

WINNERS

ACoRP Community Rail Awards 2016



We celebrated and rewarded excellence in our industry and here are the very worthy winners

Awards Presented at the Floral Hall, Southport, Thursday 29th September 2016



Winners Booklet sponsored by: Great Western Railway



Key Supporters:



Rail Delivery Group



WINNERS

ACoRP COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2016

The Community Rail Awards celebrate all that is great in the Community Rail world and this booklet highlights the very best projects and volunteer contributions in 2015/2016 as judged by our independent panels of experts.

The details contained here outline the innovation, partnership and sometimes huge complexity of these projects whilst also highlighting the dedication and hard work of volunteers and staff within our sector.

We congratulate ALL this year's very worthy winners!

Neil Buxton
General Manager
ACoRP



Messages from Sponsors

Hitachi Rail Europe

Hitachi Rail Europe is proud to support the 2016 Community Rail Awards, highlighting the importance of local railways across the country. With our train manufacturing facility now operational in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, we hope that our products will touch upon many rail communities in the future. We wish all nominees the best of success in their projects.

Govia

As the UK's busiest rail operator, we are delighted to once again be supporting the Community Rail Awards. We believe it is important to recognise and reward success, whilst seeking to improve these crucial community services for future generations.

Grand Central Railway

At Grand Central Rail, we appreciate the fantastic contribution made by dedicated and committed volunteers. Recognising their work to improve local communities and making such a difference is so important. We are very pleased to sponsor ACoRP's Community Rail Awards in 2016 and wish very best of luck to all the nominees.

Abellio UK

As a long standing supporter of Community Rail we are very pleased to be sponsoring the 2016 awards. This is an opportunity to convey our thanks and gratitude to all those volunteers who give up their time to enhance the customer experience on our growing community rail network and in particular to celebrate the list of achievements at the Awards Ceremony. We say everyone is a winner!

Department for Transport

As the core funder of local and rural services in England, the Department for Transport is a keen supporter of community rail. We recognise that one of the most positive ways of sharing best practice and celebrating success is through the annual ACoRP Community Rail Awards. We are therefore delighted to be associated with these awards.

Railway Heritage Trust

The Railway Heritage Trust is pleased to continue its sponsorship of the Community Rail Awards through the 'Most Enhanced Station Buildings' Award. Our work around Great Britain has shown how old station buildings that are no longer directly relevant to the needs of the railway can be altered for

business, entertainment or community use. We are delighted to sponsor this award to recognise the work done by the various groups that have found new uses for disused and underutilised stations on the Network.

Rail Media

Rail Media is backing dynamic plans to involve more young people in railways. The growth of the rail industry and current reforms should further expand the role of community rail, a success phenomenon in its own right. ACoRP provides a wealth of inspired stories about the men and women taking forward the community rail movement. We are delighted to be supporting the Community Rail Awards, recognising the hard work, ideas and encouragement that together will open up the railway to a new generation.

TransPennine Express

We are delighted to support the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) and their annual awards. The Community Rail Awards highlights the excellent work carried out across the country to further improve the local railway, which is becoming ever more important as more people choose to travel by rail.

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 and CRPs 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 ACoRP. This award has attracted some very exciting projects in the past and with an ever tightening financial position facing many CRPs doing a lot with a little will become ever more important. We look forward to high quality entries, to exciting and innovative projects and for the winners to share those good ideas with the rest of the community rail world.

Eversholt Rail Group

Eversholt Rail Group is delighted once again to be a sponsor of the ACoRP Community Rail Awards. We recognise and applaud both the phenomenal growth in passenger demand and the wider-ranging benefits to local economies and quality of life that Community Rail schemes and initiatives continue to deliver. Eversholt Rail Group greatly values its excellent working relationship with the ACoRP team, which is fundamental to ensuring that we understand stakeholders' needs and provide cost-effective rolling stock solutions optimised to meet them.

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 that celebrate the value of individuals in society who otherwise may not be recognised.

Angel Trains

Angel Trains are pleased to support the 2016 ACoRP Awards. Angel Trains has a strong commitment to building the future of rail and recognises the importance of local people and communities in doing this. Community Rail Partnerships are a vital element of the success of the overall rail industry in Britain and Angel Trains is proud to support them.

Great Western Railway

With all the famous Devon and Cornwall Branches; the highly scenic 'Heart of Wessex' line, the urban Severn Beach route, connecting new communities and opening up previously untapped markets in Wiltshire and a share of the 'Three Rivers' lines. GWR has always been a huge supporter of Community Rail, it connects us closely to what our customers and supporters really want from their local railway and the resultant record breaking growth in passenger numbers underlines all the hard work that goes on. We are delighted to sponsor the Community Rail Awards again this year and we wish everyone the best of luck.

Stagecoach Group

Stagecoach is pleased to be supporting the Community Rail Awards once again. These awards are a well-deserved endorsement of all the fantastic work that goes on across our community rail lines to help us improve our railway and to attract more people onto our train services. We wish the very best of luck to all of the nominees this year.

Arriva UK Trains

Arriva UK Trains is proud to be a sponsor of the ACoRP Community Rail Awards. Our rail businesses work closely with CRPs in their areas, helping them bring the railways and the communities they serve closer and to grow together. We are delighted to help celebrate their achievements and to recognise community rail's contribution to growing Britain's railways.

ScotRail

We are delighted to support the annual Community Rail Awards in anticipation of successful new Community Rail Partnerships and in recognition of the dedicated people who garden at over 250 of our stations or who have found new use for accommodation that was surplus to the railway's requirements.

Virgin Trains East Coast & Virgin Trains West Coast

Virgin Trains is proud to sponsor the 2016 Community Rail Awards. Our high speed trains along the East and West coast, serve several mainline stations that act as gateways to Community Railways. We look forward to working with supporters of these vital economic lifelines; to grow inbound traffic and enhance the range of journey opportunities available to the people of the communities they serve.

Northern

Over the next few years we will see a transformation in the rail services delivered in the North of England. This is a promise the new Northern Franchise, which from 1 April has been under the ownership of Arriva, will make happen, with £1 billion of investment. We are already rooted in the communities we serve, thanks to the tireless work of our community rail partnerships and volunteer groups. Community partnership is an organic process and so for us sponsorship of the prized ACoRP Community Rail Award for the It's Your Station category seems very fitting! Tonight provides the opportunity to celebrate the best of what the industry does and we are delighted to be able to share it with you. We wish all entrants the very best of luck.

Involving Young People

Sponsored by Rail Media

First:

Brian Haworth, Community Rail Lancashire
for Rose Grove Revived and the Adventures of 'Small Fry'

The East Lancashire CRP has worked with primary school children for many years now and has built up considerable expertise in developing projects that meet the needs of the National Curriculum (key stage 2) and linking them to station projects. This win win for both has been used to great effect in making one of the bleakest stations in East Lancashire a much more attractive and safer environment for people to use. So why Rose Grove.....?

Rose Grove was a bleak station on the Preston to Colne line only served by the hourly all stations Preston to Colne service and used by about 40,000 passengers a year in 2013/14. This all changed from the 17th May, 2015 following the introduction of the new Blackburn to Manchester service via the recently reinstated Todmorden West Curve. The new service would be semi-fast and operate hourly, 7 days a week. Rose Grove was chosen as one of the stops on the new service as it serves the western side of Burnley as well as being well connected to Padiham, in particular via the Padiham Greenway a purpose built walking and cycling route which uses the former Padiham Loop railway line. The station also offers a small car park and has bus services passing close by.

So the time had come to give the station a well needed face lift. In fact the only remaining facilities were a passenger shelter where the inner box that actually protected passengers had long since been removed, seats that were only fit for very small people and a battered telephone kiosk. All-in-all not a very welcoming first impression. Lancashire County Council committed £160k from the Burnley and Pendle Growth Fund to give the station a real make over. Now it has a new fit for purpose passenger waiting shelter, a ticket vending machine, real time information screens, CCTV, along with new seating, signage and information panels. Flower tubs have also been introduced and planted. It was a transformation but this has been considerably enhanced by the involvement of two local primary schools - Padiham Green and Lowerhouse, the latter located very close to the station - who worked really hard to provide the 'finishing touches' and a splash of colour at the station.

As mentioned above all the work carried out by the pupils directly links to the requirements of the National Curriculum and involves an escorted rail journey to the educational resource centre at Accrington eco station.

The project became known as 'Rose Grove Revived' and was successful in attracting a grant from the Designated Community Rail Development Fund. The pupils from both schools took part in six classroom based sessions where they researched the history of Rose Grove as a railway centre and the old Padiham loop line which, as we have



seen, has been converted into a Greenway. Lowerhouse School focused on the history of Rose Grove station and how the railway shaped their community whilst Padiham Green researched the history of the former Rose Grove engine shed (code 10F) and the Padiham loop line. The pupils who delved into the history of the engine shed unearthed some fascinating information about what went on.

