



ENTRY BOOKLET



Community Rail Awards 2024

Closing date for entries: Monday 9 October 2023
Shortlist announced: Wednesday 13 December 2023
Awards gala event: Monday 18 March 2024, Swansea Arena

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“ **Through another challenging year, at Community Rail Network we have been endlessly impressed by the endeavours, innovation and passion in community rail, and the impact being delivered with and for communities across Britain.**

To recognise and celebrate your work, we are excited to be gearing-up for the next Community Rail Awards, with the big event on **18 March 2024 in Swansea**. We hope you'll be joining us and encourage you to enter.

We believe the Awards are more important than ever, against a backdrop of tight rail industry finances and industrial action, many people struggling with cost of living, and the pressing climate crisis. The Awards help to showcase the social, environmental and economic value of community rail, why it matters and how it changes lives. These stories and case studies offer vital evidence for showing current and potential funders what our movement is capable of and how it provides tremendous returns for communities and railways.

Your award entries also paint a picture of how sustainable, inclusive travel and communities can be brought to life through local collaboration and action. Whether it's community gardening and arts projects bringing local people together, or boosting travel confidence to open up new opportunities, promoting greener tourism that's good for local business too, or improving active travel and bus connections – these inspiring examples help to show how we can strengthen and empower our communities while achieving a more sustainable future.

I can't emphasise enough that these awards make a huge difference to the community rail movement and its development – so I encourage you to enter.

Whatever you've been working on as a station group or community rail partnership, if you have something you're proud of, please don't hesitate to put yourselves forward.

Lastly, I want to thank those who make the awards possible, including our judges and sponsors, outlined in this booklet. We especially thank headline sponsors Great Western Railway and Transport for Wales, plus platinum sponsor Angel Trains, and Rail Delivery Group for again providing those shortlisted with a rail ticket to the event.

Best of luck, and we look forward to seeing you in Swansea!



Jools Townsend
Chief executive,
Community Rail Network



Support to help you enter and attend

Travel and attendance subsidies for shortlisted entrants:

We understand the financial difficulties that many of our members might face in attending the Awards so we will once again be offering subsidies to community rail shortlistees to help our members to attend the gala event in Swansea. The fund is limited and awarded to shortlisted entrants only, on a first come first served basis, and we will be accepting applications from 13 December when the form will be emailed out to all shortlistees.

Need advice on entering?

Do check the **Rules of Entry** and **How to Submit a Good Entry** pages in this booklet, and/or our **awards web page [HERE](#)** as your questions may already be covered in those.

We are also running weekly **online drop-in sessions** on Zoom to advise on entering, each Monday from 18 September to 9 October - see full schedule, with joining details **[HERE](#)**. You can ask questions on anything from the criteria to uploading your entry.

Adedoyin Ayoola – Senior Policy Advisor, Stations & Community Rail, Department for Transport

Ade has responsibility for supporting and promoting community rail development through the continued delivery of the Community Rail Development Strategy and engaging with key stakeholders.



Mark Barker – Chair, Cheshire Best Kept Stations

Mark is a career railwayman now retired after lengthy service, latterly as client & stakeholder manager for Northern Rail. He is now chair of Cheshire's Best Kept Stations, a group that recognises, promotes and rewards the work of volunteer and community groups at stations in the former county of Cheshire.



Paul Bigland – Photographer & Writer

Paul is a well-known photographer and writer whose career spans 20 years. He works for both the national and international media and companies within the rail industry.



Nicky Forsdike – Railway Consultant, Forsdike Associates

Nicky has an extensive background in developing business and marketing plans for railways. In 2018 she completed a PhD at the University of York which explores how rail industry managers know what they know, and why new timetables fail in implementation. Alongside her continued research she teaches marketing, business planning and entrepreneurship at undergraduate and postgraduate level.



Geoff Grant – Stakeholder Manager West Midlands, Transport Focus

Geoff works for Transport Focus, the independent statutory passenger watchdog, representing passengers across the West Midlands primarily with West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern, but also more widely. He is a member of the Grand Railway Collaboration supervisory board, and represents passengers on the North-West and Central Passenger Challenge Panel. Prior to joining Transport Focus, Geoff was the head of volunteering for British Gymnastics across three Olympic Games.



Dominic Lund-Conlon – Accessibility & Inclusion Manager, Rail Delivery Group

Dominic has worked in transport policy since 2012, on a variety of challenges, both customer and strategy focused. As a person with lived and professional experience, Dominic focuses on inclusive solutions that empower customers to control their journey with confidence and dignity. Recent projects include the Passenger Assist Improvement Programme and supporting Greater Anglia with the design and implementation of the new Stadler Flirt vehicles.



Alice Mannion – Campaigns & Leisure Promotions Coordinator, Community Rail Network

Alice coordinates Community Rail Network's annual Community Rail Week and Days Out by Rail campaigns, advising members on how to amplify their key messages and further raise the profile of community rail. Alice is also responsible for supporting members in the promotion of tourism and leisure travel on community rail lines, sharing her 18 years of tourism experience. Alice also manages Community Rail Network's tourism website, Scenic Rail Britain.



Vicki Pipe – Modern Railways Community Rail Columnist

Vicki's curiosity in railways rests with the stories of social change and how public transport has altered our sense of space and surroundings. She is the co-creator of All the Stations, author of The Railway Adventures, and Great British Railways: 50 Things to See and Do. She is also a regular columnist for Modern Railways, with a focus on community rail. When not writing about or travelling on trains, Vicki works in the wonderful world of museums where she has produced cutting edge programmes, activities and exhibitions with a diverse range of audiences. She has trained and managed teams, and collaborated with artists and communities from around the world.



Peter Roberts MBE – Chair Emeritus, Community Rail Network

With a career in transport spanning more than 55 years - public and private sectors, bus and train - Peter has been active in community rail at all levels for the past 20 years. Awarded an MBE for services to rural transport, he was chair of ACoRP (Community Rail Network) from 2003 to 2018. As a writer and historian, he continues his research and publications on rural transport.



