



# Community Rail Awards 2022



# Winners

Awards presented during a ceremony at  
Manchester Central Convention Complex  
Thursday 6 October 2022

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# Involving Children and Young People

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# First

## Engineered Learning, Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership and East Midlands Railway for 'Turning Around Vulnerable Young Lives Through Engineering'

### Concept and aims

In autumn 2019, Engineered Learning and the Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership discussed the possibility of NEET (not in employment, education, or training) young people planning and delivering a community rail project, giving them opportunities to gain valuable work experience and an accredited qualification.

This resulted in a proposal to create a decorative metal archway to enhance the entrance to Duffield Station, improving the welcome to both East Midlands Railway (EMR) passengers and visitors to the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway. The project was supported by EMR, Network Rail, Community Rail Network, the Derbyshire Police & Crime Commissioners Fund, and Open Gate Trust.

### What happened

The project was delayed by COVID-19 restrictions, but in March 2021, a group of eight young people were inducted onto the scheme. They took part in enrichment activities including team building exercises, a tour of Derby Station, and a rail safety talk. They also took a factfinding trip, visiting the EMR and Ecclesbourne Valley stations at Duffield, to gain inspiration for creating the arch. Finally, the group visited EMR's Etches Park train depot to take part in personal development and careers advice sessions.

The young people created a range of design options for the arch, with the final design illustrating both heritage and modern locomotives, along with a tree and flowers to reflect the nature of the Derwent Valley Line. This image was digitised using Computer Aided Design, before being cut into stainless-steel and welded into an arch by the young people themselves. The arch was officially unveiled in June 2022.



### Results

The eight young people all achieved a Level 1 NCFE Award in Industry Specific Engineering Skills, which offered them an insight into industry requirements, as well as providing real-life workshop experiences and activities to build confidence and practical skills.

Encouraged by their success, some of the group have gone back into education, with three now actively pursuing engineering as a future career choice. Many of the group live in Derby's Derwent ward, which is ranked

among the top three per cent of the most deprived communities in the country. This project has provided them with both a qualification and practical experience in welding and fabricating, and the arch is there as a lasting legacy of the project and a feature for the community to enjoy.

The project was embraced by a wide range of community and railway stakeholders, and was selected as a social mobility case study for the Department for Transport's Positive Support Group's 25th anniversary event in September 2022.



# Involving Children and Young People

sponsored by LNER

## Second

### 6VT Youth Community Rail Partnership for 'Tracks & Trains'

'Tracks and Trains' is a rail safety initiative aimed at children and young people, devised by 6VT Youth Community Rail Partnership. The aim of the snakes-and-ladders-inspired game is to promote rail safety in a fun, interactive and informative way. The group collated scenarios of different things that might cause safety issues on the railway, as well as the things that we can all do to help trains run smoothly. These different scenarios are designed to start conversations about why players move forward or come back down the board, promoting the strapline 'Enjoy the Trains – Stay off the Tracks'.

The partnership worked with illustrator Glen MacBeth, as well as graphic designers, train operators and local young people to develop the game. 60 sets have been printed

and sent out to schools and other community rail partnerships to use as a toolkit for their youth engagement work. The partnership has also printed a huge floor vinyl of the game for use at public events, where players can act as the pieces themselves and move through the game. Having been positively received by 6VT's peers at their youth café during the development stage, it is hoped that the game will continue to benefit and educate young people for many years to come.



## Third

### Kent Community Rail Partnership and partners for 'Youth Engagement - Shaping the Future'

Throughout the past year, Kent Community Rail Partnership has engaged more than 1,800 young people in numerous diverse activities and projects as part of their 'Youth Engagement' programme.

This has included:

- Working with station staff and British Transport Police to deliver rail safety and travel training to over 100 year 6 pupils;
- Providing gardening and station improvement opportunities for students at Sheppey College, Ashford College, and Heath Farm School, allowing them to build a portfolio of work experience for future employment;
- Involving 160 students from Five Acre Wood Special School in designing a 'Sunflower' mural to raise awareness around hidden disabilities;
- Engaging around 780 young people in replacing old picture panels at Ashford International Station, brightening up the space for passengers;
- Delivering a youth-led event during Community Rail Week, where 16–18-year-olds shared their views on barriers to train travel, accessibility, and sustainability;
- Supporting refugee and ESOL students to refurbish and plant up window boxes at Charing Station.

The work of the partnership has given a platform to the voices of young people so they can not only become the rail passengers of the future, but also have the opportunity to shape the future of rail travel itself.



# Involving Diverse Groups

sponsored by East Midlands Railway

# First

## Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership for 'Getaway'

### Concept and aims

The Getaway project was devised by Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership (GCRP) in response to data showing that black and ethnic minority communities did not have equal access to rural spaces in the UK, with some groups therefore unable to access the health and wellbeing benefits associated with enjoying nature and the outdoors.

GCRP made a commitment to address these inequalities, especially in the wake of an increase in knife crime and gang-related violence in their target area of Gloucester. Underpinned by the belief that the countryside is for everyone, and that young people should feel confident to travel independently by rail, the partnership set about developing opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to access the health and wellbeing benefits of Gloucestershire's rural spaces.

### What happened

GCRP established partnerships with two community organisations, The Friendship Cafe, and The Music Works, to engage young people in the programme and deliver a range of new rural experiences. The young people actively took the lead in co-designing the days out, working together with trusted youth leaders to plan experiences based in rural destinations accessible by rail.

A series of ten day-trips were delivered as part of the project, engaging 117 young people in 38 inspiring new experiences to expand their horizons, learn new skills, and gain confidence and independence through rail travel. These included canoeing, farming, bushcraft, mountain biking, and outdoor cooking. The 16-25yrs cohort also created vlogs for online platforms, encouraging others to take up new activities and develop their own creative skills.



### Results

GCRP said the true success of the scheme was its impact on raising the aspirations of the young people involved. While the partnership designed the project to increase opportunities for young people to engage with nature and access wellbeing and health benefits, they did not envisage that as a result of them gaining new skills and experiences, many of the group would be inspired to carve out new career paths for themselves, including in rail.

Participants said the scheme had helped them to develop positive mindsets, allowed them to make new friendships, and opened their mind to rail travel, particularly to access rural spaces. The project has seen some of the young people move into employment, start-up businesses, invest in themselves to develop further creative skills, and explore the idea of setting up their own Community Interest Company, all as a result of co-designing the experiences and exploring the outdoors in a space they felt safe in.



# Involving Diverse Groups

sponsored by East Midlands Railway



*Second*

## Hampshire Community Rail Partnership and Winchester Go LD for 'Winchester Go LD - Try the Train'

Throughout 2021, Winchester Go LD were a key member of Hampshire Community Rail Partnership's 'Confidence with Travel' project. The groups worked together on a series of 'Try the Train' trips, exploring ways to overcome the challenges faced by people with learning disabilities (LD) when travelling independently by train.



On the trips, the group were joined by Lucy Lomax of Hampshire Community Rail Partnership and accessibility and inclusion ambassadors from South Western Railway (SWR), who listened to members' concerns about train travel and shared their knowledge in an approachable and engaging way. Members of Winchester Go LD learned about the Passenger Assistance service, as well as how to request the ramp and navigate their way around the station.

The trips empowered members of Winchester Go LD to develop the skills required for independent train travel, building their confidence in a fun and interactive way. The group have even been invited to provide a training webinar for staff from SWR to share their lived experience of travelling by train with LD. This is a vital opportunity to connect the LD community with the rail industry, allowing those with LD to share their needs and experiences, break down barriers, and promote inclusion.

*Joint-Third*

## Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership for 'Total Inclusion'

Working with Greater Anglia, Essex Path to Prosperity, and RAMA (Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Migrant Action), Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership supported a range of vulnerable people to learn about and experience train travel in the UK. The partnership hosted several trips for young adults and families, supporting them in a range of areas including travel planning, rail safety, and navigating stations. These trips have inspired independence and instilled trust in a group of people who have experienced extreme hardship, and thanks to this support, they now have the tools and confidence to explore their new home by rail.



