



Community Rail Awards 2020

Winners

Awards presented during an online event
Wednesday 9 December 2020

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Community
Rail Awards
2020

Congratulations

Congratulations from the Community Rail Network!

Despite the trials and tribulations of 2020, our Community Rail Award winners this year are as inspiring as ever. This booklet showcases an array of initiatives by community rail partnerships, station friends, community stations, and railway partners across Britain – many adapted or conceived specifically to rise to the challenges of Covid-19. They show how adaptable, innovative, and committed everyone working and volunteering in community rail is, and how valuable community rail will continue to be, in negotiating these difficult times, and building back better.

The work recognised here is wide-ranging, from youth engagement, to writing and music projects, to helping people (re)discover rail as a form of sustainable travel. It's all about connecting people with their railways and stations, creating a sense of positivity and ownership, and bringing people together with the railway as a focal point. That couldn't be more important at the moment.

A wonderful, common thread running through many of this year's winners is story-telling, through arts and creative projects, discovering local histories, and helping people to work through thoughts, feelings, and mobility barriers. This booklet shows how this powerful area of work can help us better understand our communities, promote wellbeing and cohesion, create more equitable access to opportunity, and enable more people to access sustainable travel.



We look forward to sharing these brilliant examples far and wide, and continuing to support our members to keep flourishing and supporting their communities into 2021.

Our congratulations go to all whose efforts are recognised in this booklet, and everyone involved in the community rail movement.

Jools Townsend, chief executive, Community Rail Network

Involving Children and Young People

sponsored by **Grand Central Railway**

First

Kent Community Rail Partnership and Sheppey College – A Chance to Shine

Concept and aims

Kent Community Rail Partnership and Sheppey College wanted to work together to provide opportunities for students to get involved in a range of community projects. The main aim of A Chance to Shine was to empower students to showcase their talents, boosting self-esteem, providing real-life experiences, and helping build portfolios to enhance employment prospects.

The community rail partnership were also keen to engage with the students to promote rail as safe, healthy, and sustainable travel, and to get their views on how the SwaleRail Line, which runs from Sittingbourne to Sheerness-on-Sea, could be improved for young people and all sections of local communities, encouraging increased passenger use.

What happened

To introduce them to the projects, 250 students – some of whom had never travelled by rail before or even left the Isle of Sheppey – were taken on the train to stations on the SwaleRail Line. Alongside information on how to travel confidently and independently, they were tasked with looking at issues at the stations and identifying potential improvements. To complement their own ideas, students asked passengers and local residents what they wanted to see at the stations, with the results fed back to the partnership and the train operator, Southeastern.

Results

Different student groups produced work greatly enhancing the SwaleRail Line and the communities it serves.

- IT students built a SwaleRail **website** listing things to do and places to visit along the line. They also created a promotional video to support tourism, information posters detailing the history of the line and its stations, and 'PopArt' depicting a series of images along the route;
- Business students designed surveys and interviewed passengers, and created a range of posters for stations raising awareness on key issues including equality, addiction, mental health, and train etiquette;
- Construction, landscaping, and multi-trade students helped to improve station environments for passengers and communities by building and installing new benches, planters, and birdboxes, and creating floral displays.



Local councillors, the community rail partnership, and the college – which has now formally adopted all five stations on the line – praised the projects, noting that by taking ownership and responsibility, students developed teamwork, communication, and creative skills, showed increased levels of confidence and self-esteem, and developed a greater sense of appreciation for their communities and for rail travel.

Some students have gone on to complete work experience placements with Southeastern, and their achievements were also recognised by being named Kent Young Volunteers of the Year for 2019.

Involving Children and Young People

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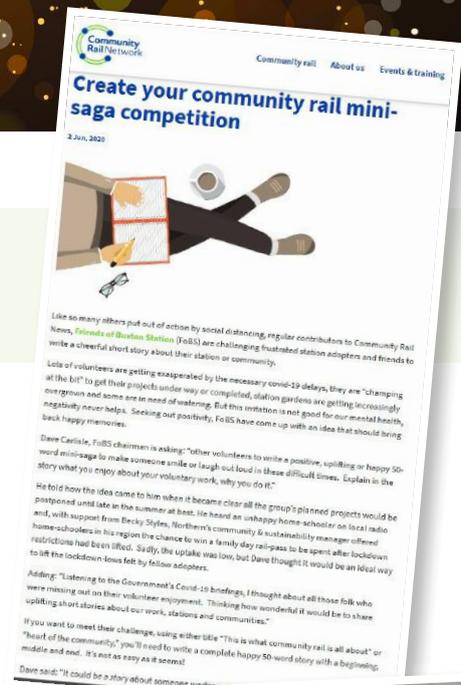
Second

Friends of Buxton Station for Mini-Saga Challenges

The Friends of Buxton Station (FoBS) became concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of young people in their local communities during the government's first Covid-19 lockdown.

With the aim of keeping positive thoughts alive, the group issued an innovative and creative writing challenge, asking young people to use the mini-saga concept to write imaginative and happy stories in exactly 50 words, taking their minds off any thoughts of negativity or confinement. Using the title 'It happened at Buxton Station', they contacted Buxton Junior School and encouraged pupils who were being home-schooled to enter. The three winning entries received family rail passes courtesy of Northern, and were featured in local media.

FoBS then decided to use National Volunteers Week in June to expand the project to encompass volunteers across the wider community rail movement, asking people to create stories using the titles, "This is what community rail is all about", or "Heart of the community". The challenge received an enthusiastic response, with many station adopters sharing inspiring and uplifting experiences that allowed people to reconnect and interact in a positive way.



Third

Community Rail Lancashire for Ticket to Pride

Ticket to Pride, a joint project between Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and the Proud Trust, focused on tackling anti-LGBT+ hate crime on the rail network, aiming to ensure that young people from all groups and backgrounds could travel safely.

The project's aims were to 'prevent, educate, and enforce', via a series of elements devised and created by young LGBT+ people themselves. This included a poster campaign, now on display at 40 Northern stations, encouraging people not to be bystanders if they witnessed hate crime, and a public art trail, taking in 14 stations across the North West, raising the positive visibility of LGBT+ people and promoting community cohesion.

Young people also benefitted from rail journeys to increase their travel confidence, and education sessions focused on how to safely support each other and report hate crime safely in partnership with the British Transport Police. These sessions not only broadened their travel skills,

but also addressed isolation and loneliness issues that many young people, especially from marginalised groups, may face.

The project received extensive coverage in local media, and CRL were also invited to participate in a Department for Transport LGBT+ and Allies Network event as a recognised national expert group.



Involving Diverse Groups

sponsored by LNER

First

Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership for Lyric and Line

Concept and aims

Music has the power to engage people; that is the simple concept behind **Lyric and Line**.

Singer-songwriter Gareth Davies-Jones approached Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership (TVCRP) with a proposal to use songs to facilitate various community views of rail travel. For some time, the partnership had been exploring different ways of identifying and understanding barriers to rail use, particularly among groups with additional needs. They wanted to find a way to engage people in more depth, seeing the railway through their eyes.

What happened

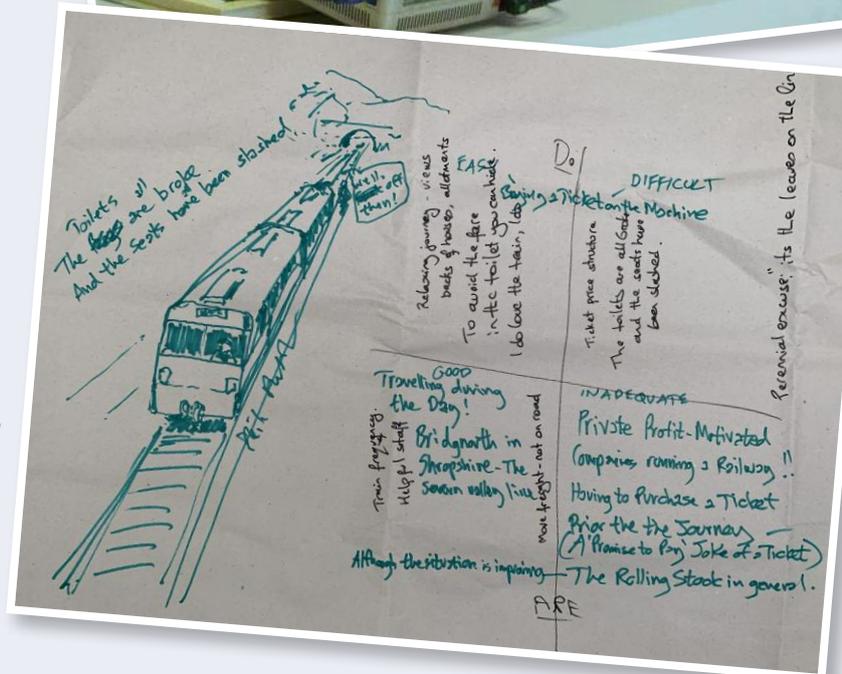
Gareth focused on three groups, who despite being familiar with the partnership's work, did not habitually use the train. Over three months, he built relationships with Gibside SEND School in Gateshead, who regularly took part in TVCRP's education programme, Journey Enterprises, a charity for adults with learning difficulties who run the coffee kiosk at Hexham Station, and Zig Zag, a group for adults experiencing social isolation.