Barbara Saunders OBE –
Consumer Consultant

Barbara is a consumer consultant and past board member of Passenger Focus (now Transport Focus), which represented passengers in the bus and rail sectors. She has considerable experience of complaints handling and regulating professions. Barbara is currently a trustee of the Association of Nutrition and the Academy of Nutrition Sciences. She brings an independent and analytical approach to the judging process.



Andy Savage MBE – Chair,
Railway Heritage Trust & National Railway
Heritage Awards

After 12 years as the Executive Director, Andy retired from employment with the Railway Heritage Trust in 2023, but was promptly appointed as its Chair. Andy's long involvement with the RHT has involved not only the restoration of the industry's built heritage but also finding new uses for redundant railway property. Andy is also Chairman of the National Railway Heritage Awards, of which he has been a Trustee for 13 years. Previously Deputy Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents, Andy has always had an interest in railway heritage, with well over 50 years working on the Ffestiniog Railway, nearly 40 of which were as a director.



Chris Selman – Stations & Community Rail
Policy Manager, Department for Transport

Chris has been the stations and community rail policy manager at the Department for Transport since May 2021. He previously worked as the policy lead for the Veterans Railcard and has also advised on HS2 policy. Before working in rail, Chris worked at the Department for Education, advising on academy funding policy.



Jim Trotman – Tourism Specialist

Jim has been involved with both tourism and community rail for many years. When working as tourism manager for Lancaster City Council, he was heavily involved with the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership and spent over seven years as an ACoRP (Community Rail Network) board member. In 2010 he became the Community Rail Officer for the Furness and Lakes lines, working closely with local station groups, councils, and Cumbria Tourism. Jim retired in April 2018, but remained involved for another couple of years as the vice-chair of the Lakes Line.



Entries will open **Monday 11 September** and close **Monday 9 October 2023**.

We are re-introducing 'It's Your Station', albeit slightly re-structured. We hope this is welcomed back with enthusiasm and of course lots of entries!

Please read the category criteria and rules of entry thoroughly before entering.

Entry is FREE and is an online process – you can submit your entry through our website [HERE](#) and follow the instructions, but please note point 1 below.

1. You may submit as many entries for different projects as you wish but each project can only be entered in one category.
2. You can start an entry, save it, and complete it later but final entries must be submitted no later than 17:00 hours, **Monday 9 October**. We encourage early submission, and it is advised to keep a copy of your entry, saved offline, for your own records.
3. Projects/initiatives must have been **delivered or completed** between **23 June 2022 and 09 October 2023, and must not have been submitted in 2022. If you're unsure about this point at all please drop-in to one of our sessions, the schedule is [HERE](#).**
4. **Summary of the entry** – you must submit a written summary of the entry in no more than **200 words**, within the online entry form. This is the first thing the judges read so please ensure this gives a clear and concise description. Please ensure you include the correct project title, as this will be used for shortlisted entries during the Awards evening.
5. **Full entry description** – as part of your entry you must upload a Microsoft Word document containing the full entry description in no more than **600 words**.

For Category 3. Community Creative Projects & Station Art – this allows for 750 words to be submitted here but please refer to the full category information for details.

For categories 1 to 7 and 9 to 11 – this must be written in the third person and in the format specified below.

Please set out in paragraphs clearly labelled as follows:

- **Concept and aims**
- **What happened**
- **Results**

See page 6 'How to Submit a Good Entry' for how to formulate the content of the full description. For examples, see the **2022 winners' booklet [HERE](#)**.

For categories 8 – Photo Competition, 11 – It's Your Station, 12 – Outstanding Volunteer Contribution and 13 – Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail, see 'How to Submit a Good Entry' on page 6 for category specific 'Full entry description' requirements.

6. Supporting Documents – please upload the following documents in support of every entry:

- **Current images** – these will be used in the awards presentation and winners' booklet if placed. **Images may also be used for publicity purposes in other Community Rail Network reports, resources, publicity and social media.**
- A minimum of **one** and a maximum of **four** photos with titles/captions. Images must be in JPEG format only and of high resolution (minimum 300dpi). Action shots are preferred where possible.
- **Please note:** If any images or videos show health & safety contraventions the entire entry will be disqualified – see the **health & safety guide [HERE](#)**.

In submitting photos you confirm that:

- All people within the photos have provided consent for their photos to be used in publicity including print, online and all social media channels. If the photos contain images of children under the age of 18 written consent must be secured from the parent or guardian, either directly or via their school/college.
- You are the owner of the image(s) and agree to it/them being used in publicity. Or, the image(s) is/are not your own but you have the relevant permissions/consent to submit on behalf of the owner, and they agree to them being used in publicity. In this case, you must state within the 200-word summary section who you are submitting on behalf of and provide clear photo credits where appropriate.

Other relevant supporting material – limited to a maximum of four items, such as testimonials. These are to be in PDF or JPEG format, unless this is a video/audio file, in which case we ask that a link is supplied to access this on either YouTube or Vimeo. Any problems, please contact hazel@communityrail.org.uk

7. Entry check boxes – you must complete the entry submission checkbox before final submission and in doing so:

- a) You are confirming that you have submitted all supporting materials necessary in the required format and within word count limitations (where relevant);
- b) You are confirming that you have checked your submission and that it meets the rules of entry. If it does not, you may be disqualified, no matter how good your entry is otherwise.

Prizes

Category winners will be awarded a trophy and a certificate. All runners-up will receive a certificate.

Every shortlisted entry will receive an electronic shortlisting certificate and can request two complimentary, flexible return rail tickets to the awards presentation event, courtesy of Rail Delivery Group.

Awards presentation event booking form

Please complete the form by downloading from our website [CRA 2024 event booking form](#) and email to events@communityrail.org.uk



How to Submit a Good Entry

Firstly, you need to ensure that you are entering an appropriate category and have read the **Rules of Entry and the Categories & Criteria** pages carefully before you start writing your entry.

Note: If you are in any doubt about this, or you have any questions to ask before you complete a submission, please make use of our informal **drop-in sessions** on Zoom and speak with our events team, who will be very happy to help. The 'drop-ins' schedule can be accessed [HERE](#).

