



# NORTHERN

## Community Rail Report 2021-22



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# Welcome

I'm sure everyone is relieved that we can all get back to actively supporting our communities and continuing to deliver the social and economic benefits of one of the country's biggest and most diverse rail networks.

Although of course, the impact of the pandemic continues to affect many of us personally and, from the perspective of running trains, it will be some time before we recover from the impact on our training programmes.

I wrote last year that it is essential we all support the government's roadmap to recovery and that message remains very much front of mind going forward.

Clearly the last two years haven't been straightforward but at Northern we remain focused on operating the day-to-day service, whilst also delivering our transformation plans, and laying foundations for the future.

Our commitment to having a positive impact for the north is fundamental and, working with Atkins, we've undertaken research to understand our true socio-economic value to the region.

The research is helping shape our business planning process and decision making to ensure we prioritise those things that will have the biggest impact for the communities we serve.

We are going to be talking a lot more about this in the future and communicating the value and impact our business activities bring to the north.

The last 12 months have once again shone a light on the importance of community-based work across the northern region. It is always pleasing to see both the volume and breadth of initiatives taking place. From activity at stations to ground-breaking projects on and off the immediate network, there has been lots achieved and as this report demonstrates local engagement and impact has continued at pace.

Despite challenging circumstances, community work on the Northern network has continued to positively affect so many groups and members of our society, supported economic recovery and further social inclusion for all. That is a real credit to everyone.

I'm really pleased that there are a growing number of examples of our business working with community groups to shape ideas that benefit Northern's customers and localities.

On behalf of the Northern team, thank you to all our community partners for your dedication and commitment – you are having a positive impact across the north.

We look forward to continuing to work with you all to support the region's economic recovery and a greener, more sustainable future.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Donovan".

**Nick Donovan**  
managing director



# Foreword

I'm delighted to see so many varied and positive examples of the ways in which Northern and our partners have continued to support local communities, despite the unprecedented impact that the pandemic has had on individuals, colleagues and of course our services and training programmes.

The case studies featured within this report are truly inspiring and a testament to all our colleagues and partners.

I'm very pleased to recognise the achievements of several Northern colleagues over the year. In particular, Barry Graham and Marie Addison who were both awarded MBEs by the Queen for their services to the rail industry and local communities. Northern was also shortlisted for a series of awards in 2021 in recognition of its initiatives to improve diversity and inclusion within Northern and the industry.

The economic and social value that Northern brings to the region demonstrates the hugely significant role that this organisation has in supporting economic recovery and driving sustainable economic growth.

We will continue to prioritise our community-based work and partnerships and to celebrate and promote the excellent and inspiring ways that you add positive value to our customers, colleagues and communities.

**Robin Gisby**  
chair



# Executive summary

Welcome to this year's community report, our annual showcase of the wide range of projects undertaken by Northern and our partners to strengthen links with the communities we serve, support those who are often most isolated or vulnerable and build a more sustainable future.

COVID may still have been with us but that didn't stop a whole range of inspiring and engaging community-based activity and in this report you can read about a number of the projects, the impact they had on local communities and many exciting plans for the future. There are, as always so many examples of how volunteer and partner work on our network are furthering the aims and objectives of the Community Rail Development Strategy.

Our annual community rail conference remained virtual this year (we're hoping to be back in person in 2022) and interactive sessions covered a variety of themes including reducing hate crime and raising awareness of unwanted sexual behaviour. Delegates talked and shared stories about supporting wildlife in station habitats, community food planting and engaging young people. Despite being behind a screen it was again a fantastic day with lots of memorable contributions.

Throughout the year we profiled community groups from across the network on our social media channels and most recently established a Facebook page dedicated to station adoption where groups are sharing hints and tips on a daily basis.

We're really pleased that our early careers programme continues to grow, welcoming more young people into Northern and the industry. We believe we offer a unique experience with our apprentices and year in industry placements delivering their own community rail projects. This gives them the opportunity to work as a team, problem solving and experiencing areas of the business outside of their placement while also delivering positive impact for customers and local communities.

It was fantastic to see external recognition for community engagement in the region this year too. Congratulations to Friends of Buxton and Mytholmroyd Station Partnership who both received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of their work to enhance and support their local communities.

As we reflect on another year of great work and contribution we have also been developing our plans for the future - thank you to everyone who has contributed to those discussions.

We are committed to having a positive impact for the people and communities of the north of England in all that we do. As we look to be emerging from the pandemic, and the wider challenges facing our society around the cost of living and drive towards net zero, our partnerships with community organisations are more important than ever and we look forward to continuing to work with you all.



**Carolyn Watson**  
director of stakeholder  
and community engagement



# 1. Our community case studies



# Blaydon

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions 2021 was a busy year for the Blaydon Station Adopters. A local group donated three planters which were restored and hung on the fence by the entrance adding colour for passengers and passers-by.

Thanks to Northern, funding was found to complete the final two panels of the mural on the station.

Sarah Jarman, a local artist was commissioned to complete the display by adding a verse from the famous "Blaydon Races" song and also silhouettes of the horses throughout the history of the races. The completed mural was well received on social media.

The summer months saw the first steps to station twinning. The Station Adopters approached Community Rail Cumbria who visited Blaydon for the initial discussions

which have since led to Blaydon twinning with Workington on the west coast, where the groups share their skills, knowledge and expertise.

Over the years, supporters in the area have knitted various items which are hung on the fence to decorate the station. In November, it is poppies for Remembrance Sunday, then the station is decorated for Christmas in a similar way. Afterwards the knitted items are dried out and recycled for the following year.

On a cold day in December the station adopters were out with specially printed notices which were made into a welcome pack and given to the owners of new houses recently built within walking distance of the station. Hopefully this will lead to an increase in passenger numbers.



WE FLEW ACROSS THE CHAIN BRIDGE REET INTO BLAYDON TOON,  
THE BELLMAN HE WAS CALLIN' THERE THEY CALL HIM JACKY BROWN,  
AW SAW HIM TALKIN' TO SUM CHEPS, AN THEM HE WAS PURSUADIN',  
TO GAN AN' SEE GEORDY RIDLEY'S CONCERT IN THE MECHANICS' HALL AT BLAYDON.

# Wylam

Wylam station in Northumberland is one of the oldest stations in the UK. It stands on the Tyne Valley line which runs from Newcastle to Carlisle.

Recently, the station has been adopted by the Wylam Rainbows, Brownies and Guides and a new sign has been placed in the entrance to the station which reads,

*“Our Station Adopters, Wylam Rainbows, Brownies and Guides – Welcome you to Wylam.”*

To mark the adoption, Wylam Brownies and Guides held a poster competition to show the attractions of Wylam village. Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership (TVCRP) arranged for the winning entries to be mounted on foamex boards and placed in the community noticeboards, one on each platform.

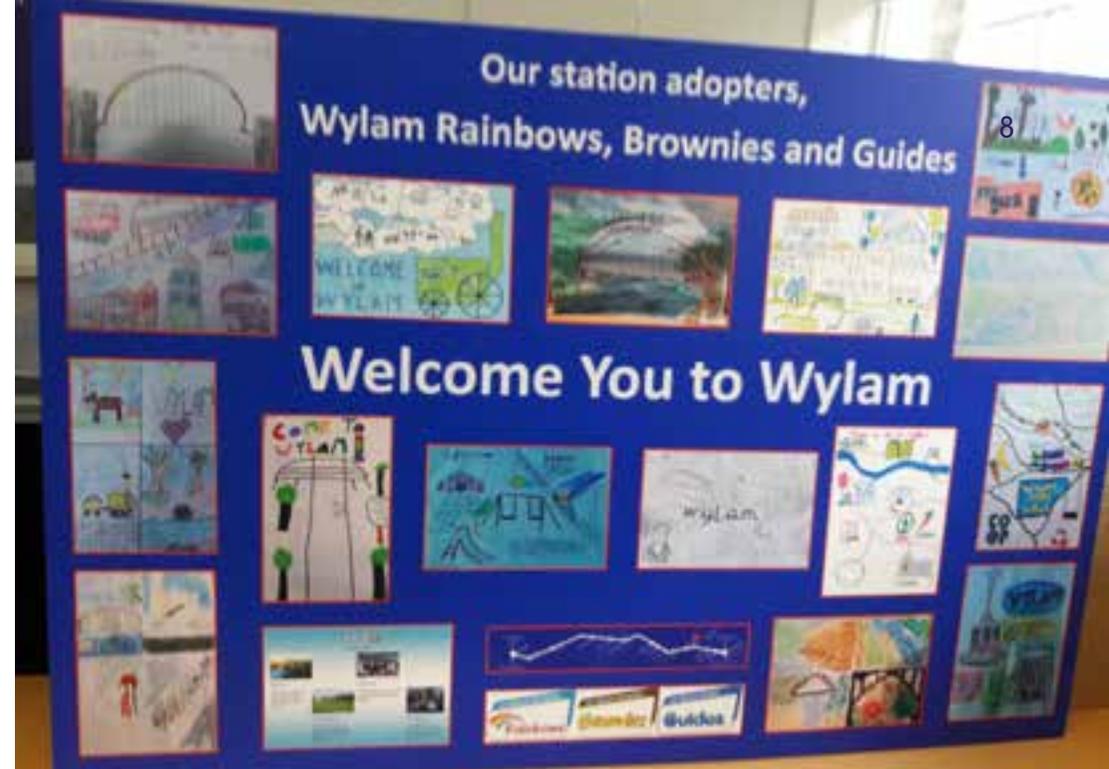
At a ceremony on Tuesday 21 September, Hebe and Erin unveiled their winning entries and were presented with their prizes by Marie Addison, Northern’s Regional Community and Sustainability Manager (North East), who said “It is nice the girls’ work will be seen by everyone on the train.”

Colin Percy for Wylam Parish Council said he fully endorsed the winning entries and that the posters would be further displayed in the village and eventually will be placed in the library or the railway museum which are housed in the same building.

Clare Overton, Brownies Leader, helped with the unveiling ceremony and said, *“In their Rainbow, Brownie and Guide promises, our young members promise to ‘serve their community’, being station adopters is a brilliant way for the girls to keep their promise.”*

Hebe and Erin, who created the winning entries explained that the posters showed their favourite things to do in Wylam and give visitors coming off the train ideas on what to see and where to go

Our thanks go to Sam Todd and Gayna Duckworth for judging the posters.



# Chester-Le-Street

The Friends of Chester-le-Street Railway Station formed in 2019, in part due to the number of suicides that had taken place, and to further partnership work around this important issue. Unfortunately, this area had become a suicide hot spot for young people, and there were fears incidents would increase.

Only a small number of trains stop at the station, with most passing through at more than 90 mph. The Chair of the Group is Derek Briggs, a local resident, and Area Action Partnership Board Member, supported by Allyson Rose, Community Project/Development Officer from the AAP Board Member. The aim was to work in partnership, with residents and local organisations, to try and improve trackside safety and awareness and offer community support to those at risk.

The group have initiated several projects, including planting and removal of overgrown vegetation, painting of fences, environmental improvement and working with partners around the installation of cameras and other preventative equipment with a focus on making the station and local area safer.