Gareth ran song writing sessions with the groups, bringing out their views on rail travel through music. Each one wrote and recorded an original song, identifying their challenges in using the train and the joys of rail travel.

Gibside School pupils spoke of the railway as 'an adventure', while Journey focused on the practicalities of travel. Zig Zag, who had the most experience of rail travel as a group, highlighted that using ticket machines, a fear of buying the wrong ticket, and worries over toilets and the height of train steps were all barriers to their rail use. However, they were also clear that if you get it right, rail travel can be 'the best way to understand the world'.

Results

Each group was able to record an initial version of their song just before the beginning of the first Covid-19 lockdown. TVCRP had planned to promote the work at various events, but instead, hosted an online Zoom session in which Gareth explained the project and played the songs, to overwhelmingly positive comments. The partnership now plans to package this session as a webinar on its redesigned website.



Gaining valuable insights into the views of the three groups has enabled TVCRP to set specific working objectives to reduce barriers to travel and build on the excitement that Lyric and Line has created. The project had an immediate impact with Journey, who took a group on the line for the first time in March 2020.

Involving Diverse Groups

sponsored by **LNER**

Second

Community Rail Lancashire for From Seats to Sacks

From Seats to Sacks aimed to reduce social isolation amongst female Muslim ex-offenders by bringing them together to transform used railway moquette into story sacks, giving community rail partnerships across the North a new literary resource to encourage engagement with local primary schools.

Community Rail Lancashire worked with members of the Muslim Women in Prison Project to organise sewing sessions. The women, at-risk of being ostracised and vulnerable following their release, not only learnt new skills, but forged friendships, increased their self-esteem, and gained railway confidence via a trip to the National Railway Museum in York. For one, it was the first time she had left the house with her family for seven years, while another said being involved had helped her to “open closed doors.”



The sacks, which were filled with goodies and a copy of the Stay Safe with Thomas book, were launched at a media event last Autumn and distributed to community rail partnerships and station adoption groups. They have been praised as an “invaluable aid” in engaging young children, with an “inspiring” background story.



Third

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership, Govia Thameslink Railway, County Care, and the Aldingbourne Trust for Good to Talk, Even Better to Share

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership (SCRCP) and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) realised that the first Covid-19 lockdown presented challenges to voluntary groups with additional needs and learning disabilities who engaged regularly with the railway. These included County Care, who are involved in station gardening, ‘Try the Train’ trips, and other accessibility projects, and the Aldingbourne Trust, a charity supporting people with learning disabilities and autism whose members travel independently by train to support station projects.



SCRCP officers and GTR contacted the groups’ support workers, as they knew members would be struggling due to the ban on travel, resulting in social isolation and anxiety at a loss of routine. Knowing that railways were a huge part of their lives, they devised a range of accessible and interactive online activities to keep the groups informed and engaged, letting them know they hadn’t been forgotten.

The partnership created WhatsApp groups and Facebook pages, held quizzes, ran ‘Guess the Station’ photo competitions, and ensured that group members stayed in touch. They also shared videos and photographs of station staff at work, e.g. tending to plants, so members still felt part of projects and were comforted that their hard work had not gone to waste.



Community Art Schemes Permanent and Larger

sponsored by **Abellio**

First

Community Rail Lancashire for Horizons

Concept and aims

This project was born when Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) began working with the Carlton Junior and Infant School in Dewsbury, whose pupils rarely engaged with the railway and in many cases, had never been on a train before. The school's headteacher was keen for this to change, and for pupils to embrace opportunities to raise their aspirations and ambitions.

Pupils from the school's art club wanted to create a piece of artwork that reflected the town and its diversity, and would give the Grade-II listed station a more welcoming environment and community feel.

What happened

Local artist Candida Wood spent ten weeks with the art club, working with pupils on a David Hockney inspired mural. The children decided which important landmarks should be included to reflect Dewsbury and its communities, choosing a train and viaduct, countryside, the town's famous mills, and both a church and mosque.

One pupil said he wanted the piece to 'put Dewsbury on the map', resulting in the idea of pointing an arrow from the running board to a globe. After members of the school community had painted the mural, an image was printed for the station, with the original put on display at the school.

Aside from the artwork, more than 200 hundred pupils from the school took part in railway education sessions, with classes travelling to Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, and York, during which they learnt how to buy a ticket, where to wait on the platform, and how to behave on the train.



Children also took part in sessions where they learnt about rail safety, careers in the industry, and explored opportunities of using the railway to commute to other cities in the North. Parents were engaged too, learning about family and friend railcards, the dangers of trespassing, and potential careers in rail.

Results

The mural's title reflects a deeper understanding of life, travel, and future opportunities gained by the children involved in the project, using rail to broaden their Horizons. The artwork has also given the children an enormous sense of pride, and a feeling of ownership over their local station.

The eye-catching mural, which was supported by TransPennine Express, has helped to raise the profile of the station and Dewsbury as a town, signified at a grand opening event attended by local MPs, the Mayor of Kirklees, local councillors, and the Deputy Lieutenant to the Queen. The children were hailed as a "credit to their community"; with the mural perfectly "portraying their ethos, values, and diversity."



Community Art Schemes Permanent and Larger

sponsored by **Abellio**

Second

The Lightbox and South Western Railway for We All Have a Happy Place – For Us it's Woking Station



The Lightbox, a charity devoted to promoting community wellbeing through art, approached South Western Railway (SWR) with an ambitious project to create standout displays on the footbridge at Woking Station. The aim was to raise awareness of the charity's work, and promote the notion among passengers and visitors that art has the power to make you feel good.

With SWR providing funding towards the project, 12 posters were installed to add colour and vibrancy to what was a previously "uninspiring" space, featuring uplifting messages promoting positive thinking and wellbeing, such as, "We all have a happy place – where is yours?," and "When was the last time you took a moment for you?"

The artwork instantly improved the look and feel of the footbridge, clearly communicating messages of mindfulness to passengers using one of SWR's largest stations. The pieces were well-received by station staff and passengers alike, and SWR has shared the replicable concept with other community groups on its network. The project also supported and aligned with SWR's efforts to reduce suicides at the station, which had been identified as an area of high concern.



Third

East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership for Liss Station Vinyls

The Victorian buildings at Liss Station were demolished in the 1970s, and local residents had long yearned for the current station to better reflect its railway history and place within the community. The aspiration was to make the interior of the station seem less drab and industrial by creating something visually attractive to passengers with a welcoming community feel.

East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership worked with local stakeholders, including the South Downs National Park and Liss Historical Society, to dramatically transform grey aluminium panels within the station booking hall, adding a series of brightly-coloured and informative vinyls. The boards display breathtaking views of the South Downs countryside and images of Liss Village over the last 125 years. The enhancements also prompted Liss Model Railway Society to install a working model of the historic Longmoor Military Railway in the station building, creating much local and visitor interest.

The vinyls have been extremely well-received, with residents stating they reflect the location and history of Liss and help to integrate the station with the village. Based on the positive reaction, the community rail partnership is now considering further displays to enhance other areas of the station.



Community Art Schemes Renewable & Smaller

sponsored by **Transport for Greater Manchester**

First

Track Record Arts and Severnside Community Rail Partnership for Track Record – The Soundtrack to the Severn Beach Line

Concept and aims

Track Record came about due to the fondness that local Bristol poets and musicians Eyebrow and The Spoke had for the Severn Beach Line. They wanted to fuse music with the written word to create a soundtrack for the line that passengers could download and enjoy while making their journey.

Supported by the Severnside Community Rail Partnership, the main aims were to celebrate the line, provide an enriched travel experience for regular passengers, and attract new visitors to the area to enjoy the lower Severn Vales.

What happened

The artists used the stops on the line to divide ambient jazz music into eleven tracks, layered together with eighteen poems inspired by history, with themes including urban, suburban, industrial, post-industrial, rural, picturesque, homespun, and spectacular.

The poetry was informed by a series of creative writing workshops held in communities along the line, identified as areas of restricted cultural opportunity. Participants used the sessions to share memories of the line and describe how the stations and the journey had evolved over time. The workshops fostered new connections between the people involved and their local railway, and built their confidence in writing for enjoyment.