You can also view our '**How to Submit an Outstanding Awards Entry**' webinar, held in July 2023, [HERE](#). This includes case studies of previous winning entries and will give you lots of practical advice, hints and tips from some of our awards judges.

Concentrate your efforts on explaining the reason you are nominating this project or person and why it/they should be a winner. Take care to demonstrate how the entry meets the judging criteria of the category you are entering. To help structure your entry, you may wish to pay attention to the following points.

The following should form the basis of your 200 word summary (except category 8):

- What is the name of the project/person/group you are nominating?
- Why was the project set up and what/who did it involve (where applicable)?
- What were the results of the project or the person's/group's involvement?

Full entry description

For categories 1 to 7, 9 and 10

Up to **600** words, **laid out in the format specified below and written in the third person.** This is important as this information will be used to produce the winners' booklet should you win an award. [See the 2022 winners' booklet HERE.](#)

- **Concept and aims:** What did the project want to achieve and why?
- **What happened:** Give a clear description of the project, what challenges were faced and how were these overcome? What steps were taken to achieve the project? What resources were drawn upon, who was involved and how was the project delivered?
- **Results:** Did the project fulfil its aims? How did the community/passengers benefit? How was the success of the project measured and what evidence is there to support that success? What has been the response of the community/rail passengers/partners/media? Did the project deliver any knock-on/unexpected results?



You must limit your total number of words to **600** over the three sections (e.g. 200 words for each), so plan your writing carefully and ensure that you do a final word count.

For categories 8, 12 and 13

Category 8 – Photo Competition

- A Word document showing titles for each image

Category 11 – It's Your Station

This must describe the work you have done or are doing to improve your station garden and environment. This must be written in the third person and set out in sections clearly labelled as follows:

- **Community**
- **Gardening**
- **Arts & Heritage**
- **Environment & Sustainability**

You must limit your total number of words to **600 over the four sections**, so plan your writing carefully and ensure that you do a word count.

As there will be no in-person judging visits this year, in addition to the written description, you have the opportunity to create and submit a video of your station and projects to better showcase your work to the category judges. See full category information for details and download the 'It's Your Station' entry guidance [HERE](#).

For category 12 – Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

- Who are you nominating?
- Describe their commitment and passion for community rail and show how they made an exceptional contribution to the group. Demonstrate what benefits they have brought to your project(s) or group and how that has impacted positively on the community.
- Include a photo of the person/group – action shots are preferable where possible.

You must limit your total number of words to **600** over the three sections (e.g. 200 words for each), so plan your writing carefully and ensure that you do a final word count.

For category 13 – Community Rail Network Award for Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail

- Who are you nominating?
- Explain fully how the organisation or group has contributed to community rail over the last 12 months.
- Describe how their contribution has created positive sustainable change/impact for their communities and the railway.
- Include photos – action shots are preferable.

You must limit your total number of words to **600** over the three sections (e.g. 200 words for each), so plan your writing carefully and ensure that you do a final word count.

Key Dates

- **Closing date for entries: Monday 9 October at 17:00**
- **Shortlist announced: Wednesday 13 December 2023**
- **Closing date for Awards presentation bookings: Friday 16 February 2024**

Community Rail Awards Ceremony Bookings and Accommodation

Community Rail Network recommends that bookings for the event and accommodation are made early.

Download a booking form [HERE](#) to book your table(s) at the event and see [Visit Swansea Bay](#) to find a suitable hotel.

**CLICK HERE
to enter the Awards**



You will be taken to our online entry system



1. Involving Children and Young People

Sponsored by **LNER**

This category recognises community rail's vital role in engaging, inspiring and empowering children and young people (under 26) with their railways, from travel confidence and educational schemes to youth-led volunteering and creative projects. We are especially keen to see projects that promote sustainable travel, life skills, inclusion, and wellbeing, and which draw on children and young people's views and ideas.

Entries invited from: We invite entries from community rail partnerships, station adoption or friends' groups, or other community groups and representatives. Rail industry partners can submit entries where a project was undertaken in partnership with a community rail partnership or community group, but the entry must clearly demonstrate this partnership working, be agreed with the community partner(s), and their contact details provided.

Judging criteria:

- Empowering and awareness raising – it successfully shared knowledge, opportunities and/or awareness, for example about rail travel, local history, culture or environment;
- Improving mobility, confidence or life skills – there was a positive impact on children's, young people's or families' ability, understanding, perception of and confidence to access rail, use sustainable travel, or other life skills;
- Engaging, enjoyable and beneficial – there is evidence it was well-received and those involved saw benefits to mobility, inclusion, health, wellbeing, confidence or awareness;
- Interactive and drew on children/young people's input – it enabled interaction with and between young members of the community, drawing on their ideas and views, or was youth-led.

2. Empowering Diverse Groups

Sponsored by **East Midlands Railway**

This category recognises community rail activity that empowers diverse groups, for instance spanning ethnicities, ages, disabilities, genders, sexual orientation, religions or beliefs. We are looking for approaches that have empowered wider audiences, especially bringing together different groups, and/or socially marginalised people to direct, lead or strongly inform projects or pieces of work. We're keen to see evidence of promoting inclusion, cohesion, skills, mobility, health, or wellbeing, as well as promoting diverse leadership in projects or regularly occurring work.

We would like to hear how you reached out to diverse groups to enable their voices to be heard; how your work supported local resilience efforts and brought new voices to community rail, enabling leadership and collaboration.

Entries invited from: We invite entries from community rail partnerships, station adoption or friends' groups, or other community groups and representatives. Rail industry partners can submit entries where a project was undertaken in partnership with a community rail partnership or community group, but the entry must clearly demonstrate this partnership working, be agreed with the community partner(s), and their contact details provided.