*Joint-Third*

## Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership for 'Our Line Connections'

Drawing on the social isolation many people felt during the COVID-19 lockdowns, Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership embarked upon the 'Our Line Connections' project to build positive connections between generations and places through rail travel along their line. Working with Luxi Creative, the partnership engaged over 200 people in visual arts and musical workshops, where participants engaged in meaningful conversations around memories and feelings of hope, developing artistic and performance skills, as well as practicing mental wellbeing techniques. Participants created songs and artwork celebrating the value of connection, which were then showcased in an exhibition at Locomotion in Shildon.



# Community Creative Projects and Station Art

sponsored by **Transport for Greater Manchester**

# First

## South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership for 'Wigan Mural Project'

### Concept and aims

The Wigan Mural project, funded by Avanti West Coast and led by South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership (SELCRP), aimed to transform a large area of Wigan North Western Station via a piece of community art that would represent a sense of pride in the local area.

The aim of the scheme was to improve the appearance and environment of the station, by engaging with local stakeholders, communities, and individuals to directly influence the mural design. The partnership also wanted to showcase the work of local artists and celebrate the heritage and history of Wigan.

### What happened

SELCRP chose local professional lettering artist Jess Riley to lead on the project. The partnership were excited by her unique and innovative design concept of an A to Z of 'Wiganese', a series of words and phrases commonly used by people of Wigan past and present.

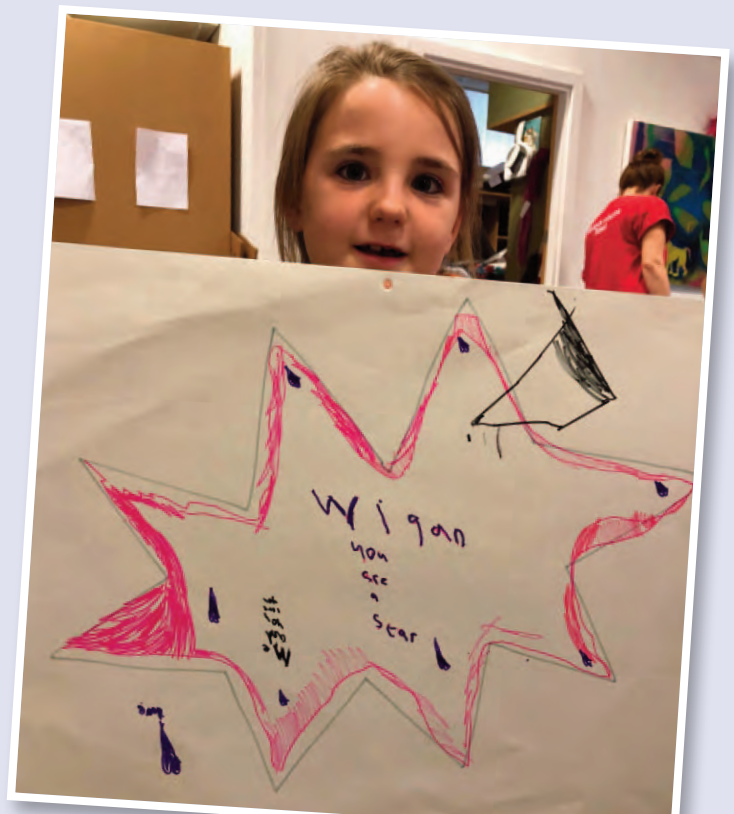
Jess and SELCRP engaged thousands of people in the development of the project, running a social media campaign, holding community workshops with groups ranging from Wigan Youth Zone to a local pensioner's club, and installing post boxes in independent businesses asking people to fill in a postcard with ideas. They actively tried to involve local people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds, asking them to nominate their favourite Wigan words and phrases, as well as local landmarks and things they loved about Wigan. Using the results, Jess created a design to portray the true sense of the area and 'bring a smile to people's faces.'

### Results

The finished mural was unveiled by the Mayor of Wigan in November 2021. The feedback on the project has been overwhelmingly positive, with station users fascinated by the transformation of the previously blank underpass. Hundreds of local people have voiced their approval on social media, and the partnership has created a page on its [website](#) dedicated to the artwork and the meanings of the 'Wiganese' terms.



Dr Steph Dermott, project manager for SELCRP, said: "SELCRP are immensely proud of this project, and the joy it continues to bring to local people. People passing through the station are now greeted by some of their favourite 'Wiganese' words and phrases that aim to embody a sense of both local pride and shared humour, providing a welcoming atmosphere to bring a smile to the faces of visitors and Wiganers alike!"



# Community Creative Projects and Station Art

sponsored by **Transport for Greater Manchester**

## Second

### Sevenside Community Rail Partnership for 'In Our Hands - British Sign Language Artwork at Patchway Station'

'In Our Hands' is a photography project borne out of the recent refurbishments at Patchway Station. After feedback that the station appeared too functional and desolate, Sevenside Community Rail Partnership worked with Great Western Railway and a local steering group to create a more welcoming station environment for passengers through the artwork.

Of the 11 local artists who applied, Bath Spa University student Katie Hanning was selected for her concepts based on the theme of 'bringing communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion'. Her idea was to create a photography piece in British Sign Language (BSL) using the hands of members attending the Memory Café in Patchway, spelling out the powerful messages 'Together We Are Stronger' and 'The Future is in our Hands'.

The project allowed participants to share their experiences of hearing loss, subsequently opening up a wider dialogue about representation of the D/deaf community. The launch event involved a performance in BSL from young people at Yate School's Hearing Resource Base, the first time these students had performed in public. Contacts gained through the project are being used to continue to develop the relationship, with more local D/deaf groups being offered a 'Day Out by Train' experience.



## Third

### The New River Line Community Rail Partnership for 'Art @ The Station'

Art @ The Station is a community art project that resulted from the COVID-19 lockdowns. Designed to give the whole community something to work on creatively together, those engaged with the project successfully revamped a disused signal box at St Margarets Station into a large outdoor art gallery.

Local participation was at the heart of the project. Funding was provided by local businesses, and posters calling for submissions were displayed across the community and on social media, encouraging engagement from artists and schools in the area. The final 12 pieces were selected by a committee and installed at the station, giving St Margarets a signal box to be proud of once again.

Art @ The Station successfully breathed new life into a previously disused building, something hugely beneficial in this time of post-pandemic recovery. Creating a space to engage and entertain passengers can help stations become more interesting, attractive, and welcoming places. By appealing to those who may not traditionally visit an art gallery, this project has offered a hook for the local community, instilling pride and ownership of the project, and encouraging more people to return to their local station and travel by rail.



# Small Projects Award – Under £500

sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

# First

## Kent Community Rail Partnership and Five Acre Wood for 'Sunflower Mural – Let's Celebrate Differences'



### Concept and aims

The concept for the Sunflower Mural was instigated by students from the Five Acre Wood SEN School, who wanted to raise awareness of hidden disabilities and celebrate people's individuality and differences.

They also wanted to bring a splash of colour to Snodland Station, which is adopted by the school, and identified a brick wall by the station bike store they felt could be brightened up with some vibrant artwork.

Working in partnership with Southeastern, the school decided to link the project with the train operator's 'Just A Minute' (JAM) scheme, which recognises that some passengers may have hidden disabilities and require additional support. Southeastern issue JAM cards and sunflower lanyards to such passengers, with the sunflower a globally recognised symbol for hidden disabilities.



### What happened

Every student at Five Acre Wood has an Education Health Care Plan, and many have hidden disabilities. All 160 students took part in the project, with teachers integrating the scheme into art lessons and allowing students extra time during wellbeing lessons to work on their sunflower designs.

Members of the local community helped to decide on the final images for the mural, taking examples of work from each class. Kent Community Rail Partnership then photographed each image before using software to arrange them into a collage.