Working with Park View School to undertake an art project, murals have been installed on an external wall of the station. All artwork underpins the theme of supporting good mental health. We talked with the pupils and found out they had lots of problems themselves like being bullied, stress, depression and mental health issues. We asked them to do bright colours and put the messages into the painting about seeking help and talking but it was left to them what they painted.

They came back with eight pictures which were incredibly unique. It was fantastic to see various artistic styles used with each painting being individual and having its own personal meaning.

The artwork was unveiled and now the station entrance and car park present a bright and welcoming environment that represents the community support that is available to all.

Since the installation of the artwork, incidents have drastically reduced, and we hope that the murals continue to offer messages of hope and support. The group are really proud of this project, and it is a talking point in the town.

Currently, we are in discussion with the Hermitage Academy regarding a further artwork installation – this work is on-going!



# Driffield

Driffield in Bloom has been an adopter of Driffield station for over 15 years and has received support and funding from Northern enabling the station to become a more colourful and welcoming place to visit.

Hayracks and barrel planters have been installed on both platforms and platform borders have been planted with shrubs and perennials.

The local ecosystem has been enhanced with the introduction of bee and bug hotels and plans are in place to install bird boxes in the station garden.

In the old station yard, old sheds have been cleared and a gravel garden and community herb bed introduced with specifically commissioned railway-style serpent benches allowing for a restful place to sit and relax.

The team's latest project is a mini-orchard with apple, plum, pear and cherry trees, as well as rhubarb, raspberry canes, blackcurrant, redcurrant and gooseberry bushes, and a bed of strawberry plants.

Many comments have been made about how the station is now a much nicer place to visit and has a safer feel as it is looked after and cared for.

Rail staff have said that incidences of vandalism such as graffiti and broken windows have declined in the last few years due to the environment that has been created.

The group have been supported by students from Kings Mill Special School who visit once a week and get their hands dirty through flower planting and garden maintenance. Two large raised planters have been

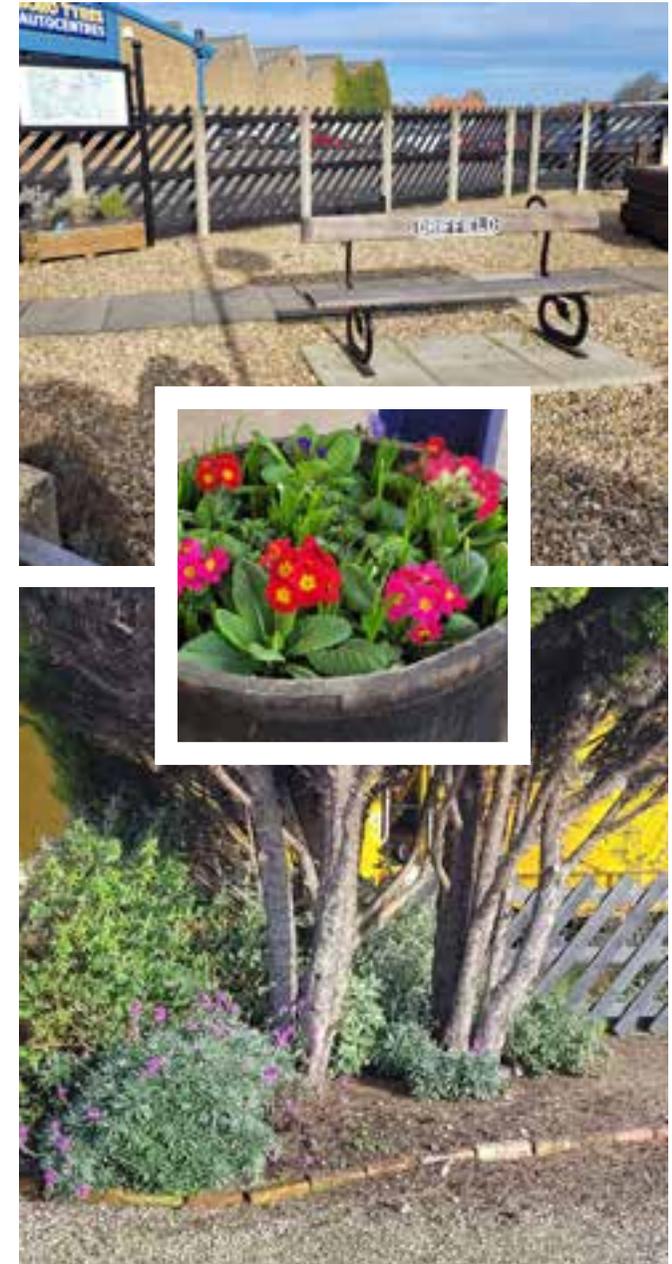
purchased to enable less-mobile and sight-impaired students to sow seeds and tend salad crops.

The Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership support and help fund the station work and Secretary Rachel Osborne says:

*"We love what Driffield in Bloom are doing with young people as it is exactly the sort of thing Northern want Community Rail Groups and Station Adopters to do and it is a good example for other Station Adoption Groups on the line as to what they could do too."*

She went on to say, *"We get loads of positive comments from rail staff and passengers about Driffield station gardens and I myself particularly enjoyed coming to see the young people working and seeing the pleasure that they got from helping."*

Amy Baron, Learning Support Assistant at Kings Mill School said: *"Working with Driffield in Bloom has helped our students tremendously. Driffield in Bloom not only provided our students with the opportunity to learn basic gardening skills, but also helped them to build their social skills and prepared them for working life through working with a mixed demographic of people and learning to follow instructions. Driffield in Bloom allowed our students to be part of a scheme which the whole community can benefit from."*



# Garforth

Incredible Edible aims to create kind, confident and connected communities through the power of food. We put in place planters full of fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs in public places for people to take for free.

Incredible Edible Garforth started working with Northern during 2020, at the height of the Coronavirus pandemic. We initially placed an edible bed on the platform at Garforth station. This was hugely successful – in fact, a local business at the train station, the Station House Café, harvested some courgettes to cook with!

Due to the success of the first bed, we quickly planned further rollouts thanks to seed corn funding from Northern.

We have placed boxes of herbs at East Garforth train station and placed further beds at Bramley and New Pudsey stations.

The impact of this activity has been huge, and we are extremely grateful for Northern's support. Many communities across Leeds now have access to fresh, abundant, and healthy food. Furthermore, individuals can now see where their food comes from as we start to create edible landscapes.

Future beds are planned at Castleford and Kirkstall Forge stations over the next few months before we look to expand further. The project aligns with the Health & Wellbeing and Sustainability strategies of several organisations and the aims of local authorities and transport executives, and provides a number of positive outcomes for community engagement.



# Mytholmroyd

Like all 'Friends of...' the year proved to be different and challenging but at the same time full of achievement.

The station partnership maintained good group communication through regular virtual meetings and one to one conversations, sharing ideas and future initiatives and keeping everyone's morale as high as possible.

The large areas of station embankments, looked after by our gardening team have stood up extremely well to the reduced attention unfortunately available. This was due, in part to the visit in spring from twenty volunteers from Northern who helped cut back, tidy and maintain the grounds.

All the volunteers enjoyed the experience as much as the station partnership and returned in April 2022 to witness the rising of hundreds of spring bulbs that were planted as well as inspecting the 'Heath Robinson' style compost bins, which have been made from discarded palettes and

have proved most effective. The partnership look forward to welcoming more volunteers and have an ever growing list of jobs and tasks to be done.

Engagement with young people continued and the partnership was delighted to co-ordinate an artwork project detailing **'Transport through the Ages' from feet to wheels'**.

Burnley Road School responded to the pictorial challenge and year 5 pupils produced some fantastic and informative pieces that have been used to create new posters displayed at the station.

Luckily the completed artwork coincided with a meeting of Community Rail Network here in Mytholmroyd where the posters were unveiled alongside the 'Go Green – Go Train' campaign by the local mayor.

The highlight of the year however came as the partnership was recognised for 15+ years of fantastic community contribution as we were awarded the 'Queen's Award for Voluntary Service' – the country's highest volunteering accolade.

Mayor Jane Hoyle read out the news as members gathered in the station car park to be formally presented with the citation by Lord-Lieutenant Ed Anderson. Everyone was both surprised, delighted and extremely proud.

Geoff Mitchell accepted the certificate. His answering speech reflected the joy and pleasure of the group whose dedication, and hard work in all weathers is well known. He added voluntary work is not only 'do-gooding' or hard work, it is greatly satisfying. The main benefit is friendship, having met as strangers 15 years ago.



# Knutsford

On the Mid Cheshire line, a good cause, 'Wrap Up Knutsford', led by Gemma Jackson a local Housing Officer utilised Knutsford's waiting shelter to provide coats and jackets for children whose families cannot afford them.

A call for help was put out on social media channels in search for a venue to hold a pop-up shop where warm coats could be donated and given out for those in need during the winter of 2021.

Sarah Morgan, the Community Rail officer for Mid Cheshire, suggested the platform shelter at Knutsford station and Northern were delighted to accommodate the pop up shop.

With the station located centrally and with good parking for donations and collections, this was an ideal venue for this type of initiative and was a great opportunity to demonstrate how railway partners can come together to bring benefit to local communities.

Posters were printed to promote the pop-up shop and posts put out on the rail partnership's social media channels and media coverage secured from The Knutsford Guardian, the local newspaper.

In December, three dates were agreed for the pop-up shop to be open and through the local charity shop and the British Red Cross coat hangers for the display of the coats were kindly provided.

*Gemma said: "I had one aim, and that is to ensure no child in Knutsford goes cold over the winter.*

*"I began the scheme last year, with my aim to get people in the community to donate coats, and for me to then distribute them to families who cannot afford coats for their child.*

*"You can come and collect a coat, and there will be no questions asked for anyone coming to collect a coat. We simply want to provide them for people and that's it.*

*"Providing coats for the local community also means these coats stop going into landfill and have a home.*

*"I'm really pleased I can help people who are struggling, through no fault of their own.*

*"I'm a believer in the idea of if we all helped out a little bit then society would be a much better place."*

Wrap up Knutsford received more than 250 donations of coats and jackets.



# Alderley Edge

Alderley Edge Station Volunteer Group set up a book exchange in the Alderley Edge waiting room in November 2021.

Anyone can take a book, swap a book or leave a book at the exchange. Second hand books can be reused time and again for everyone's enjoyment. A train journey can be a great time to sit back, relax and read a book.