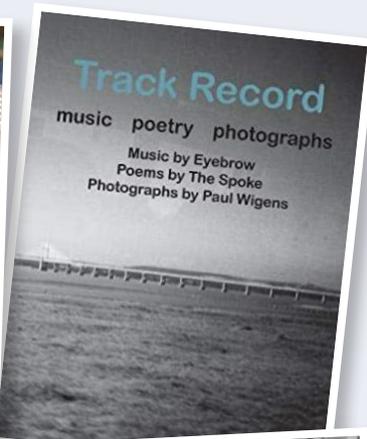
Results

The launch of the project saw two sold-out journeys of the line, with 120 passengers enjoying an innovative 'silent disco', listening to the soundtrack through headphones. One participant described the experience as "evocative, thought-provoking, and different", while another said the journey had been "enchanting, educational and charming." The afternoon culminated in an extremely well-received performance of the full soundtrack to an audience of around 500 people at the Severn Vale Festival.

A book of the poems and a CD were released in September 2019, and an initial run of 500 copies quickly sold out. The soundtrack was then made available as a free download from the Track Record Arts [website](#) for people to access via their own devices as they travelled along the line, receiving more than 400 downloads in its first six months.

When the first Covid-19 lockdown brought strict travel restrictions, the number of downloads of the soundtrack increased, as while they couldn't travel, people could still enjoy the rail journey experience from the comfort of their homes.

The project has been praised for its "fabulously creative" multimedia approach, one that could potentially be replicated on other lines to promote community rail and the arts.



Community Art Schemes Renewable & Smaller

sponsored by **Transport for Greater Manchester**

Second

Community Rail Lancashire for #BeeFree MCR

Given the ongoing success of their Rail Confidence Programmes, Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) are taking an increasing number of young people to Manchester, many of whom have special educational needs.

As well as experiencing the journey, pupils at Astley Park SEND School in Chorley were keen to encourage people to explore the rich history of the city while they were there. They were fascinated by Manchester's iconic bee symbol, and decided to use this as the basis for a new interactive walking map and activity booklet.

The children worked with CRL to plot the walking route, research the bee symbol and Manchester's history, and come up with bee-related jokes and artwork. They also walked the route to check it was safe and appropriate, taking photographs for the activity booklet.

The map links Manchester's two major stations, Piccadilly and Victoria. It encourages young people with SEND to maintain a focus on their surroundings, providing a positive distraction from the busyness of the city centre for those sensitive to crowds and over-stimulation. The resource also has space for pupils to add their own colourings and comments, offering something personal to take back to school to remember their visit by.



Third

Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership and South Nottinghamshire Academy for Inter-Generational Art

Station adopters at Radcliffe-on-Trent had identified areas of the station they felt would benefit from high-quality artwork, and as a result, were approached by the head of Art at South Nottinghamshire Academy, who was keen to get students involved. Working with the Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership, all parties came together to devise a project that would satisfy the criteria for the school's fine art qualification, and stimulate community cohesion and interaction.

Students visited the station to speak to adopters and discuss potential themes for the final pieces. To inform the process further, they also delivered an art lesson at Manor House, a local residential home, sharing their skills with residents on techniques such as pencil drawing, charcoal, and water colours, a session that was greatly appreciated by all involved.

As well as improving the appearance of the station, the artwork has added to the students' portfolios and, by having it on display locally, given them a great sense of pride. The scheme of work has now been incorporated into the academy's curriculum on a bi-annual basis, with the hope that the platform will benefit from further community-inspired artwork over the coming years.



Most Enhanced Station

sponsored by **Greater Anglia**

First

Haslemere Arts Society, Museum, and Town Council, with Surrey County Council, South Western Railway, and regional partners for Haslemere Community Station

Concept and aims

Haslemere became a 'community station' in 2015, bringing together a huge range of partners including the town's council, business chamber, museum, and arts society, alongside regional partners South Western Railway, Surrey County Council, Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, South Downs National Park, and the National Trust.

The market town has lots of independent businesses, a rich cultural history, and many popular events, and directly accessible from the station are a host of trails in the South Downs and Surrey Hills, ideal for walkers and cyclists to access by rail.

The group wanted to develop the station further, so it was not only more attractive and welcoming for passengers, but a true gateway to the town and its surrounding area, acting as a key focal point for visitors.

What happened

The main aspect of the redevelopment was a revamp of the station's community information hub. This was transformed from a modest facility only open in the summer months to a bigger space that is now open all year-round. More than 35 volunteers now help to run the hub, which has a new community events space and provides a wealth of information to both visitors and local residents.

Other enhancements have included new flower beds and planters, artwork from local schools, a large 'Totem' displaying maps of the town and its countryside, a defibrillator, and a hand-painted life-sized Surrey Hills cow decorated with the local 'Rail to Trail' cycle route.



Results

The project has not only improved the aesthetics of the station, but also created a welcoming environment that enhances the visitor experience and promotes the social and economic vitality of Haslemere. The hub has created a real buzz within the community, rejuvenating the enthusiasm and motivation of volunteers and cementing positive, closer relationships with station staff.

The number of visitors using the hub has risen dramatically since 2017, and the site also caters for regular users such as large walking groups. Volunteers have also developed the hub's online presence, and have a growing number of followers on social media.

The redevelopment of the station has been greatly appreciated by passengers and local residents, with one telling volunteers: "This is a wonderful idea – every station should have one!"

Most Enhanced Station

sponsored by **Greater Anglia**



Second

Friends of Gipsy Hill for Rejuvenation of Gipsy Hill

Inspired by the Gipsy Hill Station cat, Fanny, the new Friends of Gipsy Hill group launched an ambitious crowdfunding scheme to transform the South London station and its surroundings, which had become derelict and overgrown. The project received strong community support, with volunteers keen to rejuvenate the station's green spaces and make it more appealing.

The group has created a sustainable community garden, which features an orchard, hedges, an edible garden area, and a wildflower embankment. The area is used as a green space for the community, with monthly action days offering volunteering opportunities and social activities for local residents, families, schools, and other community groups.

Informed by community engagement sessions, the group worked with the local council to fund and install a new tree and public planting area by the station, named 'Station Square'. The authority also supported work to improve safety

on station approaches, installing a new road crossing and relocating bins that were impacting step-free platform access.

A hugely popular aspect of the revamp is a new mural on the station bridge, installed in consultation with Network Rail. The local community chose the colours and design, with the new artwork described as "the talk of the town."



Third

Five Acre Wood Special School and Grow19 for A Chance to Grow

The Five Acre Wood (FAW) and Grow19 Project empowers students aged 16 to 25 with additional educational needs to feel valued in their community and develop functional skills through real-life experiences. Kent Community Rail Partnership worked with the group to transform an unsightly grassed area outside Snodland Station, plus the station's booking hall, with all activities linked to their coursework and portfolios.

The partnership organised training around rail confidence and independent travel to allow the students to visit the station to develop their ideas. They formulated project plans and budgets, prepared the ground, built planters and researched flowers and plants to include, and designed and created artwork to enhance the station interior.

FAW have now adopted the station and become an active member of the Medway Valley Line group, offering a youth voice on future projects and events. The students continue to maintain the site, which gives them an enormous sense of pride and achievement, and has reduced litter and anti-social behaviour. Aside from improving their teamwork and practical skills, the students have vastly improved the appearance of the station and its standing within the local community.



Small Projects Award – Under £500

sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

First

Friends of Hunmanby Railway Station for Attracting Passengers to Hunmanby's New Hourly Train Service

Concept and aims

Hunmanby Station was due to receive a greatly enhanced train service from May 2019, with hourly 'Turbo Star' trains complemented by improved facilities at the station, including ticket machines, real-time information boards, waiting shelters, and CCTV. The challenge the station friends group faced was how to attract more passengers to the station, which has no parking facilities and is a 15-minute walk away from the village. The group decided to engage the community to ascertain their views and gain support in raising awareness of the revamped station and timetable.

What happened

The group decided to focus on improving the passenger experience by making Hunmanby a community station and a true gateway to the village. They learnt that people were put off travelling by the "gloomy" appearances of the platforms, so set about transforming them with homegrown plants, flower borders, and artwork created by local school children, making the site feel safer and more attractive.

A key part of the project was working in partnership to strengthen relationships with the village's residents, community organisations, and local businesses, and the friends group designed a website to promote local attractions alongside the new train service. They also worked with a local social enterprise and adult education charity to produce an easy-to-read train timetable and local events guide, containing the details of a host of village groups. More than 20 volunteers then helped to deliver 3,000 of the timetables to Hunmanby and its surrounding villages, highlighting the station upgrades and the new train services.

Results

The group held a launch event at the station to promote the new timetable, which was well-attended and received coverage in local media. As a result of their efforts, the number of passengers using the station rose by around 30% between May 2019 and March this year.

Passenger numbers were dramatically affected by Covid-19, but the group adapted their website accordingly, replacing information on local events and attractions with advice on how residents could stay safe and well. Given its improved profile and appearance, the station also became a popular place for local residents to walk to during the first Covid-19 lockdown.



