

Community Rail Awards 2021



Awards presented during a hybrid event
Thursday 9 December 2021

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Community
Rail Awards
2021

Congratulations



Our Community Rail Awards celebrate the passion and effort going into the community rail movement across Britain, by community-based partnerships, groups and volunteers.

Not only that, they also evidence the ever-expanding array of positive outcomes being delivered for and with local communities, in connecting them with their railways and stations.

2021 has been another turbulent year, and the uncertainty and restrictions of the pandemic have affected the number and range of entries, and format of this event. But we are as inspired as ever by the 130 entries (still a respectable number!) and amazing range of initiatives community rail has still been able to deliver, many rising to the challenges of COVID-19.

You have worked with schools, young people and groups with different needs to help them feel confident using their railways, and to promote inclusion and diversity. You have built positivity about rail and delivered improved integration, helping to create a greener transport future. You have celebrated history, enhanced stations, boosted local business, and transformed spaces and places, working creatively and engagingly. You have amplified voices and stories and helped rail partners to be aware of local needs. All this through a pandemic!



We believe that community rail is more important than ever now, as we strive to build back better, and look forward to rail transformation, transport decarbonisation and a levelling up of the economy – all agendas that community rail can support and engage with productively.

Our congratulations to all whose efforts are recognised on the pages that follow, and everyone helping to make community rail the wonderful movement it is.



Jools Townsend
Chief executive,
Community Rail Network

Involving Children and Young People

sponsored by **Grand Central Rail**

First

Community Rail Education Network for Backtrack: Create it, Share it, Save lives

Concept and aims

The Community Rail Education Network were approached by Network Rail to create a competition to address the 25% increase in trespassing during the COVID-19 lockdown. Although a poster competition was initially suggested, the group felt that creating films and songs, alongside scripts and storyboards, would be more appealing to young people, given the increased interest in homemade videos on apps such as TikTok. A steering group was formed with members from community rail partnerships including Community Rail Lancashire, the Penistone Line, the Bishop Line, Tyne Valley, and Southeast Communities Rail Partnership. Being located all over the country, the group used video conferencing software to meet online and make progress.

What happened

After securing £2,000 in sponsorship, the group asked 11–18-year-olds to create content to warn their peers not to trespass on the railway. The project was well-received, with articles promoting Backtrack featuring in local and regional media, including the BBC. Posts promoting the competition reached over 30,000 views on social media, where the competition has over 750 followers. Rail industry judges considered more than 50 entries, and the winning videos and songs have subsequently been played to over 1,500 young people during safety engagement sessions with Education Network members.



Results

The competition demonstrated how community rail officers could work together remotely to highlight an issue that is extremely important to the rail industry. Backtrack gave young people an opportunity to focus on something positive during the pandemic, to increase their confidence and improve and showcase their digital skills. Winner Henry Plume said his success in the competition had “made my whole year”, while Kerri Ankrah-Lucas, who won the social media impact category, said the competition had given young people the chance to “create something amazing after feeling the impact of lockdown.”

As trespassing remains an issue, the competition ran again in 2021, and was open to all young people aged seven and upwards, following suggestions from teachers to include all Key Stage 2 pupils. A **website** was created, and in a bid to reach out to more families, a campaign was organised at stations during the 2021 summer holidays where 5,000 activity sheets and pencils were handed out to families on leisure trips. Children were encouraged to create their entry while on the train and upload it to the website before their journey ended. The network hopes to build on the competition post-COVID-19, to ensure young people continue to be empowered to address safety issues on the rail network.



Involving Children and Young People

sponsored by **Grand Central Rail**

Second

Sheree Whetren and Berrywood Primary School for 'Hub of Hope'

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Sheree Whetren became concerned about the mental health of her local community. She decided to use children's artwork to bring some cheer to those who used Hedge End Station, organising competitions for children to create pieces that reflected historical and cultural events and encouraged families to take healthy walks to the station to view the colourful displays. The art spanned themes such as Remembrance Day, Christmas, Easter, VE Day and, perhaps the best received, 'Faces of Hope'. Families who had been stuck indoors made trips to the station, and those isolating saw it on social media. This engaged the whole community and forged links with Berrywood Primary School, where Sheree arranged rail



safety talks for six classes and donated books to every child and the school library. She has also organised a permanent art installation at the station, painted by the children of Berrywood, to encourage train users to adopt Network Rail's 'Think Safe, Act Safe, Bee Safe' slogan. Alongside floral displays, bug hotels, and a book swap scheme, the artwork has helped to position the station as a real community hub, with children encouraging their families to use the train more often.

Joint Third

Mytholmroyd Station Partnership for 'Sing Along the Line'



'Sing Along the Line' takes around 50 young people from three local primary schools on the train from Mytholmroyd to Sowerby Bridge every December. The children are taught how to behave responsibly on and around the railway – using the motto 'trains can't swerve!' – and encouraged to take pride in their local station, before singing carols and getting the chance to meet Santa himself. Organised by the station partnership group, the event is supported by Northern, who provide gifts and safety information for the children, and also involves parents, volunteers, and a host of VIPs.

Penistone Line Partnership and Rosie Pearsall for Penistone – 'Little Town, Lotta Heart'



Following vandalism affecting the waiting shelters at Penistone Station, Penistone Line Partnership, working with local community artist Rosie Pearsall and the town council, organised workshops with young people to create artwork for the buildings. Groups from the IKIC Youth Centre, Penistone Grammar School, and the local skate park came together to create murals with images and ideas that best represented their local community, including the words 'little town, lotta heart'. Two murals have now been installed in the shelters, which have helped to both stimulate community pride and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Involving Diverse Groups

sponsored by LNER

First

South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership for Hate Crime Awareness Project

Concept and aims

According to Home Office statistics, 2019/20 saw an 8% increase in hate crimes recorded by police in England and Wales, and the prevalence of religious or racially aggravated hate crime offences was a third higher in June 2020 than the previous year. As a community rail partnership which works with people from a range of backgrounds and communities, South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership (SELCRP) felt it was important to address this issue.

The partnership developed the project to:

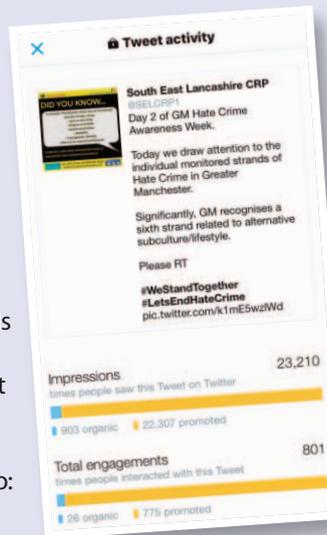
- Raise public awareness of hate crime;
- Make it easier for victims to recognise what hate crime is, how to report it, and how to access support;
- Highlight the impact of hate crime to try to prevent it.

While the initial plan was to use Bolton Station as a base for workshop sessions, COVID-19 restrictions forced the partnership to adapt and run the project online. To help inform the project, which was funded by Bolton CVS, SELCRP consulted local community groups including Bolton City of Sanctuary, who work with asylum seekers and refugees, and Stand Up Sisters, who support victims of domestic violence.