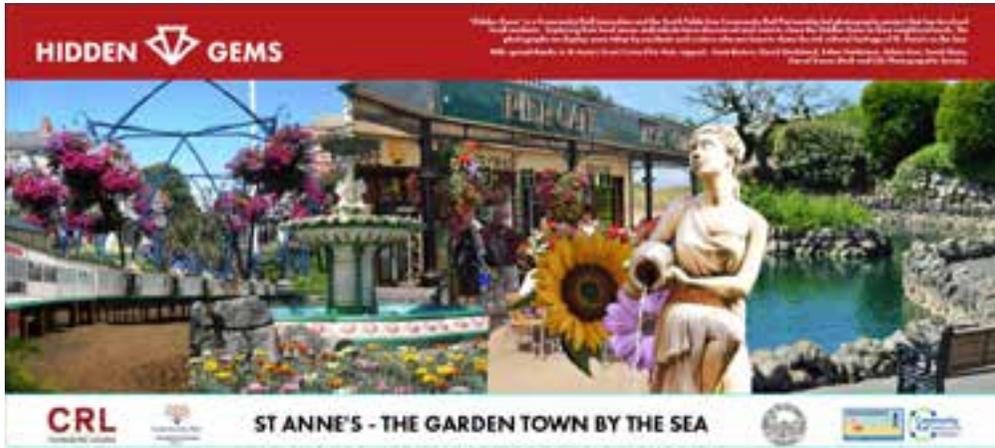
Station group volunteer Kelvin Briggs commented, *"Reading on a train can be a great way of passing the journey time. A great alternative to scrolling your phone! Simply pick up a book at the station and bring it back when you have finished reading it. It's brought people from the local community closer to us and the railway. The turnover of books is high and we have added a second new bookcase to cope with demand. A local gentleman liked the idea so much he paid for the second bookcase. We have regular rail travellers browsing the bookcases and telling us how much they enjoy choosing a new book."*

There are books for both adults and children along with a selection of magazines. Children from The Ryleys School in Alderley Edge helped coordinate the project and local people including the local MP Esther McVey donated books.

Tatton MP Esther McVey said, *"I was pleased to visit Alderley Edge station and see the innovative use the waiting room has been put to. It is also great to see the station as a whole, being cared for and that is a huge credit to the hardworking Alderley Edge Station Volunteer Group."*



# St Anne's



The Hidden Gems project was developed across several Lancashire stations through the Community Rail Partnerships (CRP).

At St Anne's station, Hidden Gems was linked to the council's desire to brighten up the rail gateway into the town using images created by local community groups and by identifying the 'gems' they associated with this important tourist destination.

Restrictions caused by the pandemic made it impossible to work with schools and community groups as originally envisaged, so photographic contributions were sought through personal connections and social media. The scheme was extremely well received, and many more entries were submitted than could be used.

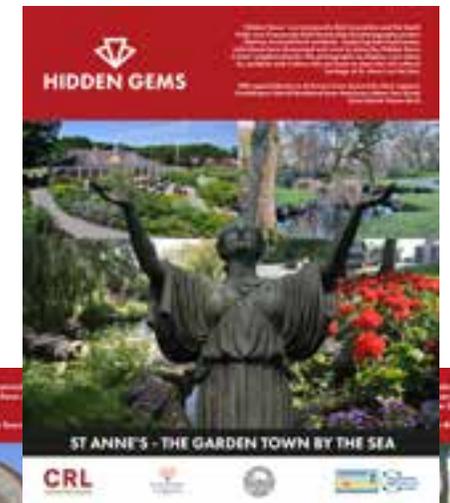
The hidden gem unveiling at St Anne's came at just the right time as restrictions eased and people were being encouraged to use public transport again and enjoy 'staycations'.

The three panels highlight many of the town's features putting St Anne's at the forefront of the visitor economy.

"The artwork looks stunning!" commented one visitor as she stepped off the train.

In unveiling the hidden gems boards the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the town council, Gavin and Karen Harrison commented on how pleased they were that more artwork was appearing in and around the town.

There are plans for the Hidden Gems project to be extended to other stations along the South Fylde line. This will allow community groups and schools to identify and photograph the hidden gems in their locality.



# Todmorden and Walsden

First impressions count for the communities of Todmorden and Walsden and after producing many beautiful station floral displays over the years, those impressions spread further afield in 2021.

The Station Adoption team were invited to showcase their green fingers at the well known Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Cheshire Flower Show in Tatton and realising the potential for the positive promotion of their towns the team grabbed their trowels and watering cans and took the Todmorden and Walsden station displays on tour.

The theme for the RHS garden was inspired by romantic walks through the town's woodland on the way to the spectacular landmark at Stoodley Pike.

A local foundry, Weir Minerals, made a cast iron replica of the pike, dry- stone walls were built, and the planting choice was selected from the Victorian Language of Flowers.

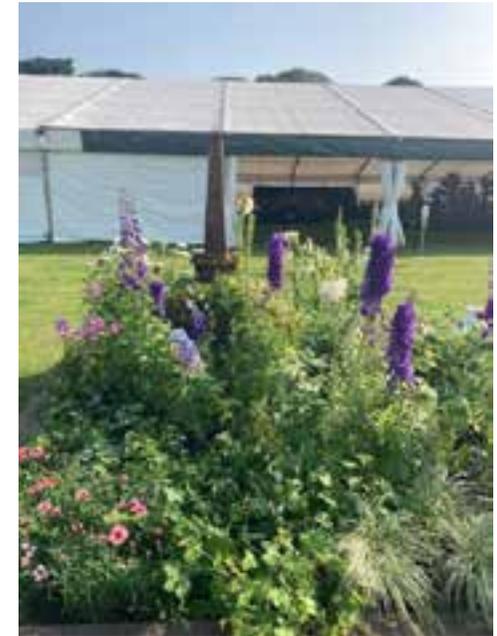
Volunteers brilliantly achieved a 'bronze' award at Tatton before successfully reinstating the display at Todmorden with an official opening supported by the town's Mayor.

Northern was delighted to provide financial support for the floral tour.

To accompany the seasonal display the station group also sought to provide a more permanent and all year-round display with the introduction of bright, colourful and attractive platform murals at both stations.

Gaining the funding from the Community Foundation for Calderdale, students from Calderdale College were commissioned to create welcoming signage that highlighted all the great things to do in both Todmorden and Walsden.

Other activities included general maintenance and station presentation as well as modelling a scarecrow on a traditional railway worker as part of the Walsden Scarecrow Festival.



# Workington

In May 2021, after two years in the making, an exhibition was unveiled at Workington station to tell the story of the area's rich industrial past.

Community Rail Cumbria and Workington Focus Group scooped the Creative Station Project and Station Arts award at the Community Rail Awards held at the start of December 2021 for their work on 'The Rails Which Cirled the World' project.

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

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

A total of 17 seven-foot-high panels were unveiled at a launch event in May 2021 with each telling a different part of Workington's 150-year rich steel production history.

Being a Steelworker was a hard and proud job, carried out by a hard and proud community and the 'Rails that Cirled the World' exhibition celebrated that work and helped educate commuters and residents.

Warren Birch, Community Rail Partnership Officer for the Cumbrian Coast line, said:

"We are delighted to receive this prestigious award. We would like to thank Laurence Hilland, who wrote the original project plan, as well as Northern, Direct Rail Services, Cumbria County Council, Workington Transport Heritage Trust, Community Rail Network, Cumbria Railways Association and the Helena Thompson Museum.

"This project would not have been possible without drawing on the rich history of Workington. We are pleased to be able to showcase all the industries that made Workington a world industrial leader and show younger generations the fantastic industrial history of the area."



# Brierfield

Brierfield station is a perfect place for exploring Lancashire's Hill Country. It is ideally located to access places along the Pennine cycleway and a three-minute walk to the Leeds and Liverpool canal.

The Friends of Pendle Stations were delighted when local organisations suggested ideas to brighten up the tired looking cycle shelter at the entrance to the station. It holds a prominent position and it was felt that this would be an inspired way to encourage more people to use the station, improve its ambiance and build on the local community's interest to enhance it. Furthermore, the project helped to curb a growing litter problem.

The project was made possible by the coming together of a host of local partners and organisations, funding from Connecting East Lancashire (a Department for Transport programme) and the buy-in and practical support of Northern and Community Rail Lancashire. The Brierfield Station cycle shelter now showcases local people and local attractions.

The Friends have been pleased to receive lots of positive feedback about the improvements while tidying and tending to the flower displays at the station, something they do each Thursday morning.

More additions have come about too! It wasn't obvious that the station was just a few minutes' walk from the Leeds and Liverpool canal. And now it is clearly signposted. The canal entrance itself has also been improved by Brierfield's Town Council and The Pennine cycleway is now promoted at local stations.

A poster created by Pendle Borough Council is now displayed in the station's 'Connecting Brierfield' poster case, recognising the wide range of groups involved in the transformation of the shelter.

Soon there is to be a guided cycle ride from the station with an organised wave off. The Friends of Group hope this will be the first of many cycle rides from the station and will support the guided walks already taking place from the station organised by the Lancashire Rail Ramblers.



# Braystones and Nethertown

Station adopters Skills 4 You based in Cleator Moor provide a safe environment to support individuals either returning to work or entering the workplace for the first time. Skills 4 You offers practical skills development with a choice of activities on offer together with support and advice on employment needs.

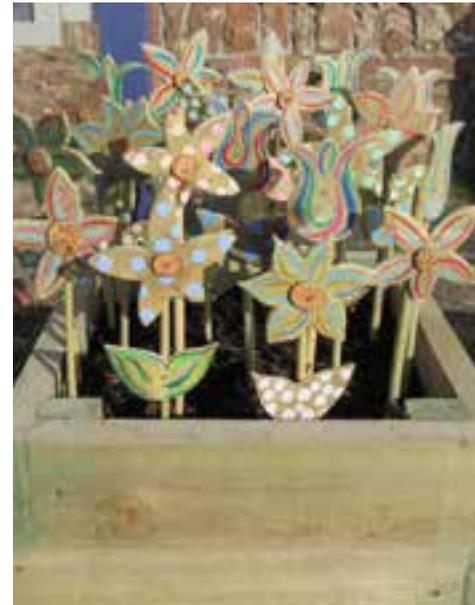
Skills 4 You took on the adoption of Braystones and Nethertown stations back in 2019. The pandemic delayed some of their initial aspirations but a great deal of work has been taking place in the background on several ambitious projects that will transform these sometimes-forgotten stations into much more vibrant and welcoming places.

Staff and learners from Skills 4 You have also been working tirelessly on a wonderful wooden train with carriage and hand painted bespoke flowers and planters that will bring a bright new focus to Braystones and Nethertown stations. Funding was provided through Northern's Station Adoption Fund.

Warren Birch, Cumbria Coast CRP Officer said, *"It was wonderful to see the individuals from Skills 4 You using these opportunities to further develop both themselves and these unique railway stations"*

Martin Keating Community and Sustainability Manager, commented, "Northern is extremely lucky to have station volunteers such as Skills 4 You, who are helping to transform Braystones and Nethertown. We are also proud to support community based organisations who are helping to transform the lives of those within their locale.

If you are travelling along the Cumbrian Coast, please take the opportunity to visit these stations and appreciate the work done by Skills 4 You.



# Bentham line development

In August 2021, following a detailed invitation to tender process, the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership (LMCRP) commissioned consultants Stantec and Allan Rail to undertake the first major study of the Bentham line in well over a decade.

The LMCRP was successful in obtaining substantial grants from Northern's Seed-Corn Fund and the Department for Transport's Community Rail Development Fund, to be able to undertake the study, as well as contributing some of their own funds.

The study is the 'first of its kind' to be led by a community rail partnership, following the strong community-based ideas included in the Government's Community Rail Strategy (2018) and in the 'Williams-Shapps Review of Rail' white paper (2021).