The pupils found out that it was not uncommon for water from the nearby Leeds - Liverpool canal to be used to tank up the engines! So when the tanks were drained the engineers often found sticklebacks in them. This became folklore at Rose Grove shed and Crewe works, where many of the engines went for maintenance, and inspired the pupils to image a journey made by a stickleback aptly called '*Small Fry*' between Rose Grove and Manchester via the Todmorden Curve. The story was illustrated by the pupils and made into a book called simply '*Operation Stickleback*' along with a DVD of the same name. The pupils tell the story of the journey made by Small Fry when he was inadvertently sucked into the tank of an engine and the characters he met on the way.

As well as using the internet to carry out their research the pupils also visited Rose Grove to get a real feel for the station and what it might have been like when it was a major staging post for freight trains between Lancashire & Yorkshire. The project helped develop their skills in a number of important ways including the production of the booklet and DVD but also made them aware of the rail link between Rose Grove and Manchester.

As part of promoting the new Blackburn to Manchester service Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) also wanted to raise the profile of the Padiham Greenway which is a cycle/walking route that follows the course of the old



North Lancashire loop line from Padiham to Rose Grove and to raise awareness to the inhabitants of Padiham that a new rail link to Manchester

was available and readily accessible via the Greenway. This not only raised the profile of the new service but also encouraged locals to cycle or walk the Greenway. The children produced a map of the route which has been included as part of a z - card pocket sized timetable. This has been distributed to all pupils at Padiham Green School and is available in local shops, the library and post office.

Continuing the 'fishy' theme the pupils of Padiham Green and Lowerhouse produced a huge banner which has been erected along the length of the platform end fence at the station and was also used on a series of special themed running in boards.

Rose Grove station is below road level and is not easily visible so developing the fishy theme, the pupils working

with CRL's Artist in Residence developed an eye catching sculpture, made from mild steel which has been erected at the station entrance.

As a reward for their work both schools were invited to make a journey from Rose Grove to Manchester via the curves.

A big launch was held on the 25th September, 2015 which saw both sets of children gather on the platform at Rose Grove along with local dignitaries to witness the unveiling of the art work and launch the book. This resulted in some very positive media reports.

The collaboration between Lancashire County Council, the East Lancashire CRP, Community Rail Lancashire & Lowerhouse and Padiham Green primary schools has transformed this run down station and produced some very striking marketing materials at the same time. Rose Grove now has a very welcoming environment, is easier to find and usage as a result has been rapidly increasing and is forecast to double over the next year.

In addition, the pupils have developed a range of creative skills and used the internet for researching local history - all achieving the requirements of the National Curriculum. As well as the trip to Manchester all pupils have received CRL's 'Passport to Safe Rail Travel' and will hopefully encourage members of their family to try the

Second:

Jon Moody, Sustrans for Train Weeks

Jon Moody, the Schools Officer from Sustrans developed this remarkable project that enthuses young people about rail travel, and encourages whole families to reconsider their travel choices.

For the last year Jon has been using The Poacher Line as a core learning resource. He has been running Train Week's in schools which incorporates several different elements of the curriculum including drama, geography and maths, all for the purpose of instilling a greater understanding,



enthusiasm and appreciation of train travel. Through Jon's work, young people are taking their first ever train journeys, and loving the experience.

Third:

Aughton St Michaels School for 'Town Green - A Conversation Place'



Back in 2014 the children of Aughton St Michaels School completed an Archie Bishop Award as part of their PHSE curriculum. The award encouraged children to 'be the change they want to see' within their communities. Part of the award required children to take a walk around their local communities and identify places that were in need of a change. One of those locations identified was Town Green Train Station. The children saw the land by Town Green train station where people had dropped litter and daubed graffiti and felt this would be the ideal place. The school also agreed that they would take on the long-term maintenance of the area so that it can continue to be enjoyed.

Involving Diverse Groups

Sponsored by Arriva UK Trains

First:

**Severn Dee Travel, Derwen College & Gobowen
for Gobowen Station Work Experience Café**

Severn Dee Travel, is a not for profit company and is managed by 6 volunteer Directors one of which is the Community Rail Officer for the line. It is as an Arriva Trains Wales rail agent operating from the southbound building at Gobowen Station. With over 20 years' experience they continue to offer improved facilities at this station in Shropshire. A funding Partner of the Chester-Shrewsbury Rail Partnership the community rail concept is embedded here and it actively seeks to encourage involvement and maximise the benefits these buildings can bring to the wider community

Derwen College in Gobowen is a further educational establishment which through personalised learning promotes the vocational, educational, social and personal development of a wide range of young people with special educational needs.

Some time ago Severn Dee Travel fitted out a small corner of the comfortable waiting room with café facilities. Gobowen approached Derwen College who saw the potential for this to be used as a work experience venue for some of their students.

No charges are made by Severn Dee Travel; to us the added benefit is that the village and passengers are provided with a café, where none existed and added to that the availability of local produce such as jams and preserves that are made at the college. All that is asked of the students is that they keep the waiting room and toilets clean and comfortable.

Derwen College embraced the opportunity to utilise the café and branding of the enterprise began in earnest.

The signage and vinyls were all designed and produced at the college by the students and they are keen to stress that they are working in Partnership with Severn Dee Travel. It also gives them an outlet for some of their other produce from canvas printed bags to aprons and cards. It also highlights the great work they do at this college.

The college curriculum features horticulture development and the students also tend the station planters, selecting and planting blooms they feel are appropriate.

Their Creative and Performing Arts Department have worked with us on a public artwork; an exciting project to transform our loo into a loo with a view which has made everyone smile and built on the 'uniqueness' that is Gobowen station. Severn Dee Travel celebrated its 20th anniversary late last year and the college helped by organising the catering and waiting on staff for our free passenger breakfast and celebration lunch. We also gave free rein to their Hospitality and Catering Department to design and make our cake.

The Results

The partnership between the two organisations continues to flourish and we were delighted that Ofsted rated the college as 'Outstanding' in 2016.

The Partnership working was recognised as follows:
From the report:
'Almost all students undertake high-quality work experience placements which link very well with their vocational studies and longer-term career aspirations. For example, the college manages the local railway station café, which provides students with the opportunity to develop excellent social, vocational and wider employability skills while working in the heart of the community. They learn to work as a team and communicate with customers.'



The mutual understanding between these two organisations has brought great benefits to the community and railway. Here is a staffed station; staffed differently.

This is Community Rail in action working with a range of people and abilities. There are no large cheque books

here, there's lots of goodwill and time devoted to it but the outputs are as great and wide as they can be with everyone gaining something good from the experience.

Second: **Govia Thameslink Railway & Sussex CRP** for Try the Train Experience

Both Govia Thameslink Railway and Sussex Community Rail Partnership are committed to encouraging more and more people to travel by train. This includes a focus on helping to make the railway as accessible as possible. We joined together at the start of the year to provide seven Try the Train events, over the course of six weeks, to a range of diverse groups, helping to dispel the myths and reservations about train travel. We received some wonderful feedback from these events and there have been many positive outcomes for the groups and our teams too.



Third: **East Lancashire CRP, Blackburn with Darwen BC, Northern Rail & Partners** for All Together Now



'All Together Now' is an innovative project which engaged with disadvantaged people, local students, school children and the local community, designed to breathe life into a run-down lightly used country station. By mixing all these different age groups and ability groups together a unique partnership between the railway and the local community has been created, which would not have happened without the catalyst of this project. The profile of the railway station has been significantly raised in the community and the unique artwork at the station has been widely viewed and acclaimed by the local community.

Community Art Schemes

(Permanent)

Sponsored by Govia

First:

**West Kent Extra, Edenbridge Town Youth Club, Edenbridge Churches
Youth Group & Graham Upton
for Edenbridge Town Station Underpass Art Project**

Urban underpasses often get the cool treatment with graffiti art or mosaic works, could we do something similar to the very dull looking underpass at the very rural Edenbridge Town station? The answer is yes if we involve the young people who attend the town's youth clubs, find a cool artist to guide the project, secure generous funding from Kent County Council, Southern and ACoRP and of course acquire permission from Network Rail.

With all that in place the young people set about deciding what they would like their project to look like, they decided upon a local theme, to paint what they knew best and saw around their town. During a week in summer school holidays 2015, a team of youngsters from the clubs, youth group leaders, the artist and various other interested locals set about this massive project. The bare bones of the design were laid down and then every day the project moved along. Odd shapes and blobs became castles and trees, a bridge and swans. Then what to do with the ceiling?



One young person suggested gold stars on a dark blue background so that is exactly what they did.

There was only a week to complete the project as the artist had to be back at work, so all week long they worked, tired and exhausted but really proud of themselves. They finished on time and to mark the occasion we held a ribbon cutting ceremony with refreshments and speeches.

Every time you walk through the underpass you notice something different, a little detail that you hadn't noticed before, it really is something for all involved to be proud of. A great effort by a great community that has added in a colourful way to the station environment. This project has also led to the youth clubs asking permission to do another art project at the town's other station this summer.

Second:

Chester-Shrewsbury Rail Partnership, Severn Dee Travel & Derwen College for Loo with a View



Art comes in all shapes and sizes but we believe it should make you smile.