Judging criteria:

- A good fit with local needs and contexts – designed to meet local needs and appropriate to local opportunities, especially to build more inclusive, connected communities, informed by strong diverse voices;
- Engaging, enjoyable and beneficial – there is evidence it enabled diverse voices to lead work, was well-received and those involved saw benefits to mobility, inclusion, health, wellbeing or awareness;
- Empowering and awareness raising – it successfully shared knowledge, amplified voices with lived experience, gave opportunities (for example new project leadership) and grew confidence and/or awareness, for example about rail travel, local history, culture, leadership skills or environment;
- Interactive and amplified ideas and input – the initiative empowered those who identify with protected characteristics to lead, direct, strongly inform and collaborate, demonstrating diversity within the community.



3. Community Creative Projects and Station Arts

Sponsored by **Avanti West Coast**

This category has been re-structured for 2024 as a trial and entries will be grouped for judging according to the size/type of the group/organisation making the submission. The judges will be comparing projects more equally in terms of resources available to each group and what they achieved accordingly:

- Large groups – any CRPs that sit under an umbrella organisation.
- Medium groups – any stand-alone, funded CRPs with one to two members of paid staff.
- Small groups – any unfunded station adoption/friends/community groups

There will be one winner at each of these levels with no runners-up, so effectively there are 3 winners for the category and each will come up on stage to receive a trophy and certificate.

This category recognises creative initiatives that have had a transformative, empowering effect on the people involved and their local environment or station, connecting people to their railway, station and wider community, and making the railway a welcoming place.

Projects involving all forms of creative expression are eligible (art, music, spoken word, writing, storytelling, photography, interpretation panels or sculpture), creating a sense of pride and community, and promoting connections between communities and railways. We are especially keen to see projects that promoted inclusion and positivity and drew on local input and creativity in innovative ways.

Entries invited from: We invite entries from community rail partnerships, station adoption or friends' groups, or other community groups and representatives. Rail industry partners can submit entries where a project was undertaken in partnership with a community rail partnership or community group, but the entry must clearly demonstrate this partnership working, be agreed with the community partner(s), and their contact details provided.

Note: *This type of partnership entry will automatically be judged within the large groups level.*

Essential requirements: Please include photographs, images or clips with your entry where relevant, showing/linking to the artwork or finished piece(s). You must also state clearly whether your group comes under the small, medium or large group and you must describe the structure of your organisation to support this. Failing to provide this information will result in automatic disqualification as the judges will not be able to equally assess your entry. To allow for this explanation and in this category only, you are allowed to submit 750 words in the full entry description.

Judging criteria:

- Promotes positivity and celebrates railway and community – clearly appreciated by passengers and local people, promoting pride, understanding and positivity, and connecting community and railway;
- Successful engagement across the community or target audience – successful efforts were made to engage people widely across the community, or amongst a clear target audience;
- Interaction and drawing on community viewpoints – the scheme enabled interaction with and between the community, such as drawing on and sharing local perspectives, memories and ideas;
- Clear benefits for the community – wider benefits have been delivered, such as through increased wellbeing, confidence, skills, cohesion and inclusion, or supporting regeneration.

4. Small Projects Award (£500 or less)

Sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

This category can only be entered by station adoption or friends' groups, community groups or community rail partnerships. It allows smaller, low-cost projects to be judged on merit, rather than competing against larger projects. Any project that cost £500 or less (excluding volunteer hours), can be submitted.

We are looking for projects that delivered great value for money and benefitted the community in a way that is connected to the railway. Awareness-raising, digital and communications projects will be considered alongside practical/physical projects.

Entries invited from: Entries can only be submitted by the station adopters, community group or community rail partnership (or a representative of them) involved with the project.

Essential requirements: A budget showing a clear breakdown of any costs incurred must be submitted as part of your supporting evidence.

Judging criteria:

- Excellent value for money – this might be demonstrated through careful management, creativity, pooling resources, and/or drawing on support from partners or volunteers;
- Clear value and connection to the railway – we can see evidence that a station or line has been enhanced, passengers benefitted, or positive connections and interest built among the wider community;
- Project sustainability or replicability – entrants are clear about lessons learnt and what worked well and intend to build on this and/or share with others (or have already).

5. Most Effective Communications Campaign Sponsored by West Midlands Trains

Effective communications are key to promoting and raising the profile of community rail activities. This category is seeking submissions that can evidence the delivery of a well-planned integrated communications campaign, aimed at publicising community rail activity or promoting success. Judges will be looking for effectively managed campaigns with evidence of PR activity and clear examples of measuring the campaign's impact (e.g. through social media).

Entries invited from: We invite entries from community rail partnerships, station adoption or friends' groups, or other community groups and representatives working in partnership with a community rail member. Rail industry partners can submit entries where a project was undertaken in partnership with a community rail partnership or community group, but the entry must clearly demonstrate this partnership working, be agreed with the community partner(s), and their contact details provided.

Judging criteria:

- Delivery of an effective communications campaign, accessible and engaging for the intended audience, working with partners to drive results;
- Evidence of PR activity undertaken and media log/clippings of successful features/articles;
- Conveys clear messages and promotes community rail in an informative, interesting way, relevant to the audience;
- Good planning, management, and use of appropriate channels – evidence of rationale behind the choice of media, planning, timing, audience and coordinated use of channels;
- Evaluation – clear evidence of the impact of the campaign, including the reach across social media/increase in followers (if appropriate).



6. Best Community Engagement Project Sponsored by SLC Rail

Community rail is all about engaging local communities. This category is no longer just about one-off community rail events, it is also about long-term engagement within communities. It aims to highlight the creativity and hard work that goes into developing, organising and promoting community engagement projects on and linked to the railway.

Entries invited from: We invite entries from community rail partnerships, station adoption or friends' groups, or other community groups and representatives. Rail industry partners can submit entries where a project was undertaken in partnership with a community rail partnership or community group, but the entry must clearly demonstrate this partnership working, be agreed with the community partner(s), and their contact details provided.

Judging criteria:

- Successful engagement in person or online across the community or target audience – successful efforts were made to engage people inclusively, or among a clear target audience;
- Engaging, enjoyable and beneficial – there is evidence it was well-received and those involved saw benefits to mobility, inclusion, health, wellbeing or awareness;
- Empowering and awareness raising – it successfully shared knowledge, opportunities, confidence and/or awareness, for example about rail travel, local history, culture, or environment;
- Interactive and drew on community viewpoints – the project enabled interaction with and between the community, such as drawing on and sharing local perspectives, memories and ideas.