The partnership then worked with the local Royal British Legion Institute to recreate the design and print it onto Dibond panels, to allow it to be displayed at the station.

### Results

The cost of the mural was only £137 (+VAT), working out to less than a pound per student engaged in the project.

The artwork was installed at the station and shared widely via social media, quickly gaining more than 2,500 views on Facebook. The project resulted in the students, many of whom have motor control difficulties, feeling great pride in the artwork by seeing it shared in public, with one making a special trip to the station with his grandfather to show off the mural and his contribution to it.

The local community has also taken pride in the artwork, with one resident stating that "it really cheers up the bike area and makes you think." Matt Jones, head of sixth form at the school, summed up the project perfectly by saying: "Everybody is different, and what a wonderful way to celebrate this."





## Small Projects Award – Under £500

sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

# Second

### **Sevenside Community Rail Partnership, Great Western Railway, and The Grove Youth Club for 'Finding the Way to Bedminster Station'**

Due to major rail improvement works at Bristol Temple Meads in the summer of 2021, all trains from the south were terminating at Bedminster, a small community station in South Bristol. The projected footfall meant there needed to be a robust rail replacement plan in place, and Great Western Railway were keen to work with the local community to help passengers navigate their way from the station to bus stops, as well as local businesses, cafés, and shops.

Sevenside Community Rail Partnership saw the benefit of supporting a more creative approach to the wayfinding, rather than just using standard signs. Young people from The Grove Youth Club were enlisted to design vibrant stencils and worked in small groups using temporary chalk spray to paint the designs in a line along the walking route between Bedminster Station and rail replacement bus stops. For a total spend of just £375, the route was easily identified and used by the thousands of passengers making the journey. As a result of this project, Sevenside have also made links with Upfest, and plan to link in with the 2023 street art festival to bring live art to the station, again inviting the youth club to be involved.



# Third

### **North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership and Friends of Alsager Station for 'Alsager Station Adopt-A-Shelter'**

Over the past few years, anti-social behaviour at Alsager Station had resulted in regular littering and property damage in the waiting shelter on Platform 2. North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership and the Friends of Alsager Station sought to address the problem by getting young people involved and arranging for a local primary school to 'adopt' the shelter.

With funding from the partnership, new trough planters were installed, alongside two recycled poster cases to add to the existing ones. Since November 2021, the children and staff have made regular visits to the station for planting, gardening, tidying, and cleaning duties, and have displayed artwork in the poster cases on the theme of local history and the environment. East Midlands Railway and North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership have also been on visits to the school, delivering project updates and rail safety lessons to pupils.

The project has been successful in significantly reducing the amount of litter and property damage at the station. The artwork has kept the waiting shelter looking bright and clean, and passengers have commented positively on the revamp of the space.



# Most Effective Communications Campaign

sponsored by **CrossCountry**

# First

## Southeast Communities Rail Partnership for 'Go Green by Train CO2 Savings'

### Concept and aims

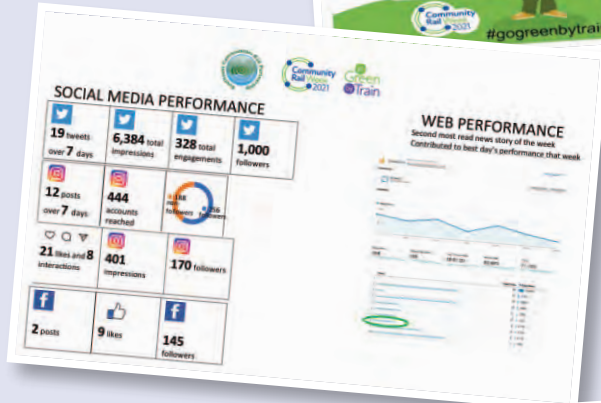
Southeast Communities Rail Partnership (SCRP) wanted to take part in Community Rail Week 2021, using its nationwide 'Go Green by Train' theme, but wanted to make their social media campaign unique. By promoting the sustainable transport message via authentic and relevant 'on-brand' posts, they wanted to ensure they 'stood out from the crowd'. SCRP decided to target their campaign at a youth audience, engaging young people in ways relevant to their generation. They did this by relating the CO2 savings made by travelling by train to the power used to charge mobile phones.

### What happened

The project team created some bespoke graphics to illustrate the CO2 savings from train journeys on each of their community rail lines compared with a car journey on the same route.

The partnership asked some of its stakeholders and partners, such as Brighton & Hove Buses and University of Brighton, for advice on obtaining reliable figures, also using LNER's online carbon footprint calculator and a greenhouse gas equivalence site to produce the statistics required.

The team chose mobile phones as a comparison as they were an item that their target audience could easily relate to. They produced templates for Instagram and Twitter which incorporated the 'Go Green by Train' branding, but could be adapted to highlight the specific savings for each line. During Community Rail Week, SCRP posted the graphics regularly, and also used them in sustainable travel workshops delivered in local schools that week.



### Results

The campaign produced excellent engagement figures, reaching well beyond the partnership's followers and core audience. There was a very positive reaction on Twitter and Instagram, and promotion by key partners, supporters, and volunteers also helped to promote the message on Facebook and the partnership website.

SCRP now have a set of graphics they can adapt and use for future campaigns, offering a shelf life beyond the initial concentrated publicity burst. Since Community Rail Week in October 2021, they have continued to use the CO2 figures at steering group meetings and in conversations with partners and other organisations, including Shoreham Port, who have asked about carrying out a similar exercise.

SCRP described the project as a "low cost, high impact campaign with lasting effects", and one they feel gives them a solid base to build on in the future. The partnership have also reassessed their use of social media as a result, now using more video content and channels such as TikTok to engage new audiences.

# Most Effective Communications Campaign

sponsored by **CrossCountry**

*Second*

## Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership for 'Pass on a Smile'

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face coverings were made mandatory on all public transport and in stations. The officer for the Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership is also a mental health first aider and was alerted to the challenges of both wearing and seeing others in face coverings. In response, the partnership developed the 'Pass on a Smile' campaign to encourage rail passengers to help others feel more comfortable and confident when travelling. A smile from a fellow passenger can easily make someone's day and raise their spirits – after all, smiling is contagious and accompanied by many health benefits.

Over a period of 18 months, 1,200 'friendly' face coverings featuring the 'Bishop Line Smile' were distributed to passengers travelling to and from Bishop Auckland Station. The Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership was able to impact positively on thousands of people both directly and indirectly via the campaign, achieving their goal of bringing social interactions and a sense of community back to passengers during incredibly uncertain times.



*Third*

## Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership and the 2021/22 Year in Industry Students at Northern for 'Access for All to the Bentham Line'

The Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership again worked with Northern's Year in Industry students to put together an extensive, multi-faceted project which has seen 'Accessibility for All' promoted along the Bentham Line. The group began by surveying all stations and facilities along the line, as well as working to find practical solutions to problems such as a lack of handrails, accessible parking spaces, and dropped kerbs. Following the surveys, the group decided to produce a colourful and detailed 60-page 'Access for All' booklet, with a view to it becoming the 'go to' source of accessibility information for travellers along the Bentham Line.

To complement the booklet, the students also created a series of three-minute **videos** giving a 360-degree tour of each station, which can be accessed by QR codes. All elements of the project have been extremely well received, with an initial 3,000 booklets ready to be distributed to communities along the line. The Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership said it was indebted to the students for the time and commitment they gave, and for the creation of a valuable resource which will raise the profile of the Bentham Line and boost the travel confidence of its passengers.



# Best Community Engagement Project

sponsored by **Go-Ahead**

# First

## Heart of England Community Rail Partnership, Highly Sprung Performance, Coventry City Council, and Avanti West Coast for 'Coventry Station Community Day – In Transit'

### Concept and aims

Coventry Station has seen huge investment in recent years, including a new £82million building and work on the existing listed building, which celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2022. The Coventry Station Community Day was developed to showcase these improvements, alongside giving local cultural organisations a spotlight to promote their work to tie in with the end of Coventry's City of Culture year.

