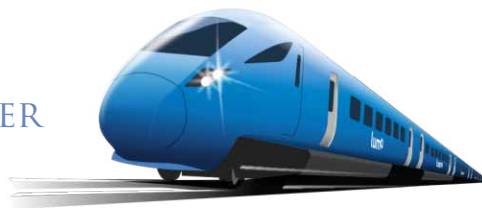


# ENTRY BOOKLET



## 2025 COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

HEADLINE PARTNER



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KEY SUPPORTERS

ORGANISED BY



**Rail Delivery Group**



**GTR**



“It has been a challenging yet exciting year across the community rail movement. With the arrival of a new government and its ambitious transport agenda, I am positive that given the demonstrable value community rail provides, we are ideally placed to play a vital role in the new government's vision of a passenger-focused, inclusive railway that is responsive to local needs, and building greener, more integrated transport networks to promote social mobility and tackle inequality.

2025 is a special year for the railway, with celebrations and events planned throughout the year for Railway 200. We plan to make our 20th Community Rail Awards in Newcastle on 13 March 2025 a truly memorable evening by shining a light on your endeavours, innovation and passion, and showcasing the impact being delivered with communities across Britain.

The Community Rail Awards are more important than ever. The projects and initiatives you enter demonstrate how rail is a powerful enabler, bringing communities together and unlocking social and economic value, while helping us tackle the climate crisis. Whether it's through community gardening, arts and heritage projects, promoting greener tourism, improving bus and active travel connections, or boosting travel confidence, inclusion and accessibility; community rail strengthens and empowers our communities, while striving towards a more sustainable future. I warmly encourage you to submit an entry, to show the difference you are making.

From all of us here at Community Rail Network, we want to thank those who make the Awards possible, including our judges and sponsors, who are outlined in this booklet. We especially want to thank our headline partner Lumo, plus platinum sponsor Angel Trains, gold sponsor CMAC, and Rail Delivery Group for again providing those shortlisted with a rail ticket to attend the event.

We look forward to seeing you all and celebrating in Newcastle!



**Jools Townsend**  
Chief executive,  
Community Rail Network



### Support to help you enter and attend

#### Travel and attendance subsidies for shortlisted entrants:

We understand the challenging funding environment and how this might impact your ability to attend the Awards, so we've been working to find ways we can ensure all those shortlisted can attend. Rail Delivery Group is again providing each shortlisted entrant with two return tickets to the event. We will be offering an Attendance Subsidy Fund to shortlisted entrants whose train operators are unable to support attendance through hotel bookings etc. Details of how to apply for both of these will be sent to shortlisted CRPs/groups after 11 December.

#### Need advice on entering?

Do check the **Rules of Entry** and **How to Submit a Good Entry** pages in this booklet, and [our awards web page](#) 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 9 to 30 September - 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 and 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 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.



**Lorraine Lewis BCA**

Lorraine is Co-Founder and CEO of The Lewis Foundation, a cancer charity which provides free gift packs and support to adult cancer patients in 17 hospitals across the Midlands.

Not just a charity leader, Lorraine is also a motivational speaker, inspiring audiences, ranging from school children to corporate professionals. She has given talks nationally and internationally to organisations such as the Eden Project, European Chartered Institute of Fundraising and Westminster Health Care Forum. Her story has captured the attention of audiences nationwide, and she has featured in publications like The Sun, Hello! and even made appearances on national TV such as Channel 4 News.



Lorraine has received a number of awards for her service to the community. She proudly holds the Hello! Magazine Inspiration Award, Great British Entrepreneur Award and the prestigious Prime Minister Point of Light Award. Recently embracing the role of an author, her memoir 'Dare To Dream,' shares her journey from a Lawyer to Co-Founder of The Lewis Foundation.

**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 19 years of tourism experience. Alice also manages Community Rail Network's tourism website, Scenic Rail Britain.



**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.



## Judges' Profiles

2025 COMMUNITY  
RAIL AWARDS  
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

**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 Chair 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 fifty years working on the Ffestiniog Railway, nearly forty of which were as a director.

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



Chris is the policy manager for stations and community rail at the Department for Transport. He has worked in rail policy since 2018, having previously advised on HS2 and policies related to regulated fares setting and discount schemes. Prior to this, Chris worked at the Department for Education, advising on funding for academy schools.