TAKING THE TRAIN FROM
SEAFORD To BRIGHTON



Uses
1.27kg
less CO₂
than a car driving
the same distance

That's the same
as charging
154
phones



#gogreenbytrain



7. Tourism and Leisure Award

Sponsored by **Scenic Rail Britain**

Leisure and tourism initiatives can play a vital role in supporting local economies, encouraging more people to use the train for sustainable travel, healthy days out, short breaks, and longer stays. This award celebrates innovative and effective initiatives or events that have been promoted to audiences beyond the local community. We're looking for submissions that can clearly evidence how they inspired and motivated people to use community rail lines and/or stations for leisure or tourism activities. Extra consideration will be given to submissions that can demonstrate partnership working with local businesses or tourism attractions alongside the promotion of sustainable and green travel messages.

Entries invited from: We invite entries from community rail partnerships, station adoption or friends' groups, or other community groups and representatives working in partnership with a community rail member. Rail industry partners can submit entries where a project was undertaken in partnership with a community rail partnership or community group, but the entry must clearly demonstrate this partnership working, be agreed with the community partner(s), and their contact details provided.

Judging criteria:

- Delivery of an initiative or event that showcased a local leisure and tourism offer, promoted sustainable travel, and improved the overall visitor experience with community rail at its heart;
- Evidence of how the initiative or event was promoted to leisure and tourism audiences beyond the local community (e.g. through social media, distribution of promotional literature etc.);
- Demonstration of creative partnerships, working together to achieve results. Partners may include local attractions, heritage railway lines, tourism businesses, or third sector organisations;
- Evidence of an effective evaluation approach including details of the estimated visitor reach, feedback, and outcomes achieved, where possible.

8. Photo Competition

Best image capturing the essence of community rail Sponsored by **Porterbrook**

We want you to get creative! We want to see light-hearted, inventive images that capture the essence of community rail. These can be in any setting, as long as the connection to rail/community rail is immediately obvious.

Entries invited from: We invite entries from any source, provided they meet the requirements below.

Essential requirements:

- A maximum of four photos per entry
- Digital photos must be in JPEG format ONLY (high res)
- Please supply a brief, one-line title or caption for each photo in the 200-word summary section of the entry form and on a Word document to be uploaded
- Any photos that show health and safety contraventions on the railway or station will be disqualified – **see the health and safety guide [HERE](#)**.

In submitting photos you confirm that:

- All people within the photos have provided consent for them to be used in publicity including print, online and all social media channels. If the photos contain images of children under the age of 18 written consent must be secured from the parent or guardian, either directly or via their school/college;
- You are the owner of the image(s) and agree to it/them being used in publicity. Or, the image(s) is/are not your own but you have the relevant permissions/consent to submit on behalf of the owner, and they agree to them being used in publicity. In this case, you must state within the 200-word summary section who you are submitting on behalf of.

Judging criteria:

- Captures 'community rail in 2022/2023';
- Impactful, eye-catching and good quality – credit will be given to photos that are suitable for using online and/or in promotional materials, to help raise the profile of community rail;
- Inclusive, positive, and people-orientated – the content of the photo, and/or the way it was taken or produced, helps to get across the 'community' aspect of community rail, and might encourage more people to get involved.

The shortlist for this category will be available online for the public to vote on, for one month from 13 December 2023. This will provide the final placings.



9. Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability

Sponsored by **RSSB**

This category recognises community rail's important role in innovating and driving change locally, to help create a more sustainable and inclusive future. We're especially keen to see great partnership working where community rail partnerships and groups have encouraged more future-focused, climate-aware and inclusive thinking and approaches, **even if the results have not yet fully materialised**. This is about supporting sustainable forms of development (as per the UN's **Sustainable Development Goals**), adopting greater care for local and global environments, more resilient and cohesive communities, and leaving a legacy for future generations.

Entries invited from: We invite entries from community rail partnerships, station adoption or friends' groups, or other community groups and representatives working in partnership with a community rail member. Rail industry partners can submit entries where a project was undertaken in partnership with a community rail partnership or community group, but the entry must clearly demonstrate this partnership working, be agreed with the community partner(s), and their contact details provided.

Judging criteria:

- Community influence – we can see how the community rail partnership, station group and/or community members worked with the rail industry, local authorities, or others to support positive change and sustainable development;
- Great partnership working – there is evidence of engaging successfully with relevant partners and working inclusively to build momentum towards future-focused change;
- Evidence basis – there is an evidence basis for this initiative and expected (or achieved) outcomes to do with sustainable development, inclusion, biodiversity, decarbonisation, modal shift or integration;
- Innovation and/or lessons learnt – an innovative or collaborative approach was used to overcome challenges or consider future needs, and/or the lessons are recognised and being shared.



10. Most Enhanced Railway Spaces

Sponsored by **Greater Anglia**

This category recognises the work of community rail or other community organisations to revitalise railway buildings and larger areas of railway land. Any space which has either been brought back to useful life or significantly improved is eligible.

We are looking for initiatives that have enhanced, rejuvenated, or repurposed a railway space and brought it back into the heart of the community, to provide new value for passengers and/or wider communities.

While many projects may involve restoration work to improve the appearance and celebrate the heritage of spaces, given that many revitalisations are in non-heritage locations or are land re-use projects, this is not a heritage restoration award. Judges are looking for projects that have engaged the local community effectively, demonstrated social value, and have sound plans for how the space will deliver ongoing community benefits.