It has been purposely undertaken at this time, as the pandemic subsides and we begin the transition to the new over-arching body for rail, 'Great British Railways', which is to have its headquarters away from London and have a regional supporting structure.

A major element feeding into the study has been the public consultation conducted across all the parishes along the Bentham line, with many contributions coming from beyond our route. In total, there were over 500 public responses and detailed consultation feedback to assess from stakeholders from rail, government, tourism, education and health sectors.

The LMCRP was delighted to see so many groups and individuals contribute positively towards the future of the line.

The LMCRP received a first draft of the extensive final 200-page report in February 2022 which presents short, medium and long-term measures which could benefit and develop the full potential of the line over the next 20 years.

Once the final documents have been prepared and a presentation of the findings given to the CRP's directors and management group, in April 2022, we will then, alongside all those with a vested interest in the Bentham line, begin the challenges of bringing to fruition the extensive ideas contained in the report and we look forward to providing further updates.

## 2. Northern and partner initiatives



# Community Rail Network

**Community Rail Network (CRN)** is one of Northern's key partners in supporting community rail partnerships and station groups, and we provide much-valued core funding to allow its team to provide guidance to community groups in the north.

## Support and development

CRN's support and development team provided more than 250 instances of support to Northern CRPs and groups, in areas including accessing funding, drawing up development plans, accreditation, progressing youth engagement, and promoting sustainable and integrated travel. The team also offered specialist assistance related to station building projects, community engagement, marketing and public relations, governance, and insurance.

### CRN supported many major projects in 2021, including:

- Mytholmroyd Station Partnership on their station building project and Tyne Valley CRP on the redevelopment of the station buildings at [Haltwhistle](#).
- Working with the Bishop line CRP to extend the platform at Bishop Auckland Station to connect with the Weardale Railway,
- Offering advice to the Leeds-Morecambe CRP on its [study](#) to establish a long-term vision for the future development of the Bentham line.



Throughout the year, we also supported the development of new CRPs, for the Calder Valley and, Northumberland line, the Coalfields area in South Yorkshire, and routes between Liverpool and Manchester.

## Funding support

CRN supported 16 Northern projects via its Community Rail Development Fund, including Community Rail Lancashire's Fantastic Recycled Plastic and Explore Lancashire by Rail projects, and new mini-timetables and website upgrades for Esk Valley CRP.

During the same period, 19 Northern projects received support from the CRN Small Grants Fund, including rail recovery projects by Mid-Cheshire and Tyne Valley CRPs,

a 180th anniversary publication by the Friends of Holme Chapel Station, new planters at Parbold and Sandbach stations, and new murals at Brighthouse station.

Northern projects also benefitted from a new Integrated Sustainable Transport Fund, including South East Lancashire CRP's work developing a sustainable [rail/bus link](#) to Rivington Country Park.

## Campaigns and events

We held our inaugural [Community Rail Week](#) in October 2021, using the tagline 'Go Green By Train' to promote sustainable travel in the run up to COP26. The launch event took place at Manchester Piccadilly, and a host of other Northern activities took place across the week, including artwork unveiling at Mytholmroyd, a special meeting of the Community Rail Education Network in Newcastle, and station displays by Esk Valley CRP and the Penistone line CRP. #CommunityRailWeek reached more than 3million users on social media, and you can view a video of the week's highlights [here](#).

CRN helped promote the tourism and heritage offer of Northern CRPs and station groups by encouraging them to get involved in its 'Days Out by Rail' campaign.

Many Northern groups took advantage of a digital toolkit to promote their tourism offer, and the campaign's



social media posts were seen by 400,000 users, with Transport for the North describing the content as “just the sort of material that will help us bring the rail offer alive in the north!”

To support social inclusion and community engagement, CRN worked with partners on a range of schemes across the year, including liaising with British Transport Police in the North West on their campaign on unwanted sexual behaviour, working with the Community Rail Education Network on their ‘Backtrack’ anti-trespass project, and supporting Northern’s links with the English Football League Trust and National Citizenship Service.

The 2021 [Community Rail Awards](#) saw Northern wins for the Friends of Buxton Station, Community Rail Lancashire, South East Lancashire CRP, and Community Rail Cumbria, with their projects promoted as best practice across the movement. In other events, 123 Northern attendees took part in the first-ever virtual

Community Rail Conference, and more than 100 community rail staff and volunteers attended training courses and webinars in areas including volunteer recruitment, project management, promoting rail’s green credentials, and engaging communities through storytelling and creative projects.

## Reports and consultations

Community Rail Network produced six regional/national briefings showcasing the value of community rail across Britain. The [Northern report](#) highlighted the region’s 3,000 volunteers, who give 140,000 hours, worth £11.7m per year, and the work of Tyne Valley CRP, Community Rail Lancashire, Friends of Buxton Station, and Action Stations Bingley and Crossflatts.

A series of three sustainability-related reports on [modal shift](#), [sustainable development](#), and [biodiversity](#) showcased the impact community rail partnerships and groups are having across these increasingly important areas. They featured Northern case studies including the ‘Buzzing

Stations’ project coordinated by High Peak and Hope Valley CRP, and Community Rail Cumbria’s ‘Rail Journey to Recovery’ scheme. The team also produced Northern-sponsored guidance on how to take an [outcomes-based approach](#) to community projects, featuring Northern examples from Community Rail Lancashire, The Friends of Hunmanby Station, and the Friends of Rose Hill Station.

Community Rail Network continued to advocate for community rail with rail and government partners, as the industry transitions to Great British Railways as a result of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail.



# Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) – education report

It has been another great year for the Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) Education Team, who were delighted to receive several awards at the 2021 Community Rail Awards in December.



A first place for **100 Women 100 Journeys** in the Best Community Engagement project, second for Bonded together with a Prayer Bead in the Involving Diverse Groups category and a third for Along the line in the Community Creative Projects and Station Arts category.

In addition to delivering projects which bring our diverse communities to the railway, the team has engaged with over 1500 primary and secondary school pupils both in school settings and on train trips.

Ten schools on the Bradford to Leeds via New Pudsey line, which has seen a spike in trespassing have been engaged with. Two of these schools have also adopted New Pudsey and Bramley stations. In addition, Burscough junction has been adopted by a school in the

west. Projects have also taken place with Rufford C of E and Padiham Green C of E Primary schools.

Blackburn and Nelson and Colne colleges have also engaged with CRL to enthuse young people into careers in the rail industry.

CRL has continued to support Northern's Business apprentices, who in 2021 have been working on improving the public image of Burnley Central as well as attending the trip to Accrington Mosque on World Hijab Day.

## Autism Friendly line (Blackburn to Manchester via the Todmorden Curve)

In order to develop the Autism Friendly line's reach, a series of films have been created to give people the opportunity to look around the station before travelling. These films are being used in rail safety and rail confidence sessions and are proving to be a very effective way of reducing anxiety about rail travel for autistic people and others.

*"I've just watched the Blackburn video, it's really good. I'm not on the spectrum but I would've found the video useful when I first started using the train by myself! The concept's a great idea... having an online video of a station makes perfect sense."* Patrick Southern, Community Rail Network.

In addition, Katie Douglas secured a grant from the Northern Accessibility Fund to develop an interactive 360-degree station environment for Blackburn and Manchester Victoria and is representing CRL at Knowledge Transfer's Rail Innovation Exhibition to speak about her role in the development of 'Serious Games' (virtual reality apps) that are at the final stages of testing.

## East meets west

This project, led jointly by Karen Bennett and Shahiستا Raja, sees women from the **Stations of Welcome** women's group in East Lancashire linking up with the **Neesie** Project, based in Bradford. The two groups were brought together to build confidence, create friendships and combat loneliness after the effects of COVID-19.



The group from Bradford visited Accrington and were hosted by Stations of Welcome participants.

Their visit consisted of a trip to the local mosque and a traditional afternoon tea. The women came together quite naturally and found things in common. Before the trip a survey was sent out to everyone about their experiences of train travel and what they hoped to gain from the project. Almost 30% of them highlighted a lack of confidence as the main reason they would not travel by train. This shows how important projects like this can be in helping people to access public transport.

In March, the Accrington group headed to Bradford to visit the Media Museum and eat at the International Restaurant. The project will continue into the summer.

## Community Rail Education Network

The Community Rail Education Network has had another action-packed year, meeting monthly to support each

other and taking part in sessions on diversity and inclusion, social media and railway chaplaincy. Chair, Karen Bennett, has also become a mentor to new education officers from the Community Rail South West's 'Platform' programme.

The Education Network met at Safety Works in Newcastle in October with representatives from Community Rail Network, Cross Country, Northern, Nexus and various CRPs.

In-person meetings will now take place in March, July and November each year with meetings in the months in between taking place virtually.



The network is open to anyone with an interest in education in rail. If you would like to come along online or in-person, please contact Karen - [Karen.bennett.crl@gmail.com](mailto:Karen.bennett.crl@gmail.com).

Community Rail Lancashire is currently upgrading its education website and will feature a dedicated area for the network which will host resources to support officers across the UK with ideas about rail education.

The Education Network was thrilled to get a 1<sup>st</sup> at the Community Rail Awards in December for Best Youth Engagement project for Backtrack. Last summer, officers from across the UK visited stations countrywide to hand out competition sheets.



# English Football League Trust (EFL Trust) NCS Programme

The EFL Trust is the charitable arm of the English Football League (EFL) and is a national charity that uses the power of football to change people's lives. Over 36.6 million people live within ten miles of an EFL Club and the EFL Trust unites the inspirational work delivered across England and Wales by the dedicated network of Football Club Community Organisations associated to these clubs.

The EFL Trust's vision is to create stronger, healthier, more active communities.

Annually the network engages with over 880,000 people, using the power of football to improve health and wellbeing, reduce loneliness, raise aspirations, realise potential and build stronger, more cohesive communities, through a combination of nationally recognised programmes such as National Citizen Service (NCS), Traineeships, Kickstart and 'Fit Fans', as well as regional specific programmes supporting local areas of need.

We have successfully partnered with Northern Trains for several years, which has included support of our NCS Programme Delivery across the Yorkshire and Humber region. Through this relationship we have developed bespoke activities to engage young people around awareness of rail use, issues including trespassing and unwanted sexual behaviour and created community projects to support young people increase their employability aspirations and have greater understanding of their community.

Northern's commitment to the EFL Trust has strengthened year on year and we hope to have further community challenges, social action projects and industry

workshops, engaging more young people in future NCS programmes over the coming months and years.

The opportunity offered to our delivery partners and the young people which they engage with through the partnership with Northern has added great value to our network and their NCS programmes.

As well as the benefits mentioned above, we have also been able to educate young people on eliminating the barriers to travel, understanding of costs and use of tickets plus operating routes and timetables. This has seen the confidence in the young people increase and helped develop them as people and offered greater options to them going forward in their lives.

One standout highlight of the work that has been developed with Northern and the NCS programme was during the repurposed summer of 2020 that was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. The programme was renamed as Keep Doing Good (KDG). Bradford City FC worked with Northern to produce a mural which was backed by the Local Authority to be placed in 4 places across Bradford including 3 at local rail stations.