What happened

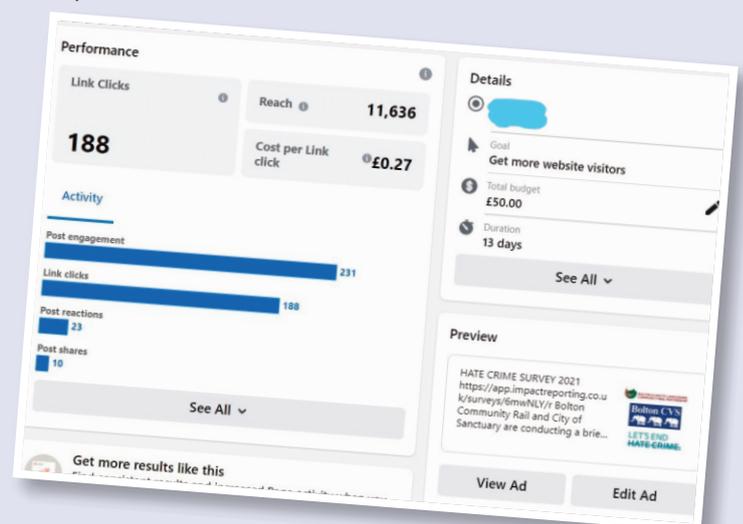
The partnership developed a social media campaign, launched at the start of Greater Manchester's Hate Crime Awareness Week, highlighting statistics and information about how to report hate crime. Promoted posts were used on Facebook and Twitter to achieve a wider reach, and the partnership also created an online survey using Community Rail Network's Impact platform. This was used to collect evidence of the issue locally and included a question referring specifically to public transport. This evidence also then informed the content of online artist-led workshops, providing powerful examples to discuss and reflect upon.

The final exhibition included graphics displaying the survey findings, as well as arts and crafts and poetry produced in the workshops. It was initially installed in the P5 Gallery at Bolton Station, before subsequently being filmed and photographed to exhibit **online**.



Results

The project engaged around 60,000 people on social media, and produced more than 80 survey responses and six well-attended workshops. Alongside the exhibition, a report was distributed to key stakeholders including Network Rail, rail operators, Community Rail Network, Women in Community Rail, Bolton CVS, and other local community organisations. The partnership hopes this report will continue to highlight the ongoing issue of hate crime in Bolton and further afield and provoke people to consider the impact of their behaviour to prevent hate-related incidents. SELCRP is planning another project on this issue for 2022 and hopes to further engage stakeholders to discuss practical ways to prevent hate crime at stations and on trains.



Involving Diverse Groups

sponsored by LNER

Second

Community Rail Lancashire for Bonded Together with a Prayer Bead

This project was devised by Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) to break down barriers, bring different communities together, and encourage new friendships by creating prayer beads, something that people of all faiths can relate to and recognise.

CRL worked with Arts2Heal, a charity which uses art to support people with anxiety and depression by building confidence and teaching employability skills. Participants travelled by train along the East Lancashire Line decorating a string of polystyrene balls to be strung together to form a huge 1,000-strong string of prayer beads. This was a first for most of the people involved in the project as they had never travelled by train before. CRL also delivered rail confidence sessions to participants, taking them around the country to showcase the prayer beads at churches, mosques, and other community venues.



The project culminated in a trip to showcase the beads at Cambridge Eco Mosque. The uplifting sessions, where people of different ages, cultures, faiths, and beliefs came together, were a real example of community rail in action, helping to promote integration and community cohesion.

Third

Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership and 'My Little Allotment' for Poacher's Patch

The Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership wanted to turn a patch of land at Sleaford Station into an allotment which would benefit the local community by providing a safe environment to connect with nature. To assist with the design, they approached Kirsty Ward, owner of Lincolnshire blog 'My Little Allotment', who had started her own allotment in 2017 as an alternative therapy to help with the PTSD she experienced with the birth of her second daughter.

The partnership teamed up with Rainbow Stars, a local charity supporting people living with hidden disabilities, to develop the space. A shed was built, raised beds added, bird and bug hotels installed, and pollinators planted to encourage bees. Rainbow Stars have now planted up the allotment, and their intention is to design an educational programme around 'Plot to Pot', which will give people experience of growing, cooking, and eating healthy foods, equipping them with valuable life skills to encourage independent living in the future.



The partnership ran a competition to name the garden and 'Poacher's Patch' was revealed at a grand opening event in June 2021, attended by the Mayor of Sleaford and project partners including Lincolnshire County Council, East Midlands Railway, and Network Rail.

Community Creative Projects and Station Arts

sponsored by **Transport for Greater Manchester**

First

Community Rail Cumbria and Workington Focus Group for 'The Rails Which Circled the World' – Outdoor Art Exhibition at Workington Railway Station

Concept and aims

The main aim of 'The Rails Which Circled the World' project was to highlight the historical importance of rail-making to Workington. The town's Moss Bay Steelworks was once proudly responsible for producing vast quantities of steel rails which were shipped all over the world.

Community Rail Cumbria and Workington Focus Group wanted to create an outdoor art exhibition that celebrated the town's heritage and rich social history, and enhanced other elements of the transformed station including the return of its original LMS colours, black and white signage, heritage benches, and artefacts displayed on the platforms.

The project also set out to continue the educational thread emerging along the Cumbrian Coast Line, with Workington joining Maryport, Ravenglass, and Millom as 'destination stations' hosting key focal points where younger generations can learn about Cumbria's heritage.

What happened

The community rail officer formed a focus group with colleagues from transport groups, the local authority, and a local museum, tasking people to research their chosen areas of industrial interest. Designs and content were created for heritage boards depicting the triumphs and tragedies of the coal mines, ironworks, steelworks, and docks, all connected by a complex rail network.

The group used a local print company, Firpress, to adapt the drafts, helping to support the local economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. To complement the emotive displays, former industrial employees were interviewed and filmed to capture their personal stories, providing footage to be played on a loop in both station waiting rooms.

A total of 17 seven-foot-high panels were unveiled at a launch event in May 2021.



Results

The project's legacy will ensure that people know about the importance of Workington and the impact that its working-class industries had across the globe. The next phase includes plans for a seven-foot statue of Sir Henry Bessemer, famed for his role in mass steel production, to be erected in the station car park.

Some of those who have viewed the exhibition have said that for the older generations, the panels have offered a trip down memory lane, to reminisce, and to ponder how life has changed down the years. Those behind the project hope this may support people living with conditions such as dementia, enabling them to be transported back to a time they may cherish and remember fondly.

Other feedback has described the display as "spectacular", "eye-catching", and "very engaging and informative", and the group hopes the exhibition will support an increase in people visiting and using the station.



Community Creative Projects and Station Arts

sponsored by **Transport for Greater Manchester**

Second

Friends of Buxton Station for Extinction-threatened Bilberry Bumblebee Legacy Artwork

COVID-19 restrictions didn't dampen the creative enthusiasm of the Friends of Buxton Station (FoBS) in their quest to protect the rare Bilberry bumblebee. The group has developed a relationship with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust to protect the species, which is native to the region but is on the verge of extinction in the UK.

To provide a supportive habitat, FoBS built a new planter from recycled sleepers, the 'Bumblebee Express', filling it with bees' favourite plants, including trefoil, clovers, heather, and bilberries. The group also wanted to celebrate the bees' presence and survival with a series of bespoke legacy art installations at the station. Teaming up with various community artists, they created a bee logo, an illustrated 'bee spotters guide', a large mosaic, and 'Billie', a painted fibreglass sculpture of the Buxton Bilberry bumblebee.

The project not only helped to boost native wildflower populations, it improved the appearance of the station with professional art and promoted environmentally responsible behaviours, beginning 'conversations about conservation'. FoBS have continued the project with guides for 'bumblebee safaris' from the station onto nearby moorland, and their innovation was rewarded with a TV appearance on 'Jimmy's Big Bee Rescue', which praised the group's contribution to local biodiversity.