Can it transform a place that usually is one of the top bugbears that everyone has had a bad experience with somewhere, sometime? We think it can and it has here at Gobowen Station. So here's how to transform a functional room into a room with a view or should we say a loo with a view? Travel with us to a faraway place whilst paying a visit

Third:

Sarah Bracey, Essex & South Suffolk CRP for 'Dreary to Cheery' Braintree Freeport Station Shelter Project

The transformation of the passenger waiting shelter at Braintree Freeport Station Essex from dreary to cheery.

Bright artwork is now in place. Braintree Freeport is home to a designer shopping village so the theme for the shelter is shopping. The 4 panels on the outside of the shelter depict the bottom halves of people in various dress carrying bags, you can have these as your own by positioning yourself in the shelter. There are also simple games that can be played within the designs. These will help to keep both children and adults entertained whilst waiting for the train.



Community Art Schemes

(Renewable & Smaller projects)

Sponsored by Govia

First:

**Sally Crabtree, Calstock Primary School, College Road Primary School
and Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership
for A Song for the Tamar Valley Line**

The concept behind the Song for the Tamar Valley Line project was to bring two schools together from opposite ends of the line, one urban and one rural, to work together on a piece of art, in this case music, that would broaden the children's horizons creatively, as well as promoting the line itself.

Over the course of two days one year four class from Calstock Primary and one from College Road Primary in Plymouth composed and recorded the song with the help of performance poet Sally Crabtree. The ideas for the song were based on what the children could see out of the window on the free trip each class made prior to the recording of the song.

Objectives

The Keyham area of Plymouth is one of the most deprived areas of the city. This deprivation is not simply one of economics but also of aspiration. Few children go onto higher education, only 53% attain A-C grades in their GCSEs and the area has one of the highest rates of children in need in the city. If we had asked the children to write a poem about their journey they would have immediately protested at how they can't write poetry or are 'no good at English'. However, each child had something to share about what they had seen from the train window and from there it was easy to start pulling these ideas together to come up with the song. Children in this area also have very little access to open countryside, despite having the railway line on their doorstep which leads to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. By linking the two schools together with this creative project not only did we want the children to be enthused about the journey and encourage their parents to do it with them another time. We also wanted to establish a permanent link between the two schools so that future visits and projects would also be possible.

End Results

On 9th June we launched the song by having an event at Plymouth station which was attended



by the schools. The song was uploaded into a special Dial a Song Phone Booth and installed in the station for a day. Whilst there, not only could the children hear the finished song through the telephone receiver but passengers coming through the station also got to listen and create their own poetry using edible words (on sugar paper arranged on a biscuit).

Since the launch the song has had 700 views through social media and thanks to tweets and retweets on Twitter has reached a potential audience of 4,526 people. The song will remain on YouTube forever, serving as a lasting reminder to local people and to the children involved. The lasting benefits of the project will fundamentally be on the children as the project showed them that they can travel further both

metaphorically and literally and have adventures with words and with their own ideas. Presenting their song in a phone box in a public space made words and what you can do with them come alive.

Sally Crabtree said *"It was a joy to witness the children and travellers hearing the song for the first time on the telephone and for me as a poet I felt a great sense of*



pride in working with the children to create an installation that took poetry and song to places you may not normally expect to find it and which celebrated the railways in an original way."

Catherine Downing, class teacher from Calstock Primary School said *"Such a great project. The children really enjoyed it. It was a really good way of using the train and*

interacting with the children who go to school in a very different place. You must have put in a lot of effort and I really appreciated it, as did the children from Class 2."

Members of the public engaged at Plymouth station described the project as "fascinating" with 40 people ranging from students to families joining in to create (and eat!) their own edible poems.

Second: Cambrian Railways Partnership & Arriva Trains Wales for Enhancing Small Rural Stations

Working together, the Cambrian Railways Partnership and Arriva Trains Wales developed a coordinated approach to enhancing small rural stations on the Cambrian Coast Railway line by getting local primary and secondary schools involved in a poster competition to both add a touch of colour to stations whilst spreading a positive safety message to the customers.

Poster cases, purchased by the Cambrian Railways Partnership were erected at stations and each school held their own poster competition with the winning posters being printed out in large format and displayed at their local stations for the summer.



Third: Essex & South Suffolk CRP, Abellio Greater Anglia & The Level Best Café for Competition on the Sunshine Coast Line

The Sunshine Coast Line competition grew out of the Designated Line Seminar held by ACoRP and the Abellio Challenge in 2015.

The scope was to work with diverse groups within the community to produce 14 colourful paintings and within

each painting to have a hidden animal painted into the picture and all within a timescale of 3 months. Once the pictures were displayed on the Sunshine Coast Line, we would then launch a competition where participants would need to visit 5 stations, name 5 animals at the 5 stations take a picture of each station they visited and produce a rail safety slogan. This project was one of the runners up that year and won funding to take the project forward. Meeting with Jane from the Level Best Café in Colchester was enlightening, her enthusiasm for the project and the students (with learning and physical disabilities) she looks after was infectious and we soon came up with a workable opportunity.

The idea was simple the pure aim to brighten up the branch line stations.



It's Your Station

Sponsored by Northern

Top Gold & Category Winner

Friends of Hindley Station

"IT IS ABOUT MORE THAN PLANTS AND GARDENS IT IS ABOUT INVOLVING THOSE IN THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH WE LIVE" This is a quote from our presentation boards which we take out into the community when giving talks and in a nutshell is what our group is all about.

January 2007 was our inaugural meeting and the rest we could say is history, or is it?

Our station was in a terrible state with ivy growing to the edge of the platform on the Manchester bound side and looked more like a forest than a station garden. Undaunted we set about clearing and tidying – our aim was to make the station a better place to visit and travel from.

In order to do this we involved the community: Explorer Scouts, Guides, Restorative Justice, Schools, and Colleges, the regulars from the local pub, older members of the community and our neighbours.

We have uncovered features long forgotten which have been repaired and added others such as The Hind of Hindley the windmill and our topiary train.

How have we done what we set out to do? Our neighbours take ownership by being involved in our projects, they have made bird feeders – planters – bat boxes – bird boxes – bug boxes and as a result the environment is improved and people enjoy the experience of travelling by train. Many of our plants have been donated by local people and it is no unusual to go up there to find bags full nicely named.

Who has supported us?

ACoRP, Northern, Network Rail, local Councillors through their Brighter Borough Fund helped us replace the fence Wigan bound, Adactus Housing and TfGM also supported us in this. Over the years RBS and Wigan Metro staff have been involved in working days and more recently Carillion.

Bickershaw Hall Nurseries a local family business have sponsored some of our planters this year and Hindley Rotary Club sponsored our Manchester bound bedding plants.

Wigan Bound was planned as a more natural side with rockeries and plants which are easy to maintain. In spring hundreds of daffodils and bluebells bloom beneath the trees all donated from our neighbours and the nurseries.

We have shared our skills and good practice with other groups particularly those setting up Station Friends Groups having been visited by: Heaton Chapel, Westhoughton, Hattersley, Daisy Hill and have been contacted by many others, including Hag Fold only this week.

Due to the fact that we encourage all age groups we have had very little vandalism and litter is only an issue on the steep banking below Railway Street to which we do not have access. Knot Weed has also been an issue but this is now being treated.



Manchester bound our neighbour supplies water which we store in barrels – beneath our 'living roof' (former soap barrels courtesy of First Bus) however we do hope to arrange a water butt from the back of the waiting shelter. On the Wigan bound side the water comes from the station office or the station house.

Buddleia has been an issue and now most of this has been cleared it is no longer able to self seed, this takes time as we use a hand saw and clear it gradually.

Recycle/reuse: Pallets have been used for fences, the archway, compost bins, bug hotel, living roof, bricks which we have uncovered have been used to edge the planting areas and stone to make a Memorial Garden.



A hedge was replanted having been donated and has now been fashioned into a topiary train. The Hebes Manchester bound were rescued from the nurseries. Our 'Royal Train' a new addition this year was rescued from a local school garden by our fencing contractor, we then customised and repainted it in black and gold. We always work in a safe manner wearing the appropriate clothing!

Much support comes from: Kildare Grange Sheltered Accommodation – they hold a Strawberry Fayre each June raising funds, at Christmas we supplied a Father Christmas and presents and raised money for our Christmas Lights and Tableau. We in turn support their Macmillan Lunches and other fundraising throughout the year having been involved in many of their 'productions'.

Pye Studios, with funding from Brighter Borough, have produced two new pieces of artwork this year. The people who attend the studios are all ages from young children to those of more mature years with varying degrees of disabilities and we also work with young offenders.

Hindley High School – continues to update their artwork in the ticket hall in poster cases which they provided. A piece of artwork entitled 'Celebrating Hard Work' is now installed in the ticket hall. The original oil on canvas is to be donated to Kildare Grange and presented at our Strawberry Fayre in June.

We have, in the process of our work, discovered much and over the winter have had a volunteer archaeologist uncover the Lancashire and Yorkshire mosaic on the Wigan side beneath the old station house garden. The rubbish will be removed from beneath this and the stone we uncover recycled.

Supporting the community – we built an allotment for a local primary school and made a dream come true for

a 'Friends' son when we built him a 'chuck wagon' for a birthday hoe down.

