



Community Rail Awards hosting – invitation to bid for 2022

We are looking for a committed partner to work alongside **Community Rail Network** is looking for a committed partner to work alongside us in hosting the **Community Rail Awards 2022**. With such significant changes occurring in the railway industry, we feel that it is becoming more appropriate for us to offer the headline sponsorship opportunity more widely across the industry, so we are inviting bids to host the Community Rail Awards 2022 from both train operators and our industry and corporate partners.

This is a great opportunity for the headline sponsor to showcase their own community rail activities or linked work to the rest of the community rail world and the wider industry. A significant sponsorship contribution is expected and in return the partner organisation will be listed as **Headline Sponsor of the Community Rail Awards 2022** and will receive a package of benefits.

The enthusiasm of the headline sponsor is as crucial to our decision on where to hold the awards as the venue itself. We have been very fortunate in having worked with some incredibly supportive train operators over the years, who have been as committed to working in partnership with Community Rail Network to make the awards and associated events a success.

About the Community Rail Awards

The Community Rail Awards, historically held every October, are all about rewarding excellence and promoting best practice in community rail, recognising the people doing wonderful work on behalf of their communities and railways. It is the chance for community rail to shine, showcasing the array of important work going on throughout Britain, and a unique opportunity to gather influencers and decision makers to show what community rail achieves.

Our awards presentation event is considered by many to be a highlight of the railway calendar. It is attended by a wide range of guests from community rail officers, chairs and volunteers to senior train operator executives, senior civil servants, government ministers, and third and public-sector partners. More than 460 guests attended the last live event in 2019 in Telford. The awards are critical to Community Rail Network's ability to understand and promote good practice in community rail. We regularly receive more than 200 entries, these feed into our year-round work supporting community rail as case studies and good practice. 2020 was delivered as an online event and we are currently planning a hybrid event in Southampton in December 2021, and we expect that this may become our regular format going forward from there. [Take a look at our previous Community Rail Awards events](#)

Partnership working to deliver the Awards

Venue

The most crucial aspect of delivering the awards is the venue for the gala dinner. The venue must have capacity for up to 500 people and with the appropriate event infrastructure such as a stage, screens and technology. Some headline sponsors have presented a handful of options allowing Community Rail Network to choose which they feel is the most suitable.

Programme of delivery

As headline sponsor, we ask that the host organisation delivers a complimentary seminar during the day of the awards presentation event, with topics and details to be confirmed by the host in consultation with Community Rail Network. Historically, these seminars have been by invite only and mainly aimed at community rail partnership officers / chairs, but this can be at the host organisation's discretion. These seminars have been very well received in the past, offering a chance to network and share good practice, as well as to showcase the impact being delivered through community rail in the area. In some cases, host organisations have also organised 'market stalls' and banners at the main local station to welcome guests to the town or city and to also promote community rail to other local rail users. *The seminar would be organised and co-ordinated by the host organisation, but Community Rail Network will act as consultants in the process where appropriate.*

Social trip or activity

We also propose that the headline sponsor organises a post-awards train trip / station activity or both on the day following the awards. This provides further networking and showcasing opportunities, as well as a sociable and enjoyable addition to the awards event and a chance to 'wind down' the day after the awards. Past activities have included a trip on a local community rail line and/or a heritage railway, a train naming, a reception hosted by a local dignitary, a station gala or a guided tour. Again, this would be organised and co-ordinated by the host organisation but Community Rail Network act as consultants where appropriate.

Local travel for awards guests – *where the host is the local train operator*

Host train operators have provided complimentary extended local rail travel for awards guests. This was created either in the form of a two-sided ticket produced as a dinner ticket one side and a permit to travel on the other (specifying exactly which routes were permitted) or as a smartcard. Where the host organisation is a train operator, Community Rail Network would encourage them to provide the same with a permit to travel Thursday to Sunday for local community rail lines and other services that connect those lines together. This would encourage people to extend their stay over the weekend to explore community rail in the local area.

Steering group

Community Rail Network suggests that a steering group is formed within the host organisation to manage the co-ordination and delivery of the accompanying events. Community Rail Network will support this steering group with expertise and advice from a Community Rail Network representative attending these meetings where possible, and via Zoom/Teams/phone at other times. Community Rail Network will also liaise regularly with a nominated event lead at the host organisation by phone and email to update on delivery of the event, seek approval on materials, and ensure all parties are happy with progress.

Optional entertainment at dinner

We encourage the host organisation to work with us collaboratively to ensure the awards are as successful, enjoyable and memorable as possible. For example, by organising evening entertainment before, during or after the presentation event. All options happily discussed.

Sponsorship and benefits

Community Rail Network requests **£5,000+VAT** sponsorship of the Community Rail Awards, with the host organisation being named as headline sponsor.

In return for this level of sponsorship we offer the following benefits:

- Headline sponsor status on all publicity materials, including prominent branding wherever possible.
- Two free sponsor places at the gala dinner.
- A discounted table of 10 at awards event.
- A senior member of your team invited to co-host and present the awards on the night, alongside Community Rail Network's chief executive.
- Sponsorship of an awards category at 50% discount, with all associated branding benefits.
- Prominent branding and link to your website on Community Rail Awards pages on Community Rail Network website.
- Prominent branding as headline sponsor on front page of the entry booklet.
- Prominent branding as headline sponsor on front page of dinner programme.
- A paragraph at the top of the messages from sponsors pages in the entry booklet and web pages.
- Acknowledgement and thanks as headline sponsor in the gala dinner presentation.
- Prominent branding on hanging or pop-up banners at the gala dinner.
- Acknowledgement on all Community Rail Network social media channels as appropriate, including scheduled dedicated posts.
- Prominent acknowledgement as headline sponsor and a quote in our media releases promoting the Awards.
- Support from Community Rail Network in promoting your sponsorship, such as providing information, images and thank you messages for inclusion in your corporate communications.
- An opportunity to include souvenir items and information in the 'goody bag' given to guests as they leave the event.

The above list represents standard benefits on offer to the headline sponsor. Additional value may be derived through working collaboratively to identify related opportunities to promote the project and the host organisation's support.

How to bid

Please submit a bid to Hazel Bonner at hazel@communityrail.org.uk by **30 July 2021**, outlining your proposals, including:

- A suggested suitable venue(s)
- The structure for your steering group / management of the project
- Your programme of delivery / seminars
- Suggested social trips / activities
- Any additional proposed entertainment
- Agreement to the sponsorship level

Feel free to express an interest and discuss your ideas with Hazel before submitting your final bid.

Hazel Bonner

Events & fundraising Manager

Community Rail Network

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