Joint Third

Community Rail Lancashire for Along the Line



'Along the Line' has transformed the appearance of Ramsgreave and Wilpshire Station, which despite being a gateway station to the Ribble Valley, had been affected by anti-social behaviour. Working with various partners, artist Karen Allerton held sessions with students from Ribblesdale High School and Blackburn College to produce a range of artworks, pictures, and stories. Young people also interviewed passengers, who highlighted a desire for better station signage. The artwork has made the station more appealing to a growing passenger market, and links made during the project ensured that rail information was included in information about a new local housing development.

Camberwell Society for Denmark Hill Station Art Trail

The new art trail at Denmark Hill Station in South East London has pieces ranging from professionally crafted sculptures to incidental art made from recycled material, all designed to attract and bring smiles to the faces of passengers. The Camberwell Society has installed a plinth for changing displays including a marble run and 'chaos water wheel', decorated a new station entrance with unique Camberwell brick branding, and added poetry. They also worked with artist Godfried Donkor to erect a sculpture dedicated to healthcare workers who were on the front line during the pandemic, including staff from two local hospitals, showcasing human values such as versatility, endurance, and the power of love.



Small Projects Award – Under £500

sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

First

Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership, Greater Anglia Asset Team, Dura Composites Ltd for West Runton Station Sign Restoration



Concept and aims

Although not formally listed, the station sign at West Runton in Norfolk is understood to be of historic importance. A date of December 1921 is etched into the structure, and it is thought to have been manufactured at the former Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway works at Melton Constable, making it the only such example still in existence on the national rail network.

Those behind the project wanted to repair the historic running in board by finding a new material for the lettering which would tolerate extremes of weather, sourcing a suitably authentic font, and respecting the sign's heritage by not creating an overtly modern, polished, or clinical finish.

What happened

The community rail partnership did not know whether the original board contained a painted name, had lettering embedded in the concrete, or had cast iron letters affixed to it. It is thought that during the Second World War, the lettering had been removed as an anti-invasion measure, and a photograph from the 1960s showed just a blank panel.

Although structurally sound, they knew that the sign's lettering was in such an exposed location it was prone to weather damage and occasional theft. As they were unsure of the original font, the group did some research and found the remains of a similar board at the former Gedney Station in Lincolnshire that allowed them to replicate the design.

The team removed the sign's remaining wooden lettering and commissioned new letters built in modern glass reinforced polymer, affixing this to the panel without drilling into the structure. Having been aware of successful projects at stations in Suffolk carried out by Essex-based Dura Composites Ltd, the community rail partnership approached the company about the project, and they kindly undertook the work for free. Given there is no power at the site, most of the labour was done by hand, using just one battery-powered hand tool.



Results

The volunteers behind the project achieved their goal of finding a modern solution to replacing the sign, without comprising its heritage. The structure has suitably aged over its 100-year history and the aim was to preserve its original, traditional feel while using sustainable materials that could cope with weather demands.

Following the refurbishment, the community rail partnership was congratulated by the Sheringham Dementia Friends, as the font they have used, with its large scale and contrast of black lettering on white, makes for an easy-to-read sign they would like to see replicated at other locations.



Small Projects Award – Under £500

sponsored by **Community Rail Lancashire**

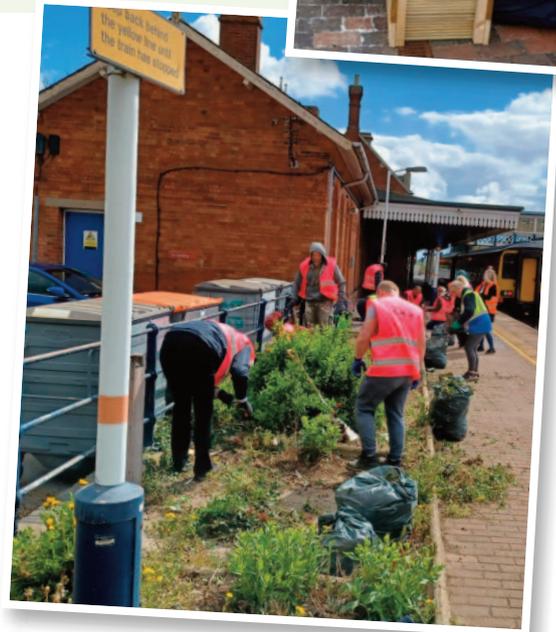


Second

Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership and Voluntary Centre Services for Voluntary Centre Services Action Day – Sleaford Station

The Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership wanted to tackle instances of anti-social behaviour at the Grade-II listed Sleaford Station by brightening up the site and increasing the number of station adopters. Working with the Voluntary Centre Services (VCS), a scheme to transform garden areas via a series of Community Action Taster Days was developed. The aim was to combine gardening and building activity into single-day sessions, allowing attendees to both learn new skills and see the instant results of their hard work, in turn boosting their sense of pride and achievement.

While some participants initially lacked confidence, the nature of the activities helped to build teamwork and social skills, with many making new friendships on the day. All the volunteers who took part expressed a desire to take part in further projects, and some have now become official adopters at the station. The scheme will now become a core activity for the partnership, working with the VCS and Lincolnshire County Council's Young People's Learning Provision, who assist young adults aged 16-24 with opportunities to access further education or work.



Third

East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership, Derby Road station adopters, Ipswich Friends of the Earth and Ipswich Wildlife Rangers for Derby Road Pollinator Patch

The Derby Road Pollinator Patch was a collaborative project between the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership, Derby Road station adopters, Ipswich Friends of the Earth, Ipswich Wildlife Rangers, and Greater Anglia. The aim was to turn a bare piece of land at the station entrance, which regularly attracted rubbish, into a wildflower meadow of 21 native species.

The patch was designed to help foster wildlife by providing food for bees and insects, to promote pollination, and to improve the aesthetics of the station. Volunteers also built a compost bin from recycled pallets to ensure clippings wouldn't need to be transported off-site. To explain the project to passengers, a lectern designed by the community rail partnership and built by a local company was placed in the meadow.

The patch has helped to support wildlife and enhance the look of the station, and station adopters have noted a marked decrease in rubbish since the meadow has bloomed. The scheme attracted the attention of local media, and Friends of the Earth have expressed an interest in replicating the project at other stations across East Suffolk.



Best Community Engagement Project

sponsored by **Rock Rail**

First

Community Rail Lancashire for 100 Women, 100 Journeys



Concept and aims

Since 2018, Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) has devised various projects to address the gender imbalance of the workforce in the rail industry. When COVID-19 struck in March 2020, CRL's education team adapted to develop a new initiative that could be delivered under lockdown restrictions. Instead of taking groups out by train, women were encouraged to write about a memorable rail journey they had taken. The aim was to collect 100 stories from 100 women to compile into a book sharing their recollections and experiences. CRL wanted to use the stories to support rail recovery by reminding readers of the romance of train travel, as well as promoting rail as a viable career option for young women. The team also wanted to raise funds for Women's Aid to support the Rail to Refuge campaign.



What happened

Women were invited to take part in the project via social media, with the team particularly keen to hear from women of different generations, industry employees, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The target of 100 stories was achieved, with pieces submitted by women from a host of different countries and backgrounds.



The book was launched online on International Women's Day in March 2021, with over 30 of the contributors in attendance. Audiograms of eight writers had been created to promote the project on social media, and several of these were also played at the event. Diane Rimmer, who read her story on the day, said it had been a "privilege to be part of such a wonderful, worthwhile project", and many participants said their involvement had given them something to focus on during the pandemic and ignited a new-found passion for writing.

Results

1,400 books have been printed and handed out at stations to inspire women to pursue careers in the rail industry and to tempt passengers back to rail as travel restrictions have eased. They have also been distributed in secondary schools, accompanied by posters featuring a selection of the stories.