**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.

**Daniel Wright**



Daniel has a keen interest in transport design and infrastructure, and railway architecture in particular. He holds a first-class honours degree in transport from Aston University. In 2012 he created transport design and architecture website The Beauty of Transport which he continues to write, as well as writing for other clients in the public transport industry and the community rail sector. His current project is a book on inter-war railway station architecture. Daniel has worked as a transport journalist and editor, public transport planner, and for Community Rail Network from 2018 to 2024 as support officer with a special interest in advising non-profit organisations on the reuse of redundant railway buildings. He is a member of the Railway Heritage Trust's advisory board.

2005 ★ 2025

Did you know?  
Since the awards began,  
our judges have  
reviewed over  
**4,000**  
inspiring awards  
entries

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS





Entries will open **Monday 2 September** and close **Monday 30 September 2024**.

**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 30 September**. 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 **10 September 2023 and 31 August 2024**, unless specified as exempt in the category criteria. **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 – if shortlisted, this is how we will refer to your project in our media work and 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 & 10** – 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 our previous winners' booklets [HERE](#).

**For categories 8 – Photo Competition, 11 – It's Your Station, 12 – Outstanding Volunteer Contribution and 14 – 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 [events@communityrail.org.uk](mailto:events@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.***

Every shortlisted entry/group can also apply for an '**Attendance Bursary**' to support their attendance at the Awards gala event in Newcastle. These bursaries are only issued to shortlisted members, where their train operator is unable to support their accommodation/other expenses, and where they do not have access to other funds for this purpose. Application forms for rail tickets and attendance bursary will be issued with the shortlisting notification emails on 11 December.

## Awards presentation event booking form

Please complete the form by downloading from our website [CRA 2025 event booking form](#) and email to [events@communityrail.org.uk](mailto:events@communityrail.org.uk)





# How to Submit a Good Entry

2025 COMMUNITY  
RAIL AWARDS  
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

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 **2024 Hall of Fame** [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, 11, 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](#).**

# How to Submit a Good Entry (continued)

2025 COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS  
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

## 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 30 September at 17:00**
- **Shortlist announced: Wednesday 11 December 2024**
- **Closing date for the Gala Awards Event bookings: Friday 14 February 2025**

## 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 [NewcastleGateshead.com](https://www.newcastle-gateshead.com) 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**

*For this category entries will be grouped according to the size/type of the group/organisation making the submission. This is to enable the judges to compare projects equally in terms of resources 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 **Great Western Railway**

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.

**Essential Requirements:** You **must** provide clear evidence of the **impact** of the campaign, gathered via your pre-planned evaluation.

### 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 **Freightliner**

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.

One-off projects must come within the required timeframe as laid out in the rules of entry, however rolling community engagement projects can be submitted here, and are exempt from the date limitations. However you must provide clear evidence that the project is continually evolving and adapting to the needs of the community.

**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.

## 7. Tourism and Leisure Award

Sponsored by **TransPennine Express**

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.

**Note:** *The judges will give extra consideration 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 & 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 2023/2024';
- 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 11 December 2024. This will provide the final placings.**





## 9. Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability

Sponsored by **Northern**

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. 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.

**This is not a heritage restoration award** - many projects may involve restoration work to improve the appearance and celebrate the heritage of spaces, but many revitalisations are in non-heritage locations or are land re-use projects. 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 and 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 **CrossCountry**

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 in the past year, 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

Sponsored by **Govia Thameslink Railway**

Community Rail Network's senior management will present two special awards, to a community rail partnership and a station adoption group, that, in their view, have each demonstrated an outstanding contribution to community rail over the past 12 months. 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 the winners who will receive a trophy and certificate. This can also be made as a discretionary award i.e. not necessarily selected from the nominations.

Nominate via the [online entry form here](#) 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 over the past 12 months. Please also feel free to include additional testimonials and images.



## Our Sponsors & Donors

2025 COMMUNITY  
RAIL AWARDS  
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

### Lumo - proud to be the headline partner for the 2025 Community Rail Awards in Newcastle!

Lumo operate a 100% electric powered train service which is 25 times cleaner than flying and has a strong commitment to sustainability across all areas of the company. It is also very active in supporting the communities it serves, providing sustainable travel and championing innovation with industry-leading customer satisfaction.