Small Projects Award – Under £500

sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

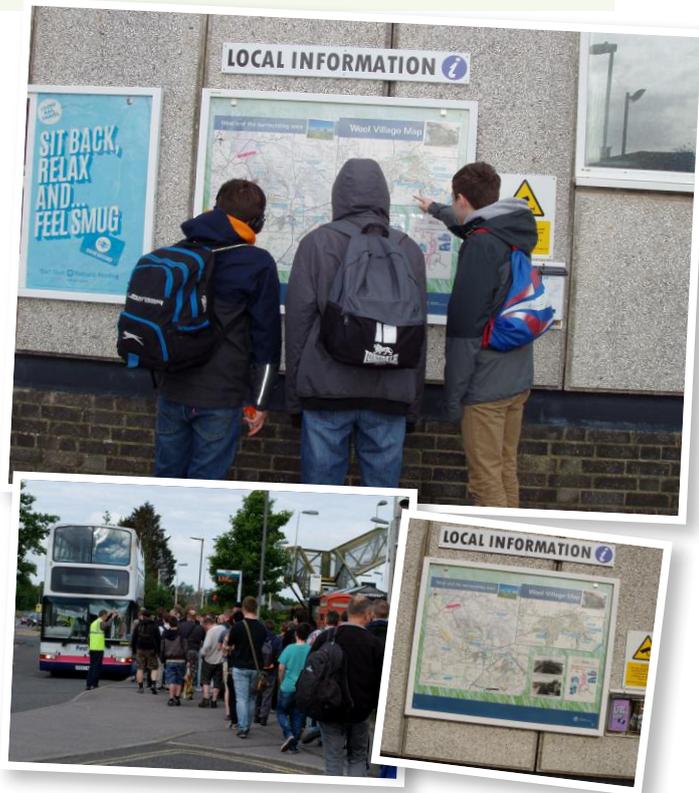
Second

Friends of Wool Station for Making Connections

A common question when people step off a train and enter unfamiliar surroundings is, “where to now?” At Wool Station in Dorset, the station group have tackled the issue with their Making Connections project. Their aim was to enhance the experience of station users by improving information about onward travel in a more welcoming environment.

The group completed an audit of existing signage and information and identified a number of potential improvements, including the installation of a detailed map of the village. To supplement the information provided by train and bus operators, they created their own easy-to-follow guides in the form of a Tube-style map of local bus and rail routes, bus timetable summaries, and travel information for websites. Now, whenever there is a timetable change, the group liaises with local parish councils and information outlets to make sure all information is accurate and up-to-date.

The group also coordinated travel arrangements with local tourist attractions, setting up a shuttle bus service and acting as station ambassadors for visitors arriving by rail to major events such as ‘Tank Fest’ at Bovington’s Tank Museum. A local information point is now housed at the station containing all the ‘last-mile’ information that visitors need.



Third

Friends of Brockenhurst Station for Launching Towards Community Engagement

When the Friends of Brockenhurst Station (FoBS) were established in 2019, their main aim was to reconnect the station with its communities. Members felt that local residents merely absorbed the station in the background, rather than embracing the many benefits it could offer.

They created a brochure to mark the launch of the group, re-telling the history of the station to encourage engagement and interest. This was designed as both a souvenir item and a tool to increase membership. The picture-led publication balanced historic narrative with content aimed at younger readers, such as a ‘did you know?’ page dedicated to the ‘Snakecatcher’, who used rail to transport hundreds of adders from Brockenhurst to London Zoo to feed the animals. Volunteers distributed 1,500 copies of the brochure at the station and other village outlets, resulting in new members signing up.



FoBS also wanted an opportunity to engage the local community face-to-face, and devised a ‘Carols Under the Canopy’ event in December 2019 to coincide with the annual village Christmas fayre. Members met returning commuters under the ticket office canopy at the station with mulled wine, mince pies, and seasonal songs, chatting with more than 125 people to again raise the profile of the group.



Best Community Engagement Project

sponsored by **Rock Rail**

First

Community Rail Lancashire for Women in STEM



Concept and aims

In 2019, only a quarter of employees working in core Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) industries were women. A need to address this led to Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) creating Women in STEM, a project designed to address gender bias and banish stereotypes that certain roles were only suited to men. The initiative looked at ways to encourage more women and girls to join STEM roles in these industries, and opportunities to promote their views of these exciting roles within rail.

What happened

A key element of the scheme was empowering women and girls from a wide range of ages and backgrounds to communicate and share their views to rail industry stakeholders, ensuring that rail embraces equality, diversity, and inclusivity as it continues to grow. CRL recognised that by promoting and championing the voices of women and girls, the project could help shape the future of rail as an attractive option for travel and employment for all women.



Sessions included a meeting with female Merseyrail staff in a group interview scenario, confidence-building rail trips for women who spoke English as an additional language, art sessions around gender balance for younger entrants including Brownies, guided sessions for young women with disabilities, trips to engineering depots with university groups, and LGBTQIA+ inclusive sessions around inclusion related to gender identities. All sessions focused on the STEM and technical roles within rail, giving participants valuable insights into that side of the industry.



Results

More than 300 women and girls took part in the project, using the sessions to create writing and artwork pieces to express their views on issues important to them, including making rail inclusive, gender balance, and mental health. Rail industry professionals selected winners from hundreds of entries, with 32 authors and artists invited to an inspiring celebratory event at the National Railway Museum in York.

The project promoted community rail, as well as the need for greater gender balance in rail and across STEM, through coverage in a wide range of publications including Rail Staff magazine, The Manchester Evening News and The Liverpool Echo, and via a piece with the Manchester United Foundation in the club's official matchday programme, raising awareness of the project to thousands of fans.



Best Community Engagement Project

sponsored by **Rock Rail**

Second

Isle of Wight Community Rail Partnership and Lymington to Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership for Food On The Move

When the first Covid-19 lockdown hit, community rail partnerships were challenged as to how they could support vulnerable members of their communities. One key priority was ensuring that those who were isolating had adequate food supplies. As a result, the Isle of Wight and Lymington to Brockenhurst community rail partnerships redirected funds from Music on the Move, an annual summer music event, to support Food on the Move instead.

The Lymington to Brockenhurst partnership, with the support of the Friends of Brockenhurst Railway Station group, worked with Priestlands School and a dedicated team of volunteers to distribute non-perishable food parcels to more than 1,000 vulnerable families. Many of the recipients were children whose parents had been made redundant rather than furloughed, who were on low or no income and often living in rented or emergency accommodation.

On the Isle of Wight, staff at Sandown Railway Station's Gaslight Café worked tirelessly to provide 400 'Railwayman's Lunches' per week. Volunteers delivered the fresh food to vulnerable families and isolated elderly individuals living along the Ryde to Shanklin rail corridor, supported by a host of other local organisations and businesses. The response to the scheme was "overwhelming", with more than 5,000 people receiving support.



Third

Furness Line Community Rail Partnership and Lakes Line Community Rail Partnership for Skill Swap

Railway stations in Cumbria have been adopted by a hugely diverse range of community groups of varying sizes, each with their own specialisms and skills. Those involved in the Furness Line and Lakes Line community rail partnerships wanted to bring volunteers together to allow them to share experiences and best practice, resulting in the inaugural Skill Swap event.

More than 30 station adopters, representing 13 stations across the two lines, attended the event, benefitting from training workshops, updates from train operators and community rail partnership officers, and most of all, a valuable chance to network and share what works for them at their individual stations. Groups were given an opportunity to discuss prospective projects and ideas and develop closer working relationships for the future.

The event stimulated renewed energy, passion, and motivation for groups to take on new projects and activities, with one attendee describing the enthusiasm within the room as "infectious and inspiring." A second Skill Swap is now planned for station adopters on the Cumbrian Coast Line, and longer-term, the partnerships hope to establish a regular platform for all groups across the county to exchange ideas, discuss new innovative ways of working, and offer mutual support.



Best Marketing or Communications Campaign

sponsored by **CrossCountry**

First

The Bittern Line, Wherry Lines, East Suffolk Lines, Hereward Line, Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnerships and Greater Anglia for Room with a View

Concept and aims

The aim of this joint project between a host of community rail partnerships and train operator Greater Anglia was to attract more people to take days out on local branch lines. The group wanted to showcase the amazing places and attractions within easy reach of the lines, and highlight that with the introduction of new trains across the local network, passengers could sit back in comfort and enjoy the ever-changing scenery, like having a 'room with a view'.

The campaign also complemented sustainability objectives of all partners involved, in helping to remove congestion and pollution from popular locations by encouraging people to use the train for leisure travel rather than their cars.

