



Headline sponsorship of the Community Rail Awards 2025

About community rail:

Community rail is all about ensuring communities get the most from their railways. Working alongside local, regional and national partners, community rail partnerships and groups around the country aim to play an important role in social inclusion, community wellbeing and economic development, and promote rail as a key part of sustainable, healthy travel.

Community Rail Network supports more than 70 [community rail partnerships](#) and over 275 smaller community groups, such as [station friends or adoption groups](#), around Britain. These groups work along railway routes to connect communities with the railway, train operator and other partners. They deliver a [range of activities](#) locally, often involving volunteers, which contributes significantly to the needs of their communities and the railways.

About the Community Rail Awards:

The Community Rail Awards are all about celebrating the passion, commitment, innovation and best practice in community rail, recognising the volunteers, groups and partnerships doing wonderful work on behalf of their communities and railways. It is the chance for community rail to shine, showcasing the array of work going on across Britain, and showing influencers and decision makers what community rail achieves. See our [2022 Award Winners booklet](#).

Our awards event, held in October, is considered 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. 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, which feed into our year-round work supporting and championing community rail.

For the first time in 2022, we took the decision to offer headline sponsorship of the Community Rail Awards more widely. Historically, headline sponsorship has been solely available to train operators but for 2022 we are delighted to provide this opportunity to other industry supporters of community rail.

This is an opportunity for the headline sponsor to show their support for community rail and commitment to working with and serving communities as part of an inclusive, sustainable, community-minded industry. We are looking for a committed partner to work with us to ensure the event is a success and delivers major benefits for you as sponsor and the community rail movement as a whole. As headline sponsor, you will receive an outstanding package of benefits (see below).

Venue requirements and event format

In previous years the Awards have moved around many locations so we know selecting the right venue for the gala dinner is crucial, with capacity of up to 500 and appropriate facilities. Previously the awards followed a traditional sit down dinner and gala event format but in 2022, our event in Manchester followed a more flexible and informal approach and was very successful.

Partnership working:

Community Rail Network's highly experienced **events team**, made up of Hazel Lavery (Events and fundraising manager) and Hannah Cottrill (Events and partnerships officer), bring decades of experience in delivering a range of high-profile events. Their commitment to delivering the Awards over recent years despite the challenges and adversity of the pandemic, has showcased not only their expertise and organisational skills, but also their ability to adapt and rise to the new challenges. The team prides itself on working in partnership with headline sponsors to keep them regularly informed and engaged throughout the process and help them to reap the associated benefits such a partnership brings.

There are also opportunities for the headline sponsor to run complimentary events either side of the Awards if they so wish. In such cases, we suggest a steering group is formed with the headline sponsor to manage the co-ordination and delivery of any accompanying events. We can use our expertise and advice to help coordinate this steering group as needed and involve other local partners if beneficial.

OPTIONAL: Day time seminar

The headline sponsor has the option to deliver a complimentary seminar on the day of the awards, with content to be agreed in partnership, and our help promoting this to awards guests. Historically, these seminars have been mainly aimed at community rail partnerships and groups in the area, but this can be explored. These seminars have been well received in the past, offering a chance to network and share good practice. In some cases, sponsors have also organised stalls and banners at the main local station to welcome guests to the town or city and to promote community rail to other local rail users.

OPTIONAL: Social trip or activity

The headline sponsor also has the opportunity to organise a post-awards outing / activity, or both, on the day after. This provides further networking and showcasing of community rail, as well as a sociable and enjoyable addition to the awards event and a chance to 'wind down'. 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 and a guided tour. This would be organised by the sponsor with us acting as consultants and helping to promote any activity to guests.

Headline sponsorship packages and benefits

We have **sole** or **joint headline sponsorship** packages available, with an accompanying range of standard benefits, plus the chance to work collaboratively with our team to help you get the most from the opportunity:

- Four free sponsor places at the Awards (if co-sponsors, this would be two places each).
- A discounted table of 10 at awards event (30% off).
- 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 following Awards literature, plus a headline paragraph at the top of the sponsors' pages in the entry and winners' booklets:
 - Entry booklet (online)
 - Dinner programme (hard copy)
 - Winners' booklet (online)
- Prominent branding on Award banners on the night.

- Acknowledgement and thanks as headline sponsor at the Awards presentation.
- 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. This includes local and regional press releases for every winner, plus a national press release to transport, rail and third sector media.
- Support from Community Rail Network in promoting your sponsorship, such as providing information, images and thank you messages for inclusion in your corporate communications.
- As above, headline sponsor/s also are given the opportunity to organise events before and after the Awards, which our team will work with you on and help you to promote and get benefit from.

Joint headline sponsors: Co-sponsors, £6,000 +VAT (per sponsor)

Headline sponsorship and benefits (as listed above) are shared between two sponsors unless otherwise stated. Community Rail Network would facilitate conversations around shared benefits as needed.

Sole headline sponsor, £12,000 +VAT

As sole headline sponsor you receive all the above listed benefits without sharing the exposure. Additional sponsorship benefits include:

- Up to two discounted tables of 10 at the awards event (30% off).
- Sponsorship of the 'Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail' Award.

NB. Additional, lower level, sponsorship opportunities are also available, such as sponsoring an individual Award category, sponsoring the drinks reception etc. Details of additional 2025 sponsorship opportunities will shortly be available on <https://communityrail.org.uk/events-and-campaigns/community-rail-awards>

To discuss becoming headline sponsor please call Sarah Fatica (07983 919702 / sarahf@communityrail.org.uk) or Hazel Lavery (07786 190774 / hazel@Communityrail.org.uk).