Northern – also raised funds to buy a Tommy Soldier to be mounted in the garden, offering an area for people to reflect and enjoy some quiet time.

Drifffield also plays hosts to some major events – such as Drifffield Show and the Steam and Vintage Rally – typically attracting around 25,000 visitors to the town. The In Bloom and community rail partnership volunteers work tirelessly at these community events preparing the station gardens, acting as marshals directing visitors, and hosting their own stalls giving out information on community rail and promoting rail as a healthy, viable and sustainable travel option.



# ACoRP Award for Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail

*Awarded* to

## Mytholmroyd Station Partnership

ACoRP's first encounter with the Mytholmroyd Station Partnership was an e-mail, which read 'we have planted a few dafs in the station and wondered if you might like to have a look!'

And so began a 12-year association with the group that has seen them grow from a small band of residents to, well, a small band of residents! But, it is what they have achieved, sometimes through great adversity, that makes them this year's winner of the Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail Award. So, starting with the few daffodils – it was in fact thousands of them. This progressed to regular station tidy-ups attracting large groups of volunteers, quite often in torrential rain and gales, a well-known experience in this part of Yorkshire.

The group's biggest and most significant project has been the renovation of a three-storey station building. The listed structure was closed to the public in the 1980s when new platforms were built. Over a period of more than 20 years, the building became a dilapidated eyesore, but the station partnership continually said that there was "constant demand" from the local community to bring it back into use. Having researched the market and engaged local stakeholders, the group developed a business case to convert the building for community use, and commissioned a full feasibility study. Initial plans included a marketplace of activities showcasing local businesses and start-ups, including space for a local food manufacturer, art studios and a community gallery, and a walking and cycling hub.

The first phase of this major capital project is now complete, with Network Rail having successfully restored the outside of the building. While the local train operator, Northern, will take responsibility for the lease, the station group are set to be allocated a base at the site, alongside a new education facility. The group have achieved their core aim of bringing the building back into an appropriate use, thus benefitting the community, thanks to their detailed planning and persistence. The one snag for the group may be where they are going to hang their community artwork now that the building's windows are no longer boarded up!

The partnership, led by Geoff and Sue Mitchell, are extremely active in reaching out to their local community, involving volunteers in a range of gardening and planting activities. They are also involved in varied work with local schools, including environmental projects at the station, organising visits to local businesses under the 'Fanfare for Local Business' scheme, and events such as an annual Christmas carol singing train. In 2017, they won the ACoRP Small Projects Award for their youth engagement work with local Cubs, building a host of 'bug hotels' at their station made from locally-salvaged waste materials.



To sum up, they are principally a community railway station – always looking to work with local residents, businesses, schools and community groups to improve their local station and make it a welcoming gateway to the town. They are also happy to share their knowledge and expertise with others in community rail, and were the first group to be twinned with another Northern station adoption group, based in North Yorkshire. This award is a suitable reward for their 13 years of hard work and dedication serving their community.

# ACoRP Lifetime Achievement Award

*Awarded* to

**Peter Roberts MBE**

**The winner of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award has been associated with the transport industry most of his working life. Starting out on the buses, his migration from driver, to manager, to civil servant seemed seamless.**

He first became known to community rail during his time at the Countryside Agency, where he was responsible for administering rural bus grants. He came across the fledgling ACoRP and its redoubtable general manager of the time. He was convinced that funding ACoRP was a jolly good thing (and how right he was!), and so began our long-standing association.

When the Countryside Agency was being wound up in 2003, he came along to an ACoRP committee meeting, just to say goodbye. He ended up walking out of the meeting as chairman, although he recalls that he is still not sure how it happened!

He remained our chair for the next 15 years, overseeing some massive changes to community rail and ACoRP, and always led by great example, demonstrating sound judgement and good humour.

During his time at the helm, he oversaw ACoRP's move to a new base in the Old Water Tower at Huddersfield Station, and was instrumental in supporting the major reorganisation process that saw the staff team double in size, championing the expansion and praising new ideas and enthusiasm.

A long-standing colleague at ACoRP said of him: "He was always a steady hand to guide you, and a wise head to talk to. He had a positive influence on everyone, and was always focused on our team and, most importantly, our members. He knew there was much to take pride in, bringing rail into the community and the community into rail."

He was awarded the MBE in 2009 for his services to rural transport, and now this award is something even better! So, the deserving recipient of our Lifetime Achievement Award is Peter Roberts MBE.



# Messages FROM SPONSORS



## Department for Transport

As the major funder of local rail services in England, the Department for Transport is a keen supporter of community rail. The key pillars of the new community rail strategy create the framework for community rail to continue to flourish. We recognise that one of the most positive ways of sharing best practice and celebrating success is through the annual ACoRP Community Rail Awards. We are therefore delighted to be associated with these awards.