What happened

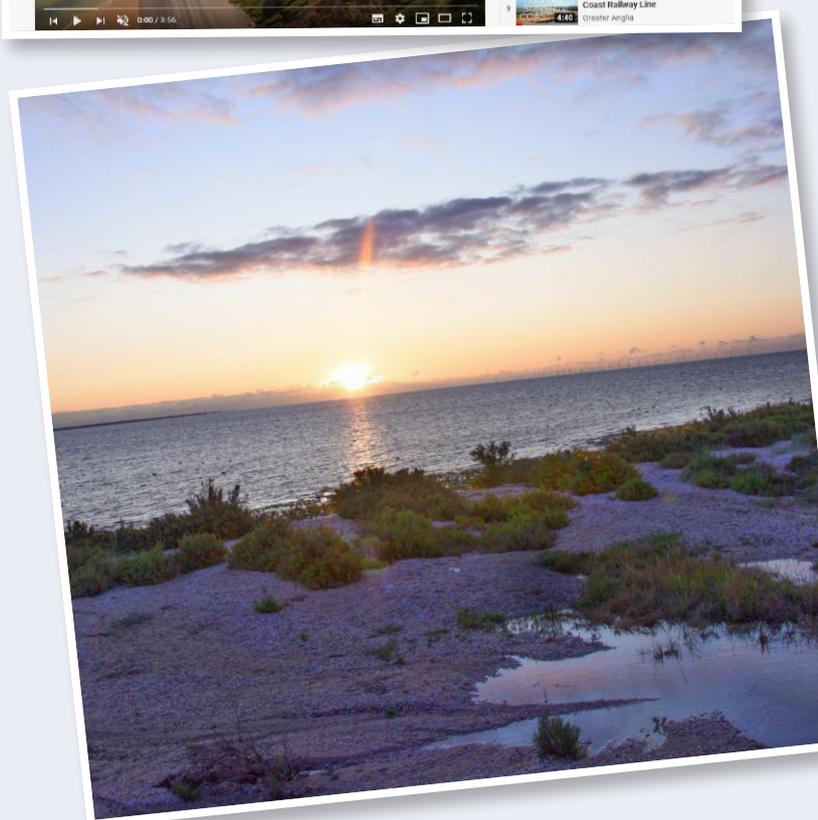
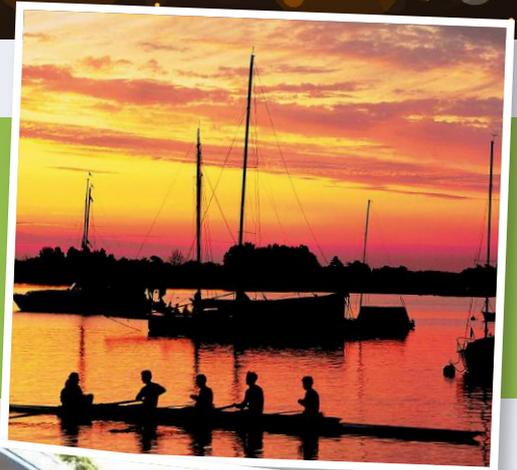
Recognising that the campaign needed to be visually engaging, the group commissioned promotional **videos** for eight separate lines across the community rail partnerships involved. Each partnership was instrumental in developing scripts and creating footage for the films, ensuring the most appropriate locations were included.

Greater Anglia then enlisted the help of their social media agency to promote each video through the community rail partnerships' Facebook pages, targeting posts to people in the region who enjoyed travel. Contained in each post was a link to a specially-created landing page on the Greater Anglia website, offering help for people to plan their trip. This included links to partnership websites, downloadable line guides, and specially-produced downloadable bucket (and spade!) lists that people could use to tick off the main things to do on the line, or even print and take with them.

Results

Information from the landing page allowed partners to measure their key outcome of how many people took steps to plan a journey, providing a clear indicator of intended behaviour and potential ticket sales. The data indicated a significant uplift in passenger journeys during the campaign period, generating an additional £108,492 in ticket sales and £11,400 through social media promotion.

The videos appeared in around 1.29 million people's Facebook feeds, and were watched by 223,000 people, who enjoyed the "beautiful and inspirational" footage. Overall, a total of 17,700 people clicked through to the Greater Anglia landing page, smashing the project's original target of 200.



Best Marketing or Communications Campaign

sponsored by **CrossCountry**

Second

Hereward Community Rail Partnership for Online Consultations

To maintain meaningful levels of community engagement throughout station improvement schemes, the Hereward Community Rail Partnership created a method of delivering simple and effective consultations online without alienating community members who were less confident with or had limited access to technology. This was evidenced in Summer 2019, when the partnership facilitated an online consultation allowing the public to choose their preferred improvements to waiting shelters at Manea and Whittlesea stations, which were then subsequently installed.

Earlier this year, another consultation was planned to inform a community-led redesign of a building at March Station. A programme of face-to-face meetings and physical information displays was organised, but then swiftly had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. The consultation could not be delayed due to the time-sensitive nature of the work, so the partnership stepped in, using their experience of online consultations to redesign the programme and collect the data required. They developed a survey to collect feedback, and for anyone without online access, advised how information could be provided by phone.

The partnership's expertise and timely response has allowed the project to remain on target for completion in Spring 2021, and ensured that community engagement has been retained at the forefront of the process.



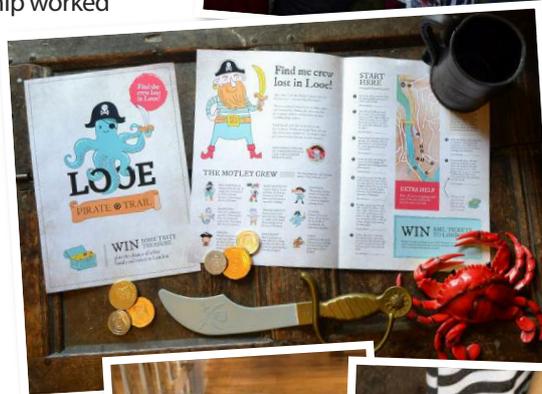
Third

Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for Looe Pirate Trail

Everyone loves pirates, especially children. So, what better way to entice families to take an out-of-season train journey to the Cornish resort of Looe than with a pirate trail?

In February this year, the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership worked with local businesses to create a self-guided treasure hunt starting at Looe Station that took in shops and restaurants throughout the town. Families picked up their free trail booklet on the train and followed clues to find loveable pirate window stickers at each venue. Once they'd found the crew the children could claim their own treasure, a bag of chocolate coins and a sticker of their favourite pirate.

The trail was promoted widely on social media and despite the area being hit by the high seas of Storm Dennis, it proved to be a swashbuckling success, with 100 children and families taking part. As well as introducing new generations to train travel and educating them about some real pirate stories, including Looe's own, the project gave a boost to the local economy, with some businesses reporting a 20% increase in footfall over the week. The partnership plans to repeat the project during school holidays once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.



Influencing Positive Change & Sustainable Development

sponsored by TransPennine Express

First

Community Rail Cumbria, Millom Discovery Centre, and Flimby Primary School for Better Side of the Tracks



Concept and aims

West Cumbria has 29 communities ranked in the top ten per cent of the most socially and economically deprived areas in England. All lie along the route of the Cumbrian Coast Line, in neglected coastal communities such as Barrow-in-Furness, Workington, and Maryport.

Numerous studies have concluded that deprivation can have deep and lasting effects on young people. Community Rail Cumbria were aware of this and wanted to explore how community rail could play a role in helping to bring about real and positive change for children and families.

What happened

The partnership worked with Flimby Primary School, which serves a community high on many deprivation indices. The first step saw the school adopt their village station, and the children showed their appetite for change by creating artwork and a project entitled 'Stop Smashing Our Windows', aimed at reducing vandalism and promoting social inclusion and community responsibility.

Pupils were given the opportunity to experience train travel, some for the first time, and the journeys introduced new dimensions to the curriculum, allowing their inquisitive minds to benefit from practical ways of learning about issues like healthy lifestyles and the environment. They took the train to learn about and join their local library, and also discovered the Roman history of Maryport via storyboards on the station platform.

Every child from the school, together with staff, community volunteers, and parents, visited Millom Discovery Centre and its museum. They learnt how rail had impacted on the area's industrial and social past, as well as enjoying the centre's model railway and other attractions. Community Rail Cumbria has formed a strategic alliance with the centre, which has opened up new funding streams for future projects from organisations such as the Heritage Lottery and the Arts Council.

Results

The project has been hugely appreciated by those living in Flimby, with the revitalised station placed at centre of the community with young people leading the way. One resident told the partnership that the station was now "at the heart of positive change, not negative behaviour", while another parent said, "the pupils are inspiring their brothers and sisters to respect each other and take pride in their village."

Community Rail Cumbria has used the project to develop a more substantive strategy for supporting other deprived communities, and has used the influence and persuasion of



community rail to engage other organisations, including working with Cumbria County Council on introducing family learning sessions, and Barnardo's on counselling to help deal with anxiety among school children.