## The footfall through these stations is as follows

Shipley = 1.7 m

Bradford Interchange = 2.6 m

Bradford Forster Square = 1.9m

**Total = 6.2 million passenger journeys**



# Tackling rough sleeping on rail

The rail industry is working together to support a route out of homelessness for every rough sleeper on the UK rail network. We have a key role to play in safeguarding communities and helping to put an end to rough sleeping for good.



At Northern we've been proud to be working in partnership with colleagues from Network Rail and the charity Shelter on a pilot scheme to support homeless people who have gravitated towards the railway network.

The project covers Birmingham New Street and Manchester Piccadilly stations with Northern's Manchester Victoria and Oxford Road as satellite stations.

Outreach workers trained in intervention worked with our station teams and Travel Safe Officers to identify and approach people who frequented the station areas to offer practical support such as clothing, food and access to accommodation services. There was a specific mental health team and medical team available for counselling and health services.

Our station teams commented that until this point they didn't know who to call to make an intervention and some mentioned that they did not have the confidence to do so. They were supplied with direct access numbers to call to get support to individuals quickly and efficiently.

The pilot has proved successful in giving colleagues more confidence in identifying those who may be homeless and getting the support they need.

In the last year alone, rail staff at Manchester stations have made 145 referrals of vulnerable people and support has been given in helping these individuals to obtain IDs, set up bank accounts, access benefits, register with GPs, have their mental health assessed and receive essential care for substance abuse.

Individuals have also been provided with help and guidance in applying for and becoming settled in temporary and permanent accommodation.

We are now applying the learnings to our wider network, working with industry partners and local teams so we can help protect those who are vulnerable and support everyone's route out of homelessness.

# UK Parliament's Education and Engagement Outreach Office for Yorkshire and Humberside

For the past two years the UK Parliament's Education and Engagement Outreach Office for Yorkshire and Humberside, has enjoyed working collaboratively with Northern to help the young people of Yorkshire and Humberside get their voices heard on issues that matter to them.



Together we have facilitated events with community groups and colleges across the East Region, engaging with over 450 individuals including groups from the National Citizens Service, English Football League and the Rugby Football league.

The UK Parliament sessions aim to help communities gain a fuller understanding of their democratic systems and look into the working processes of Parliament, the House of Commons, House of Lords, and the government.

Holly Lynch MP and Robbie Moore MP joined sessions to engage with students from Keighley College and the Halifax Station Partnership (Calderdale College) taking questions from the young people and explaining to them the issues they were focussing on at the moment within their constituencies.

We were able to invite Hilary Benn MP to join Northern's diversity and inclusion staff during a session to upskill them as to how they can encourage young people to get involved with their local communities.

Working with Northern has given UK Parliament's Education and Engagement Outreach Office for Yorkshire and Humberside an opportunity to reach new groups of disengaged individuals that they had not come into contact before and has allowed them to cascade exciting opportunities such as asking young people in the north to partake in the Lords' Select Committee Inquiry on Youth Unemployment. This gave them direct access to engaging with Parliament through a simple survey.

UK Parliament's Education and Engagement Outreach Office for Yorkshire and Humberside are thrilled that the valuable sessions we led across the East Region led to the very first youth consultation on a major rail infrastructure project in the north which was a great success. This enabled young people to have a direct input into the redevelopment of Halifax station.



## How do we create and protect jobs for young people? Committee seeks views

20th May 2022



The House of Lords committee on youth unemployment today publishes its call for evidence. The committee is asking the public to share their views on how to help create and protect jobs for young people, and to assess if they are equipped with the education and skills needed to meet the future market.

# Northern's Year in Industry students join the Bentham line

Over the past four years, Northern has encouraged second-year university degree students from across the north to join their business in management roles for a year's experience of the railway industry.



Not only do they experience a variety of different areas within the business, but they also have the opportunity, on two days per month, to look at the community side of the railway.

This year's cohort, like previous students, joined the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership (LMCRP), based in Bentham, who offered them an insight into the world of community rail partnerships, station adoption and volunteering on the railway.

2020-21's cohort, demonstrated a keen interest in green and sustainable matters and created a series of large station information panels and a portable exhibition around their chosen theme 'Get Nature Back on Track'.

The students worked alongside the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to create panel

designs on nature and conservation, with Northern colleagues on recycling and sustainability in rail and with the Partnership on renewable energy ideas.

All ten large pieces of artwork, which adorn Bentham line stations have something of interest for the widest possible audiences. For children, they are all linked to a short animation, which the students also developed based on 'Ed the Eagle – Eco Warrior'.

Previous Year in Industry students have focused on rail safety education with the development of the 'Sheep on the line' project, encompassing visits to heritage sites and the creation of rail-safety artwork with primary schools in Carnforth and Cononley.

Year in Industry students have also introduced young children to the railway, by creating the characters and poetry for a lavishly illustrated book, 'A Grand Day Out to the Seaside', based on a journey along the Bentham line from Leeds to Morecambe.

Sadly, the pandemic reduced in-person engagement activities but the students adapted and supported the CRP with online and virtual meetings and workshops. They were delighted to finally get together in June 2021 and launch their community projects at Carnforth Heritage Centre.

The fourth group of students are now well on the way with their 'Accessibility for All to the Bentham

line' projects which include a community-orientated accessibility guide, short videos with the benefit of 360-degree footage of the facilities on our Class 158 units and at our stations and impactful improvements to signage, parking, steps and kerbs.

Clearly, this three-way scheme has considerable benefits for all the parties involved. The students have





In acting as the 'glue' and the reassurance which brings the students together on a monthly basis, the LMCRP is greatly appreciative of the students sharing their new ideas, approaches and talents, while they support and develop new initiatives for the line and increase their range of experiences.

Northern is able to share in the talents of these young people too, with a good number of the students returning to the company through their graduate schemes and for employment throughout the business.

Details of the student's projects, their artwork and their films can be found throughout the Bentham line website: [thebenthamline.co.uk](http://thebenthamline.co.uk)

access to opportunities well beyond those normally offered within a business and have regular opportunities to share experiences. They appreciate the breadth of opportunities offered, by looking at the railway world from different angles, and enjoy having the freedom to develop their own projects and consequently their own life skills.



### 3. Community Rail Partnerships



## Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company

**CRP Officer:** Joanne Oakey and  
Katie Chesworth

**CRP Chair:** John Moorhouse

**Website:** [settle-carlisle.co.uk](http://settle-carlisle.co.uk)

### Key highlights of 21-22

- Progressed Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) project with Settle Primary School creating a dedicated classroom, separate to the school, to further this specialist and much needed area of education. This is set to be built by March 2022, and will be open for the local community and schools across our line to promote STEM and rail education, including rail safety and careers in rail.
- Dementia and Other Hidden Disabilities Friendly line. Working in partnership with FoSCL, Northern, Thred, Dementia Forward, North Craven Age UK, The Place and others, our focus is to gather information to help prepare the town of Settle, and the Settle to Carlisle rail line, to become more accessible for those struggling with hidden conditions. Stakeholder conversations have started, and a reference group has been established.
- Dalesbus 830 - Our line covers some incredibly rural areas and through our funding opportunities, we were able to match fund this project with Friends of the Settle Carlisle line (FoSCL) to ensure the summer tourist bus continues to serve our visitors wanting to travel further afield where there is not a rail link, helping provide the last mile connection and adding value to our communities.
- The Staycation Express - Our involvement this year with the Staycation Express was to take telephone bookings to assist people who wished to travel with a bike, had a specific disability or special dietary requirements. We also supported with social media activity and helped people feel more comfortable and confident returning to rail.
- For a second year, we did a virtual advent calendar, working with our local communities who sent in pictures which we shared on Facebook and Twitter. We then placed the pictures in Settle station so they could be seen by passengers and visitors.



**Northern DalesBus 830**  
**Ribblehead Station to**  
**Swaledale via Buttertubs**  
Sundays 16<sup>th</sup> May until 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Dales Bus**

As seen on BBC4 'All Aboard the Country Bus'.  
Take the train to Ribbleshead Station and board the bus for a  
stunning journey over Buttertubs Pass (the route of the  
2014 Tour de France) into Swaledale with opportunities to  
visit Hawes, Muker, Gannarside, Reeth and Richmond.

Great value fares for everyone with discounts for concessionary  
pass holders and families

**Dales Bus** **NORTHERN**

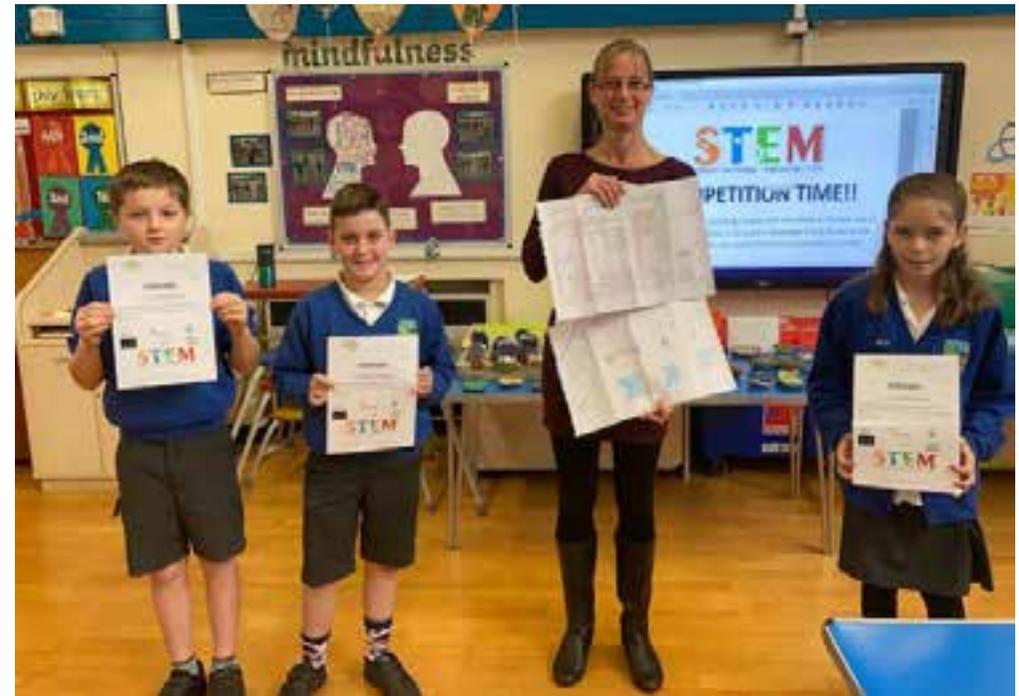
[www.dalesbus.org](http://www.dalesbus.org)



- Dark Skies Evening - We worked in collaboration with Yorkshire Dales National Park, Go Stargazing and The Station Inn at Ribbleshead to co-host a Dark Skies Event as part of the Dark Skies Festival to promote winter travel and the winter offer on the Dales Railcard.
- Ribbleshead Café and visitor center opened again for the summer season, providing refreshments for customers and visitors.