Department  
for Transport

## Angel Trains

Angel Trains is pleased to support the 2019 ACoRP Awards. Throughout our 25 years we have demonstrated a strong commitment to building the future of rail, and we recognise the importance of local people and communities in doing this. Community rail partnerships are a vital element of the success of the overall rail industry in Britain and we are proud to support them.



## Rail Delivery Group

The Rail Delivery Group continues to work with ACoRP to improve train operators' knowledge of how community rail can help them and the communities they serve. The railway does not just provide a vital transport service, it also acts as a key part of our social and economic future, boosting local communities and adding £31bn to the UK economy each year. We are proud to support ACoRP's work as we commit to enabling more people to benefit from travelling by train.

## Rail Delivery Group



## Porterbrook

Porterbrook is proud to sponsor the 2019 Community Rail Awards. For 25 years we have been at the heart of the rail industry, and during that time have established a reputation for innovative asset management as well as active engagement with key organisations across our industry. ACoRP is one of these key organisations, and we are delighted to be able to join in celebrating the important role that community rail partnerships, supporter groups and individuals play in promoting local rail services and enhancing the stations they serve.



## West Midlands Trains

West Midlands Trains is proud to be the headline sponsor of the national Community Rail Awards. As a company, we are committed to expanding and enriching community rail in both of our business units and the company has increased investment and resources as part of our new franchise. West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway have an intense focus on community rail, station adoption and social regeneration. Both the heads of stakeholder & community work hard to be closer to our communities, supporting the company's efforts to build a better railway and enrich the lives of local people while enhancing the places that we serve.



## Merseyrail

Merseyrail is among the highest performing rail operators in the UK and is committed to serving the communities in which we operate. We are delighted to be associated with these awards that celebrate the value of individuals in society who otherwise may not be recognised. We are extremely grateful to the many volunteers that give their own free time to help make our stations the wonderful welcoming places that they are.



## Great Western Railway

Our community rail partnerships provide a vital transport link for residents and the work undertaken reflects the needs of the communities they support, meaning they are often the driving force for positive change on their line and in the surrounding stations. Great Western know that access to transport services, especially in rural areas, is key to our overall sense of wellbeing, and supporting cohesive communities and promoting economic growth are among our key priorities. Great Western Railway are proud to support the 2019 ACoRP Awards and celebrate the hard work, dedication and innovation of all involved.



## Abellio Group

We are delighted to be once again supporting the Community Rail Awards. The night is a fantastic opportunity to thank the volunteers who do so much to help make our stations essential parts of the community. We are thrilled to be sponsoring the Community Art Schemes Award, which celebrates creative achievements that complement our investment in new trains and services by bringing station environments to life for passengers. We are also incredibly proud that our West Midlands Trains company is tonight's headline sponsor. We wish all nominees the best of luck for the evening, and for the future success of their projects.



### Transport for Greater Manchester

Transport for Greater Manchester believes that community rail is an important and valued



Transport for Greater Manchester

part of a successful Greater Manchester transport network. It increases rail usage, improves stations and interconnectivity, supports economic growth and regeneration, encourages local tourism and helps bring all our communities together. We are delighted to sponsor these awards in recognition of the fantastic and indispensable contribution made by volunteers and organisations.

### Northern

We're delighted to sponsor this year's Most Enhanced



Station Buildings and Surroundings category. Stations are so much more than a place to get on or off a train, they have the potential to be an experience in their own right, a gateway to the local community, a visitor attraction or to provide a valuable service for those in need. We're committed to making the North a better place to live and work for everyone, and our work with community rail partnerships, station adoption groups and other community partners is vital to making this happen. These awards provide a great opportunity to celebrate and showcase the very best of community rail and to recognise the hard work and dedication of all involved.

### Community Rail Lancashire

Community Rail Lancashire is once again delighted to sponsor the Small Projects Award. It is true to say that a lot can often be done with a little, and community rail partnerships are generally very good at coming up with low-value, high-impact schemes, often with some help from the small grants fund looked after by ACoRP. This award has attracted some very exciting projects in the past and with an ever-tightening financial position facing many community rail partnerships, doing a lot with a little will become ever more important.



### Rock Rail

We are delighted to sponsor the Community Rail Awards again this year and to celebrate the tremendous achievements of the many individuals, groups and organisations in benefitting their communities and local railways. Rock Rail is focused on the delivery of trains and other rail infrastructure to provide better passenger travelling experiences and better value across the UK. We are committed to helping build a better rail industry and so are particularly pleased to be able to acknowledge the vital role of the community rail groups in stimulating growth and shaping the UK rail industry to better serve communities across the country.



### TransPennine Express

TransPennine Express is delighted to support the Influencing Positive Change category of the Community Rail Awards. We are focused on taking the North further with a fleet of new trains, additional services and an enhanced customer experience. This positive change is having a transformational impact on the communities we serve in the North of England and into Scotland. Likewise, positive change on community rail matters, and the influence made to deliver it has a similar transformational impact. Good luck to all the entrants!