Influencing Positive Change & Sustainable Development

sponsored by **TransPennine Express**

Second

Community Rail Lancashire for The Autism-Friendly Line



There are around 700,000 people on the autism spectrum in the UK, and being overwhelmed by unexpected changes when taking public transport is one factor that can lead to autistic people becoming socially isolated. Community Rail Lancashire (CRL), in partnership with Northern and the National Autistic Society, created the UK's first autism-friendly railway line, focusing on the need to increase inclusion for those with less-visible disabilities.

After a comprehensive consultation with project partners, local families, teachers, and young people with autism, the 'Todmorden Curve' line between Blackburn and Manchester was enhanced in a number of ways designed to make the travel process easier for autistic passengers. Train staff received training on autism, specialist resources were stored at stations, including sunglasses and ear defenders to assist passengers who have sensory needs, and activity books and a tailored line guide were developed, featuring access information, tunnel/sensory details, and specific station images.



The project enabled families who had never, or rarely, used rail before to access the line, and 100% of attendees at its launch event said they would use the line again. CRL has since developed a best practice guide on autism-friendly initiatives, and delivered autism-friendly and neurodiversity rail workshops for Network Rail and Transport for London.

Third

Incredible Edible Bristol, Severnside Community Rail Partnership and Great Western Railway for The Secret Garden at Avonmouth Station

In 2018, approximately 14,000 Bristol households had occasions when they were unable to afford sufficient food to keep themselves healthy. Many were referred to food bank charities and became dependent on emergency food supplies.

The Secret Garden at Avonmouth Station came about when a disused platform compound was transformed by volunteers into a food growing and learning scheme. The aim was to empower members of the community, of all ages and backgrounds, to develop skills to grow some of their own food at home, thereby reducing dependency on charitable support and maximising the health and wellbeing benefits of growing and eating fresh produce.

With funding from Great Western Railway and help from their apprentices, the project is led by Incredible Edible Bristol, supported by Severnside Community Rail Partnership, volunteers from Network Rail, and the local Community Payback Scheme. 'Wellbeing Wednesday' sessions allow vulnerable people to drop in on an informal basis, some signposted under social prescribing by GP and NHS services.



An array of fruit and vegetables are now being produced and shared with the local community centre, providing ingredients for soup and lunch clubs. Since Covid-19, produce has also been included in food parcels distributed to those most in-need.



Tourism & Heritage Award

sponsored by **Transport for Wales**

First

Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership, Lowestoft Central Project, Lowestoft Heritage Open Days Festival, and Network Rail for Lowestoft Signal Box Tours



Concept and aims

The Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership and Lowestoft Central Project team wanted to offer unique tours of Lowestoft Signal Box, which had overseen the town's station and goods yard for over 100 years but was due to close in February 2020. The aim of the project was to engage people in railway heritage and the community rail movement, and also incorporate the tours as a major focal point for Lowestoft's Heritage Open Days Festival.

The closing of the signal box was part of a significant £60million modernisation scheme for the Wherry Lines, including the installation of new signalling and automated crossings, and the tours also offered an opportunity to raise awareness of the ongoing project and the impact the forthcoming works would have upon the town and its rail services.

What happened

After liaising with Network Rail throughout 2019, the project team devised a system for running the tours, ensuring they were inclusive for all, including those with mobility issues. A press release was circulated widely, coupled with extensive promotion via social media. The team also used the visit of a steam train to Lowestoft in August 2019 as an additional opportunity to promote the tours.

To complement the Heritage Open Days Festival in September 2019, the team worked with the East Anglia Transport Museum to arrange a free vintage bus service that called regularly at the station during the festival, enabling visitors to enjoy a tour of the town. At Lowestoft Station itself, the Parcels Office hosted a free photographic exhibition showcasing the changing local railway scene over the past five decades, and a series of talks about local history, including the life of Samuel Morton Peto, who first brought the railway to the town and developed much of Victorian Lowestoft.



Results

Successful promotional activity resulted in the tours being oversubscribed, but the local operations team worked hard to organise extra capacity to cope with the demand. Several hundred visitors, ranging from ages five to 89, were able to experience the thrill of seeing a working signal box in its final months of action, and were able to take away a factsheet outlining its important role in Lowestoft's railway past.

The publicity generated around the signal box tours resulted in wider promotion of the overall Heritage Open Days Festival, which in the end, attracted 15,000 visitors to the town, the most successful festival to date and a key event for promoting tourism and the local economy.



Tourism & Heritage Award

sponsored by **Transport for Wales**

Second

Furness Line Community Rail Partnership and Morecambe Bay Partnership for To Stations and Beyond - Wayfinder Maps on Furness Line Stations and Window Gazer Guides

The Furness Line in Cumbria offers spectacular seascape views across tidal sands and places rich in history and wildlife, but there was little at the line's stations to reflect the environment it passes through. The local community rail partnership, working with the Morecambe Bay Partnership, wanted to signpost people to attractions easily accessible from the railway, encouraging them to explore local landmarks and boost local economies.

The team created and installed easy-to-read wayfinder panels for each station on the line, each one showcasing historic and natural treasures in the local area. The vibrant maps were complemented by a handy pocket-sized 'window gazer' leaflet, which passengers could use to observe notable landmarks as they enjoyed their journey. The leaflet was made available at stations, tourist information centres, and popular tourist attractions, encouraging people to "spot" their way along the line.



The project successfully filled a void for visitor information along the scenic route, evidenced by the fact that only a handful of 10,000 'window gazer' leaflets remained when Covid-19 restrictions took hold in March. Following their popularity, Cumbria Tourism has now agreed to fund and develops new 'window gazer' guides for all Cumbrian lines.

Third

Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership for Christmas in St Albans by Community Rail

Christmas is always a busy time of year for businesses and local tourist attractions along the Abbey Line. To try and promote its work and raise awareness of local sustainable travel by rail, the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership devised a Christmas tourism campaign to get more visitors using the line and promote its own festive celebrations.

The partnership worked with its local tourism body and various popular local attractions to coordinate the campaign, encouraging passengers to visit Christmas events by train. They also collaborated with a local primary school, who designed festive banners to brighten up Watford Junction, Abbey, and Bricket Wood stations.

Despite the line being affected by strike action throughout December resulting in no weekend services, the campaign still went ahead, and staff and volunteers were able to engage with passengers to spread the word about the partnership's work and activities, alongside some festive cheer!

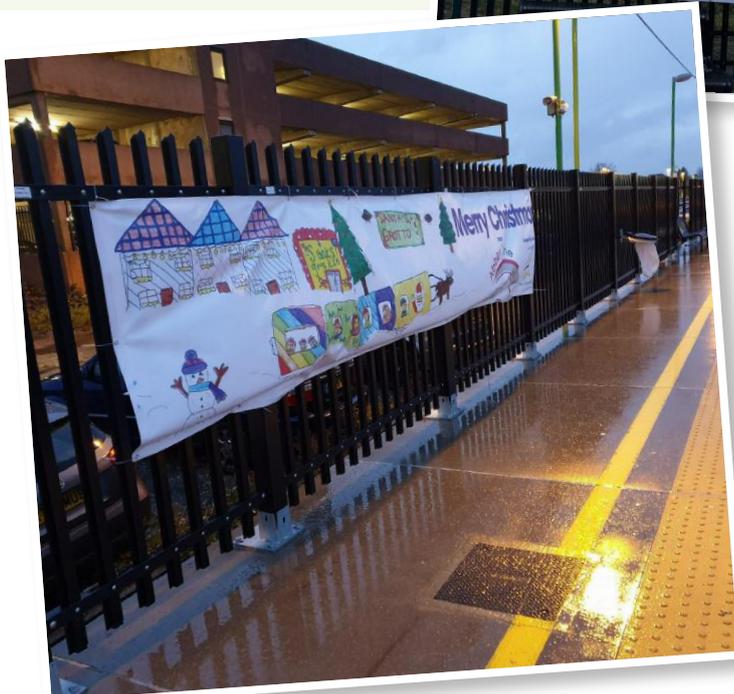


Photo Competition | 'Community Rail in Action'

sponsored by **Porterbrook**

First

'Age is Just a Number' – Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership



Photo Competition | 'Community Rail in Action'

sponsored by Porterbrook

Second

'Snodland Garden, Growing Together!'
Kent Community Rail Partnership



Third

**'It Seems They
Enjoyed Their Visit!'**

Bedford to St Albans
City Community Rail
Partnership



Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

sponsored by Merseyrail



First

Kath Warbrick – Friends of Aspatria Station

About Kath

Following the retirement of a couple who had tended the station planters for many years, Aspatria Station became somewhat neglected and unloved. Kath and her husband Keith offered renewed hope and optimism. Health issues meant that Keith was unable to carry out any physical work, but, undaunted, Kath took it upon herself to seek the additional support she needed to make her hometown station something the community could be proud of.