GMP asked us to work with the PCSO's and Hindley Young Police Cadets. We sourced funding for their uniforms and the work began – initially we did the six weeks of the school summer holidays in 2015. Since then we have worked with them every half term and at Christmas and Easter. We planted millennium oaks in the local park last summer, supplied by the local authority. At Easter we did a litter pick and at the June half term planted vegetables in our 'outdoor classroom', which we will share with vulnerable families. This 'classroom' will be used when schools visit the station and we look at Bees and Biodiversity.

To commemorate the Battle of the Somme we asked the community to knit or crochet poppies and now have well over 100. The judges said of the Friends of Hindley, "The depth and breadth of their achievements has really impressed us and despite strong competition we unanimously agree that they richly deserve their title of Top Gold & Category Winners"



Top Silver

Friends of Cricklewood Station

This young group have achieved amazing things in a short time. Working collaboratively with the community, their train operator and Network Rail they've transformed the run down and uninviting entrance to a North-West London station with an imaginative mix of plants, recycled materials and artwork. They've also shown how social media can be used to generate interest in and advertise the work to the wider community. The group has ambitious plans for the future which will expand on what they've already achieved. The judges were very impressed with their dynamism, creativity and their can-do attitude.



Top Bronze

Friends of Hattersley Station

Despite suffering the loss of their original garden due to Transport for Greater Manchester's improvement work, this very small group, led by Babs Allen, has triumphed in the face of adversity. When others may have given up, this group has re-established their garden, despite having little in the way of facilities to support their efforts. They've also brightened up the station with artwork and are planning to extend their activities onto the station platform. The judges were impressed with the groups tenacity and their determination to improve what must be one of the most uninviting stations on the network.



Most Enhanced Station Buildings and Environs

Sponsored by Railway Heritage Trust

First:

Sevenside Community Rail Partnership for A New Station for Severn Beach

Until recently, Severn Beach station consisted of a very old small bus-stop type shelter, without any glazing and open to the strong winds blowing from the Channel. There was one bench seat – and nothing else. The open derelict land next to the platform, often coupled with smoke haze from heavy industry in nearby Avonmouth, added to the desolate ambience. Severn Beach is a somewhat isolated community with relatively high deprivation factors and the railway provides the only public transport link to Bristol.

The number of passengers (footfall) using Severn Beach station on weekdays in 2008 was 116; by 2015 it had risen to 390. During the 15 months to November 2015 passenger numbers had risen by 46% - one significant factor being the growth of new warehousing and distribution centres in the locality. Continuing growth forecasts added to the justification, and urgency, for improvement. A larger shelter was also needed to accommodate Sevenside Community Rail Partnership (SCRPP) school rail familiarisation visits as a whole class would not fit into the old shelter. The station was certainly not fit for purpose, and it was recognised by GWR and South Gloucestershire Council that a complete rebuild was necessary.

In 2013 FGW, the local authorities and the SCRPP had participated in the development of Station Masterplans showing the improvements needed to update local stations in the West of England. The Severn Beach Station Masterplan, prepared by consultants, suggested that a



new shelter, fencing and seating should be provided at a cost of around £150,000. The Partnership considered these costs to be excessive. A key objective of the SCRPP proposal was that an attractive station should be delivered, with community involvement, at a considerably reduced cost.

A number of factors emerged in 2014- 2015 which, taken together, would lead to a more affordable and community driven project. These included an initiative by the national Community Rail Steering Group to cut the cost of station shelters, the availability of significant funding (£20,000) from ACoRP through the Designated Community Rail Development Fund, and £5,000 heritage lottery funding from the "Forgotten Landscape" project aimed at improving access to the Severn Vale Area. A total funding package of around £92,000 was put together by SCRPP, completed by contributions from SCRPP,

South Gloucestershire Council and GWR. GWR put the main elements of the scheme out to tender – a new shelter with internal poster cases, and water butts connected to the gutter, fencing (which because of the exposed location needed to be windproof), and removal of old shelter. The contract was awarded to SISK Rail, at a package price considerably below previous estimates.

Once the basic costings were firm, and with funding in place, SCRPP was able to step up engagement with the community and develop their



suggestions for the visual enhancement of the station. These included sustainable "cycle planters" as well floral displays, new seating, and interpretation panels on the local history of the area - Severn Beach was a major seaside resort up to the early 1960s. Consultation meetings were held with the Parish Council and community groups; an article was written for the local paper and the improvement scheme featured on a Radio Bristol broadcast. There was tremendous local support, the new station providing a real fillip to a somewhat neglected area – and has even become a local visitor attraction! The local gardening and history groups are now looking after the station. The amount of local involvement and "feel good factor" achieved by the scheme has been a major success.

The total cost of the whole rebuilding and enhancement of the station has come in at around £75,000 – half the original 2013 quote just for the basic elements, and well below the DCRDF bid package price. This is the first time on the GWR network that a complete station rebuild has been sponsored and a funding package put together by a Community Rail Partnership. Delivering the project on time and well below budget – a major objective - has been a significant achievement.

With the growth of local light industry, more commuting and the development of Severn Beach station as the railhead for tourists to the Severn Vale, the train service to Severn Beach will be doubled in 2019 as part of MetroWest. The new station provides a bright welcome and looks forward to considerably increased use.

Second: Heart of Wales Line Forum for The Llandeilo Community 'Rail Hub'

Llandeilo station serves one of the main communities on the Heart of Wales line route. In the 1990's the historic buildings were demolished, leaving only the platform waiting shelters.

Over the last two years the Heart of Wales Line Forum has been working with Welsh Government and Arriva Trains Wales to develop the concept of rail-community 'hubs'.

An innovative prefabricated building design was commissioned capable of being installed on any piece of available level ground. Network Rail agreed to the use of their land and on June 1st our first new hub was installed – at Llandeilo. Station and Halling Station.



Third: Friends of Glossop Station for Glossop Station Lighting Improvement



Definitely new lamps for old at Glossop Station! In a recent project led by Friends of Glossop Station and funded by Northern and The Railway Heritage Trust, 14 authentic replica heritage lantern lights, with LED filaments, have been installed by Network Rail in the interior of the station. These have replaced 35 year old globe light fittings which had failed to meet modern day requirements. The new lights have successfully raised luminosity levels and are environmentally friendly dimming at night. No more twilight gloom at Glossop as the lights enhance the many infrastructure developments and environmental improvements of recent years!

Small Projects Award – Under £500

Sponsored by Community Rail Lancashire

First: Friends of Buxton Station for Buxton Station Fanlight

This project was the dream of our Committee Secretary, “to see the fanlight window come alive at night!” We wanted it to succeed for two reasons, to enhance the historical artefact and to fulfil this dream!! Although a significant architectural and historical feature, the fanlight fell into obscurity under the cover of darkness. Adjacent unsympathetic street lighting cast a huge yellow blanket over the supportive millstone grit gable and left the window feature in dark anonymity. We believed this to be visually poor, the worthy window that spoke so loudly in daylight completely disappeared in the night-time.

Rather than throwing light inappropriately on the dramatic structure, we wanted to gently play inspirational illumination upon our heritage asset in a sympathetic manner, to pay homage to the construction and not to overpower it.

It is our opinion that this simple, but cost-effective scheme should be recognised. We sincerely believe that this project has made a significant impact upon a listed structure and was done at very low cost. It represents a tremendous value-for-money endeavour and provides a template for success that others may easily follow. Define your goals, set up your partnerships, and then do your research, involve the community, prepare for success, but also prepare for failure that will trigger further challenge and then go for it with your plans in place!!

The following is a summary of the scope of works at Buxton Station:

- Illuminate the fanlight window in the gable wall between the platforms. It is all that remains of the 1863 station, formerly a large glazing covered train engine shed built under the guidance of famous Architect Joseph Paxton (of the Crystal Palace fame!).
- Construct a simple supportive platform on the cast iron supports at the rear of the fanlight – in truth we found a length of metal tracking which we adapted to fit the existing supports by simply drilling two holes that allowed it to sit on the supports (there was no cost).
- Route electrical cabling from nearby distribution board along the large piping running just under the fanlight sill/bottom rail. Provide electrical isolation at the chosen point and securely install projecting lamps within a vandal-resistant enclosure (this work was kindly arranged by D. B. Schenker using their appointed electrical contractor, hence no cost to FoBS).

- Supply three LED, low energy external-safe projector lamps (30W lamps giving the equivalent of 300W power, discount negotiated from supplier).
- Fix the lamps to the platform and aim them along the quadrants formed by the radial tracers (power kindly provided by D. B. Schenker, so no ongoing cost to FoBS).

Operate the lamps at night on warm white or phased or static colour settings using timer switches. We were aware that our fanlight window was rare if not unique meaning that others had not faced the exact same negotiations for Consent with the relevant planning authorities, so we sought assistance from those who might have faced something similar. We approached English Heritage (now Historic England) and the Railway Heritage Trust for their advice. Sadly, neither organisation could offer specific advice, but referred us to their publications (Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance, April 2008 and External Lighting for Historic Buildings, April 2007), which we found helpful in making our presentation to the planning authority in support of our listed building consent application. Consent is a legal requirement for any work “of alteration” to a listed building like our grade II structure.