Information boards showcasing four of the stories are also in the process of going up at selected stations across the Northern network. The displays feature a QR code to allow passengers to find the book online and read it during their journey. Those whose stories were featured have spoken of their pride at being included in the project, and the stories have been described as "inspirational", "heart-warming", and "thought-provoking".



Best Community Engagement Project

sponsored by **Rock Rail**

Second

Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership for 'The Bees' Knees' – Alresford Bee Friendly Community Station Garden

Adopters at Alresford Station wanted to create a sustainable wildflower garden for their community to enjoy, and ensure the station felt cared for as it changed from staffed to unstaffed. Working with Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership, Greater Anglia, Alresford Primary School, the Bee Friendly Trust, and Cobnuts, the group focused their design on plants which provided a food source for pollinators, and a sculpture depicting waiting commuters which also served as a wildlife habitat.

The project produced a relaxing garden with a sustainable message, offering a place for visitors to reflect, and look and listen to returning wildlife. The addition of a solar-powered 'talking bench' also provided opportunities to learn more about the garden and the history of the area.

The biggest, and most unexpected, success of the scheme was how the garden provided the community with a focal point during COVID-19 lockdowns, supporting local wellbeing and resilience. Socially distanced workshops were held with local school children, and the station became a destination for people taking walks or exercise. The garden was also recognised by DEFRA and the Bee Conservation Trust, winning the 'Bees Need' award for 2020.



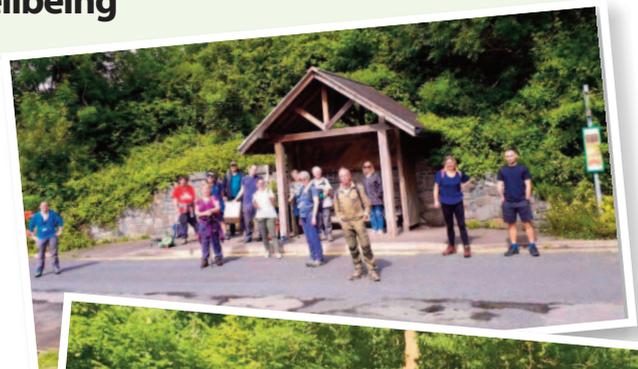
Third

Conwy Valley and North West Wales Coast Community Rail Partnership for Walking for Wellbeing

Conwy Valley and North West Wales Coast Community Rail Partnership recognised that the pandemic exacerbated personal challenges felt by many people, including those facing social isolation, loneliness, or anxiety and depression. The partnership wanted to devise a project to address these issues, and as restrictions eased and more people were allowed to meet outdoors, they partnered with the Carneddau Landscape partnership and Conwy MIND to offer a series of guided recreational wellbeing walks.

More than 80 people took part in the walks, including clients of local housing associations, many with learning difficulties, people being supported by MIND for mental health issues, and individuals involved with the military veterans' charity, Boots on The Ground, which gives veterans the opportunity to walk and talk with their support workers. All walks started and finished at either a railway station or bus stop, and participants used public transport to attend, many for the first time during COVID-19.

The project successfully raised awareness of the mental health challenges people face in everyday life, and 90% of walkers said taking part had made them feel more connected with people and better able to get things done.



Best Communications

sponsored by **CrossCountry**

First

Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership for Dartmoor Line Communications Group – Promoting a New Era for the Line to Okehampton



Concept and aims

The reopening of the Dartmoor Line between Exeter and Okehampton, the first under the Department for Transport's 'Restoring Your Railway' initiative, was the result of a major infrastructure project long in the planning. Prior to the initial public announcement in March 2021, decisions had to be made about how to unveil the news, how to promote the re-opening, and how to bring people on the journey as the story developed. As a result, the Dartmoor Line Communications Group was born.

What happened

The group, a collaboration between Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership (DCRP), Great Western Railway, Network Rail, and others, worked together to coordinate and deliver joint communications and media activity.

DCRP created **dartmoorline.com**, which has had more than 25,000 visitors since its launch, to look ahead to the new train service, revisit the history of the line, and acknowledge the vital community efforts of OkeRail, the Dartmoor Railway Association, and others. The group also teamed up with award-winning Devon artist Becky Bettesworth, and DCRP used her motif and colour palette for the website and subsequent print materials, creating a unique partnership brand.

When the government put out its official press release about the re-opening, it included a link to the website, which helped to drive further traffic to it. The group also secured significant media coverage for the launch event, with BBC Breakfast broadcasting live from Okehampton Station on the day and print articles appearing in national, regional, and local press.

As the story developed, Network Rail produced regular behind-the-scenes pictures and videos to give people an insight into the work involved in restoring the line and to provide updates on progress. There were also a host of activities to encourage the local community to get involved, including a request for people's memories of the line's 1972 closure, and a project that saw more than 90 people submit designs for the line's 'roundel' logo, including local school children.



Results

The group's efforts have been praised both by the rail industry and the communities the new line will serve. Councillors and local rail campaigners described the Dartmoor Line website as "one to be proud of". The group also received recognition from Network Rail, winning its 'Achieving Communications Excellence' award in May 2021.

Next steps in the project will involve engaging the local community at events including the Okehampton Show, working with local schools, and expanding the website with travel planning resources and day trip ideas, including walks and video guides.



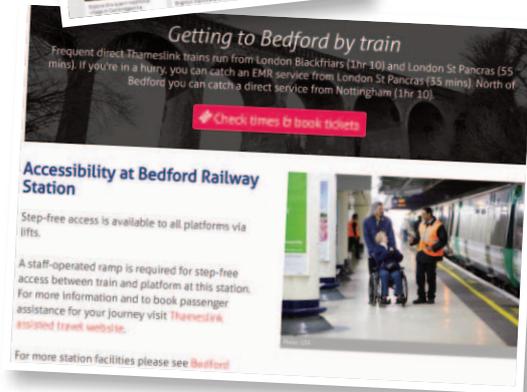
Second

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership, Meldreth, Shepreth, and Foxton Community Rail Partnership, Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership, Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership, and Beds and Herts Community Rail Partnership for ‘Countryside, Capital, and Coast’ – an Online Thameslink Guide

Community rail partnerships on the Thameslink network wanted to highlight the accessibility advantages of using rail services to travel to, from and through London for leisure journeys. Despite individual partnerships promoting their local areas, there had never been a guide incorporating all routes and the long-distance journeys they offered. The partnerships joined forces to create ‘Countryside, Capital, and Coast’. The **micro-site** sits within Community Rail Network’s tourism website **ScenicRailBritain.com**, linking it to an established audience.

The goals of the online guide were to promote sustainable tourism and leisure travel by train, which in turn would support local businesses and economies. Content includes an interactive map with pop-ups showing journey times, 17 destination pages identifying highlights of different locations, and itinerary pages grouping attractions into themes, including ‘family fun’ and ‘awe-inspiring architecture’. Pages also provide accessibility information, options to book tickets, links to partner websites, and active travel options such as walking and cycle trails.

The site was launched in May 2021, and while still in its infancy, user figures are expected to increase as leisure travellers begin to return to rail.