Assembling a new team

Kath set about putting exciting plans for the station in place, and successfully engaged a number of partners to share in her vision of turning Aspatria into a welcoming place of colour and beauty. They included the deputy mayor, the town council, Community Rail Cumbria, Northern, community police, a criminal justice charity, and local businesses. All offered their support, and by single-handedly raising the profile of the station, Kath also recruited two new like-minded adopters to form a small but determined team.

Revitalising the station

With her new team in place, former nurse Kath set to work weeding, sanding, sweeping, and clearing away any signs of damage. Gradually, new planters and hanging baskets appeared with bright floral displays, fences and gates were repaired or replaced, sad patches of rough ground became tidy white gravelled areas, and a plaque thanking a local charity shop for their ongoing support was proudly displayed on the northbound platform.

The station sprang back to life, resulting in a reduction of anti-social behaviour. The revamp also stimulated interest from the local secondary school, whose students built and installed a wooden seat and planter to further enhance the look of the station. There are now plans in place to work with the school to create a community herb garden.



Championing station adoption

Kath's hard work and dedication is there for all to see, with the county council describing her transformation of the station as "miraculous." Her efforts didn't go unnoticed by the media, and Kath faced the ITV news cameras to promote the value of station adoption and the benefits it can offer communities. She is also always ready to support fellow volunteers, and has lent her enthusiasm and expertise to other, new station adoption groups.

Describing Kath, a colleague said: "Her can-do attitude, leadership, and mentoring skills continue to inspire, and her passion and unstinting desire to help people and communities flourish shines through. Her efforts have revitalised the station, generating renewed interest and community pride, and she has every intention of making Aspatria Cumbria's best loved station!"

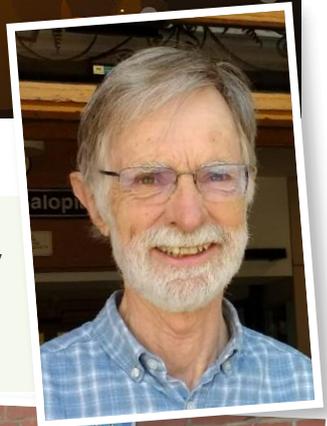


Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

sponsored by Merseyrail

Second

Mike Willmot – various community rail groups, including the North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership and Helmsdale Station CIC



Mike Willmot's commitment to community rail has provided the driving force for major initiatives in three parts of the UK: Staffordshire, Shrewsbury, and the North of Scotland.

Mike set up the North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership in 2005 and has been chair ever since. His dedication to partnership working has secured support from four different local authorities and train operators, and the group achieved accreditation from the Department for Transport in October last year.

In Shrewsbury, Mike is heavily involved with station travel planning activities, working with a huge range of partners to improve access. Re-opening a footpath to the station to improve pedestrian links is now included in the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan as a key strategy for reducing town centre traffic.

In Scotland, Mike led the £175,000 restoration of the station building at Helmsdale, creating holiday accommodation and community facilities, run by Helmsdale Station CIC, that are vital to locals and visitors alike. He is currently leading on developing a community rail partnership for the Far North Line.



Described by colleagues as someone whose "enthusiasm and drive are second to none", Mike also served on Community Rail Network's board, and was instrumental in the creation of the 'community stations' concept.

Third

Sarah Hampton – Friends of Beeston Station

Sarah Hampton was a founder member of the Friends of Beeston Station (FoBS) when it was set up in 2017. The station had seen little investment for 25 years, but now, £1.2million has been earmarked for platform refurbishments and major accessibility improvements, including new lifts.

As secretary for the group, Sarah has been a driving force behind the projects, with her background in disability awareness fuelling a passion that rail travel should be accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities or mobility issues. She was instrumental in putting together a business case for the funding, compiling extensive research, and liaising with key rail and government partners.

Sarah has also been inspirational in integrating the station with its local community, coordinating gardening and painting activities, the refurbishment of the near derelict 'Tin Bridge' footbridge, and the transformation of one platform into a photographic display, featuring storyboards and images of the station and town, described by locals as a "treasure trove of memories."

Sarah's invaluable passion and commitment is described as "the glue that holds FoBS together", and one colleague said: "Because of her extraordinary dedication and skills, we can look forward to a new phase in the station's history."



It's Your Station

sponsored by **Avanti West Coast**

LEAD *Platinum* Friends of Buxton Station

Having achieved platinum level in this category in 2019, the Friends of Buxton Station (FoBS) enjoyed another stellar year, extending their already expansive range of community development and environmental work. They continued their varied biodiversity projects, including the conversion of a tree-strewn area of land into a new Japanese Garden, and the creation of a wildflower garden with bat boxes and bee hotels, built with pupils from a local secondary school. The group also developed their diverse range of artwork, working with students from the University of Derby and residents from a nearby care home to produce murals, mosaics, and statues to make the station more welcoming.

The group have cemented their place at the heart of their community, leading on local events, installing an information point at the station, acting as consultees over the local council's Future High Street Funding bid, and during the first Covid-19 lockdown, initiating a campaign to encourage rail users to support local retailers. They continue to share their enthusiasm

and expertise, and over the past year, have helped establish a new adoption group at Dove Holes and presented at a Northern conference. FoBS go above and beyond the work of a station adoption group, and were recognised this year by Buxton Civic Association, who awarded them 'heritage hero' status.



LEAD *Gold* Friends of Rose Hill Station

Rose Hill took top prize in the 2019 Best Kept Cheshire Station Awards for its gardening and growing community engagement projects, and the Friends of Rose Hill Station have continued this work over the past 12 months. Members have been busy expanding the platform 1 embankment planting area and the station's community orchard, and new projects have included the creation of a 'help yourself' herb bed, new bird boxes, and wildflowers to attract bees.

The group celebrated the 150th anniversary of train services at the station in 2019, forming the basis for a number of community projects and events highlighting the importance of the line, including a photo and artefacts display exhibited in local libraries, commemorative plaques for former stations and a newly restored North Staffordshire Railway bench at Rose Hill, a cycle ride and guided walk, and a painting competition for pupils at Rose Hill Primary School.

Members continued to raise the profile of the group by hosting events including their popular Santa train, creating a presentation on the story of the station for local community groups, and updating their 'Walks from Rose Hill' leaflet. They

also increased their profile on social media, and continued working in partnership with the nearby Friends of Marple Station and local neighbourhood forums.



It's Your Station

sponsored by **Avanti West Coast**



LEAD

Silver

Reedham Station Adoption Group

The green-fingered group of station adopters at Reedham Station care for two platforms featuring an array of tubs and planters and an embankment overlooking the station entrance. They practice pesticide-free gardening and recycling, have compost bins and a water butt, and are now nurturing a small wildlife area, planted in late 2019. It is a relatively large group, and members enjoy the social opportunities offered by regular gatherings.

The station houses a small heritage centre, where visitors are encouraged to learn about its history and enjoy railway memorabilia. The group helps to raise awareness of the local railway by distributing guides and walking leaflets, and last winter, worked with the Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership to install two information plinths featuring station and railway history linking a new walking trail with various landmarks in the village.

The group organises a range of events to engage the local community, including working with the local school and hosting tea parties to raise money for local charities. Members also host a popular Christmas carols event at the station, involve villagers in baking and cake sales, and support the community rail family by volunteering at events at neighbouring stations including Lowestoft and Oulton Broad North.



LEAD

Bronze

Evesham Station Garden Project



The small team at Evesham, situated on the Cotswold Line between Worcester and Oxford, have been working on the station garden and platforms since 2014. In that time, they have transformed what was an overgrown and neglected area into one that is now hugely appreciated by visitors, passengers, and railway staff.

More than 1,400 reclaimed bricks uncovered on the site have been used to lay out a series of paths and to construct a number of raised beds. Extra planters have also been added along the recently extended platforms, to provide vibrant and colourful views for passengers. To encourage wildlife to the garden, the group have created four small ponds, including one as the central feature of one of the new flower beds.

The group are adept at forging partnerships with local businesses, with two garden centres supplying plants either free or at discount price, and residents also donating

plants and equipment. Water butts have also been obtained from a local food manufacturer to collect rainwater and reduce the need for mains water.

The group have put up notice boards to keep the public updated on their projects, and are now working with the recently established Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership and Great Western Railway to develop their activities.



Community Rail Network Award for Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail

Awarded to

Community Rail Education Network

The seeds for our winning entry were first sown back in 2017, when colleagues within community rail began discussing the concept of linking community rail partnerships through education work. Community Rail Lancashire, with support and funding from Northern, developed the idea, and the Community Rail Education Network was born.