Before we made our formal application, we consulted D. B. Schenker (now DB Cargo), the owners of the fanlight for their support and were very grateful for that received from Simon Ives, Head of Property and Mark Nicholls, their Estates Surveyor (Senior Manager). Both were very encouraged and referred to this as a great development following their restoration of the fanlight window with the help from a Railway Heritage Trust grant in 2009.

Armed with Schenker’s backing, we took advantage of a negotiated offer of pre-application advice from High Peak’s Planning Officers free of charge (normally a fee of £56 applies to such advice, but we successfully argued that it should be free as listed building consent application was free of charge!). Our delight at being given free advice was soon tempered by what we were told: “The Council are moved to resist any works that will detract from the heritage asset’s value and therefore the application is unlikely to succeed.”

In support of the application, we canvassed rail users and found a general support for the idea, we considered this a “dream” worth following despite the high likelihood of failure. We had prepared our formal appeal in draft - that is



how sure we were that we would not be supported by the planning authority.

We went ahead with the application, keeping down costs by doing our own technical drawings, preparing our own Heritage Impact Assessment (these can cost several £100s!).

It is one of the most prominent landmarks of Buxton, so described on page 31 of the Council's Buxton Conservation Area Appraisal document of April 2007. Our proposal sought to address the lost significance of this remarkable architectural feature, enhancing its uniqueness to herald it as the key feature of its setting. Joy of joy, we succeeded!!

We think we succeeded because we were able to point at the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Policies to show that conservation is not a static or stagnant affair and character may be enhanced when change intends to bring about positive transformation: we think the conservation of listed buildings is best secured by keeping them alive and visible.

Buxton Station has been a significant gateway into the town for over 150 years. As we look to the future we believe that carefully managed illumination of the fanlight at night will continue to undoubtedly enhance arrival and help enhance the setting of the structure to create and maintain an arresting new view. We believe that for the investment of just £135 and a small amount of

time and effort, we have added to this historic and iconic feature, out of a deep respect for "our fanlight window," FoBS Members will continue to strongly defend it.



Second:

Friends of Guide Bridge Station for Guide Bridge Station Memorial Garden

Our Station Project has been created to be a Memorial Garden, our permission to use the land was granted by the TOC Northern Station Manager. Our first initial Idea was to just be a Garden but was changed to become a Memorial Garden. The Garden comprises a number of flower beds, trees and bushes that have been kindly donated, a stoned pathway around the garden, and we have recycled washing machine drums as planters supplied by British Gas. We also had sponsorship from Royal Mail and have been working closely with representatives from the Audenshaw Allotment Society.



Third:

Friends of Brighouse Station for Brighouse Station Garden

This triangular piece of land had become heavily over-grown with weeds and had the inevitable self-seeded sycamore in it. Because it was so obviously uncared for it was also a target for litter. Access was very tricky as the land is enclosed on all sides and entry to the area requires the use of two ladders to scale the fence and descend to the bed. The Friends of Brighouse Station didn't let that deter them though and they decided to clear the area and replant it since it was a considerable 'eyesore' and gave a bad impression of the station.



Best Community Engagement Event

Sponsored by Hitachi Rail Europe

First:
Friends of Bentham Station for 'Great Scenic Railways' campaign

In the Spring of 2015, the Friends of Bentham Station (FOBS) took the decision to create a project which would attempt to involve the whole community of our small parish, encompassing the town of High Bentham, the village of Low Bentham and the surrounding rural area. With the vast majority of people today having a camera, tablet or mobile phone it seemed appropriate to hold a digital photographic competition, to capture the flavour of Bentham Life in 2015, to add to the history of the Parish. It would be called 'A Day in the Life of Bentham' and take place on 29th July 2015. The competition soon became affectionately known by the organisers as DITLOB.

To assist, FOBS called upon a representative from the Bentham News, Shirley Brown and Jon Brook at Bentham Imaging. Their help and support was to prove invaluable and both gave freely of their time over the coming five months. The rules developed were made as simple as possible.

Following discussions with Champion Bowland, a voluntary organisation associated to the Forest of Bowland AONB, (just to the south of Bentham), a grant was agreed to the value of £750. An application by the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership, (LMCRP), on behalf of FOBS, to the Designated Community Rail Development Fund was successful and a matching grant awarded. Sufficient funds were now in place to deliver a quality event in a professional manner.

Posters and flyers were designed by FOBS and reproduced by the printer in town. The Bentham News gave over space in the three monthly issues prior to the day, to promote involvement and build enthusiasm and Bentham Imaging made arrangements to receive the entries and print the exhibition photographs.

FOBS arranged for a local professional photographer, Veronica Caperon, to offer workshops to the pupils at Bentham Community Primary School and to residents at the town's art centre, The Looking Well, prior to the main event. Posters were put up all over the Parish. Photographs from the workshop at the school, the event poster and rules, and the trophies were combined to make a colourful display in a town centre shop window, for the week before the big day; Wednesday, 29th July 2015. Local newspapers, the rail press and websites also promoted the day and gave good coverage of the exhibition and the winners presentation evening. The winning photographs were widely used too.

On the actual day, tablets, mobile phones and cameras were clicking and flashing everywhere in town, across the farms and at the local events. The entries came rolling in covering a very wide range of activities throughout the Parish. There were shots of the day's livestock auction,



early morning baking, young golfers in action, church bell ringers, maids milking and a coffee morning, to name but a few. Of course there were serious shots and not so serious shots, to reflect the atmosphere in the Parish that day from sunrise to sunset.

Having seen the excitement and enthusiasm generated by the event and the great quality of the photographs being entered, We Are Bentham, a local group of traders offered up to a further £500 funding to double the size of the exhibition from 20 to 40 photographs and provide framed enlargements for the winning entries. This gesture was warmly welcomed.

A panel of judges made up of representatives from Champion Bowland, Community Rail Lancashire, (on behalf of ACoRP and Northern Rail), LMCRP and FOBS assembled at the Bentham Imaging photographic studio, in early August, to view an amazing 250 entries from people of all ages, including ones from visitors to the Parish on the day. The judges first task was now to select a 'Final 40' for the exhibition at the end of August, before going on to choose a first second and third place photograph in both the adult and junior classes. An added ingredient to the competition was that one of the photographs would be chosen to go in the professionally produced 'Bentham and Beyond' calendar for 2016. It took a little over four hours to come to the final decisions after a great afternoon's viewing.

The 'Final 40' were printed onto Foamex board ready to be exhibited and Bentham Imaging created enlargements of the six chosen winning photographs. These six were professionally framed at Bentham Gallery to be presented as prizes. All the photographs have been stored on CD to add to the Bentham archives, but the Final 40 were also turned into soft and hardback photo books to mark the event and were made available to purchase at cost. The exhibition was held for five days in the last week of August at the studio; a prime position in the centre of town. There were well over 400 visitors to the exhibition, with 330 of them casting votes for the 'People's Choice' award.

On the third evening of the exhibition the Final 40 photographers and guests were invited to the prize giving ceremony, not knowing who had won. All winners received a mirrored trophy, their framed photograph and photograph album prizes. In addition the two first places and the 'People's Choice' winner received rail travel prizes, kindly donated by Northern Rail.

The Final 40 photographs were again on display in September 2015, this time at Bentham station, during the FOBS fourth anniversary celebrations. This gave an opportunity for the guests from across the rail industry and others from outside Bentham, to get a taste of Bentham life. As part of the celebrations, Kulvinder Bassi from the DfT in London presented the 'People's Choice' trophy and prizes for the photograph receiving the most votes at the exhibition two weeks before. A secret which had been well kept.

The 'Final 40' photographs are a great resource and talking point to be shared. Consequently, they have been assembled into a portable exhibition with its own large travelling case. It is available to museums, galleries and other communities, as a stimulus to undertake similar events.

Following the event the members of FOBS decided that a permanent way should be found to display the photographs on the station for all to see. A design was put together for a large panel to go on the footbridge, to be printed on Dibond, a tough aluminium bonded material. Recently, additional funds have become available to FOBS and so the panel will now be created and installed. This is a splendid way to add to this powerful project and share the results with visitors to Bentham and passengers on the Bentham Line.

In putting together the 'A Day in the Life of Bentham' photographic competition, FOBS, with their many local supporters, created a project which was enjoyed and appreciated by a great many people, either by taking their own photographs, viewing the work of others or in voting for their favourite. It was an event that really brought the small parish of Bentham together and created a 'buzz' on the day of the event and throughout the exhibition. It was a talking point for many weeks and captured a new slice of the history of Bentham. Everyone enjoyed the experience and those who were involved or organised the event would advocate that other towns and villages should have a go. Perhaps it may even lead to 'A Day in the Life of Community Rail' project.

Second: Three Rivers CRP for Netley Station 150th Anniversary Event

On Saturday 5 March over 500 people visited Netley Station celebrating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Southampton to Netley Railway. Various local community groups, wanting to celebrate local railways both historically and today, participated in eight months of preparation. The resulting vibrant Victorian themed programme, overseen by Queen Victoria, the Mayor of Eastleigh and the Not so Fat Controller was a resounding



success. Apart from bringing the community together for a day, this event has provided an ongoing legacy for locals and passengers through improved gardens, a refurbished waiting room and a dedicated local history exhibition room.