### Next 12 months

- Carrying on our STEM project and engaging with schools along the line to promote rail travel and STEM education.
- Working with Access the Dales to promote their accessibility festival, and work with them to promote accessibility on the line. We're working with them to house a power chair at Settle station.
- Carrying on our Dementia Project, working with the local dementia groups in Settle, Kirkby Stephen, and Appleby to work on making the line more dementia friendly. We plan to have an open day and hold a dementia train with some of the groups, create a survey to understand the barriers people living with dementia face, have a line/station audit, and make changes in accordance with the information found.
- Hold an autism event, working with a school in Bradford, and teaching confidence on the train, rail safety, and STEM education.
- The Year of Appleby project is about engaging with the town on the history of the station. We plan to work with the town's historical society to create history boards for the station, work with the schools and local artists to create some artwork at the station and hold a heritage open day focusing on the history of the railway. We will also be working with the Girl Guides/Scouts to look after the bug hotel and seeking to secure the Appleby Stones and creating information boards.
- Creating a story app with Settle Stories which people can listen to on the train and hear stories from the line.



- We plan to work with Settle Stories to create another Dark Skies event in February 2023.
- Working in collaboration with The Bentham line on cross line promotion, encouraging people to use both lines and to explore both areas.
- Improving the path between Lazonby and Kirkoswald to the station.
- Encouraging winter travel and working on seasonal promotions with local businesses and attractions.
- Promoting the Eden Valley with Eden Valley Tourism and Eden River's Trust.

## Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership (LMCRP) (The Bentham line)

**CRP Officer:** Catherine Huddleston  
(part-time) and Brian Haworth (part-time)

**Website:**  
[thebenthamline.co.uk](http://thebenthamline.co.uk)

**CRP Chair:** Gerald Townson

[leedslancastermorecambecrp.co.uk](http://leedslancastermorecambecrp.co.uk)

### Key highlights of 21-22

- We were able to further develop our much-appreciated station history project with new colourful panels at the stations west of Wennington. This project now covers all our stations from Skipton to Heysham Port. The CRP has now embarked on a similar project to depict the history of the early electric 'Pioneer line' between Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham Port, a fondly-remembered railway, now part of national walking and cycling routes.
- The pandemic restrictions in the first half of 2021 meant the green energy and sustainability projects planned with the third cohort of Northern's year in industry students were, in the main part, undertaken remotely but a relaxation of restrictions allowed for an in-person launch event of their 'Get Nature Back on Track' exhibition at Carnforth Heritage Centre. The ten artworks created are also on display at our stations. The event also gave the previous cohort the opportunity to launch their beautifully illustrated children's book 'A grand day out to the seaside'.
- The CRP wanted to ensure that there was a warm local 'welcome back to the railway' and in spring 2021, supported by a media company, we produced a three-minute video, about the whole line and its attractions. This included new drone footage, and carried a 'we have missed you too' message.
- The relaxation of pandemic restrictions during the summer months enabled the partnership to be able to offer its, now annual, assistance with rail-based visits to the SELFA children's charity. SELFA supports young people with additional needs in the Skipton, Settle and Bentham areas.
- Autumn 2021 brought opportunities to work with local primary schools once again, and Giggleswick and Hellifield schools took part in the 'sheep on the line' project

with events in school and educational days at Carnforth Heritage Centre. The pupils recently unveiled their rail-safety themed artwork at their local stations.

- The partnership has also been pleased to support the introduction of defibrillators at Bentham and Clapham stations, extending the networks of these life-saving machines. Clapham-cum-Newby Parish Council and the Friends of Bentham Station raised funds to purchase the machines and LMCRP facilitated and contributed to the installations.
- Finally, and most importantly, a major piece of work for the partnership has been the preparations for, and the commissioning of, the first major study for the Bentham line in well over a decade, to look at the developments and initiatives which will help our line to reach its full potential. The community-based study saw over 500 residents complete the online survey and our consultants engage with a further 30 stakeholders.

Details about all of the above activities and far more news can be found on the partnership's website: [thebenthamline.co.uk](http://thebenthamline.co.uk)



## Next 12 months

- The LMCRP is, of course, now looking forward to receiving the finalised line study report detailing the possibilities for the Bentham line over the next twenty years. And sharing the findings for short, medium and long term improvements with key stakeholders and the communities along the line.
- Resulting directly from the study, we have recently embarked on a detailed audit of all Bentham line stations. This looks at their accessibility and transport links, to establish a working document for discussions on future improvements alongside the train operator and other stakeholders.
- Working with the fourth cohort of Northern year in industry students we look to improve 'access for all' to the line by providing signage and step-free improvements, short videos with 360-degree filming of the facilities onboard Class 158 units and at stations, and a community-orientated booklet to support everyone's journeys on the route.
- We have remained in contact with the dementia groups along the route and are keen to resume supported visits this summer for their members and careers, which proved very successful pre-pandemic. The LMCRP will continue to offer dementia-awareness sessions to new staff and volunteers and we are looking to produce a booklet to tell the story of our award-winning 'Dementia and Community Rail' mentioned in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, to assist other partnerships.
- Work has begun on a project to improve the station and surrounding environment at Heysham Port, to tie in with recent improvements to the port building by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company. We plan to work with stakeholders at the port and the local schools to create a more colourful environment.
- Along with Settle-Carlisle CRP, we are looking to develop tourism by train to the 'Ingleborough Triangle', an area between our two lines with many natural attractions and rural events, as we look to cater further for active leisure travel.



## Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (YCCRP)

**CRP Officer:** Gill Simpson

**Website:** [yccrp.co.uk](http://yccrp.co.uk)

**CRP Chair:** Tony Cooper

### Key highlights of 21-22

- **Social Media**

Yorkshire Coast and Community Rail Partnership (YCCRP) has increased activity across social media and we actively post at least one positive news story every day. The pages get regular passenger enquiries, and followers send pictures and information of interest to our wider community.

We regularly reach 17,000 people and posts attract high engagement with more than 1,500 interactions in one month. The YCCRP Facebook page currently has 1356 likes and 1431 follows and our Twitter account has 550 followers.

- **Timetables**

The YCCRP developed a printable version of the May to December 2021 timetable, distributing over 5000 copies to stations and points of public interest - they ran out of the timetables in September.

Due to industry constraints, the December timetable was not positively received and the YCCRP team worked hard to provide information and passenger guidance.

- **Line Guide**

The new line guide was very well received, and they have a 5000 rerun on order from the local printers.

- **Hull Station**

Karen Bennett and the YCCRP delivered a very successful rail safety event in August giving out educational books, quizzes and goodies to children travelling into and out of Hull station.



- **Cottingham Station**

The YCCRP are working with Kasha Gravill station adopter to develop a replica vintage Pullman carriage and station waiting room giving a year-round dining experience. The facility will be used by dementia groups, schools and as a tourist attraction. It is expected to be completed early next year.

- **Beverly Station**

The In-Bloom team continue to weave their magic with the station gardens and are working with and Hymers College to produce artwork for the station as part of the National Citizens Service (NCS).

- **Driffield Station**

Driffield In-Bloom and Kings Mill Special School have developed a fabulous community vegetable plot and are now enjoying harvesting their produce. Any produce sold from the garden goes to help school projects. The local 'Men in Sheds' community group are also helping out with handyman and DIY skills and pupils from Hymers College are helping with digging, planting and fence painting as part of their NCS.

Driffield In-Bloom have also created a book exchange in the waiting room on platform 1.

- **Nafferton Station**

A local artist and member of Nafferton In-Bloom produced some railway themed artwork which is currently displayed on the station building. The YCCRP were so impressed they wasted no time recruiting him as the lead station adopter and are looking forward to seeing future plans for more artwork at stations on the line.

- **Bridlington Station**

It's been a busy time at Bridlington, with the Adopters doing a fantastic job with the floral displays. In September the YCCRP hosted an open meeting for prospective new members and the station hosted their first Macmillan coffee morning raising £236, made up to £300 by the YCCRP.

During lockdown 2020 one of YCCRP's members tracked down and obtained the remains of Bridlington station's North Eastern Railway tiled map. The tiles are now being restored by a local craftsman and will be mounted onto an image and displayed as a permanent exhibit with an explanation panel on the station concourse.



- **Hunmanby Station**

The Friends of Hunmanby Station unveiled their replica tile map and held a very successful village heritage day.

- **Filey Station**

Chris Smith has opened a new café at the station and has agreed to be the station adopter along with the local in-bloom group.

- **Scarborough Station**

The YCCRP has an explanation panel made for the station's historic North Eastern Railway tiled map that was installed in September.

- **Membership**

YCCRP has recruited six new members this year and the Management Committee decided to continue to waive membership fees for a further 12 months to thank existing members and attract new volunteers.



### Next 12 months

- Unveiling of the North Eastern Railway tile map at Bridlington.
- Sling Express trains supporting new parents.
- Unveiling of dementia, heritage and education projects at Cottingham.
- Continue to support inbound tourism.
- Samaritan Brew Monday events at stations and continued prevention training.
- Rail safety in schools with Network Rail.
- Rail rambles update walks with Network Rail.
- Expansion of YCCRP bug hotel network at stations.
- Work with Northern and Hymers and Tigers NCS to create new rail rambles, host a stand at the Driffeld Show and produce a Yorkshire Coast line marketing video.
- Move business across to Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council.

### Longer Term

- YCCRP to work with RSPB and Revolution Hull to develop electric bike scheme between the station and the reserve.
- Have upgraded CCTV at stations to help with safety and crime prevention.
- To work with Northern to have defibrillators at all stations.

## Penistone line Partnership

**CRP Officer:** Rowena Chantler

**CRP Chair:** Neil Bentley

**CRP Support Officer:** Sarah Wells

**Website:** [penline.co.uk](http://penline.co.uk)

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### Key highlights of 21-22

- Over the past couple of years, Penistone line Partnership (PLP) have been planning ways to work with people with hidden disabilities to promote the use of the train and build their confidence in using the train. In late 2021 we visited Ability Options, a local organisation who provide activities for adults with learning disabilities. They created some lovely Christmas decorations which were displayed at Huddersfield station.
- The Community Rail officer focused much of her work on promoting rail safety and visited schools in person and engaged virtually. We met with Network Rail and British Transport Police to focus on reducing trespass and anti-social behaviour and were able to speak directly to pupils in known problem areas.
- A relationship has also been formed with Kirklees College with both the Foundation Department (young people and adults with additional needs), and the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Department. Students have been learning about rail safety and will be trying the train and learning how to read a timetable and purchase a ticket.
- PLP supported the Backtrack competition which promotes community rail safety.
- Despite COVID restrictions we have managed to gain a new and passionate Station Friends group on the line, at Chapeltown.
- Silkstone Common Group who adopted the station last year were shortlisted for their work at the 2021 Community Rail Awards.