The main aims of the event were to:

- Raise the profile of Coventry as having a sustainable, greener future, promoting green travel and future travel innovations;
- Raise awareness of Coventry Station and the potential for rail travel among non-traditional users;
- Increase local engagement with the station and show how it now has an increased sense of place and links with Coventry;
- Highlight active travel options for the 'last mile' of people's journeys;
- Raise awareness of the work of the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership.

### What happened

Coventry Station Community Day took place on Saturday, 7 May, 2022, on the boulevard in front of the station. The day had a family-friendly festival feel, featuring activities including Coventry Transport Museum's 'Playhem on the Promenade', designing a 'train of the future' with local artist Emily Kaye, and a scale model of the Coventry-based world's first fully operational Urban Airport.

There was a strong focus on encouraging active travel with Learn to Ride a Bike sessions, bike security marking, pedi-cabs, free cycle safety checks from Dr. Bike and information about the West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme.

The event was able to showcase some of the best local talent as part of the City of Culture's Open Weekend, and culminated with two sold-out performances of 'In Transit' by Highly Sprung. A mix of professional performers and over 100 children from six local schools amazed audiences with music, dance, and aerial performances, all showcasing the role the railways have in connecting people and the environmental benefits of travelling by train.



### Results

It is estimated that over 1,000 people participated in or interacted with the daytime events, with around 800 people enjoying the 'In Transit' performances. One of the secondary schools involved has since reached out to Heart of England to organise a 'Rail Week' in the autumn term, as well as asking to create artwork for Tile Hill Station in Coventry.

The partnership is set to work with Highly Sprung on a new project aimed at breaking down barriers to rail travel, and is exploring the potential to hold further community performances and pop-up events at Coventry Station's boulevard space in the future.



# Best Community Engagement Project

sponsored by **Go-Ahead**

## Second

### Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership for 'Dementia Friendly Music Train'



Recognising that certain sections of the community may find train travel difficult, Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership embarked upon a journey to make rail accessible and inclusive for all. Working alongside Greater Anglia, the Alzheimer's Society, and Braintree District Council, the partnership hosted its first ever dementia-friendly train event in December 2021.

Around 40 people living with dementia, and their carers, took part in the event, which aimed to provide an opportunity for people with dementia to enjoy the everyday experiences everyone has the right to access. The group enjoyed afternoon tea before being entertained by a local saxophone player, and those involved spoke positively about how the event had improved their mental wellbeing and reduced feelings of isolation. After the event, participants were signposted to the community wellbeing team and other local support groups, and Braintree Station has now become an accredited dementia-friendly station.

The partnership said seeing the difference it makes to people's wellbeing when they re-engage with their communities is what inspired them to deliver the project, encouraging them to provide safe and enjoyable travel experiences to empower individuals, build their independence, and improve quality of life.



## Third

### Our Flimby and Flimby Primary School for 'Our Flimby'

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pupils of Flimby Primary School sensed that the residents of their small West Cumbrian village were struggling. People were feeling isolated and low, and the children aspired to change this. The 'Our Flimby' project was subsequently launched via Facebook, to try to lift the mood of the village at a very difficult time. The idea was to encourage the local community to reconnect with family, friends, and neighbours by going out and exploring Flimby, taking photographs of their favourite places and putting them forward for display at the village railway station, which was adopted by the school in 2018.

With funding from Northern and local design company Firpress, the submitted images were brought to life on the 'Board of Hope' on the northbound platform of the station. The initiative provided a huge morale boost to everyone involved, generating a real sense of hope and strength across the community for the first time in months. Residents and passengers travelling by train along the Cumbrian Coast Line can now enjoy the images and quotes as they travel through the station, as well as learning about previously unknown aspects of the community.



# Tourism & Leisure Award

sponsored by **Transport for Wales**



# First

## Great Little Trains of Wales and the Community Rail Partnerships in Wales and the Borders for 'Wales on Rails Tourism Project'

### Concept and aims

'Wales on Rails' (WOR) is a sustainable pan-Wales tourism project, led by Great Little Trains of Wales (GLTW), the consortium of Welsh narrow gauge heritage railways, in collaboration with all the community rail partnerships across Wales and the Borders.

The project was designed to provide a resource for tourist travellers to explore Wales by public transport, offering a series of maps, itineraries, and information cards, all explaining the heritage and social and cultural landscape of Wales to enrich the visitor experience.

### What happened

Working with a web developer, the project team created a brand and set of visual materials offering an extensive resource and scenic experience to inspire travellers. The community rail partnerships acted as expert tourist guides, expanding links with their communities by identifying local tourist attractions and popular things to do within easy access of stations on their lines and local bus routes.

A transport consultant was engaged to produce a review of leisure ticketing, and to help inform the information cards, the team held an industry briefing webinar with tourism partners attended by more than 40 businesses.

The project was launched to wide media coverage in Cardiff by Vaughan Gething MS, the Minister for the Economy, and Tim Dunn, British railway historian and TV presenter, in March 2022. A photographic competition, 'A Golden Photo of Wales', was held to coincide with the launch, receiving more than 150 entries. Five winners received a pair of GLTW Gold Cards, and have been sharing their travel adventures on social media.



### Results

Since the launch, the project has featured on Transport for Wales's 'Just the Ticket' podcast, and the team have promoted sustainable tourism to travellers at Birmingham New Street and Manchester Piccadilly Stations during Community Rail Week 2022, and to visitors to the Visit Wales stand at the Wales Rural Network Event in Builth Wells.

The cards are described as the "jewel in the crown" of the WOR [website](#), with over a thousand available to choose from, giving freedom and choice to travellers. It also features maps including all rail, GLTW, and connecting bus routes. As of June 2022, the website had received 34,000 Google page views, and the project's social media reach was more than 208,000 users.

The team state they have seen great face-to-face engagement with the project at exhibitions, and alongside commitments to expand the website and social media content, they are developing a calendar of events to take WOR 'on tour' in 2023.

# Tourism & Leisure Award

sponsored by **Transport for Wales**

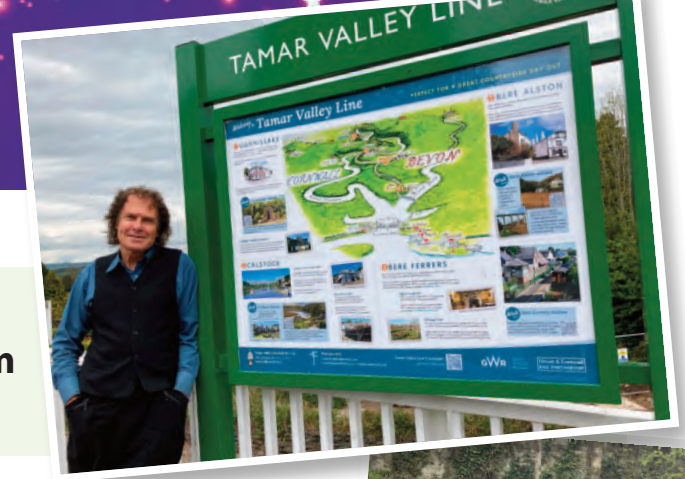
## Second

### Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for 'Walks from the Railway'

Responding to their community's desire to get back outdoors following the pandemic, Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership (DCRP) mounted a two-year campaign to promote scenic 'walks from the railway' across the two counties. The aim was to give locals and visitors alike the inspiration and resources to improve their physical and mental health, whilst helping to rebuild rail patronage and support tourism businesses.

DCRP doubled the number of self-guided walks on their [website](#) to 36, as well as creating video guides, a new 'Walk of the Month' feature, and promotion of their fast-growing TikTok account to reach younger audiences. The walks were also featured in DCRP's flagship Great Scenic Railways leaflet, of which 275,000 copies have been distributed.