Joint Third: Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station for Sowerby Bridge Railway Station 175 Weekend



The 175 Weekend took place from Saturday 3rd October to Monday 5th October 2015 and commemorated the 175th anniversary of the railway arriving in Sowerby Bridge. The event aimed to inform and educate the public on the impact the railway had on the town whilst simultaneously highlighting some of the developments at the Station since 1840 and the recent projects completed by the Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station. The 175 Weekend was enjoyed by people of all ages, involved local

businesses, was financed by a grant from Calderdale Council and was supported by Northern Rail and Trans Pennine Express.

Joint Third: Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership for Loop the Loop - Branching Out!

Loop the Loop; Branching Out was a two day event celebrating the Looe Valley Line and Cornwall's railway heritage. It engaged young and old in a creative and fun way. Through escorted rail trips, creative workshops and heritage research, 170 local school children created a station mural with Beano artist Nick Brennan, travelled the line dressed as Victorians for the day, and produced bookmarks promoting the line. Volunteer 'heritage experts', recruited through the project, shared their steam railway memories and research with the 200 members of the public who enjoyed the event's pop-up library, railway exhibition and art sound performance.



Best Marketing Campaign

Sponsored by Abellio

First:

TransWilts CRP & Great Western Railway for The Weymouth Wizard

Improvement works diverted the Weymouth Wizard, an eight-coach, high-speed train, via the TransWilts line, replacing a journey by our regular one-coach train on four summer Saturdays. Working with Great Western Railway, the Heart of Wessex CRP, by using social media and at-station advertising, we encouraged up to 350 passengers per trip, many of them new to rail, to try the train and have a great day out at the seaside.

In the Summer of 2013, it wasn't possible to take a Saturday day trip to Weymouth via the TransWilts by train. In the Summer of 2014, a single-carriage train made it possible via a connection at Westbury. In the summer of 2015, an eight-carriage, high-speed train made the journey directly from Swindon and Chippenham to Weymouth. The Weymouth Wizard was quite a hit with the TransWilts users.

The objective of our Facebook campaign in late July and early August was to encourage residents of the towns that this train doesn't normally serve, and who are not regular rail users, to try the TransWilts. Secondary objectives were to build a customer base and spread wider knowledge of TransWilts and other public transportation in Wiltshire, by TransWilts brand awareness and build up a following.

The Campaign was a short, sharp campaign initiated on 26th July 2015. Prior to that point, engineering works resulted in the majority of trains being replaced by buses, which was not opportune to encourage rail newcomers to have a great experience. 26.07 "Fancy a day at the Seaside" on Facebook: 36,000 reach, 302 likes, 240 comments, 306 shares. Promoted in Swindon and Chippenham. 30.07 "Day out at the seaside by train from Pewsey" on Facebook: 12,000 reach, 39 likes, 23 comments, 60 shares.

Promoted in Pewsey and Marlborough. 09.08 "August Saturdays ..." on Facebook: 7,500 reach, 65 likes, 12 comments, 30 shares. Promoted in Swindon and Chippenham. 15.08 "By direct train for the day from Swindon" on Facebook: 9,100 reach, 74 likes, 19 comments, 22 shares. Promoted in Swindon and Chippenham. Early August Facebook posts in "Swindon and Area for Sale" groups, and related Chippenham and Wiltshire Groups.

All comments and questions were followed up quickly, with notes made for future work or constructive feedback where people had issues. Campaign and Marketing: about 20p per passenger.

The Results:

Weymouth was noticeably quieter on the 23rd than on the 1st, and local traders were looking bored and commenting on the quietness. The difference was the weather, which was excellent from the 1st to the 15th; on the 23rd it was overcast and it rained. The TransWilts team travelled on each of the above dates, identified by their conspicuous TransWilts T-shirts, to answer any questions and help people find the right train for their return.

A quick survey took place on the 1st August asking where the people travelling had heard of the Weymouth Wizard. Chippenham and Swindon joiners responded about 50% station and National Rail advertising, 35% from social media and 15% were Staff or enthusiasts. By the 23rd, the estimate moved to 40% station, 50% social media, 10% staff or enthusiast. Customers had a great day, many of them remarking they will be making more rail trips as a result.





The purpose of this train is to provide an extra service and relief capacity from Bristol and especially Trowbridge and Westbury onwards to Weymouth on Summer

Saturdays. In past years and when there's not been engineering, the train has run shortly behind a regular train and it's been hard to persuade too many people to "wait for the nice train", resulting at Westbury, where a four- or five-car train has left packed and then 25 minutes behind it a very sparsely occupied eight-coach HST. The objective has been to get the train, with around 500 to 550 seats, bustling, even though on the direct route, the numbers often struggle to get much more than 100 passengers. This social media campaign succeeded.

Second: Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership for Mini Adventurers take the Train

The best way to forge a connection with passengers is on their own terms and nowadays that means on social media. To inspire families to try the train, the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership ran a video campaign on four social networks, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram to highlight the enjoyment and sense of adventure that young children get from travelling by train. The 25 second video was produced in-house, using volunteers as models and for the voiceover. Thanks to innovative audience targeting techniques and an advertising budget of just £200, more than 10,000 parents viewed the video within a fortnight.



Third: Leeds-Morecambe CRP, Lancaster and Skipton RUG & Northern Rail for 'Rail to Trail - 12 Self-Guided Station to Station walks on the Bentham Line

This 'Rail to Trail' project of twelve self-guided walks reflects a truly community approach to a marketing project which, with the support of the train operating companies, has been turned into a valuable resource for the Bentham Line with a long life-span and marks the beginning of an ever-growing programme under the 'Rail to Trail' banner, along with a much closer working relationship with the train operating com-



pany. From the outset the project was designed to encompass both traditional marketing means and the use of modern marketing techniques via websites, apps and social media.

Outstanding Volunteer Contribution

Sponsored by TransPennine Express

First & Lifetime Achievement Award

Mike Fitzgerald - Kent CRP Chair & Volunteer

The judges awarded a combined first place & lifetime achievement award to Mike and the following will show just why they wanted to do so!

Mike has grown the Kent Community Rail Partnership from inception over eleven years, Chair first of the Steering Group and Chair of the Designated Medway Valley Line, demonstrating energy, determination and humour, whilst motivating those around him. He is also a respected leader in the charity sector. His drive has led to a decade of success, gaining financial and resource support from partners, working with schools, parishes and community groups. Mike managed the Partnership through a difficult period of change (staff & hosting) and pulled out all the stops to ensure sustainability and a bright future.

He has given of his time working tirelessly rarely missing a meeting or event and always promoting the Partnership.

Commitment & dedication to the Partnership

As Steering Group Chair Mike ensures he has prepared well and meets with officers, asks difficult questions so he can challenge as appropriate and build a strong team from across the industry, business and community. He is a wise and highly effective chairperson.

Mike drove forward the formation of the Medway Valley Line Group and its DfT Designated Line status. He has been Chair of the Kent Community Rail Partnership Medway Valley Line Group since inception and has played an active part in organising and promoting line events. He also attends and supports SwaleRail Line Community Rail Partnership meetings which he helped set up, as well as all their events.

He has worked tirelessly to attract wider membership of all the groups and encouraged partners including parishes to make a contribution to funds. He has encouraged much volunteering that has brought great value to everyone connected with the Medway Valley Line and the SwaleRail Line ensuring we drive forward our action plans year on year.

His commitment was particularly evident during 2013-2014. Due to staff changes and a new bidding process to decide the Hosting of the Partnership for 2014 onward, Mike was not only central to the process of the appointment (which resulted in new hosting partners) but also in the transfer arrangements to ensure a seamless transition.

Here are a few examples of the work he carried out during and after this particularly challenging period:

- Personally managed all the Stakeholder Meeting arrangements; producing all the paperwork and presenting the evening event, including registration, display board, (which he prepared) and presenting



volunteer certificates for the first time to some 31 supporters.

- Put together the arrangements for the launch of the Snodland Garden which involves 10 partners including the local school. He negotiated with the school to manage the site on an ongoing basis. He invited guests, produced a programme for those attending and arranged the information plaque and the provision of refreshments.
- Supported the DfT Annual Designated line seminar submitting a proposal for a new Pop-Up Hub vision. This was shortlisted and Mike produced his own presentation material to support his delivery to those gathered at Blackpool. He had no support but was determined not to let the Partnership down.
- Ensured the success of two line events namely a Music Train and a "Discover the Medway Valley" Train with live commentary. He 'found' the money to make these events happen and he was responsible for the promotion of the events together with the organisation and funding of the refreshments. Both were hugely successful.

Mike continued to work with both Hosting partners, old and new, during this period of transition to ensure the growth and success of the Partnership and to provide a seamless delivery to fulfil Kent CRP's action plan. In March 2016, He worked closely with Sarah Deakin, Engagement Officer, to lead and support the Partnership's entry for the Abellio challenge. The entry duly won this coveted award for its "Smarter Travel" initiative. Before retiring from the Partnership, Mike negotiated a new 3 year hosting contract with the support of stakeholders, providing security and confidence for officers.