- Denby Dale and District Rotary did their usual garden management at Stocksmoor and Denby Dale, keeping the stations looking cheery.
- Shepley Village Association created an amazing display for the Woven Festival, which also allowed for many of the line's stations to be dressed in yarn displays, including the pillars at Huddersfield. The festival enabled us to engage with groups to get them involved at local stations, and we were also able to host a stall in Huddersfield promoting the Penistone line and station adoption.
- Promotional project for 2022 were the redesign of the PLP website and the redesign of our backing posters for our Community Rail boards at stations which now look much better and brighter. Our newsletter has continued to be produced and circulated digitally.
- Penistone Murals were awarded Third Place in the Community Rail Awards, involving children and young people category. PLP were also very pleased to have been involved in Backtrack, winning First Prize in the same category!
- In the Summer, PLP were pleased to be able to support Sheffield rail safety week which involved promoting the Backtrack competition and handing out "Stay Safe with Thomas" books.
- Also, over the summer, PLP worked with Element Society Sheffield, initially as part of the National Citizen Service programme, promoting Rail Safety and Backtrack Competition. We then went on to work with local artist Rosie Pearsall to create new artwork for Sheffield station with youth group, Generation Z (also based at Element Society). We are currently awaiting the installation of the work.
- Kirklees Council applied for and succeeded with "Levelling Up" support from the Government to fund additional work and services on the Penistone line.
- The council have also been involved with West Yorkshire Combined Authority in applying for some access improvements at stations along the Penistone line.



### Next 12 months

- Working with tourism and event organisers to promote return to rail activities.
- Family marketing campaign.
- Continuing to promote school-based rail safety and encourage reductions in trespass and anti-social behaviour.
- Partnership work with Kirklees College and re-engage with the University of Huddersfield.
- PLP will be working with community groups to rewrite our Penistone line Trail (station to station walks).
- We will continue to work with people living with dementia and other groups with hidden disabilities to try and address challenges they have and provide feedback to relevant train operators.
- We are encouraging local communities to get creative and decorate their stations for the Queen's platinum jubilee. Station groups are already busy thinking how their planting can represent the colour purple.
- Sustainability is a key issue and we will be encouraging people to use the train over the car wherever possible.

### Longer Term

- 2023 marks PLP's 30th anniversary, which we will be keen to celebrate! We will be spending some of this year collating people's memories of Penistone line events over the years.
- Working on station attractiveness, accessibility and sustainability with operators, Network Rail and local communities.

## North Notts & Lincs CRP CIC (NNLCRP)

**CRP Officer:** Kate Myres

**Website:** [nnlcrp.org.uk](http://nnlcrp.org.uk)

**CRP Chair:** Barry Coward

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### Key highlights of 2021

- “Romans to Railways”, six panels of artwork related to Lincoln’s history and devised by a local artist, schools and youth groups.
- Following a major campaign, supported by local authorities and community groups, LNER were able to open a lift for platform 3 at Retford station facilitating easier interchange between Northern’s low level platforms and the East Coast main line platforms.
- NNLCRP opened an office shared with the Friends of Retford Station and the Bassetlaw Railway Society on Retford Station courtesy of LNER.
- A large ‘Welcome to Worksop’ panel designed by local artist Kyle Emerson was installed on platform 2.
- Five “bus walks” covering Retford, Worksop and Shireoaks were launched at Worksop station. These leaflets with their linear walks connecting with Stagecoach buses and railway stations are immensely popular.
- During the summer of 2021 a book bench was placed on the forecourt of Worksop station.
- After a long ambition we have now received a draft lease on a room at Worksop station for use as a community room managed by NNLCRP and the Friends of Worksop Station.
- In response to a planning application for a supermarket close to Worksop station we have responded asking for a section 106 agreement to include improvements to the station.

- Banners and planters maintained by the Friends of Shireoaks were subject to vandalism. Following a request to the Police, Police Community Support Officers now visit the area and vandalism has ceased.
- A South Humber Rail Link project initiated by NNLCRP and led by North Lincolnshire Council submitted a strategic outline business case (SOBC) to the Department for Transport in November. In their summary of the study North Lincolnshire Council wrote:

“There is strong support from the Advisory Group of elected members of parliament, rail industry and transport and planning authorities and community rail partnerships to move the project to the next phase. The commercial and management case suggests that relatively fast delivery of the scheme is possible and should secure the economic return as soon as possible.”

A full report of our activities across the partnership during 2021, involving four train operating companies, can be found at [nnlcrp.org.uk/docs/2021report.pdf](http://nnlcrp.org.uk/docs/2021report.pdf)

### Longer Term

- The NNLCRP board agreed in January 2022 to add Doncaster to our portfolio of stations.
- Northern accounts for 45% of the trains calling at the station and platform 0 is exclusively used by Northern trains. A major area for community development is the space between platform 0 and the bus station.

The addition of this large station necessitates the employment of a second part time officer which will be advertised once funding is secured. A list of projects has been drawn up in co-operation with LNER.

- We are working with the Friends of Shireoaks, Northern and local artists to produce artwork for the station waiting area.
- “Poems on the stations” is a project based on the book of poems designed for children by Sheffield poet Phil Loutsis entitled “The Adventures of Colin The Dog.” Illustrated short poems will appear on redesigned poster case backing sheets at our stations including all our Northern stations (Shireoaks, Worksop, Gainsborough Central, Kirton in Lindsey and Brigg).

- Plans to add additional panels to the “Romans to Railways” artwork at Lincoln station will be developed.
- We will work with the Friends of Worksop Station to fit out the community room and encourage its use.
- A “Welcome to Gainsborough” panel in the style of the panel at Worksop has been commissioned and will appear at Gainsborough Central.
- We will continue to develop contacts with schools and youth organisations.
- We will work with Network Rail to counter trespass on the railway.
- In May 2022 we will, in partnership with Stagecoach East Midlands, produce and distribute to all homes, travel guides for Worksop, Retford, Gainsborough, Saxilby, Lincoln and Kirton in Lindsey.
- We will work with station adopters to ensure the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee is celebrated at our stations.



## Bishop line Community Rail Partnership

**CRP Officer:** Felicity Machnicki

**CRP Vice Chair:** Charlie Walton

**CRP Chair:** Robert Whitehouse

**Website:** [bishopline.org](http://bishopline.org)

### Key highlights of 21-22

2021/22 was about restarting projects and priorities which paused due to the pandemic, reigniting connections with organisations along the route and building new relationships while also keeping our community informed about ongoing travel restrictions.

- **Backtrack 2021**

Backtrack 2021, a competition aimed at reducing youth trespass on the railway, ran through the summer with CRP officers running virtual and in-person rail safety sessions with schools and colleges across the country.

New for 2021 we took Backtrack to the public and we ran events throughout the summer at many stations including Darlington, Durham, Glasgow Central, Liverpool Central, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly, Doncaster, Sheffield and London Waterloo.

The competition ended on 30 September with entries from across the country and it was encouraging to see plenty of submissions from the Bishop line community.

The competition was awarded best project involving children and young people at The Community Rail Awards and going forward the project team are looking into how we can develop Backtrack further. More information on Backtrack can be found at [backtrackcompetition.co.uk](http://backtrackcompetition.co.uk)

- **Rail Safety sessions in UTC**

Working with the learning and engagement team at Locomotion in Shildon, we developed a rail safety assembly aimed at secondary students focusing on the benefits of rail travel and the risks of trespass, including promotion of the Backtrack competition.

We delivered the 30 minute session to around 200 year 10 and 12 students at University Technical College South Durham in June and again to their new intake in September. From these sessions we have built a growing relationship with the college and we are delighted that they are adopting their local station, Heighington.

- **Weardale Railway platform connection**

The partnership has been working together with Weardale Railway since 2019 to progress a joint project with Network Rail to build a connecting path between the Weardale platform (Bishop Auckland East) and the main Bishop Auckland station.

With much perseverance we now have a great team who have met weekly to push this project over the finish line. Funds have been raised to complete a ground level path with disability compliant ramps at either end which will enable passengers to access Weardale Railway's services directly from the Northern station, giving passengers a better sense of safety and convenience. The path will be opened in spring 2022.

- **Building awareness of the partnership**

Our social media following has increased dramatically over the past two years. In 2021 we saw an increase of 24% on Facebook (79% on 2020), 28% on Twitter, (96% on 2020) and by 79% on LinkedIn (46% on 2020).

### Next 12 months

2022-23 looks to be a creative year for our partnership as we reignite links with local artists and our community. We have two beautiful projects initiated already which will lead to more engagement as the year goes on and as connections grow.



- **Our line connections**

Our line started as an on-train experience in 2018, where passengers listened to a bespoke play for the Bishop line.

In 2020 we worked with producers Luxi to develop an online experience which could be enjoyed at home, encouraging listeners to take time out of their busy day to reflect. The team felt there was great potential to build on the project's success and we secured funding from Cross Country Trains and Arts Council England to expand the experience to include face to face sessions in the community.

In spring/summer 2022 the team will run song writing and arts sessions in elderly care settings and schools in the Bishop line community between Darlington and Bishop Auckland where participants will listen to the Our line play and share the feelings and thoughts that it brings about. Content and imagery created will be shared in a celebratory book in the summer.

- **Creative journeys**

In collaboration with New Writing North, Locomotion Museum and Shildon Alive – a local food bank, this project will run as part of Durham Book Festival in March 2022. It is a creative exploration of the theme 'journeys', train journeys and food journeys.

Two strands make up this project, one with schools in their classroom and at Locomotion where year four students will learn about food journeys and food waste, and one with young adults on the Bishop line train exploring the history of the line.

A resident artist will lead creative writing sessions and work created will be celebrated at the Loco Lates exhibition at Locomotion. We will target young people in the area who would not typically be interested in the book festival with a view to changing perceptions and opening up new opportunities.

## Esk Valley Railway Development Company (EVRDC)

**CRP Officer:** Alan Williams

**General Manager:** Lisa Williams

**Projects Support Manager:** Sally Michulitis

**Website:**  
[eskvalleyrailway.co.uk](http://eskvalleyrailway.co.uk)

### Brief summary of route

The route starts at Middlesbrough, the gateway to the rest of the national rail network. Located on the south bank of the River Tees it is the home of the popular Middlesbrough Football club, Museum of Modern Art and the Dorman Museum. From Nunthorpe the route is very rural, crossing the North York Moors National Park, passing through stunning villages and following the River Esk to the sea finishing in the popular resort of Whitby.

### Key highlights of 2021-22

- Produced our own Esk Valley Railway Calendar for 2022 which sold out.
- Updated and modernised our website.
- Held successful Volunteer Day at Glaisdale station.
- Involved with Flash Mob Play competition at Glaisdale station.
- The 'Forget Me Not' Train was again a tremendous success and we will continue this amazing project going forward. Songs of Praise have stayed in touch and plans are afoot to build a programme around the Forget Me Not train in 2022.
- Worked with Northern to gather funding to have the netting at Whitby station removed and replaced with Firegel to try and deter pigeons.

### Next 12 months

- Focus on tourism, encouraging day trips and holidays by train.

- Gain Railway Heritage Fund support for improvements to Whitby station.
- Restart running and promoting the Forget Me Not train.
- Continued involvement with Apple Pressing Days.
- Work with the North York Moors National Park on encouraging more cycling.
- Celebrate with National Park the Dark Skies events, running a Dark Skies Train into Glaisdale to meet up with a team of astronomers and some hot chocolate!
- Work with the 'Yorkshire Wanderer' to film the Esk Valley line both on and off the train and with drone footage to be available on our website and via our YouTube channel.
- Increase social media presence via Twitter and Facebook.
- Work closely with schools through station adoption and station artwork to teach pupils about the railway and hopefully reduce vandalism.
- Organise further Volunteer days.
- Promote regular get-togethers with station adopters to swap ideas and offer greater support.