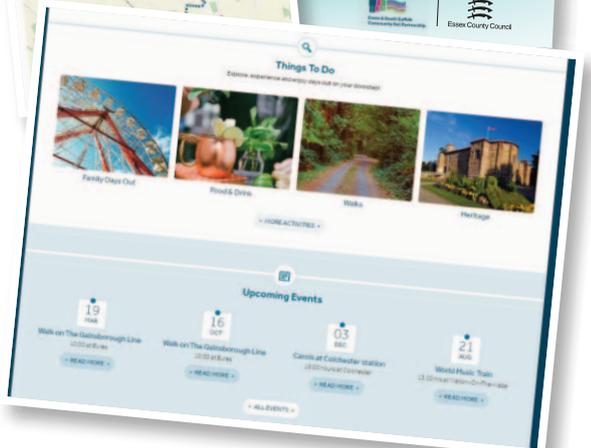
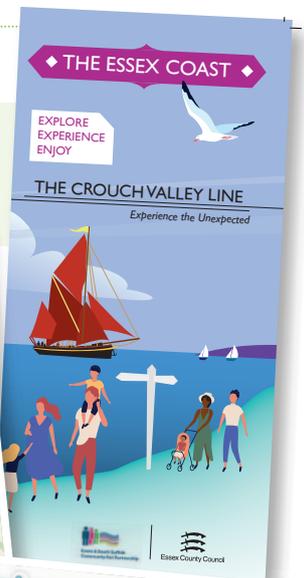
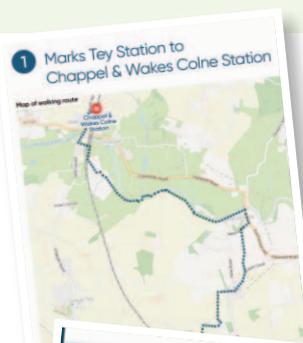
Third

Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership for Keeps Communications on Track

When the pandemic put travel on hold, Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership seized the opportunity to proactively review and improve their communications to maintain their profile and visibility, and to make a series of improvements to stations ready for when passengers returned.

The partnership used the time to develop a social media strategy and toolkit, with increased activity leading to significant increases in users and followers. The group recognised that printed materials also had a role to play, particularly if linked to physical activity that people could benefit from during lockdowns. They developed walking booklets with routes starting and finishing from stations, and leaflets and family activity books promoting local coastlines. The materials were distributed at stations, information centres, shops, libraries, as well as directly to homes. At stations, the partnership installed history boards, ‘talking benches’, posters, way markers, and murals, all telling stories or directing people to local attractions.

The partnership also ensured it continued to communicate with volunteers while they were unable to access stations, with ‘welcome back’ packs sent once activities resumed. This was appreciated by existing volunteers, and also helped to recruit new adoption group members for several local stations.



Influencing Positive Change & Sustainability

sponsored by **TransPennine Express**

First

East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership and Suffolk County Council for Katch All-Electric Demand-Responsive-Transport Link

Concept and aims

The population of the Suffolk town of Framlingham has increased more than 20% since 2011 due to new housing developments. In 2019, Suffolk County Council met with the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership to discuss the viability of providing a demand responsive local taxi-bus service, as there was no public transport link between Framlingham, the village of Wickham Market, and Wickham Market Station, six-and-a-half miles away in Campsea Ashe.

The aim was to connect people who had no access to transport of their own with the railway station, as well as reducing the number of cars making the journey. Alongside serving local commuters, the route could also cater for leisure travellers wanting to access Framlingham Castle, a major Suffolk tourist attraction, and visitors to Wickham Market's outdoor markets.

Suffolk County Council has a goal of being carbon neutral by 2030, twenty years sooner than the UK government. The service therefore needed to use electric vehicles and energy produced by renewable sources.

What happened

Suffolk County Council leased two eight-seat electric vehicles for the service, and the name 'Katch' was chosen based on feedback from the public. The community rail partnership sourced funding to install two charging points at the station, thus saving the vehicles an extra 8,760 miles a year in non-revenue service.

The partnership worked with local designers and train operator Greater Anglia to install a Katch running-in board on the station platform, promoting it as an integrated transport hub. Bus flags were also placed at the station and at all designated stops to make the service easily identifiable. A mobile app was commissioned for online bookings, which could also be made via phone.

Suffolk County Council hired a local film company to create a promotional **video** for the new service, and the partnership made posters to be displayed at stations across East Suffolk.



Photo credit: Simon Lee



Photo credit: Simon Lee

Results

After a delay due to lockdown, Katch was launched in May 2021, operating from 6.30 to 22.30 Monday to Saturday, and 9.00 to 19.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Given ongoing travel restrictions, passenger numbers were initially limited to three per vehicle.

As restrictions eased from July 2021, all partners were able to actively promote the service and weekly passengers immediately increased by almost 50%. Katch drivers also reported that people were using the buses on a regular basis, giving a solid passenger base from which to develop the project in the future.



Influencing Positive Change & Sustainability

sponsored by **TransPennine Express**



Second

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership and GTR/Southern for The Passenger Benefit Fund vs Pandemic Lockdown – An Unexpected Journey

When the pandemic and lockdown struck, officers from Southeast Communities Rail Partnership (SCRP) were determined not to see projects grind to a halt, and instead seized opportunities to make station enhancement plans more sustainable and inclusive. Working with the GTR Passenger Benefit Fund team, they used the time to engage with communities connected with stations to take advantage of their local knowledge and ensure their wants and needs were brought to life.

In the 18 months to mid-2021, SCRP officers covering six GTR lines worked intensively with 19 different station partners on 29 separate projects. These included:

- A wildlife project at Newhaven Harbour Station with the Bee Friendly Trust;
- Work to save and renovate buildings for community use at the Grade-II listed Bishopstone Station;
- Art and heritage projects at Eridge Station;
- Improvements at Amberley Station including information panels, maps, artwork, and floral displays.

The collaborative approach led by SCRP has helped to bring about a host of positive changes for passengers, as well as giving communities a voice in the development of their local stations and raising the profile of community rail.



Third

South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership for Rivington Bus Project

During the pandemic, South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership (SELCRP) noticed a rise in visitors to Rivington Country Park, a greenspace bordering Bolton and Chorley popular with walkers, cyclists, and families. Despite this popularity, there had been no public transport link serving the area for over 20 years, resulting in issues with parking and traffic congestion.

Seizing the opportunity to build upon the influx of people looking to visit the countryside, SELCRP led on establishing an integrated transport link to facilitate access to the area as an alternative to using private cars. The partnership joined forces with a local bus operator, Diamond NW, who agreed to extend an existing service, connecting Bolton Railway Station/Interchange to Rivington on a looped route.

The bus service was initially commissioned to run every Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday from April to October 2021, with the option of additional days if the service proved commercially viable for the operator. Passenger numbers have steadily increased, and it is hoped that the project will continue to encourage and enable sustainable travel and modal shift. SELCRP have since replicated the scheme in the Wigan area via a new bus-rail link to Haigh Country Park.



Every Sunday & Bank Holiday between 11th April & 17th October 2021

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DIAMOND bus services

SOUTH EAST LANCASHIRE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

Photo Competition | 'Community Rail in 2020/2021'

sponsored by **Porterbrook**

First

Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership and
The Friends of Radcliffe Station for Roll out the Barrows!



Photo Competition | 'Community Rail in 2020/2021'

sponsored by **Porterbrook**

Second

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership for A Winning Entry for Glynde Station Metalwork Trains



Third

Phil Wallis for Making a New Family Home at Morecambe Station; Watch Out!



Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

sponsored by **Merseyrail**

First

Dave Carlisle – Friends of Buxton Station

Early days:

When Dave Carlisle broke his hip and leg in a cycling accident, he used a period of enforced bedrest to form his vision of how to reinvigorate the Friends of Buxton Station (FoBS). He formulated ideas and started to gather people together, determined to make a positive difference to the town. The revitalised group initially focused on litter picking and gardening, but Dave immediately took it upon himself to seek out funding that would allow it to expand and develop. Although the railway station was at the heart of projects, Dave always endorsed and supported other local community projects, ensuring this was reflected in FoBS' constitution.