The campaign reached 450,000 people on social media, with more than 1,000 positive comments and shares. Over 20,000 people visited DCRP's walks webpages, more than double their previous record. The partnership's marketing was praised by partners ranging from the National Trust to Dartmoor National Park, and local hospitality businesses reported additional bookings as a direct result of the campaign. All this helped the partnership to play its part in Devon and Cornwall's bounce back in rail passenger numbers over the past year – unrivalled almost anywhere else in the country.

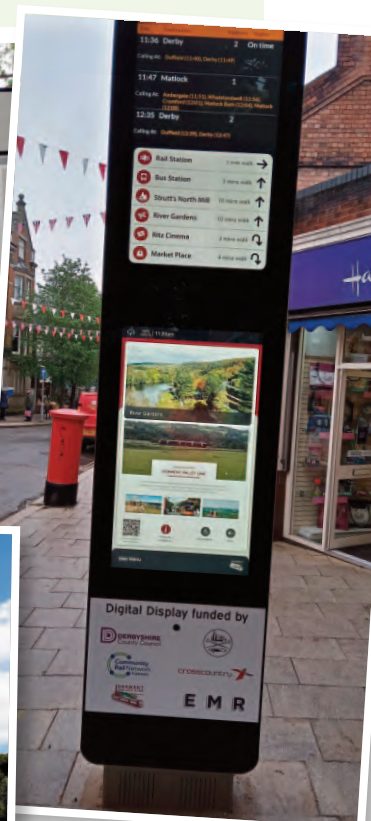


## Third

### Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership for 'Promoting Post-COVID Return to Rail Travel, Walks and Attractions'

Having previously only had a web presence on external websites, Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership recognised the need for a modern, attractive, and functional website to encourage a post-pandemic return to rail travel. The process began in November 2020, when East Midlands Railway developed a new logo for the partnership, reflecting the heritage, tourism, and landscape characteristics of the line. The new comprehensive and easy-to-use website was launched in 2021, advertising more than 100 things to do along the route and featuring upwards of 50 walks, which can be searched by station or from a selection of tourism and leisure categories. There are full details of all 13 stations as well as scenic journeys, school trips by train, and community rail information.

Since its launch, over 9,300 users have visited the [website](#), with the figures indicating consistent month-by-month growth. From July 2021 to March 2022, the associated growth in leisure travel has seen the main leisure destination of Matlock Bath recover to 89% of pre-COVID levels, showing how successful the new website and complementary brand initiatives have been in providing a high-quality, ongoing resource for future growth on the Derwent Valley Line.



# Influencing Positive Change & Sustainability

sponsored by **RSSB**

# First

## Platform Rail Community Education Scheme for 'Platform Rail Community Education Scheme'

### Concept and aims

Platform is a rail education scheme that invests in future generations and raises climate awareness, developed collaboratively between Severnside, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, and Transwilt Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs).

The partnerships had a shared vision of developing an education offer across their areas that would successfully support schools in their engagement with the rail industry. They had a collective goal of creating a team who could deliver in-school workshops, encourage schools to use the railway, and create bespoke, rail-related resources that linked to the curriculum.

### What happened

To build a business case and secure funding, education consultants Sustainable Hive were commissioned to undertake a feasibility study, embedding specialist sustainable education insights throughout. This identified key findings and recommendations including using professional teachers with the required understanding of the educational environment, building bespoke and distinctly local resources, and providing geographical context promoting sustainable, healthy travel linked to the PSHE curriculum.

Funding for an 18-month pilot was secured via the Community Rail Development Fund, Great Western Railway, and CrossCountry. Before school-based delivery began in April 2022, the delivery team created 26 bespoke lessons meeting at least one sustainable development goal. They included:

- "Wet Wet Worcester": Exploring the role of human and physical geography in contributing to the rising problem of flooding in the area;
- "Action Stations": Calling on young activists to tackle the climate crisis, exploring both mitigation and adaptation;
- "What's So Great About Accrington": Learning about the sustainable features that can be included in stations to make them more environmentally friendly and mitigate against climate change.

The Platform team contacted more than 200 schools within walking distance of stations, presented at network meetings, and offered CPD sessions for teachers. They liaised with local authorities in all seven of the counties covered by the scheme, and forged partnerships with other education providers.



### Results

By June 2022, the team had delivered workshops and assemblies to 1,848 students, with 129 young people taking part in rail familiarisation visits. The project [website](#) had 1,110 registered users, with 227 lessons downloaded.

After what was described as "outstanding" enthusiasm and uptake from schools, the project was extended to incorporate local authority Holiday and Food Programme schemes, with bookings at capacity in summer 2022.

The collaborative approach has since fostered several new joint CRP projects, and all partners are committed to continuing and building the scheme, promoting sustainable and healthy behaviours among young people by engaging them in accessible, interactive, and meaningful ways.





## Second

### Friends of Buxton Station for 'Dementia-friendly Signage for Rail Users'

Through personal experience, observation, and consultation with relevant community partners, members of the Friends of Buxton Station (FoBS) recognised that the signs at their station were not particularly helpful to rail users living with dementia. In an innovative approach, FoBS were awarded funding from Northern to work closely with Mark Wilson OBE, a rail accessibility campaigner, to form a pilot that could determine signage changes across the whole Northern network.

Taking a 'pan-disability' approach, where the signage would help rail users with visual acuity issues and autism as well as dementia, FoBS set about designing signs that would be clear and easily understandable, incorporating essential design criteria for the rail industry. They consulted with relevant local community groups and received direct feedback from 45 people living with dementia, and adaptations are now underway to improve the designs.

FoBS's legacy signage aims to provide the right information in the right places, so a passenger with dementia can easily translate, appreciate, and understand their journey. Not only will the signs enable important safety information to be communicated better, they will also enable all passengers to have a much more enjoyable and stress-free journey, potentially building the confidence needed to travel independently.



## Third

### Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership for 'Let's Talk Travel'

Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership's 2021 research project 'Let's Talk Travel' focused on the barriers to employment faced by people in the community. The findings demonstrated that many people only considered employment or training opportunities in the area where they lived, or in places familiar to them. Those who considered travelling avoided complex journeys and combinations of travel modes, and struggled with planning journeys, resulting in up to 40% avoiding using public transport.

The partnership recognised that confident travellers have access to more economic opportunities, and so set about working on the 'Let's Talk Travel' initiative. Engaging over 120 employability and education professionals, they provided proactive, integrated transport information and journey planning through bespoke resources and training sessions to those seeking access to jobs and training. As a result of the project, employability professionals and tutors felt better equipped to support their clients, and learners and jobseekers expressed greater confidence in planning journeys, buying tickets, and navigating their way around stations and trains. The project also enabled them to develop new strategies for problem solving and keeping themselves safe on public transport, paving the way for an overall boost in confidence and access to opportunity for the learners and jobseekers of Gloucestershire.



# Most Enhanced Railway Spaces

sponsored by **Greater Anglia**

# First

## Friends of Goostrey Station for 'A Creative Hub at Goostrey Station'

### Concept and aims

When the Friends of Goostrey Station (FOGS) formed in 2012, the Victorian wooden station building lay dilapidated and disused. The group gradually improved the overall station environment but retained a determination to renovate the building and bring it back into community use.

Working with Network Rail, the Rail Heritage Trust, and other partners, the roof and floors were repaired, electrics replaced, cladding and canopies recast, and the building repainted in traditional colours. Having altered the interior to create two large rooms, FOGS needed to find a suitable tenant for the building to help realise its potential.

### What happened

During the COVID-19 pandemic, artist Debbie Goldsmith stopped working at the Tate Liverpool and set out to find somewhere as a base for creative workshops. The station building proved a perfect fit, and she agreed a contract with Northern, taking the keys in July 2021.