Based in Newcastle upon Tyne in the Stevenson's Quarter on the site of the world's first railway locomotive factory, Lumo offers fast, comfortable and reliable services on the East Coast Main Line connecting London King's Cross and Edinburgh with Newcastle. Throughout 2025 it is also supporting the Steam to Green exhibition at Newcastle's Discovery Museum, which explores the story of energy including ground-breaking research taking place in North East England. The exhibition includes a section about environmentally sustainable transport which will feature information about Lumo's sustainability and innovation journey.

Lumo is proud to play an active role in its local communities and is pleased to help celebrate the work by community rail partnerships, station adoption groups and many others who contribute to the success of the railway, the region and beyond.

### 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 their 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

The Department for Transport is a keen supporter of community rail. We appreciate the efforts of those working within the community rail movement to improve stations and support the communities served by the railways across the country. 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.



Department  
for Transport

### Rail Delivery Group

Rail Delivery Group is delighted to sponsor this year's Community Rail Awards, which recognise the vital role played by thousands of volunteers and crucially the communities they serve. We would like to thank Community Rail Network for their dedication and hard work throughout the year and look forward to continuing to work together.



### Govia Thameslink Railway

Govia Thameslink Railway is thrilled to support the 20th anniversary of the Community Rail Awards. Dedicated volunteers across our network play a vital role in enhancing the communities we serve. They contribute by improving our stations through art and gardening projects, encouraging people to experience train travel for the first time, promoting local tourist attractions, and collaborating with community groups to bring about positive change. These volunteers truly make a real difference in the communities they serve, which is why we take great pride in sponsoring the recognition of outstanding contributions to community rail.



### 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.

AVANTI  
WEST COAST



## Our Sponsors



### CrossCountry

With community rail initiatives in progress across the length and breadth of the CrossCountry network, it's fantastic to be able to support the Community Rail Awards in its twentieth year.



Twentieth wedding anniversaries are traditionally marked with gifts of china; beautifully reflecting the complexity, beauty and value of our community rail network, which stretches as far as from Liskeard to Leuchars, and from Cardiff to Cambridge. We congratulate all of the nominees and winners of this year's Community Rail Awards – and invite community rail partners to take a look at our newly-launched Customer & Communities Investment Fund, which this year takes taking a renewed focus on projects that specifically encourage sustainability improvements in local communities.

### East Midlands Railway

East Midlands Railway are delighted to support the Community Rail Awards 2025, in this special Anniversary year 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.



### Freightliner

Freightliner is delighted to become a sponsor of the Community Rail Awards 2025 sponsoring 'Best Community Engagement project' category. We are passionate about social value within the communities and environments we operate in and being a responsible business within the communities we serve and touch. As a Rail freight provider, we are not only committed to ensuring a more sustainable environment for our communities, but we also support a wide range of employee nominated charities both within the UK and Europe, match employee fundraising and sponsor employee connected grass roots sports and other personal passions. We are looking forward to and welcome the opportunity to work with community rail and wish all shortlisted nominees the very best of luck.



### 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. With new trains on all our services, we're collaborating with our CRPs and adopters to maximise their positive local impact and ensure that the railway plays its full part in the sustainable development of our region, in line with community needs.



### Great Western Railway

The 20th anniversary Community Rail Awards also mark 200 years of rail service to customers and to communities. Great Western Railway are immensely proud to be part of the celebrations by sponsoring the Small Projects Award. This is the award that showcases the impact and social value that can come from smaller projects and their ability to grow like mighty oaks from tiny acorns.



### LNER

Through our Responsible Business approach, we are passionate about tackling the social issues that impact the communities we serve. We are delighted to be sponsoring this year's awards, an event that provides a fantastic opportunity to celebrate and showcase the hard work and dedication of everyone involved. Good luck to all entrants.



### 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 the 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.



### Northern

Northern is once again a proud sponsor of the Community Rail Awards, recognising the incredible work being done by community rail partnerships and station adopters all over the country. The hard work and dedication of everyone involved continues to keep rail at the heart of the communities we serve. We wish everyone the very best of luck!





## Our Sponsors

2025 COMMUNITY  
RAIL AWARDS  
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

### Porterbrook

Porterbrook is proud to sponsor the 2025 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.