Dave's approach:

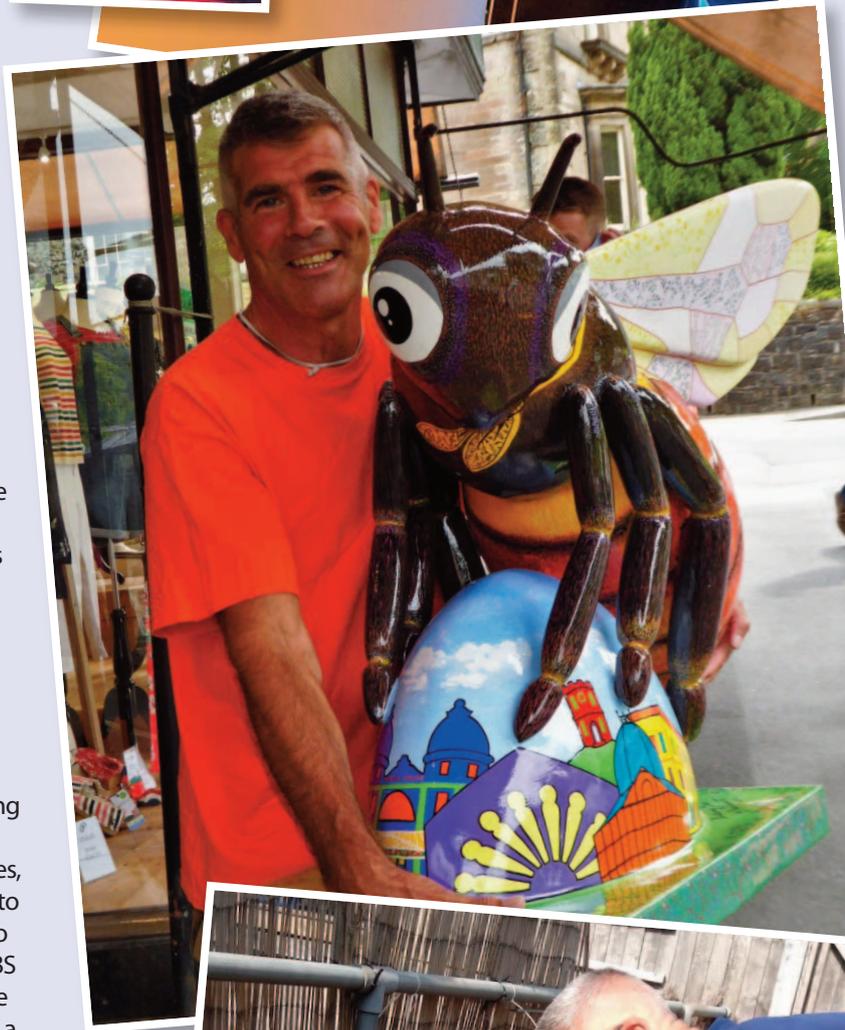
FoBS' colleagues say that the starting point for many of the group's pioneering projects has been Dave, saying: "Right, we're going to do this. What's stopping us?" His approach is described as "innovative", and "a breath of fresh air", and his determination and passion ensure he always gets results. He is extremely persuasive – as local council planning officers can testify! – but also inclusive of everyone and happy to share his knowledge and ideas. This can be seen in his pride at mentoring a newly established adoption group at Dove Holes Station, and his enthusiasm when showcasing FoBS' projects and good practice at community rail and rail industry events. He has a "relentless stream of creativity and energy," and is always sure to thank anyone who supports the group's work.

Projects:

In recent years, Dave has led FoBS to success in projects ranging from the installation of a defibrillator housed in an old phone box at the station, to a host of wildlife and biodiversity schemes, including the creation of a 'Japanese Garden' and a campaign to support Buxton's rare and endangered Bilberry bumblebee. To support their community during the pandemic, Dave and FoBS produced the 'Retail Rail Trail' to encourage people to continue to use local businesses, and devised the 'Mini-Saga Challenge', a writing competition designed to promote positive mental health.

Recognition:

FoBS are admired and valued as an integral part of their community, and Dave is said to be "pivotal" to this success, driving the group forward to always go "above and beyond". They have been recognised with success at the Community Rail Awards, been named 'heritage heroes' by Buxton Civic Association, and in June 2021, had the honour of receiving the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. While it is a true team effort, Dave's community focus and attitude as chair to constantly strive for excellence is often the catalyst for "making stuff happen", and his commitment to community rail is described as "inspirational" and "second to none."



Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

sponsored by Merseyrail

Second

Michael Solomon Williams – Friends of Ally Pally Station

Michael Solomon Williams set up the Friends of Ally Pally Station (FAPS) in 2016, initially to create a community garden and work to improve the overall station environment. Since then, he has been “the driving force and inspiration” behind a transformation of Alexandra Palace Station, with community engagement his number one priority. From the very beginning, Michael reached out to partners including Haringey Council, the Sunshine Garden Centre, The Palace Gates Residents Association, local businesses, and pupils from Heartlands High School. As a teacher, including young people has often been at the heart of his initiatives, involving them in artwork, craft, and gardening schemes.

Under Michael’s leadership, FAPS have added planters and seating to platforms, brightened up the station ticket office with a mural and floral displays, held monthly ‘garden parties’, enjoyed carol singing, and, using his musical contacts, even had members of the London Symphony Orchestra play in the station’s Bedford Rose Garden.



Describing him, a FAPS colleague said: “Michael is characterised by having grand ideas for his neighbourhood station. These exemplify not only his organisational ability and leadership, but above all, his passion for making the station a welcoming and productive space for all. With his imagination and enthusiasm, he started a true community enterprise.”

Third

David Wallace – Friends of Workington Station

Workington Station’s outstanding appearance cannot be attributed to one individual, but every team needs a leader, and Workington born-and-bred David (Dave) Wallace is that man. Spending countless hours at his second home, Dave is described as the “eyes and ears” of the station and an inspiration to everyone around him. An avid transport enthusiast, he is an active member of the Workington Transport Heritage Trust and the Friends of Workington Station, and his positivity and dedication has been instrumental in returning the station to its heritage roots.

The work of Dave and the friends’ group is starting to make a real mark on the station, resulting in a reduction of anti-social behaviour, newfound respect and pride by the local community, and an expanding range of projects, including a new outdoor exhibition celebrating the town’s rich railway heritage.

Colleagues say Dave’s biggest attribute is his ability to see people’s potential and nurture their development, and two members of the friends’ group, one with autism and one with a learning disability, have “flourished under his tireless support and guidance.” Workington has recently ‘twinning’ with Blaydon Station on the Tyne Valley Line, and Dave is already leading the way in offering ideas and advice, using his expertise to widen the community rail movement.



Station Friends and Adopters at the Heart of Communities

sponsored by **Avanti West Coast**

First

Friends of Buxton Station for Part of the Community: At the Heart of our Community

Concept and aims

The restrictions imposed by the pandemic didn't dampen the enthusiasm for community groups to come together and support the town of Buxton. Instead of pausing activity, 'Kickstart Buxton' was created, and the Friends of Buxton Station (FoBS) ensured they were at the very heart of things.

The group decided to shift their gaze away from the station, to support the wider community and the local environment. Working with a host of partners, including voluntary groups, independent traders, educators, local government officials and others, FoBS re-evaluated their role to widen their influence and positive impact.