Since then, the station has turned into a real creative hub, with Debbie using the building as a studio to paint, create wool rugs, and prepare workshop materials. The workshops are designed to promote community cohesion, and have been well-received by the local community, including schools and youth groups. Events have included the hosting of a Visual Arts Open Studio as part of Goosfest, the annual village arts festival, Holmes Chapel Rainbows learning how to make bird prints, and Goostrey Beavers making leaf prints, complementing other activities they enjoy with FOGS such as planting and building bug hotels.



In 2022, Debbie received a grant from the Let's Create Jubilee Fund to support the Platinum Plaque Project, the first major community project at the studio. Older people shared their memories of Queen Elizabeth's Coronation and her jubilees with local school children, inspiring them to design ceramic plaques and write Haiku poems. There will be a celebration event for families of all who have contributed and a permanent display at the station, ensuring a legacy of this historic event.

### Results

Goostrey Art Studio has revitalised the station building and created an environment that brings people of all ages and life experiences together. Participants relish opportunities to be creative and to work with a professional artist. Visitors are also encouraged to access the studio by rail or walking/cycling, promoting sustainable travel in the local area.

A recent successful application to the National Lottery will allow the building's facilities to be improved, with the installation of a kitchen and toilets, ensuring more ambitious projects can be undertaken and the studio can be a community hub for years to come.



# Most Enhanced Railway Spaces

sponsored by **Greater Anglia**

## Second

### Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for 'Restoration of Bere Alston Former Signalbox'

After the old signalbox at Bere Alston Station succumbed to years of neglect, with smashed windows, rotten doors, and ivy growing over most of the building, the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and the local Scout group knew something had to be done. Together, they undertook a major restoration project, firstly rehusing the 60,000 bees that had made the building their home. Work progressed on lovingly restoring the signalbox to its former glory with the help of a local master craftsman. Slowly the box started to emerge, and local people would regularly comment on how lovely it was to see.

The signalbox is now in use for the first time since the early 1990s and, thanks to the invaluable input from the local community, is now an asset rather than an eyesore, adding to the character and heritage of the Tamar Valley Line. The Scouts have 'adopted' the platform that houses the signalbox and are working in conjunction with Bere Alston in Bloom to make the platform look great for both the community and local wildlife, thanks to the addition of nature-friendly planters.



## Third

### Solent Cycle Project, c/o Solent Remade CIC for 'Havant's Community Space Promoting Repair, Reuse and Active Travel'

Solent Remade CIC runs projects in Havant Borough that help the local community cut consumption, keep things in use for longer, and travel more sustainably. After launching a community cycle repair project in 2020, Solent Remade has since launched a Repair Café and is developing a Library of Things – all of which require suitable storage for equipment and supplies.

Through South Western Railway's 'Community Use Spaces' scheme, Solent Remade was able to lease a redundant space at Havant Station for a peppercorn rent. Solent Remade oversaw the refurbishment, converting the space from an eyesore into a valuable community asset. Research revealed that the space used to be the station's parcels office, and the unit was given its new name: The Old Parcels Office.

Opening in May 2022, the new facility has guaranteed the future of several Solent Remade projects by providing a secure storage space and thriving drop-in centre for community cycle projects. The new shopfront and internal redecoration have substantially improved the appearance of what was previously the most unloved part of Havant Station, and Solent Remade has achieved its goal to provide a smart and practical space providing substantial community benefits.



# Station Friends and Adopters at the Heart of Communities

sponsored by Siemens Mobility

# First

## Friends of Buxton Station for 'Part of Something Positively Local'



### Concept and aims

Throughout 2021, the Friends of Buxton Station (FoBS) examined the ways they had adapted their work to account for changes introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions had led them to reach out to other community, mostly volunteer, groups, to seek new partnerships and ways in which they could work together, developing innovative pathways to shared, common goals.

As restrictions eased in 2022 and physical interactions and events became possible again, the group sought to develop its collaborative way of working, and its new-found commitment to its wider community, alongside station-based projects.

### What happened

By looking out to the wider community and seeking ways in which to maximise positive impacts on their locality, FoBS have now become a core part of something much bigger than the sum of its parts.

Their 'new normal' way of working is based on effective partnerships, shared agendas, supportive thinking, and inclusive action. FoBS are now working with other voluntary groups (Buxton Sparkles and Transition Buxton), a Community Interest Company (Buxton Town Team), a local charity (Buxton Civic Association), and High Peak Borough Council, with all partners dedicated to combining their skills and experience to deliver positive local impacts in imaginative and engaging ways.

### Results

Over the past year, projects that FoBS have led on or been involved with have included:

- Organising a carol concert and festive entertainment for Buxton's biggest-ever Christmas lights switch-on event, attended by around 6,000 visitors;
- Maintaining and dressing the town's memorial to Samuel Turner, who played a pivotal role in bringing the railways to Victorian Buxton;
- Sourcing and erecting a new town centre map, highlighting local attractions and points of interest, after the previous map was vandalised;
- Engaging in a host of festivals and local commemorative events, such as Buxton Art Trail, Buxton Garden Trail, Buxton Flowerpot Trail, Carnival & Wells Dressing, Armistice Day, and Christmas festivities;
- Scattering wildflower seeds in Ashwood Park and other areas of town centre parkland, complementing their own local bumblebee conservation programme;
- Researching and developing 'The Buxton Cup', a multi-use pint pot designed to replace single-use plastics, promoted as part of a reprint of their popular 'Rail Ale Trail' leaflets.

The group are now also in the early stages of a major project that could see just under three acres of land near to Buxton Station gifted to the town, with the potential for this to be developed as a local nature reserve.

By embracing partnership working beyond the station, FoBS are becoming involved in a bigger, more diverse range of projects, cementing their place where they aspire to be, at the heart of their community.

# Station Friends and Adopters at the Heart of Communities

sponsored by Siemens Mobility

## Second

### Friends of Kents Bank Station & Foreshore for 'Kents Bank Station at the Heart of the Community'



Following the closure of its shop, post office, pub, café and two hotels between 2014 and 2018, Kents Bank in Cumbria was left without any community meeting place. In recent years, the Friends of Kents Bank Station & Foreshore have turned the station into a true community facility and a real focal point at the heart of the village.

Over the past year, the group's activities have included:

- Developing a well-used and much appreciated book exchange in the station waiting room;
- Communicating with members and local residents via newsletters and Facebook pages;
- Regularly updating the 'Poetry on the Platform' and community information boards;
- Working with community partners to find ways of alleviating the traffic problems and train overcrowding caused by people participating in Cross Bay walks;
- Maintaining the popular station and foreshore gardens to provide enjoyment and a relaxing environment for residents and visitors.

The group also played their part in celebrating the 175th anniversary of the Furness Line in 2021, hosting a well-attended event on the station with stalls, plant sales, and folk music. The event was an opportunity to socialise again following the restrictions of the pandemic, and led to the group recruiting some enthusiastic new members.



## Third

### Friends of Hindley Station for 'Supporting and Reaching Out to a Community in Crisis'

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, the Friends of Hindley Station were more determined than ever to reach out to their local community, ensuring they supported people in any way they could. Undeterred by the pandemic, the group were busier than ever, with a huge range of activities in 2021/22 including:

- Clearing a station footpath and making it accessible for pushchairs;
- Turning an old platform into a 'wildlife corridor' and creating an 'English Garden' to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee;
- Supporting a local COVID-19 food hub;
- Installing new planters and benches;
- Adding 'Save Our Bees' artwork, Calligraphy pebbles and hearts, and a lavender hedge;
- Building additional bird and bat boxes;
- Working with Transport for Greater Manchester and Ince CE School to design artwork for Ince Station, also adding planters and supporting new station adopters.

The group supports people of all ages and abilities to work together for the benefit of the community, and there is a genuine sense of engagement and pride in the station and the vital role it plays in community life.



# Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

sponsored by Eversholt Rail

First

## Julie Levy – Volunteer for South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership and Bolton Station Community Partnership

### Background:

Since the start of her involvement in community rail, Julie has used her varied expertise in the arts, education, and community work to develop and deliver a range of projects that have not only provided opportunities for engagement with people from all ages and backgrounds, but also made significant impacts locally. Julie represents Bolton Station Community Partnership (BSCP) and South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership (SELCRP) through substantial involvement at a strategic and grassroots level, attending a number of regular forums including the Bolton Cultural Leaders Group and the Cultural Education Partnership, which she also chairs.

Her dedication to these activities, on an entirely voluntary basis, has allowed BSCP in particular to thrive as an adoption group based at a large station, which subsequently grew into the development of SELCRP. Without her time and commitment, the sheer volume of projects undertaken by both organisations over the past few years could not have been completed.

### Projects:

Over the past 12 months, Julie has helped deliver a huge number of activities including:

- Organising a summer station Mela event as part of Bolton Food & Drink Festival;
- A large community art mural at Wigan North Western Station;
- The transformation of land behind the Swan & Railway Hotel in Wigan into a wildflower meadow with beehives,
- Hosting the internationally accredited Bolton Film Festival in the P5 Gallery at Bolton Station;
- Promotion of the Rivington Rambler bus/rail links project;
- Curating exhibitions by professional artists, schools, and community groups in the P5 Gallery;
- Installing artwork and poetry on Bolton Station;
- Organising a Christmas Fair in Bolton Interchange;
- The rejuvenation of planters at Bolton Station and initiation of a sculpture viability study.



### Recognition:

Julie is always an active promoter of community rail, featuring regularly on local radio station Bolton FM, ensuring that projects receive appropriate recognition via local and national press releases. She is passionate about making an impact, and believes strongly that community rail should be focused on 'doing and delivering' to create real change and opportunities for everyone.

SELCRP chair Professor Paul Salveson said: "Julie is an amazing force of nature. Without her involvement in the various activities at Bolton Station, and more widely in the South East Lancs CRP, we would not have been able to achieve a fraction of what we've done. She goes way beyond the traditional horizons of station volunteering and has brought in new groups such as Stand-Up Sisters, Bolton City of Sanctuary, and local filmmakers. She has also engaged positively with railway staff at the station and more widely with Northern and Network Rail."

Both BSCP and SELCRP are indebted to Julie for her continued and consistent contribution, offering their thanks to her as a "truly outstanding volunteer, and a wonderful friend."



# Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

sponsored by **Eversholt Rail**

*Second*

## Julia Prigg – Wrabness Station Adopter

Julia has cared for the beautiful station at Wrabness for over ten years, transforming it from a neglected village eyesore into a wildlife haven and community garden that has been used by residents and schoolchildren for all sorts of community activities.

Julia is a member of Greater Anglia's Station Adoption Scheme, and she stands out because of the energy and enthusiasm that she demonstrates for her community and her station garden.

She loves the social aspect of being in the station garden as there are always so many visitors – either people getting off the train to go walking in the area, children coming to play on the pretend railway that runs through the garden, or people who come to just sit and relax.

Julia also works with two local schoolchildren who are helping her in the garden to work towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award, and a group of volunteer students who attend a school for people with additional needs who attend weekly gardening sessions.

Described as a 'true legend of Wrabness', Julia was awarded the British Empire Medal for 'services to community rail' in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2022.



*Third*

## Tony Ford – Volunteer for South Fylde Line Community Rail partnership and Friends of St Anne's Station

Tony has been an inspiration to the South Fylde Line Community Rail Partnership since he took over chairing the group. His real passion lies in being an active member of the partnership and running his local Friends of St Anne's station group.

Tony has inspired the formation of new station partnerships at Kirkham & Wesham and Squires Gate, and supports other more established groups at Lytham, Moss Side, and Ansdell.

Over the past year, he played a key role in the 'Explore Lancashire By Rail' film, detailing the walk between Lytham and St Anne's, and also inspired the production of the 'Discover the South Fylde Line' leaflet launched during Community Rail Week, 2022.

Tony recently received what has been called 'the Tony Award' for his Outstanding Contribution to Britain in Bloom North West for 2021. It recognises his involvement and enthusiasm in supporting volunteers at stations along the South Fylde Line.

The testimony to Tony's energy and hard work is stations along the South Fylde Line that look cared for and welcoming, and he is described as a "truly inspirational volunteer who does so much to promote community rail."



# Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail



Jointly  
Awarded to

## Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership and The Friends of Goostrey Station

The senior management team at Community Rail Network deliberated extensively over the winner of this award for 2022. In the end, as was the case last year, it was decided it could not come down to just one member group and so, for just the second time, two winners have been chosen, one community rail partnership, and one station friends' group.

The Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership had a fantastic year in 2021/22, developing a huge range of activities across its six branch lines. In 2021, the partnership announced that every station it covers now has a station adoption presence, with volunteers making an "overwhelming" difference and creating welcoming and attractive station environments for communities to be truly proud of.

Some highlights for the partnership over the past year have included:

- Working with Refugee, Asylum Seeker & Migrant Action (RAMA) to help refugees and asylum seekers adapt to life in Essex. The partnership took almost 50 people, from countries such as Albania, South Sudan, Kuwait, Russia, and Iran, who are now living in Colchester, on one of its popular 'bucket and spade' trains to increase familiarity and travel confidence;
- Running Essex's first-ever Climate Change Train, encouraging families to think about the climate emergency, biodiversity, and the importance of travelling sustainably by rail, and planting a tree on behalf of every passenger who travelled;
- Partnering with Maldon and District Community Voluntary Service to host the Southminster Railway Shed volunteers in their new base at Southminster Station;
- Creating a new community garden at Rayleigh Station and developing the Bee Friendly Community Station Garden at Alresford;
- Organising its first-ever dementia-friendly day out by train, and running its inaugural 'heritage' train, alongside other special services such as music and sea shanty trains;
- Enhancing station environments with colourful planters and floral displays, vibrant new artwork, and talking benches to add to the passenger experience;
- Working with Greater Anglia to produce a video promoting things to do and see from the partnership's six lines, encouraging people back to rail;



- Continuing to develop its rail safety programme with local schools and community groups, which has engaged more than 12,000 people since 2012.



Jools Townsend, chief executive of Community Rail Network, said: "Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership has delivered hugely diverse and vital activity over the past year. Their work with refugees and asylum seekers, for example, shows how community rail can be a powerful enabler, bringing people together and empowering people with confident access to travel, with potentially life-changing effects.

"This year has also seen them run a special climate change train to raise awareness, and a dementia-friendly service, along with ongoing work inspiring more families to use the train, and supporting local station-based volunteering. They are fully deserving winners of this award."





# Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail Continued

The **Friends of Goostrey Station** work tirelessly to improve their historic station, its facilities, and the service it provides to their village. Following their formation in 2012, the group's major project was to save and restore the station's Victorian building, which has now been successfully converted into Goostrey Art Studio. The group are now expanding their reach with different projects, including developing the station into a wildlife-friendly site that enhances nature and biodiversity.

Highlights for the group over the past 12 months have included:

- Working with new tenant artist Debbie Goldsmith to develop Goostrey Art Studio, running a host of workshops, exhibitions, and educational activities with local community groups, including the Platinum Plaque Project;
- Creating new art exhibitions at the station with contributions from Goostrey Primary School pupils and local youth groups;
- Installing a new bicycle shelter and storage loops at the station, to encourage active travel to and from the station and sustainable journeys by cycling and rail;
- Continuing to develop their Geographical Information Service (GIS) mapping to record different species of wildlife at the station, and to monitor use of the new habitats they create;
- Enhancing biodiversity by adding bird and bat boxes, bug hotels, and plants and shrubs that offer year-round food and shelter for wildlife;
- Promoting community rail and rail travel at the historic Goostrey Rose village festival;
- Running interactive art workshops at Crewe Heritage Centre as part of Community Rail Week 2022;
- Winning the Sustainability Award in the 2021 Cheshire Best Kept Station Competition, for their commitment to enhancing biodiversity and promoting greener travel.