Note: *This award is not primarily concerned with attracting new passengers to the railway, but rather making use of disused railway assets for wider community benefit. Small gardens and flowerbeds won't be considered in this category, these should be submitted within an entry to 'It's Your Station' or 'Small Projects Award' and art/creative projects should be submitted in the 'Community Creative Projects & Station Arts' category.*

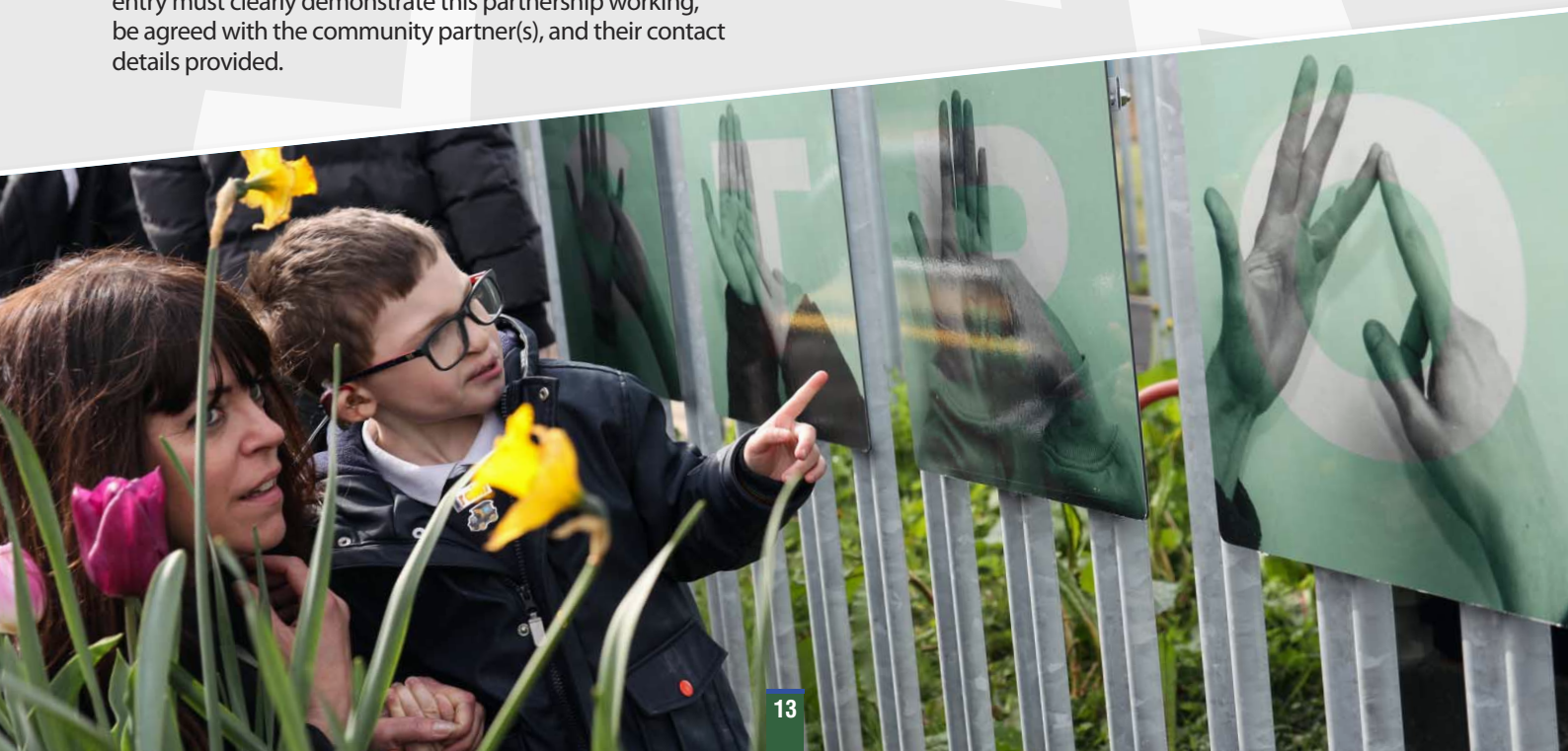
Entries invited from: We invite entries from community rail partnerships, station-based groups, station adoption or friends' groups, or other community organisations and representatives. Rail industry partners can submit entries where a project was undertaken in partnership with a community rail partnership or community group, but the entry must clearly demonstrate this partnership working, be agreed with the community partner(s), and their contact details provided.

This award is for organisations which have leased/licensed/purchased railway buildings or land to deliver their community project, with a legal right of occupation/access.

Essential requirements: Before and after images or other evidence clearly showing the change(s) made must be submitted as part of your supporting evidence, along with any other evidence showing how the project was developed and delivered. Details of the ongoing use for the building/land must be included.

Judging criteria:

- Repurposing a railway space – we can see how station building(s), platforms, shelters, facilities, or railway land have been rejuvenated or repurposed, in whole or in part, to provide community benefit;
- Sensitive approach to rejuvenation/refurbishment – sympathetic to station heritage if appropriate, or to the new community use where non-heritage assets have been developed;
- Clear benefits to users – evidence the project has benefited and is appreciated by its target audience/clientele;
- Building positive links with the community – the space has been brought more into the heart of the community and delivers benefits to local people e.g. through local volunteering, community events, communications, outreach, and/or new people using station buildings;
- Great partnership working – we can see how collaboration with the rail industry and others has helped to deliver improvements and overcome challenges, or bring in wider expertise, involvement, and ideas;
- A well-considered plan for how the space is intended to deliver ongoing social benefits.



11. It's Your Station

Sponsored by **Merseyrail**

This category recognises and rewards the hard-working people who maintain station gardens, displays, notices, and the station environment, on a voluntary basis across the network. Continuing with guidelines introduced last year, there is no overall category winner, with entries instead judged at four different banding levels, with the highest scoring entry in each band being recognised as outstanding at that level. We hope this format will continue to facilitate fairer judging on a more like-for-like basis.

Entries in this category are assessed and points awarded over four sections: community, gardening, art & heritage and environment & sustainability. The total points achieved will equate to one of the four bands: **bronze**, **silver**, **gold** or **platinum**. Every entry that meets the basic requirements will receive at least a bronze certificate, but following the judges' online assessments, specific bandings will be allocated from the four listed above, and certificates awarded accordingly at the presentation evening. **The highest scoring entry in each banding will also be presented with a trophy and certificate on stage.**

Entries invited from: Station groups or community groups directly involved with looking after the nominated station.