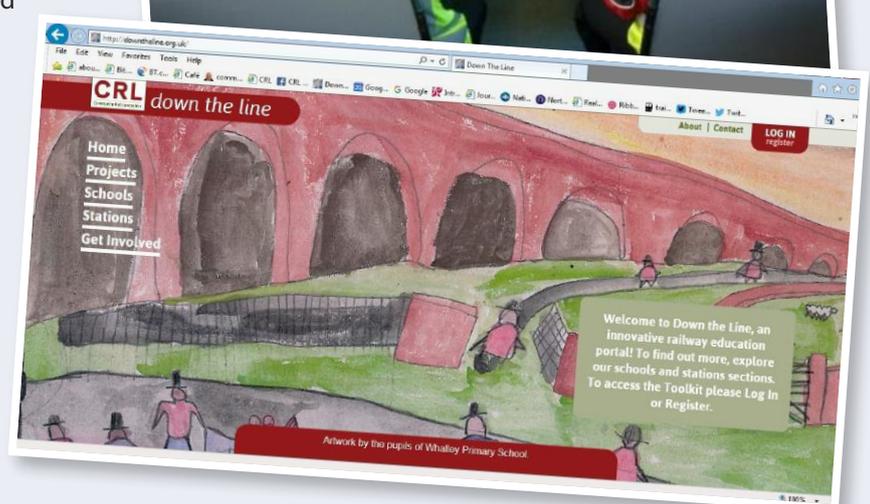
Its objectives were to share best practice and successes in educational engagement amongst community rail groups, to offer a tool for communication and support, and to provide training and impetus to trial new ideas and innovative ways of linking education and community rail. The ethos behind the network was to provide opportunities for partnerships and groups to support each other.

Since its inception, the group has devised and promoted a host of educational resources and projects, many of which can be found on the '**Down the Line**' website. The network was also instrumental in the creation of Community Rail Network's youth engagement strategy, which in turn led to our recent youth engagement report.

The network was initially open to community rail partnerships and groups across the Northern network, but when Covid-19 hit, the group moved its meetings online and invited members from across Britain to join. One thing that many people missed about usual community rail life was the interactions with others, and the network's virtual gatherings offered a hugely appreciated opportunity to see friendly faces, chat, and share ideas and thoughts.

The sessions not only allowed people to share ideas and good practice, they also provided a continued sense of community, providing many, often lone workers, with support, comfort, and motivation during a difficult time. As engagement work had to be done virtually, the network explored new ideas and ways of working to enable continued engagement with schools and colleges. The group has been commended for their adaptable and innovative approach, and successful projects such as **Backtrack**, a national competition devised by the network to tackle rail trespass among young people.

The work of the network is growing ever more important, as members consider how education and its links to community rail will evolve over the months and years to come. The meetings continue to provide crucial peer support, and members have reaffirmed just how much the group is appreciated by all involved.



Railway Family Supporting Communities Award

sponsored by Rail Delivery Group

Awarded to

**Shellene Divall and Christine Holland
for The Scrubs Project**

This special award was created for 2020 to recognise individuals within the rail industry and community rail who have gone the extra mile to support their communities during the coronavirus pandemic.

This year has been a challenging time for everyone, but countless members of our railway family, at all levels, went above and beyond their usual duties to help, making a real difference to people's lives.

When Covid-19 first hit, huge demands were placed on the NHS and care sector, and our winning pair, Shellene and Christine, immediately set out to help. They began making much-needed scrubs and bags for their local hospital, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, as well as other medical centres and care homes. Between them, they sourced materials and threads from friends and sewing groups, and secured donations and support from the local business community, included a clothing firm who cut the patterns for the scrubs on their industrial machines.

As volunteers for their local station adoption group, they also worked with their community rail partnership, Community Rail Lancashire, and St. Anne's Town Council to obtain funding to support their efforts. Being able to buy clothing materials in bulk was vital, as demand for the scrubs quickly began to outstrip supply. Undaunted, Shellene and Christine merely upped their commitment, and leading by example, they encouraged more people to get involved, working with volunteers at other stations on the line to support the project, bringing local communities and rail partners together at a time of national crisis.

This win really is a family affair, as aside from both being station adopters at St. Anne's Station on Lancashire's South Fylde Line, Shellene, who works in the care sector, is also Christine's niece! They are described by those that know them as "invaluable assets" to their community, filled with a determined resolve to always actively seek out and help others.

Their efforts in supporting frontline health workers were hailed by their community rail partnership as a "shining example of rising to, and meeting, an unprecedented challenge in a practical way, and inspiring others to do the same."



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 Community Rail Development 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 Community Rail Awards. We are therefore delighted to be associated with them.



Department
for Transport

Angel Trains

Angel Trains is delighted to be the headline sponsor for this year's Community Rail Awards. We have a long history of supporting community rail partnerships and throughout our 25 years we have demonstrated our strong commitment to building and investing in the future of the UK rail network. Community rail partnerships are vital to the success of the rail industry, and we recognise and wholly support the people and communities who work tirelessly to ensure that we meet the current and future needs of UK rail passengers.



The Rail Delivery Group *Rail Delivery Group*

The Rail Delivery Group continues to work with Community Rail Network 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 Community Rail Network's work as we commit to enabling more people to benefit from travelling by train.



Transport for Greater Manchester

We believe that community rail is an important and valued 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.



Great Western Railway

Great Western Railway is proud to sponsor the 2020 Community Rail Awards. As a company we are committed to ensuring people in our communities get the most from their railways working alongside local, regional and national partners, community rail partnerships, groups and volunteers. We are delighted to see the community rail partnerships on our network growing in stature and recognition and having such a positive impact on people's lives. We thank each and every volunteer involved for all their hard work and commitment.



TransPennine Express

TransPennine Express is delighted to support the Influencing Positive Change & Sustainable Development 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 service 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!



South Western Railway

South Western Railway is delighted to sponsor this year's Community Rail Awards. We recognise that the passion of volunteers is at the heart of community rail and helps to make stations gateways to the communities they serve, not just a place to catch a train. We are proud to celebrate the hard work of all volunteers nationally, and would like to offer our congratulations to everyone who has been nominated for this year's awards.



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. Community rail partnerships and station groups 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 Community Rail Network. This award has attracted some very exciting projects in the past and with an ever-tightening financial position facing many, doing a lot with a little will become ever more important.



Avanti West Coast

Avanti West Coast is proud to be supporting community rail partnerships across our network and working together to involve communities in everything we do.



Rock Rail

We are delighted to sponsor the 'Best Community Engagement' category 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.



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 Community Rail Network and is proud to be involved in this year's event.



Eversholt Rail

Eversholt Rail is delighted once again to be a sponsor of the 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 Community Rail Network team, which is fundamental to ensuring that we understand stakeholders' needs and provide cost-effective rolling stock solutions optimised to meet them.



Grand Central Rail

Grand Central is proud to support the Community Rail Awards. Putting rail at the heart of the community underpins everything we do, and we are delighted that these awards recognise the fantastic work being done within community rail in engaging diversity, improving mobility and raising awareness. We wish all the nominees our heartfelt congratulations for the sterling work they're doing.



CrossCountry

CrossCountry is delighted to support the Community Rail Awards 2020 and sponsor the Best Marketing or Communications Campaign category. These awards recognise passionate individuals who make a real difference to the villages, towns and cities that the railway serves. They celebrate the fantastic contribution community rail partnerships make to society.



Merseyrail

We are delighted to continue our long-running association with the Community Rail Awards. We are committed to working in partnership with community groups, schools, colleges and charities to support local community initiatives and it's these people and organisations who enable us to deliver such a range of beneficial projects in their areas, and make our stations an integral part of the community. 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.



Transport for Wales

Transport for Wales is again delighted to be sponsoring the Tourism and Heritage category at this year's Community Rail Awards. We continue to be impressed with the great work that our community rail partnerships and station adopters do for tourism and the heritage railways in the Wales & Borders region. We have just introduced our first new community rail partnership in South West Wales that is being hosted by 4theregion, a community interest company with lots of ambition. We will be working more closely with Community Rail Network to introduce more community rail partnerships over the coming years.



LNER

LNER is passionate about the diverse communities we serve.

We are committed to supporting and promoting social projects in these communities to create an inclusive culture where people can be themselves. We're proud to work together with community rail partnerships and are delighted to be sponsoring the Involving Diverse Groups category at the 2020 Community Rail Awards. This prestigious event offers a valuable opportunity to celebrate the dedication, professionalism and passion of everyone involved. Well done to everyone who has been nominated!



Porterbrook

Porterbrook is proud to sponsor the 2020

Community Rail Awards. For over 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. Community Rail Network 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.



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 one of the Community Art Scheme awards, which celebrates creative achievements that complement our investment in new trains and services by bringing station environments to life for passengers. We wish all nominees the best of luck for the evening, and for the future success of their projects.



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 station adopters to maximise the community benefits of the new trains 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.



We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all sponsors
of the Community Rail Awards 2020

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