As a former Mayor of Maidstone, Mike has a keen knowledge of the work of local charities. He has also worked tirelessly for Maidstone Day Centre which supports homeless and vulnerable people and he continued to give 100% commitment to Community Rail until his retirement this year.

He is always keen to recognise the commitment of other volunteers and is truly an excellent role model for any volunteer.

Second: Julia Prigg Wrabness Station Adopter

Julia has been volunteering at the station garden at Wrabness for over 7 years, and became an adopter in April 2015. Julia is constantly thinking of new ideas to ensure the garden and station look wonderful encouraging locals and visitors to sit and enjoy the area. She helps with community rail events, theme trains and the Liverpool Street ACoRP event. Additionally, Julia is having a promotional stand in the station garden as part of Wrabness open gardens. It's fair to say that she 'Sleeps, Eats and Drinks' community rail, station gardens and she welcomes the community spirit that station gardens encourage.



Third: Third: Mike Bishop - Friends of Handforth Station

Mike Bishop founded Friends of Handforth Station 20 years ago as the first station support group to bring the station back to life, inspiring many others. As Chair, Mike has transformed the fortunes of the station from being faced with closure, to a multi-award winning well-used station. He's built lasting relationships with all of Handforth's Community partners, schools, clubs, societies and individuals. His hard work has resulted in their continued engagement in Station art, garden and creative projects. This leaves a lasting impression on all the passengers passing through and makes Handforth Station a local treasure for residents.



Outstanding Teamwork Award

Sponsored by Stagecoach Rail

First:

NHS Lanarkshire Occupational Therapy & Mental Health Teams and Clydesdale Community Initiatives for Adopt a Station Projects

The Adopt a Station Project is a fantastic Scotland wide initiative set up and funded by ScotRail. In Lanarkshire this project has been supported by NHS Lanarkshire and Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI). CCI are an innovative and award winning landscaping organisation and social enterprise whose core mission is to empower people facing significant barriers to social inclusion and employment, due to their learning disability, mental health issue or other challenging circumstance. They gain the opportunity to make a positive contribution to their community.

CCI staff and volunteers have worked in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire's mental health and forensic occupational therapy staff and clients throughout this project. To date five stations in Lanarkshire have been adopted by the NHS and CCI partnership. These include Hamilton West, Sunnyside, Wishaw, Whifflet and Coatbridge Central.

What did we want to achieve?

The core aim of the project has been to invigorate our local train stations and in doing so improve the experience of passengers travelling through the stations making their journeys more enjoyable. We are able to do this due to the great work being carried out by volunteers/adopters through creative gardening and art projects.

By working across the public and third sector, both groups saw this as a unique opportunity to enable volunteers facing extreme barriers to community participation due to their mental health condition, to become more involved in their local communities and to explore, develop and build upon their social and vocational skill sets.

Exceptional Project Impact and Outcomes

The social, vocational and wellbeing impact of the project on volunteers has been exceptional and could not have been achieved without the co-operation, communication and commitment from all involved. The majority of volunteers involved will have experienced mental health issues such as anxiety or depression. For some volunteers their mental health condition has been long term and severe preventing them from participating in social or vocational community activity.

The project has had a particularly significant positive impact on individuals in the Forensic Mental Health service who often experience additional barriers to social and vocational activities in the community due to their involvement in the criminal justice system which individuals recognise adds an additional barrier to involvement in social and vocational opportunities.

The Adopt a Station project has provided the opportunity for this client group to become involved in community activity at the Hamilton West Station and has empowered them to develop their practical skills, whilst growing in confidence and self-esteem. The work delivered at the station by the team has been exceptional with members from the wider community visiting the station to see the completed work.

All of this demonstrates perfectly why excellent partnership working, in all aspects of the project has been vital to its success.

Diverse Project Activities and Strong Relationship Building

Across the stations volunteers have been involved in planting, maintenance, drawing plans, woodwork and crafts activities enabling them to develop their practical skills whilst growing their social connections and confidence. Volunteers have also been provided with the opportunity to build custom made planters at CCI which has enabled them to gain practical, hands on experience in the use of tools and raise their awareness and knowledge of health and safety procedures.

A group of volunteers were also involved in making mosaic tiles for use at one of the stations. This activity had a significant impact on one particular volunteer who had previously found social interaction and close contact



with males extremely difficult but through engagement with the station project this has been a positive factor in the volunteer making progress towards breaking down their barriers to social inclusion and employment as they have now successfully gained part time employment.

This project has also opened up other opportunities for volunteers, for example a newsletter had been created with the help of a volunteer involved in the project. This has had a huge impact on the person involved as he has been able to gain confidence speaking to others and has developed his IT and writing skills, giving him the confidence to apply, and successfully gain a place on a college course.

The excellent working relationships forged with ScotRail staff has also contributed to the project's success as volunteers have been able to be recognised in a 'worker role' where they are required to wear high visibility vests, comply with employment etiquette and to adhere to all health and safety rules and procedures. This has encouraged the volunteers to recognise how valuable their contribution to the stations is and the importance of utilising their own skills, talents and abilities to make a positive impact.

NHS Lanarkshire forensic and mental health teams and CCI staff have also thoroughly enjoyed working together on the projects with occupational therapists

Excellent interagency communication and collaborative working by all those involved in the 'Adopt a Station' project has underpinned the exceptional social, vocational and community outcomes achieved.

Both organisations and volunteers have worked incredibly hard to deliver projects which benefit passengers through improved station surroundings but also have been a huge benefit to individuals who have been enabled to participate in their communities showcasing the wonderful skills, talents and experiences they have to offer the wider community.

NHS Lanarkshire forensic and mental health teams and CCI are committed to continual development and strengthening of their collaboration, and it is hoped that this partnership model can serve as an inspiration for other public, private and third sector bodies to come together to create innovative, dynamic and inclusive projects which have a real impact on their local communities in which they work and live.

Second:

Derwent Valley CRP, East Midlands Trains, Network Rail, Ambergate Station Adopters for Teamwork transforms an overgrown area into a terraced planting bed

Exceptional teamwork at Ambergate Station has delivered the transformation of an overgrown banking area on the station approach road, into an impressive terraced sleeper planting bed, which customers cannot fail to be impressed by.

The new terraced sleeper bed comprises 60 donated railway sleepers which have made a triple level terrace, colourfully planted with over 500 shrubs. This has been a project between East Midlands Trains, Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership, Network Rail and station adopters. Great teamwork by dedicated staff and volunteers has enabled numerous difficulties to be successfully overcome, achieving a fantastic transformation of the station approach.



Third:

Templecombe Station Friends, South West Trains & Partners for Joint preservation of the station footbridge

The Friends of Templecombe Station have painted their 123 year old foot bridge over to the old platform and gardens, in original colours, as part of a long term project to make the station a focal point on the South West Trains West of England Line.

The volunteers at Templecombe station spent over 400 hours preparing and painting the bridge, with the help of South West Trains, Network Rail and Bagnalls building contractors.



Passengers Matter

Sponsored by Merseyrail

First: Great Western Railway for East of Bath line closure communications campaign

Overview

The Great Western Main Line is benefitting from a massive infrastructure investment, and when the key route to the east of Bath was closed for six weeks during the summer of 2015, Great Western Railway (GWR) made sure customers came first through an innovative communications campaign and a customer service philosophy. Co-ordinated through the in-house project and communication teams, and along with the four impacted community rail partnerships they conducted a campaign of awareness and detailed journey information which was extremely well received by customers who were faced with a prolonged period of diversions and extended journey times.

What the project entailed

Network Rail's modernisation of the Great Western Main Line is seeing major engineering projects, infrastructure upgrades and electrification across the network. With this £7.5 billion investment the demands to close the railway while the work is carried out becomes greater and greater. None more so than the six-week closure of Box Tunnel and concurrently the four-week closure of the line from Trowbridge to Bath Spa station, the longest closure of the Great Western Main Line for 40 years.

The communication team managed a large scale campaign of customer communication and recognised early on the role that the four well established Community Rail Partnerships at Severnside, Heart of Wessex, Three Rivers and TransWilts could play in developing the alternative services during the line closure and in getting information to customers.

From the very start of the planning process, GWR worked closely with the CRPs to ensure clear, joined up messaging and engagement. This included meeting with the community rail groups, along with rail user groups and local authorities.

Engagement with our community rail partnerships was a fundamental element of the project. From the outset the Project Manager recognised the passion the groups had for the service, and their depth of knowledge and experience. They immediately came forward with ideas and willingness to help.

Members of the CRP volunteers attended meetings to input into bus and train plans, they fed back on how to communicate out information and how best to engage with customers in their areas. This was through a mix of evening meetings, committee meetings, volunteer days at stations and a full morning session with the Heart of Wessex CRP at Maiden Newton which generated a multitude of ideas.

Ideas proposed by the community rail partnerships were taken away, reviewed with Central team management, Train planning, Traincrew managers and engineering to work out what we could and could not achieve.