Essential requirements: Entries must describe the work you have done or are doing to improve your station garden and environment. You must include before and after images (relevant to when the work started) with your entry, and other suitable evidence, clearly showing the station environment and how it has been improved.

Important Note: Our judges are no longer able to make personal visits to stations, so you must make sure that your entry is well supported by photographs and video footage, as this will be the only opportunity to showcase your station and the work you've been doing to the judges. To help you with this, we have developed guidance, designed especially to support you in submitting an entry to 'It's Your Station'. Download the [guidance HERE](#).

Judging criteria:

- **Community** - inclusive of and represents local people. Engages with the local community to collaborate and participate in the planning and delivery of projects and in publicising its activities;
- **Gardening** - station gardens and environments enhance the passenger experience – quality, colour, and variety of planting and changing displays are maintained and cared for throughout the year;
- **Art & Heritage** - artwork that impacts the station showing skill and imagination. Local artists, schools or other community groups involved in the design and delivery. Heritage installations have a railway (eg. signage or other artefacts) or a local historical theme;
- **Environment & Sustainability** - the group is improving the station environment by litter-picking, leaf-clearing, weeding platforms etc. Creating or maintaining green space, which addresses sustainability by rainwater harvesting, composting, recycling etc.

Please note: Shortlisted entries in this category will be informed of the level awarded in advance of the presentation evening, where all certificates will be available for collection.



12. Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

Sponsored by **Eversholt Rail**

This category recognises the invaluable contribution that so many volunteers make to community rail, and their stations, lines, and communities. We are especially keen to see nominations for committed individuals who make an outstanding contribution on a regular basis, or those who have gone the extra mile, impacting positively within their local community, station group or community rail partnership.

Entries invited from: Nominations for this award can be made by community rail partnerships, station adoption groups, other community groups, train operators, other partners, or individuals, so long as they are nominating a volunteer who is active in community rail. Self-nominations will not be accepted.

Essential requirements: Independent testimonials (up to four) must be provided as supporting material, showing how the volunteer meets the criteria.

Judging criteria:

- Commitment and passion for community rail – they have worked hard, with enthusiasm and commitment, making an exceptional contribution to their community rail partnership or group;
- Clear benefits for the community – their contribution has been shown to impact positively on the community, for example bringing people together, raising awareness, or creating a more welcoming, sustainable, and inclusive local environment;
- Inclusive, collaborative, positive working – they have taken an inclusive, collaborative, and positive approach, for example getting more people involved in community rail, engaging new groups or partners, and/or building positive relationships.



13. Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail

Community Rail Network's senior management will present a special award to a partnership or group that, in their view, has demonstrated an outstanding contribution to community rail. Nominations are invited for this award, but they must be for a third party, as self-nominations will not be accepted. There will be no shortlist for this category, there will just be one winner who will receive trophy and certificate. This can also be made as a discretionary award i.e. not necessarily selected from the nominations.

Nominate **HERE**, using the online entry form and upload supporting documents including: a written description Word document (no more than two pages) that explains how the organisation/group has contributed to community rail since 23 June 2022. Please also feel free to include additional testimonials and images.



Our Sponsors

Great Western Railway (GWR)



GWR are delighted to be joint headline sponsor of the 2024 Community Rail Awards. Rail services, both locally and nationally, are a key part of the fabric of life. It is rail that makes the connections for business, education, health, meeting friends and family or simply for leisure, and it is community rail that connects us closely to what our customers and supporters really want from their local railway. There is no doubt that rail's recovery and continued growth is in no small part due to all the hard work that goes on in every Community Rail Partnership and station adoption group. These awards are a way to say thank you, and well done, and we wish everyone the very best of luck.

Transport for Wales



Transport for Wales is delighted to be joint headline sponsor for the 2024 Community Rail Awards. We are dedicated to connecting communities to their railways, helping people get the most from their railways promoting social inclusion, sustainable travel and bringing stations to life. We continue to be hugely impressed with the great work that all community rail partnerships and station adopters do for our communities across Wales & Borders - we thank them for all their efforts. Good luck to all nominees this year and hope you all have a chance to experience our wonderful Welsh tourism and hospitality. Welcome to Wales!

Mae Trafnidiaeth Cymru yn falch iawn o fod yn brif noddwr ar gyfer Gwobrau Rheilffyrdd Cymunedol 2024 yn Abertawe, Cymru. Rydym yn ymroddedig i gysylltu cymunedau â'u rheilffyrdd, gan helpu pobl i gael y gorau o'u rheilffyrdd gan hyrwyddo cynhwysiant cymdeithasol, teithio cynaliadwy a dod â gorsafoedd yn fyw. Mae'r gwaith gwyh y mae'r holl bartneriaethau rheilffyrdd cymunedol a mabwysiadwyr gorsafoedd yn ei wneud ar gyfer ein cymunedau ledled Cymru a'r Gororau wedi gwneud argraff fawr arnom o hyd – diolchwn iddynt am eu holl ymdrechion. Pob lwc i bawb a enwebwyd eleni a gobeithio y cewch chi i gyd gyfle i brofi ein twristiaeth a'n lletygarwch Cymreig bendigedig.

Angel Trains



Angel Trains is a proud supporter of the Community Rail Awards. This is an excellent time to recognise those who have worked hard to improve our communities in so many ways. As always, the nominees are incredible: they've helped make our communities healthier, more connected, and more sustainable. It will be a wonderful celebration of community rail and we wish everyone the best of luck!

CMAC



CMAC Group is very happy to support the Community Rail Awards. We chose Community Rail Network as our corporate charity partner because we share CRN's commitment to promoting the importance of rail travel and, above all, enabling local people and communities to play an active role in the use, and development, of our railways. The awards are a wonderful way of celebrating the hard work and imagination invested by local community rail partnerships in the projects nominated for awards. We wish all nominees the best of luck. As far as CMAC is concerned, you're all winners!

Department for Transport



Department
for Transport

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, and we are therefore delighted to be associated with them.