### Transport for Wales Rail Services

Transport for Wales Rail Services is delighted to be sponsoring the Tourism and Heritage category at this year's Community Rail Awards. Within our first full year of operation we have recognised the great work that our community rail partnerships and station adopters do for tourism and the heritage railways in the Wales & Borders region. We will be more than doubling our community rail partnerships over the next four years to ensure that all areas of the region benefit from this great work.



### South Western Railway

We are delighted to sponsor the Outstanding Volunteer Contribution category at this year's Community Rail Awards. South Western Railway recognises that the passion of such volunteers makes a positive impact to the whole community, not just to the stations they care for. South Western Railway is proud to recognise the dedication, hard work and boundless enthusiasm of all its volunteers. Congratulations to volunteers from across the rail network who have been nominated in recognition of their efforts over the last year.



### Grand Central

Grand Central is delighted to continue its support of the 2019 Community Rail Awards. We congratulate all nominees for the tremendous work they do in bringing rail to the very heart of the community.



### Virgin Trains

Virgin Trains is proud to sponsor the 2019 Community Rail Awards. Our high-speed trains along the West Coast serve several mainline stations that act as gateways to community railways. We enjoy working with supporters of these vital economic lifelines; to grow inbound traffic and enhance the range of journey opportunities available to the people of the communities they serve.



### CrossCountry and Arriva UK Trains

Arriva and CrossCountry are delighted to support the Community Rail Awards 2019. This event showcases all that's great about community rail in keeping Britain's railways at the heart of the places it serves. Community rail partnerships have shown once again their determination and dedication to deliver projects of all sizes, making a real difference in villages, towns and cities across Britain, and these awards salute their efforts.



### LNER

Through our ambitious Community Investment Strategy we are passionate about tackling the social issues that impact the communities we serve. We are extremely proud to be working collaboratively with community rail partnerships on this strategy and are delighted to be sponsoring this year's awards. The event provides a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the hard work and dedication of all involved. A huge well done to everyone who has been nominated.



### Greater Anglia

Greater Anglia is proud to be a sponsor of the Community Rail Awards. We're passionate about the benefits community rail and station adoption can bring for both the railway and the communities we serve, so we have increased the investment and resources we put into community rail. We're also collaborating with our community rail partnerships and adopters to maximise the community benefits of the new trains that we are introducing over the next two years. Together we can not only promote sustainable, healthy travel, but also underpin social and economic development, support diversity and inclusion, increase community involvement and better meet local needs.



### ScotRail

It was ScotRail's honour to host last year's awards, and the positive legacy this is having within our network reflects the value of recognising and promoting best practice in community rail. We are delighted to be a sponsor of this year's awards and wish all nominees the best of luck for the evening, and for the future success of their projects.



### Eversholt Rail

Eversholt Rail is delighted once again to be a sponsor of the ACoRP Community Rail Awards. We recognise and applaud both the phenomenal growth in passenger demand and the wider-ranging benefits to local economies and quality of life that community rail schemes and initiatives continue to deliver. Eversholt Rail greatly values its excellent working relationship with the ACoRP team, which is fundamental to ensuring that we understand stakeholders' needs and provide cost-effective rolling stock solutions optimised to meet them.



### Stagecoach Group

Stagecoach is very proud to be supporting the Community Rail Awards once again this year and we are pleased to be working in partnership with ACoRP to deliver improvements for customers and communities. These awards are a well-deserved endorsement of all the great work that goes on across the country's community rail lines every day to help us improve our railway and to attract more people onto our train services. We wish the very best of luck to all the nominees.



### Vivarail

As the designers and builders of the Class 230 trains, Vivarail has put passenger needs at the heart of their operation – with a real focus on green initiatives. Vivarail is bringing battery trains back to the UK and has the country's only battery unit with a range of 60 miles between charges. This train offers operators the chance to provide emission-free travel for their customers and is one of the most pioneering opportunities for the rail industry today. Vivarail's team continues to engage and listen to organisations such as ACoRP and is proud to be involved in this year's event.



### Hitachi

Hitachi Rail is proud to support the 2019 Community Rail Awards. Over the next two years our teams will deliver over 200 new trains to serve the UK network and provide an essential gateway to join communities together. We're passionate about supporting our employees and those around us who make this possible and would like to congratulate all winners and nominees for the outstanding work you do each day to make our railway a better place.



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## HEADLINE SPONSORSHIP



Operated by West Midlands Trains

VENUE DRESSING



WINNERS BOOKLET



DRINKS RECEPTION



AWARDS RELATED TRAVEL

**Rail Delivery Group**



VIDEO RECORDING



CERTIFICATES



TROPHIES



GOODY BAGS



PROGRAMME



GENERAL SPONSORSHIP



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