Even though the Bath to Trowbridge line was closed for 4 weeks the community rail partnerships impressed upon us the need to keep a summer Saturday service to Weymouth, and at their urging we managed to deliver a High Speed Train (HST) to Weymouth from Bristol via Swindon each Saturday. This was a huge deal for Heart of Wessex and through their local knowledge and support we managed to convince train planning that an eight carriage High Speed Train was necessary, rather than a two car unit.

We also ran two peak buses from Castle Cary to Bristol and back to provide better journey options for Weymouth line customers, another idea developed with Heart of Wessex. We also ran some peak buses from Warminster to /from Bath to provide better connections with Portsmouth line trains. All services that were additional to the base plan and gave our community rail customers a far better service.

The partnerships played a crucial part in the preparation of the line closure, they were able to open up channels to local communities through newsletters and local shops to help get the message out. They also gave up their time to volunteer for the Meet the Manager sessions at stations, which helped us get the message out to the community and communicated at a local level.

End result

After six weeks which saw one of the largest engineering projects on the Great Western Main Line since



Brunel and the longest closure since the introduction of the HST, the work finished on time and passenger services resumed as planned on Tuesday 1 September 2015.

Transport Focus, the independent passenger watchdog, conducted three waves of research with the last wave being conducted during the works. In wave 3, it showed the awareness of the works amongst passengers was 84%. Amongst commuters there was 97% awareness.

Positive feedback from passengers and local media coverage.

This could have been a very difficult time for customers travelling on routes covered by four Community Rail Partnerships. By working with the CRPs and their volunteers, harnessing their knowledge and expertise, GWR offered extra services, and customers awareness reached record highs. Through working together with its CRPs, treating them as part of the solution, and giving them a say in the delivery of the service, GWR made sure that passengers really mattered and that the longest line closure in 40 years passed without incident and indeed with many plaudits.



Second: Nick Farthing Three Rivers CRP for No Train - No Worries



Despite the best efforts of the Rail Company, there are times when trains through Chandlers Ford rail station are cancelled. With only an hourly service, rail passengers can be stranded waiting for the next train. To improve the service and reduce inconvenience for

rail users, a new “No Train No Worries” ticket for use on the adjacent Bluestar 1 bus service has been introduced. By showing a valid rail ticket to the bus driver, rail passengers can travel for a flat fare of £2.00 to Southampton or Winchester, so as to reach their destination or connect to rail services elsewhere.

Third: Haslemere Station Community Partnership for A redundant station frontage shop into an information point

The town of Haslemere in Surrey has joined together with South West Trains to create a Community Partnership to encourage people to visit the town and its amazing neighbouring countryside.

As part of their plans they have taken on a redundant shop let at the station and have transformed it into a visitor information centre, advising the many hundreds of walkers, cyclists and tourists on where is best to go in this activity-packed town.

Haslemere Station Community Partnership have worked with the South Downs National Park and the local tourism centre to create a perfect addition to the station environment.



Station to Station – Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration Projects – Special Award

Sponsored by Great Western Railway

First:

East Suffolk CRP & Partners for Multiple Events along the East Suffolk Line

The East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership wanted to mark the Queen's 90th Birthday but we were also keen to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the line being reprieved from the Beeching Axe in 1966. As both anniversaries fell during June and the new community rooms and café based at Beccles Station were almost complete we felt a special day of celebration incorporating all three was appropriate with the celebration helping to launch other summer events too. We also wanted to involve the station adopters and engage with diverse communities along the route.



We started promoting the events during the spring by mentioning the forthcoming celebrations in media coverage for our new walks book and our sponsorship of a festival rail – bus link. As the momentum built we took delivery of over 3000 feet of red, white and blue bunting and after securing permission and satisfying safety concerns preceded to install bunting at all stations over the 49 mile route where appropriate fixings were possible. The installation of bunting gave another opportunity for media coverage with one member of the public commenting that his local station hadn't had any since the Coronation!

After some extensive research including a few taste tests! We ordered several hundred special birthday cakes from a local company, although based upon a Victoria Sandwich they were renamed Elizabeth for the day and came specially wrapped in Union Flag branded boxes. The logistics of distributing hundreds of cakes proved difficult, however after three days travelling the line installing all the bunting we managed to perfect the use of wheeled suitcases!

We booked the Southwold and Reydon Corps of Drums, a local band more used to marching in parades than performing on trains and platforms. Their participation was important as they had a mix of young and old members and wore military style uniforms perfect for creating a sense of occasion. The aim was for the band to visit three stations traversing much of the route, playing a short concert at each station on arrival. The line has an hourly service in each direction so to allow travel and performance time the schedule was tight, one late train could have caused chaos!

First to begin the celebrations was the Suffolk market town of Beccles. The town's station had been semi derelict for over fifty years however the local community worked together to refurbish the station building, providing business start-up units, meeting rooms and a new café. The café was just a shell two days before the event but with the help of CRP volunteers it opened right on cue as the band struck up. Extra tea and cake was provided free to passengers and local people on vintage china before the band boarded the train to Lowestoft.

As terminus of two lines we thought the best way to celebrate would be to hand out cake while the band played, the station staff who had even trimmed up the booking hall, joined the CRP volunteers and the Mayor Of Lowestoft in his full regalia distributing cakes, taking selfies and posing for press photos. It was then back onboard the train as we headed south to Halesworth handing out more cake on the way. When you rely on social media and editorial coverage it is often difficult to ascertain just how many people will join an event and as we arrived at Halesworth



we were absolutely thrilled to find both platforms full to capacity, the station adopter team were busy ensuring everyone was safely away from the platform edge and had even drafted in a retired policeman to ensure safe and orderly use of the barrow crossing. We'd invited the townsfolk to join us for a 'cuppa and a bun' and 400 came along. Judith and her station adopters did a superb job and when the band struck up the station came alive with community singing and both before and after this the local U3A Ukulele Band played along too. The town museum housed inside the station building



Second:

Friends of: Hattersley; Glossop; Guide Bridge & Hadfield Stations for Joint Event - A Royal Teddy Bear's Birthday Party

This was a joint community event organised by the above Friends' groups. Designed to entertain our local communities and educate them regarding green travel, ie rail, whilst bearing in mind the special significance of our longest reigning monarch's 90th birthday. We engaged with individuals, organisations and community groups who volunteered their time, services and equipment for free to make it a huge success whilst lifting our stations' profiles and enabling families to travel by rail, often for the first time. The event has also enhanced our already good relations with each other, Northern Rail, local communities and other stakeholders.



extended its opening hours for the day and featured information on the history of the line.

On leaving Halesworth we headed south handing out cakes on board trains and on platforms stopping at Saxmundham, Woodbridge and Ipswich Stations. On the return journey we had just enough cakes left for the passengers, the guard and the driver too! During our travels we even managed to ensure the fun was conveyed via social media not an easy task in our 3G sparse county!

The aim of our celebration was to engage the local communities served by the East Suffolk Line, we wanted to mark the Queens 90th birthday but also celebrate the reprieve of the line and support the work done by the community at Beccles and station adopters at Halesworth. With so many events being held across the country for the Queen we felt ours needed to go beyond just a cake and a photo opportunity, remind people how close the line once came to closure and show what an important transport artery it is today and find a fun way of promoting community rail. We were all exhausted at the end but the many happy smiling faces of all generations, the fun and laughter, sense of community spirit and the legacy of memories and lots of genuine positive media coverage meant it was worth all the effort.

Third:

Sarah Reeves, Three Rivers CRP for Gillingham Station POP-UP Birthday Event

Friends of Gillingham Station hosted a successful POP-UP Birthday event at Gillingham Station to mark the 90th birthday of HM The Queen and also the 160th year of the founding of the Salisbury to Yeovil Railway Line.

The Mayor of Gillingham opened the event which attracted hundreds of people.

The programme of events included music from Gillingham Imperial Silver Band, a Mini pop-up Museum, model train display, steam road engine, plant stalls, games for all and complimentary refreshments and celebratory birthday cake.



Overall Winner Award

Sponsored by ACoRP

Awarded to: Great Western Railway, with their CRPs and all volunteers!

This year's overall winners have demonstrated strong ongoing commitment to the spirit of Community Rail, clearly showing what sustained partnership working can achieve in this sector!

The collaboration between Great Western Railway, its CRPs and volunteers has achieved so much: from imaginative projects engaging young people; through to

innovative art schemes and a substantial station redevelopment.

By maximising the local knowledge of its partnerships in planning the communications campaign for modernising the Great Western Route and by hosting its annual community rail conference in Yeovil (described by the DfT as "the gold standard for others to aspire to"), Great Western Railway, has demonstrated how to reap the full benefits of the creativity and knowledge generated through effective partnership working.





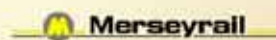
Photo competition 'The Essence of Community Rail'

Sponsored by Grand Central Railway

This category was voted for on the night by all guests and winners will be displayed on our website after 3rd October www.acorp.uk.com

**We would like to express our sincere
gratitude to all the sponsors of the
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**Without them this project and event
could not exist**



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