Rail Delivery Group

Rail Delivery Group



Rail Delivery Group is delighted to sponsor this year's Community Rail Awards, which again recognise the vital role played by our people and crucially the communities they serve. We look forward to continuing to work with community rail partnerships as we look to maximise the railway's contribution to recovery, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank Community Rail Network for their valuable work throughout the year.

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.

Our Sponsors

LNER

Through our ambitious Community Investment Strategy, we are passionate about tackling the social issues that impact the communities we serve. We are incredibly proud to be working collaboratively with community rail partnerships on this strategy and are delighted to be sponsoring this year's awards. The event always provides a fantastic opportunity to celebrate and showcase the hard work and dedication of everyone involved. Good luck to all entrants.



East Midlands Railway

East Midlands Railway are delighted to support the Community Rail Awards 2024 and sponsor the 'Empowering Diverse Groups' category. Community rail enables us to listen to our communities and support them to flourish, seeing tangible differences within society. These awards are a fantastic opportunity to showcase and celebrate all that community rail achieves. Congratulations and good luck to everyone shortlisted.



Eversholt Rail

Eversholt Rail is delighted once again to be a sponsor of the Community Rail Awards. We recognise and applaud the work and dedication of everyone across the railway industry as the railway enters a new phase. It is fantastic to be joining in celebrating achievements. We greatly value our excellent working relationship and corporate partnership with the Community Rail Network team, which is fundamental to ensuring that we understand stakeholders' needs and provide innovative and cost-effective rolling stock solutions optimised to meet them.



SLC

As corporate partners of Community Rail Network, SLC Rail and SLC Property are pleased to sponsor this award. SLC Rail helps third party scheme promoters develop strategic plans, win industry support, develop business cases that secure funding, and develop and deliver their aspirations. SLC Property works with local authorities, developers, and freehold property owners to resolve the most complex and challenging land and planning situations, and to navigate regulatory environments. Find out more by visiting www.slcrail.com or www.slcpoerty.co.uk.



Porterbrook

Porterbrook is proud to sponsor the 2024 Community Rail Awards. Being at the heart of the UK rail network for three decades, we know how important community rail partnerships and station volunteer groups are when promoting local rail services and enhancing the stations they serve, which is why we are delighted to join in celebrating the brilliant work that the community rail network continues to do.



West Midlands Trains

As the primary operator in one of the most densely-populated regions outside London, West Midlands Trains is proud to sponsor the Community Rail Awards. We are thrilled to play our part in celebrating the outstanding efforts of community rail groups and station adopters right across the country. We're passionate about the communities we serve and remain fully committed to supporting our customers in making their rail network a place everyone can be proud of. We look forward to another year working together to promote sustainable, healthy travel and supporting the diversity and inclusivity of the railway.



RSSB

Celebrating and promoting rail's social value has never been more important, so RSSB is delighted to be sponsoring these awards. It's wonderful to be recognising those who are helping local communities to rediscover the joy of train travel, and so promoting rail at the heart of sustainable transport.



Merseyrail

We are delighted to continue our long-running association with the Community Rail Awards. Merseyrail's involvement in the communities across our network is essential so that we can help to make it the best place it can be and to ensure that we have the greatest positive impact possible. We are a very proud supporter of Community Rail Network. Its knowledge and best practice sessions help us to continue to promote community engagement, confident travel activity, improvements to equality, diversity and inclusion practices, supporting young people and being a good neighbour.



Our Sponsors

Avanti West Coast

West Coast Partnership is committed to delivering growth for our communities and connecting people and places with opportunities. Community Rail Network plays a vital role in spreading the benefits of the railway to all the communities we serve on the West Coast route, and we are delighted to be sponsoring these awards, celebrating the work we do together to create opportunities across our network, both now and for the railway we're building for tomorrow.



Grand Central Rail

We are incredibly proud to support the annual Community Rail Awards once again this year.

Ensuring rail is at the heart of any community underpins everything we do at Grand Central, and every year these awards recognise the fantastic work being done to engage and support diversity, improve accessibility and mobility, and raise awareness. We wish all the nominees our heartfelt congratulations for the sterling work they have done, and no doubt will continue to do!



Greater Anglia

Greater Anglia is proud to be a sponsor of the Community Rail Awards again. We're passionate about the benefits community rail and station adoption can bring for both the railway and the communities we serve, so we provide significant support for community rail initiatives across our network. We're also collaborating with our CRPs and adopters to maximise the community benefits of the new trains now operating on all our routes and services, transforming the quality of service available across our network. Together we're working to not only promote sustainable, healthy travel, but also increase community involvement, contribute to social and economic development, support diversity and inclusion and better meet local needs.



Welcome to Swansea, home of this year's Community Rail Awards

South West Wales Connected warmly welcomes you to Swansea, a modern beachfront city that offers a wide array of opportunities and experiences and which also serves as a gateway to the Gower, the UK's first designated area of outstanding natural beauty which is rated one of the most beautiful coastline peninsulas in the world.

We sincerely hope that you will enjoy your stay here and explore everything our city has to offer, including Wales' largest and historic indoor market, the stunning fishing villages of Mumbles and the history of the Mumbles Train which was the very first railway in the world to carry passengers regularly in 1807...this is where it all began!

Why not extend your stay and arrive over the weekend prior to the Awards, to make the most of your visit to our little corner of Britain? We're gathering a menu of suggested activities and recommendations to make sure you'll have a great time!

For more information please visit our website:
<https://bit.ly/ExperienceSwanseaBay>

SOUTH WEST WALES
Connected
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MARCH

Satellite Events

Transport for Wales, supported by Great Western Railway, will be hosting a number of satellite events to showcase community rail activity in the region, so keep the date in mind when making your return travel arrangements.

The following events are currently being planned, but a more detailed itinerary and further details on how to book will be published nearer the time in **Community Rail News**:

- Welsh for beginners
- Wellbeing walk with Ramblers Cymru
- Immersive tourism experience
- Live artwork event



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Community Rail Network

Email: events@communityrail.org.uk Website: communityrail.org.uk