

**Supporting
resilience &
(funding)
development**

Jools Townsend
Chief executive



Where we are now

- Train operator budget cuts > almost all CRP core protected, but ongoing impacts
 - Ongoing rail industry financial squeeze, uncertainty for 2024-25
 - A need to diversify funds + build evidence
 - And negotiate through political change
 - Some CRPs achieving wider funds & demonstrating impact
 - Shift in focus for us, your umbrella body
- ... But plenty to be positive about!**

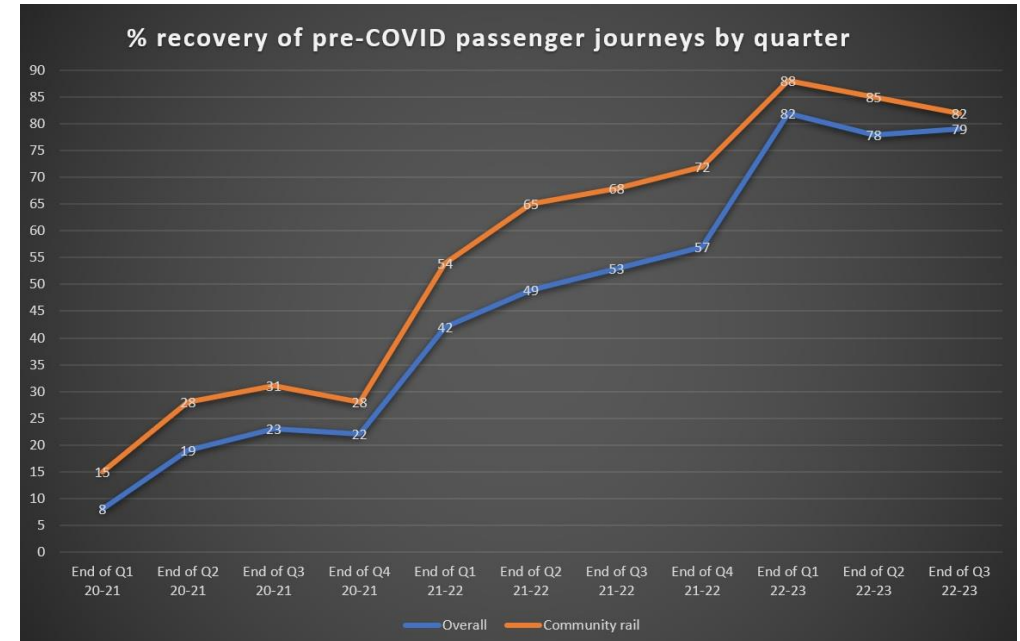


South East Lancashire's Rivington Rambler



Photo courtesy of Daniel Graves & Heart of England CRP

How do we evidence our impact?



Community Rail Lancashire: In 2023, 27 pre-existing neurodiverse community groups and SEND schools/colleges took part in our Try The Train programme, with 224 beneficiaries.

86% became more confident in planning a train journey and 90% became more confident finding their way around a station, finding their platform and taking the train independently.

How do we evidence our impact?

“I didn’t use the trains before, I felt a bit nervous. But with this project, I’ve found out that there are people that can help you at stations, and there is nothing to be scared about.”

Keeley Smith, 17, student, Sheppey College (working with Kent CRP)



Local newspaper journalist Pauline Cherry, giving the train a try with Southeast Communities Rail Partnership, having not been on a train for 10 years.

She said: “My trip was so enjoyable and informative. I think people should give the train a try to get places. You can get to a lot of places by train.”



A look at our tackling loneliness project's evaluation



- Worked with UWE & drew on existing evidence
- Three pilots set up 'theories of change'
- Participatory evaluation (eg workshops, arts) + before and after surveys
- Statistical results, eg: 65% said they discovered new places; 1 in 10 had their first taste of rail travel
- Examples of individual change, eg some enrolled on courses and started new activities, citing improved confidence/self-esteem
- Quotes showing change, eg: *"I feel more confident after today and know I can do it."*



400 young people
were engaged through 3
innovative pilot projects

- Gloucestershire and Bristol, run by Gloucestershire CRP and Severnside CRP
- Blackburn with Darwen, run by Community Rail Lancashire
- Newcastle and County Durham, run by youth and family charity Catch22

[See full report](#)



A look at our tackling loneliness project's evaluation



Evidence counts (especially now)

- To influence
 - To grow & diversify income
 - To build partnerships
 - To promote ourselves
 - To get our messages out
 - To give communities a voice
 - To play a stronger role
- + To hold on to existing funding**



Platform Rail trip to Bristol



New River Line, Essex & South Suffolk & Bittern Line CRPs promoting their lines

Using evidence to build resilience

- Advocating for ongoing support
- Engaging new corporate partners
- Grants for major (cross-CRP) projects
- Profile-raising PR/comms
- Sharing good practice
- Providing you with support, tools & opportunities for communications, fundraising & collaboration

>> Two-pronged: umbrella level & helping you do these things locally



Southeast Communities Rail Partnership
& local partners, Maidenhead

Using today

- Open forum, for sharing your thoughts, ideas, experiences
- Bringing impact & evidence into the discussion?
- Relating to our challenging backdrop?
- While thinking long-term, big & positive?

>> A chance to be creative and challenge ourselves & each other



Community Rail Conference,
March 2023



Using your community rail network

- Draw on our wider evidence & resources
- Feed in your examples & impacts (another survey coming soon!)
- Use our guidance & toolkits (forthcoming on fundraising & communications)
- Use our Impact tool
- Use our national campaigns & events (Awards 18 Mar; Community Rail Week 20-26 May)
- Tourism, education & integration networks
- Talk to the team (and think big!)



Community Train CRP launch at Tolworth, in Community Rail Week



Meeting Lee Waters MS, Welsh Government Deputy Minister, with South West Wales Connected and Wales & Borders CRPs

**Please keep talking
to us & sharing your
ideas & experiences**

communityrail.org.uk/about-us/our-team-and-board/

