**Press release | For immediate release: 19 March 2024**

**From Community Rail Network |** **news@communityrail.co.uk**

**Community-led project connecting people with rail in [insert region name e.g Kent] recognised at UK awards**

[insert region name as above]-based community [rail partnership/group], [insert name of partnership/group], has won a coveted national Community Rail Award for its innovative work engaging communities with their local railway [line/lines] and [station/stations].

[insert name of partnership/group] was named second place winner of the [insert award category name] award at the 19th national Community Rail Awards, organised by Community Rail Network.

This year’s Awards, jointly sponsored by Transport for Wales and Great Western Railway, recognised a diverse array of projects across Britain and beyond, with 19 winners chosen from 180 inspiring entries, all demonstrating how the community rail movement builds positivity and awareness between local people and their railways.

[Insert project name and add more details about the project – you could lift some text from your awards submission].

More broadly, [insert name of partnership/group] delivers a range of community engagement and social inclusion initiatives, supports volunteering at stations, promotes green travel and tourism by rail, and works with railway and local authority partners [delete as necessary and adjust so this paragraph reflects the wider work you do outside of your winning project].

The Community Rail Awards were held at Swansea Arena on 18 March. More than 430 guests including senior rail and transport leaders and community rail officers and volunteers. It recognised projects supporting diversity, accessibility and inclusion, sustainable travel and tourism, youth and schools engagement, community-led station improvements, empowered communities and influencing positive change.

The Awards recognise the crucial, often unsung work of community rail partnerships, station friends and other community rail groups, which continue to grow in number and impact, under Community Rail Network’s umbrella. There are now 77 CRPs and an estimated 1,200 station groups spread across Britain (and now a few beyond too).

**[name of representative] from [name of partnership/group] said: “**[insert quote]**”**

**Jools Townsend, chief executive of Community Rail Network, said:** “Our Community Rail Awards give deserved recognition to community rail partnerships, groups and volunteers across Britain. The awards ceremony showcased the great value of community rail, helping to build stronger, fairer, greener communities, served and connected by their railways and wider sustainable transport network. Our congratulations to [insert name of partnership/group/individual] and to all our winners, and thanks to everyone who supports and champions community rail, helping the movement to go from strength to strength.”

[Insert additional quotes from your local train operator or project partners.]

**Rail Minister Huw Merriman MP said:** “The Community Rail Awards are important in recognising the incredible work of volunteers and community groups improving our rail network. I was lucky enough to see first hand the difference these projects are making when I met with some of those taking part including during my rail tour last summer.

“Whether it’s improving accessibility in stations or engaging with young people about rail, I’d like to thank each and every one for their contribution and the impact they’ve made.”

[Where relevant you could also include the below quotes, if space allows. However it’s best practice not to have more than two or three quotes in a press release]

**Marie Daly, chief customer and culture officer, Transport for Wales, said:**

“We were thrilled to co-sponsor this year’s awards in beautiful Swansea and celebrate the amazing work being done across the UK and particularly across our own network.

“We’re so lucky to be able to work with so many amazing communities and organisations through our Community Rail Partnerships and really believe that by connecting and encouraging collaboration among businesses and organisations in local communities, we can empower those communities to work together on a whole range of social, economic, cultural and environmental issues, as well as showcase the best our network has to offer.”

**Mark Hopwood, managing director, Great Western Railway said:**

“GWR has 11 Community Rail Partnerships on our network and we are incredibly proud of the work they do. They have great local knowledge and I know that they all work incredibly hard, as volunteers, inspiring sustainable improvements to their community and adding so much value to the local economy.

“They continue to deliver a host of worthwhile projects and I am delighted to see them gain such deserved recognition at the 2024 Community Rail Awards.”

**Full details of all winners can be found here.**

**ENDS**

**For more details and follow-up interviews, please contact [insert name, telephone number and email address for media to get in touch for more info or for follow-up interviews].**

**Notes to editors:**

1. Community rail is a grassroots movement spanning Britain that is made up of community rail partnerships, which work along railway lines or across regions, and volunteer station ‘friends’ groups, to connect communities with their railways. There are over 75 community rail partnerships and 1,200 station friends volunteer groups across Britain [**www.communityrail.org.uk**](http://www.communityrail.org.uk)
2. [Insert basic information about your partnership/group here to give extra background information that editors may need]