Jools Townsend, chief executive of Community Rail Network, said: "We are continually impressed by the breadth of the work delivered by the Friends of Goostrey Station, and their obvious commitment to engaging widely with their community and delivering positive change. Their work developing Goostrey Art Studio is a fantastic example of a historic railway building being lovingly restored and converted into a creative community hub.



"The group's innovative endeavours to enhance the local environment for people and wildlife is particularly inspirational. We're delighted that they have been working with us to enthusiastically share their experience on enhancing biodiversity with other community rail partnerships and groups across Britain. We congratulate them on their achievements and this worthy win."



Photo Competition | 'Best Image Capturing the Essence of Community Rail' sponsored by Porterbrook

*First*

Friends of Irlam Station (FIRST) for A Good Workout!



**Photo Competition | 'Best Image Capturing the Essence of Community Rail'** sponsored by Porterbrook

*Second*

**Friends of Goostrey Station for Volunteer Pride**



*Third*

**Southeast Communities Rail Partnership – Catherine Simmons for A Royal Tour of the 1066 Line – What Will They Think of Next!**



# Board's Special Recognition Award

*Awarded to*

**Richard Watts**

Richard is one of the founders of community rail, and has been a proud ambassador for the movement at a national level, showing an exemplary commitment to consistently taking the movement forward. He ensures projects he is managing or assisting on are undertaken with diligence and dedication, and the recipients of his hard work – communities across Lancashire and beyond – are rewarded with the best possible outcomes, driven by his desire to place the railway at the heart of a fairer, more equal society where everyone has the chance to thrive.

As chair of Community Rail Lancashire (CRL), Richard has led community rail in new and exciting directions, including a range of pioneering education programmes. He is deeply passionate about this – and as a former history teacher he has never lost his desire to ensure future generations are provided with the opportunity to shine and develop a love for learning (and ideally rail!) The work of the CRL education team, under his leadership, has impacted on tens of thousands of young people and is a blueprint for much of the community rail education work that now takes place across the country.

Richard's many achievements in rail down the years include:

- Leading the redevelopment of Accrington Station as one of the UK's first 'eco-stations';
- Playing an instrumental role in the creation of transport interchanges at Burscough Bridge, Carnforth, and Clitheroe, the building of new stations at Burnley Manchester Road and Buckshaw Parkway, and the reopening of the iconic Settle-Carlisle Line;
- Acting as a pivotal figure for community rail partnerships across Lancashire and numerous rail user groups;
- Supporting vital community projects such as the 'DalesRail' guided walks programme and the EU Interreg project, 'Citizens' Rail', working alongside the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership and partners in France, Germany, and the Netherlands.



Richard influenced government policy through playing an active role within Rail North in helping to shape the future of community rail in the Northern franchise, and was a key architect in supporting the Department for Transport in moving to the model that supported community rail through franchise agreements. He also served on the Community Rail Network (then ACoRP) board for many years, helping to oversee our expansion and embed a strategic approach to developing the movement, and provided a strong and valued voice on the National Community Rail Steering Group.

Richard understands the core of community rail; from his early involvement to his unwavering commitment to the movement, his positive impact on the physical rail landscape and many rail groups, his innovative outlook, and his unerring faith in the people who deliver community rail activity and ensure its legacy.

Daisy Chapman-Chamberlain, former equality, diversity, and inclusion lead at CRL, and current Community Rail Network board member, said: "I can think of nobody more deserving for this recognition than Richard. As well as being a creator and tireless supporter of community rail, Richard is an outstanding team leader and a great friend, not just to me, but to all those who love community rail and rail as he does."



### Transport for Greater Manchester

TfGM is delighted to be able to co-headline sponsor the 2022 Community Rail Awards in Manchester. We believe



that community rail is an important and valuable part of a successful Greater Manchester transport network. It helps increase rail usage and support sustainable travel, improves stations and interconnectivity, aids economic growth and regeneration, encourages local tourism, and helps bring all our communities together. We are very pleased to sponsor and support these awards in recognition of the fantastic and indispensable contributions made by many dedicated volunteers. Good luck to all potential nominees this year, and for those who do attend the awards, we hope you all have a chance to experience and enjoy the local rail network whilst you are here.

### Northern Trains

We are delighted to co-sponsor this year's



Community Rail Awards, a wonderful celebration of all that community rail achieves, good luck everyone! Our community partners are vital to thriving communities and we're extremely proud to work closely with them to deliver such a wide-ranging positive impact for the north of England. Customers – and the diverse communities we serve – are at the heart of all we do and there is no doubt that the volunteers across our network help to engage with those communities and support the delivery of more sustainable futures.

### Angel Trains

Angel Trains is delighted to be a partner in the 2022 Community Rail Awards. After the last couple of years, community rail partnerships have never been more important to the communities they serve, and the individuals involved. Angel Trains is proud to be part of the recognition of the people and groups who have made a massive difference over the last year to the industry, their contribution has been immense, thank you.



### 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



The Rail Delivery Group – A Great British Railways



Transition Team Company, 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 the Community Rail Network for their valuable work throughout the year.

### 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.

### 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.



### 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.



### Go-Ahead

As the operator of Britain's largest railway network, The Go-Ahead Group is very proud to support the Community Rail Awards. Public transport is embedded in communities across Britain, providing vital services to enhance social and economic inclusion, to connect people to opportunities and to keep our nation moving. These awards recognise the contribution made by volunteers and community organisations to the industry, and we're grateful for the dedication and hard work of all those who are taking part.



### 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.



### Transport for Wales

Transport for Wales is delighted to be sponsoring the Tourism and Leisure Award for this year's Community Rail Awards. As we slowly return to some sort of normality, we look forward to welcoming passengers back to the railway with tourism and leisure being an extremely important market for many train operators. As has been the case for the past few years, it's been challenging times for all, yet we continue to be hugely impressed with the great work that our community rail partnerships and station adopters do for our communities across Wales & Borders - we thank them for all their efforts. 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.



### Siemens Mobility

Siemens Mobility are proud to be supporting this year's Community Rail Awards through our sponsorship of the 'Station Friends and Adopters, at the Heart of Communities' award. Community Rail Network has been a crucial partner in our mission to provide positive, meaningful, and long-lasting social value for the communities in which we work. This award, focusing on the work of station friends and adopters to engage and enhance their local communities and environments, celebrates the type of positive action that Siemens itself aspires to deliver.



### Porterbrook

Porterbrook is proud to sponsor the 2022 Community Rail Awards. Being at the heart of the UK rail network for over 25 years, we know how important community rail partnerships 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.



### Greater Anglia

Greater Anglia is proud to again be a sponsor of the Community Rail Awards. 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 community rail partnerships and adopters to maximise the community benefits of the new trains that we are currently introducing, as they transform the quality of service available across our network. Together we can not only promote sustainable, healthy travel, but also underpin social and economic development, support diversity and inclusion, increase community involvement and better meet local needs.



### 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.



### Grand Central Rail

Grand Central is proud to support the Community Rail Awards. Putting rail at the heart of the community underpins everything we do, and we are delighted that these awards recognise the fantastic work being done within community rail in engaging diversity, improving mobility, and raising awareness. We wish all potential nominees our heartfelt congratulations for the sterling work they're doing.



### East Midlands Railway

EMR are delighted to support the Community Rail Awards 2022 and sponsor the 'Involving Diverse Groups' category. We are firm supporters of community rail across the East Midlands as it enables us to engage with communities, supporting them to get the most from their railway, from promoting social inclusion, to sustainable travel, to breathing new life into stations. These awards are a fantastic opportunity to showcase and celebrate all that community rail achieves. Good luck to all the nominees.



### CrossCountry

CrossCountry is delighted to support the Community Rail Awards 2022 and sponsor the Most Effective Communications category. These awards recognise passionate individuals who make a real difference to the villages, towns and cities that the railway serves, and celebrate the fantastic contribution community rail partnerships make to society.



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