### TransPennine Express

TransPennine Express is delighted to sponsor the Tourism & Leisure Award, as the awards are a fantastic opportunity to celebrate all the amazing work of the hard-working community groups and volunteers. At TransPennine Express, we are committed to the communities we serve and recognise the part we play in helping them grow. We want to make sure our positive impact extends beyond the station doors, and we love to support our local areas, doing our bit to help them thrive.



### Siemens Mobility

Siemens Mobility is delighted to support those being recognised at the Community Rail Awards for the amazing work they do in their communities, through the Attendance Bursary Fund. Working with stations and partnerships, we see firsthand the impact community rail can have and are thrilled to play our part in appreciating the crucial role that local people play. Congratulations to all the nominees in attendance.

**SIEMENS**

### Transport for Wales

Transport for Wales is delighted to be a sponsor for the 2025 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.



Noddir gan/Sponsored by  
**TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU**  
**TRANSPORT FOR WALES**

### Join the conversation online

Once you've uploaded your awards entry why not share the exciting news with your followers online? It could help pique their interest about your work. Join in the conversations using the hashtag: **#CRA25**



# Fringe activities in support of the Community Rail Awards 2025

## Pre-Awards Welcome event – hosted by Lumo

12  
MARCH

Our Headline Partner Lumo will be hosting a complimentary pre-Awards welcome event, which is open to all Awards attendees who will be in Newcastle on the evening of Wednesday 12 March.

Full details to be confirmed, so please check our [Community Rail Awards](#) webpage for updates on this event and how to book your place.

## Community rail and other wonders of the North East - You may want to book a few days in the region!

While you're in the North East, take some time to discover what makes this region and the people who live here so well loved.

**The local community rail partnerships (CRPs) including Bishop Line, Esk Valley Railway and Tyne Valley will be on hand at the Awards to showcase the best of community rail in the North East.**

Newcastle makes an ideal base for exploring the region, so why not take some extra time during your visit and discover what the area has to offer.

Take a trip around the city and onwards to the coast on board the **Metro**, looking out for iconic art along the route.

Travel west from Newcastle along the **Tyne Valley Railway** to Haltwhistle, the central most town in Britain, and see the work of the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership. Visit the Old Booking Hall, now used by the CRP as an education space, and see reproductions of the classic railway tickets invented on this line in the 1830s, known as Edmondson tickets. Nearby you'll see more impact of the CRP's work as you enjoy a bite to eat at the **Water Tower** cafe, recently converted by the CRP and explore the fascinating exhibitions in the waiting rooms and the new offices and studios transformed from redundant station buildings. Haltwhistle is a gateway to the area's Roman history which is easy to reach with the AD122 bus from the station to **Hadrian's Wall, Vindolanda** and **The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre**. Alternatively, leave the train at Wylam to visit Stephenson's birthplace and for a memorable evening, join the **curry train to Corbridge**. You might even be able to take a ride north on the anticipated new **Northumberland Line**.



In 2025 we  
celebrate the  
200th anniversary  
of the birth of the  
railway and you'll be in the best place to  
explore where it all began.



En route to Newcastle, take a trip along the Bishop Line, from Darlington and discover the area's rich history. Less than half an hour from Darlington and you'll be at the end of the line at Bishop Auckland. Here you're invited to step back in time as you experience 2,000 years of history with **The Auckland Project**, home to Auckland Castle, The Spanish Galley and Auckland Tower. Leave the train at Shildon to see how the railways have progressed throughout the ages with a visit to **Locomotion**, home to the largest undercover collection of historic railway vehicles in Europe. Back on the train and one stop later you can visit the newest attraction in the North East, **Hopetown**. This site boasts over 7 acres where each building has a unique and interesting story to tell, including North Road Station Museum, The Carriage Works, The Stores, Darlington Locomotive Works and Skerne Bridge, known to be the oldest operating railway bridge in the world.

## Staying for longer?

Make sure you take a trip east from Darlington via Middlesbrough, on the **Esk Valley Railway**. You'll soon see why it's known as 'The Pretty Line' as you journey through North Yorkshire Moors National Park, passing Roseberry Topping and taking you to the historic seaside town of Whitby to enjoy some of the area's famous fish and chips. Along the way, be sure to look out for the amazing station display by the Nunthorpe and Marton Knitters.



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KEY DONOR TO THE 'ATTENDANCE BURSARY FUND'

**SIEMENS**



Community Rail Network

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