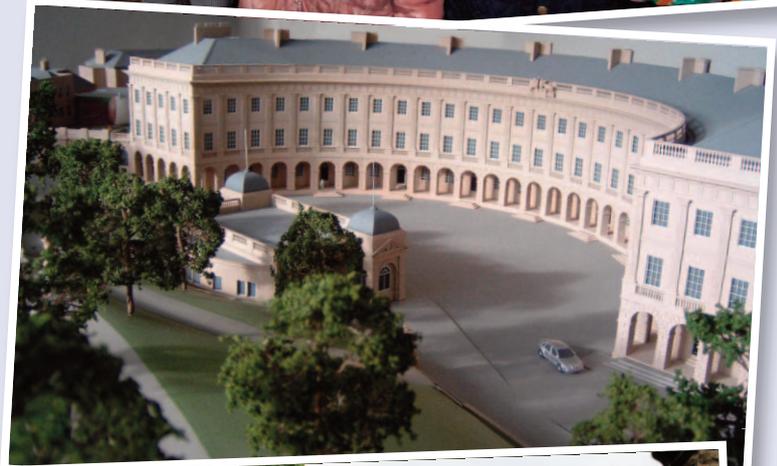
What happened

FoBS proactively looked at what they could offer in terms of community support, and realised that as a group, they could offer support as promoters, initiators, partners, campaigners, mentors, improvers, and preservers. Members expressed a passion to play a part in something more than their station adoption group, and they were determined to develop FoBS' place at the heart of the community, the underlying ethos of the group.

Results

As a result of their new approach, FoBS played a leading role in projects including:

- The conservation of the rare and endangered local Bilberry bumblebee, via the building of planters at the station and guided safaris to raise awareness of the species;
- Devising the 'Rail Retail Trail' to help support small businesses and boost the local economy during the pandemic;
- The creation of a scale-model of the town for display at Manchester Piccadilly Station, to promote Buxton and local tourism by rail;
- Running the 'Mini-Saga Challenge' writing competition, designed to improve mental health by encouraging people to share their positive memories of rail travel;
- Re-inventing the town's famous 'Wells Dressing Festival' with a 'Trainbow Walls' hanging display;
- Erecting a community Christmas tree with local school pupils, adorned with baubles made from recycled materials;
- Planting thousands of wildflower seeds with local children;
- Establishing a car share scheme at the station;
- Restoring vandalised memorial benches;
- Supporting and mentoring a new adoption group at Dove Holes Station.



Via the sheer diversity of the partnerships and projects they either led on or played a key role in, FoBS cemented their place as a driving force in their local community. Rather than being inhibited by COVID-19, they took it upon themselves to make positive social impacts outside the traditional sphere of community rail, and are an example of how the movement can make a real difference in the communities it serves.

Station Friends and Adopters at the Heart of Communities

sponsored by **Avanti West Coast**

Second

Lowestoft Central Project for Lowestoft Central Project

The team of volunteers at Lowestoft Station were undaunted by the pandemic, and rather than pausing activity, they adapted to find new ways of working, adopting a positive can-do approach, and continuing projects that in the longer-term would encourage people back to the railway.

Projects included:

- An exhibition marking 50 years since the closure of the Lowestoft to Yarmouth Railway, which the group moved online to allow it to continue;
- The creation of a new tourist information office and shop at the station, restoring the facility after a gap of five years;
- The installation of a mural highlighting the station as a gateway to the Broads National Park;
- Exhibitions for the Lowestoft Heritage Open Days Festival;
- Restoring the station's redundant signal box;
- Launching a book, 'A Long Way from Home', and hosting railway memorabilia displays;
- The development of a fully integrated transport hub, bringing together bus services, taxis, cycles, car parking, and walking routes;



- The production of a DVD of archive footage of local railways;
- The hosting of an 80th anniversary reunion of wartime evacuees.

Those involved in the project have successfully re-connected the station to the town, and their efforts are a testament to what community rail can achieve.

Third

Farnborough Street Residents Association for Reg's Garden at Farnborough North

Farnborough Street Residents Association (FSRA) had a vision to restore the large garden next to Farnborough North Station that had previously belonged to Reg, a former station master. The intention was to rent the land from his descendants and turn it into a community farm and garden, somewhere for people to meet, volunteers to work, and families to enjoy.

Although the pandemic hit, the station group, led by Mike Knott, got to work, turning what was a "jungle" into a space that could be enjoyed by everyone using the station. Members built planters and benches from unused pallets, restored a greenhouse, ploughed ground and sowed grass, and in total, cleared more than 1000sq.m of brambles and fallen trees. Other additions included a bee sanctuary and beehives, ready-to-pick crops, allotments, and a children's adventure trail.

As the garden was taking shape, volunteers averaged around 85 works per week to drive the project forward, and its ambition has seen FSRA membership treble, with local community groups taking an interest in using the space for their activities. The garden has not only improved the appearance of the station, but instilled a sense of pride over what has been achieved.



Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail

Jointly Awarded to

**Southeast Communities
Rail Partnership**



This year, Community Rail Network has selected two winners for this award, ensuring we recognise the different types of community rail entity and their contributions during these challenging times

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership had another stellar year, with the addition of an extra line – the '1066 Line' from Hastings to Tonbridge – taking the partnership's coverage to eight lines across Sussex, Kent, Surrey, and Berkshire. During 2020, volunteers from 73 station partner groups delivered thousands of work hours, cementing the partnership's vision of local communities becoming fully connected with their railways.

Some highlights over the past year included:

- Continuation of the 'Go Learn' education project. Since its inception in 2015, more than 26,300 children have attended a rail safety or junior citizen event, more than 5,300 pupils have had a classroom workshop with the partnership's education office, more than 1,200 pupils have taken part in a station visit and train ride, and the partnership has worked with 740 schools across Sussex. This is alongside the 'Active Access for Growth' programme, which engages young people who face barriers to rail and sustainable transport use;
- On the Seaford to Brighton Line, the partnership worked with a charity called Culture Shift to create an arts and heritage project encouraging adults with additional needs to travel on the railway. The 'Get into Trains' programme aimed to help participants to overcome barriers to choosing train travel, by gaining confidence, meeting new people, and learning about railway heritage;
- In 2020, the partnership introduced its first Environmental and Sustainability Policy;
- The partnership was also active during COVID-19. It used its long-established relationships with local schools to establish how to get students back to school by train following lockdown, promoting active travel, running educational sessions via video conferencing, and providing a 'virtual schoolbag', an online information service for parents and pupils. The partnership was also proactive with rail partners in guiding their thinking on station 'pinch points' and timetable arrangements, ensuring young people could travel safely;
- At the end of 2020, the partnership promoted 'I missed a train today', a musical project celebrating the vital role that rail travel plays in people's lives.



Jools Townsend, chief executive of Community Rail Network, said: "Southeast Communities Rail Partnership continues to deliver an extremely impressive range of work. Over the past year, they responded very well in adapting to the pandemic, and delivered some fantastic work around schools engagement, sustainability, and tourism. They are fully deserving joint-winners of this award."

Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail

Jointly Awarded to

Friends of Buxton Station

The Friends of Buxton Station are involved in a huge range of community development and environmental projects, and their reach and influence only continues to expand. They play a vital role at the very heart of their community, and also make a much-valued contribution to the wider community rail movement. They go above and beyond the work of a station adoption group, and their dedication has been recognised with a string of accolades in recent years.

Highlights over the past 12 months included:

- In June 2021, the group were honoured with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award volunteers can receive in the UK;
- During the pandemic, the group put together a 'Rail Retail Trail' to help local independent businesses recover from the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown;
- A little piece of Buxton now sits on the main concourse of Manchester Piccadilly Station, promoting the town to rail users and visitors;
- The group has led on the 'Buzzing Stations' project, protecting bee species, promoting bee-friendly environments, and hosting bumblebee safaris;
- At the onset of COVID-19, the group's leader, Dave Carlisle, aimed to inspire other station adopters by offering ten great tips for station adopters to consider during lockdown;
- Running the 'Mini-Saga Challenge' writing competition, designed to improve mental health by encouraging people to share their positive memories of rail travel.

Jools Townsend, chief executive of Community Rail Network, said: "The group's continued leadership throughout the pandemic and beyond has been outstanding. They are the very essence of what community rail is all about, being innovative and creative, but grounded in the community they serve. They continue to share their enthusiasm and expertise, and we congratulate them on their achievements."



Board's Special Recognition Award

Awarded to

Kulvinder Bassi MBE

Kulvinder Bassi (Kul) joined the community rail team at the Department for Transport (DfT) in late 2006. He became team leader in 2010 and held that position for a decade until moving on to become stations and accessibility policy manager within the department in 2020.

Throughout those 15 years, Kul was pivotal in securing and maintaining departmental support for community rail, and though his chairmanship of the Civil Service Staff Network, he was able to introduce community rail to other government departments.

Kul was instrumental in setting up the Designated Community Rail Development Fund (later CRDF), through which Community Rail Network has distributed more than two million pounds in project funding to support community rail partnerships across Britain. After the 2008 financial crash, it was Kul who was again instrumental in ensuring that funding for community rail was built into train operator franchise agreements.

While the funding has been vital to the development of the movement, Kul also understood that community rail was all about people. He went to lengths to visit as many community rail partnerships and groups as he possibly could, and was always keen to help. He was especially good at cutting through red tape, encouraging support for community rail, and being the face of the DfT on the ground.

Kul was awarded the MBE in 2012 and has also won Civil Service Awards, including the Diversity and Inclusion Award in 2017.

On winning the latter award, the civil service stated: "Kul Bassi's energy is awe-inspiring, his networking skills are the stuff of legend, and he makes a tangible difference to the way people feel about working in DfT. These skills have been honed over 20 years of leading DfT's Positive Support Group, and the tone and direction of his network has influenced the way we do business with all our networks and is the model for new and emerging ones."

Marion Atkinson, vice chair of Community Rail Network and chair of Women in Community Rail (WiCR), said: "Kul was a fantastic support to women and a true ambassador for WiCR. He listened and was always really helpful with what and who we needed to speak to in order to get things moving. WiCR has a lot of respect and gratitude for Kul and we are truly grateful for his support."



Richard Burningham, chair of Community Rail Network, said: "There is no doubt that without Kul's enthusiasm, never-ending good humour, knowledge of finding a way through industry procedures, negotiation skills, and frankly bare-faced cheek at times, community rail as a whole would not be in the very good position we are in now."

"We are delighted that Kul is the winner of our very-first Board's Special Recognition Award."

Messages FROM SPONSORS



Great Western Railway

Great Western Railway is proud to be one of the headline sponsors of the 2021 Community Rail Awards. Despite all the challenges during the last 15 months, our community rail lines were amongst the most resilient and these are the routes our customers really valued. They will also be the routes that holidaymakers head for as we plan staycations and day trips this year and we need to be ready to make sure that we give returning and new customers the very best experience and the confidence to travel with us. This is how we will rebuild rail and how we will restart the shift from car to train. Community rail, and our brilliant volunteers, are key in helping to achieve this, and we thank each and every volunteer for all their hard work and commitment.



South Western Railway

South Western Railway is delighted to co-host this year's Community Rail Awards in Southampton. Community rail is all about bringing communities together to work collaboratively to get the most out of their railways. In the face of the pandemic, it has been uplifting to see the hard work, resourcefulness, and perseverance of so many community groups in overcoming challenges and making a positive difference within their communities. We are proud to celebrate the hard work of all volunteers nationally and look forward to welcoming you all to our network. Congratulations to everyone who has been nominated this year.



Angel Trains

Angel Trains is proud to be a partner in the 2021 Community Rail Awards. Community rail partnerships are even more important to the industry and the communities they serve following the recent unprecedented events. We are delighted to support and recognise the people who have made a difference over the last year and thank them for their contribution to the rail industry.



Department for Transport

As the major funder of local rail services in England, 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.



Department for Transport

Rail Delivery Group

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

Rail Delivery Group



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.



Rock Rail

Rock Rail is proud to renew our sponsorship of the 'Best Community Engagement' category to maintain our perpetual support of the Community Rail Awards and their role of rewarding the countless organisations who have been integral in the conservation of our railway during such testing times. We at Rock are honoured to participate in the industry's collective strive to provide passengers with a reliable and sustainable railway service connecting communities all across the UK.



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, especially throughout this most challenging time, and 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 cost-effective rolling stock solutions optimised to meet them.



LNER

Through our ambitious Community Investment Strategy, we are passionate about tackling the social issues that impact the communities we serve. We are extremely proud to be working collaboratively with community rail partnerships on this strategy and are delighted to be sponsoring this year's awards. The event provides a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the hard work and dedication of all involved. A huge well done to everyone who has been nominated.



Abellio UK

Abellio UK is happy to be supporting this year's Community Rail Awards. The night is an important moment to celebrate the volunteers who make such an important contribution to the railway, and we wish all nominees best of luck for the evening.



Transport for Greater Manchester

We believe that community rail is an important and valued part of a successful Greater Manchester transport network. It increases rail usage, improves stations and interconnectivity, supports economic growth and regeneration, encourages local tourism, and helps bring all our communities together. We are delighted to sponsor these awards in recognition of the fantastic and indispensable contribution made by volunteers and organisations.



Greater Anglia

Greater Anglia is once again proud to 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 invest significant funding and resources into community rail across our network. We're also collaborating with our community rail partners and adopters to maximise the community benefits of the new trains we are currently introducing, as they transform the quality of service on our community rail routes. 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.



CrossCountry

CrossCountry is delighted to support the Community Rail Awards 2021 and sponsor the Best 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.



Merseyrail

Merseyrail is among the highest performing rail operators in the UK and is committed to serving the communities in which we operate. We are delighted to be associated with these awards, which celebrate the value of individuals in society who otherwise may not be recognised. We are extremely grateful to the many volunteers that give their own free time to help make our stations the wonderful welcoming places that they are.



Transport for Wales

Transport for Wales is delighted to be sponsoring the programme for this year's Community Rail Awards. It has 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. In collaboration with Community Rail Network, we are delighted to announce that we have introduced another new community rail partnership that will cover the Cardiff Valleys area.



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 the nominees our heartfelt congratulations for the sterling work they're doing.



Avanti West Coast

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. West Coast Partnership 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.



TransPennine Express

TransPennine Express is delighted to support the Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability category of the Community Rail Awards.

Under our new National Rail Contract we have exciting plans to deliver a truly sustainable railway that supports our communities in the North of England and into Scotland and provides real social value. Good luck to all the entrants!



Transport for the North

With 20 Community Rail Partnerships in the north,

Transport for the North is delighted to sponsor the trophies for these brilliant awards which recognise the often unsung work that goes into making our railways a safer and better place to be. Community rail plays a vital part in ensuring the rail offer to users is better tuned to community needs and expectations, and will be able to play a strong role in rebuilding rail demand after the pandemic.



Porterbrook

Porterbrook is proud to be a corporate partner of Community Rail Network and to sponsor the 2021 Community Rail Awards.

We have been at the heart of the UK rail network for over 25 years and we are committed to helping build a more sustainable, accessible and resilient railway. Partnership in action is integral to our approach and we are delighted to join in celebrating the important role that community rail partnerships, supporter groups and individuals play in promoting local rail services and enhancing the stations they serve.



Northern

Our community partners are the heartbeat of the railway

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. The Community Rail Awards are always a fantastic celebration of all that community rail achieves, we're delighted to sponsor them, so congratulations to all the nominees and good luck!



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 promoting rail at the heart of sustainable transport.



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PROGRAMME



TROPHIES



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