### Longer Term

- Progress proposals to use Section 106 funding to improve the line.
- Aim to re-purpose disused signal boxes at Sleights and Glaisdale stations.
- Increase newsletter readership and Twitter and Facebook profile.



## Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership (TVCRP)

**CRP Officer:** Fiona Forsythe

**Website:** [tvcrp.org.uk](http://tvcrp.org.uk)

**CRP Chair:** Malcolm Chainey

### Key highlights of 21-22

In common with many others, a year where we saw projects still on hold or having to change direction, we are none the less pleased with our outcomes.

- **Station Accessibility Study**

In Summer 2021, we undertook a review of all 14 stations between Newcastle and Carlisle and investigated how accessible they were by both public transport and car.

From this piece of work, Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership (TVCRP) has been able to engage with wider strategic partners, including Nexus, Cumbria County Council and Northern as well as with many of the station adoption groups and the review will inform many workstreams in the coming year.

- **Wylam Station**

We were able to celebrate artwork that Wylam Brownies and Guides completed during lockdown 2021 in which they designed a poster to inform a visitor to Wylam about places to see.

We had the winning entries made into posters for the station and we were able to present all the entrants with A5 postcards featuring their design. We asked the girls to send these postcards to friends and family as a way of spreading the message. See page 8.

- **Blaydon Station**

Friends of Blaydon Station used images of their station murals to create 'welcome to your new home...and railway station' cards and posted these and timetables through the doors of a new block of flats close to the station.

- **Brampton Station**

Lanercost school swapped postcards of their murals at Brampton station (Cumbria) with Brampton school in Suffolk.

- **Go Green, Travel by Rail**

As a CRP, we have missed Community Rail in the City events and the opportunity to share the treasures of the Tyne Valley with a new audience. We were therefore delighted to join with a range of train operating companies at Edinburgh and Leeds to promote a go greener, travel by rail message at events in October and we designed and gave out a range of 'hand outs' from cloth bags to masks and have enjoyed seeing photos of them being used across the country.

- **School engagement**

School engagement was hampered by the effects of COVID but we were delighted to welcome our first school trip, since March 2020 back on the line in Jan 2022. Education and youth work is an area we hope to grow in 2022-23 and we are pleased to be part of the award winning Backtrack Competition and enjoyed talking to passengers and handing out Backtrack activity sheets in Newcastle and Carlisle.

- **Haltwhistle Station**

A keystone moment in the re-development of two wooden buildings at Haltwhistle station was reached in March 2022 when the completely restored waiting room on platform 1 was opened.



The waiting room has a 12-panel exhibition, funded by Cross Country, focused on different dog breeds which have their origins in the border area. The studio areas and the building on platform 2 are in the final stages and will be completed soon.

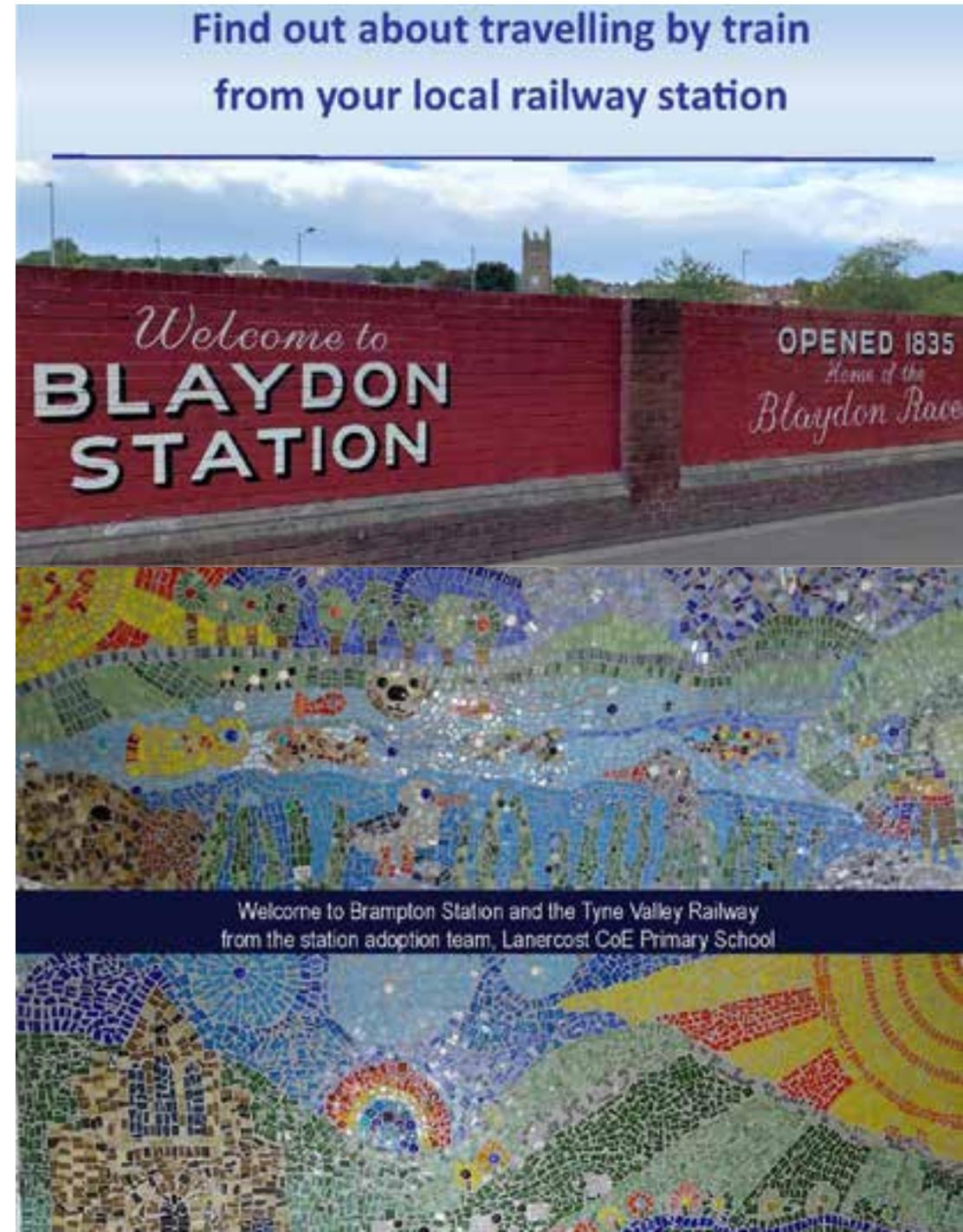
### Next 12 months

- Looking ahead, 2022 is going to be an excellent year to be promoting the line with the focus on Hadrian's Wall celebrating 1900 years since its construction began.

We are putting plans in place to take our own Hadrian's Wall (a four-metre model) to various events in the area and further afield.

As part of our promotion work, part funded by Northern, designs are being finalised to construct a cyclo-knitter. This fully accessible kit will allow a person to sit on a seat, turn pedals and create a knitted scarf. A tie in to both the Roman heritage of the area (Romans wrote home asking for more socks!) and the increasing number of cycling visitors! The inspiration came from a railway station in the Netherlands.

- In April 2022 we will hold our first volunteer conference. This is an event we are looking forward to and hope that it will become key as we work to share knowledge and ideas between the station adoption groups.
- We are currently in the process of appointing an Intern, funded through Creative Fuse [creativefusene.org.uk](https://creativefusene.org.uk) a project which runs across the five North East universities. The focus for the internship will be social media and looking at ways in which we can increase our social media reach and develop more content.



## South Fylde line Community Rail Partnership (SFLCRP)

**CRP Officer:** Caroline Holden supported by Simon Clarke

**Website:** [communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/southfylde](http://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/southfylde)

**CRP Chair:** Tony Ford

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### Key highlights of 21-22

- Along with Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and the other three Lancashire CRPs, the SFLCRP was formally re-accredited by the Department for Transport (DfT).
- The CRP was part of the team for the 'Restoring Your Railway' project to enhance the service frequency along the line. The first stage was to submit a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the DfT. A grant towards the cost of the SOBC was secured from the Community Rail Development Fund.
- In December 2021 the CRP along with Community Rail Lancashire and the other Lancashire CRPs submitted a response to the Manchester Recovery Task Force (MRTF) consultation on the December 2022 timetables.
- The line enjoyed a successful year of community activities and far fewer service disruptions. Higher numbers on platforms indicate greater confidence and usage which bodes well for the future.
- The colourful Hidden Gems artwork funded by St Anne's Town Council was unveiled by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. At the same time, they unveiled eye-catching carved twin owls which had been created by a local woodcarver who made the most of a left-over tree stump.
- History Posters depicting the development of stations over time were installed at St Anne's, Moss Side and Salwick and others are shortly to be installed at Squires Gate and Lytham.
- Several stations along the line gained prestigious 'In Your Neighbourhood Awards' presented by NW In Bloom.
- The Christmas trees made from discarded pallets made a welcome return for a festive display enhanced by decorated wooden ornaments created by members of the Memories Club.
- Several stations engaged with national Community Rail week by staging events and displaying posters with 'green' messages.
- The Friends of Squires Gate station have a licence from Network Rail for the overgrown platform 2, and work there has continued at pace as they create wildlife-friendly habitats, attractive planting and signage detailing aspects of the station's history.
- In addition, the CRP continues to work with several stakeholders to progress step-free access at the station.
- A new station adoption group has been created at Kirkham and Wesham station.
- CRL staff worked with pupils from Pear Tree School to create artwork to brighten up a blank wall on the platform at Kirkham and Wesham station.
- St Anne's station volunteers hosted station adopters from Romiley station and have shared their activities with other station groups through Northern's station adopters Facebook page.
- Launched a video 'walk' from Lytham to St Anne's as part of the 'Explore Lancashire By Rail' series. View the walk on YouTube: [youtube.com/watch?v=bC7Cik2ZJJO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bC7Cik2ZJJO)
- ICG has been commissioned to help promote all the 'Explore Lancashire By Rail' videos and Simon Clarke took part in one broadcast on Radio Lancashire's Sunday show.
- Every station on the South Fylde line now has a Facebook page where appropriate service messages provide useful information for rail users. The reach and usage of these pages has increased using 'Welcome back funding' to improve postings and increase community engagement.
- The SFL produced pocket-sized timetables which were distributed to retail outlets, businesses, restaurants and hotels along the line.

### Next 12 months

- Develop and distribute a new South Fylde line guide in easy-to-use pamphlet form.
- Continue to promote the 'Explore Lancashire By Rail' video and produce additional 'Explore on Foot' self-guide walk leaflets.
- Continue to promote and prepare for step-free access at Squires Gate station.
- Completion of Foundation Stone project at St Anne's station.
- Reapply for accreditation.
- Distribute pocket-sized timetables and dispensers to local businesses and retail outlets.
- Continue to engage with relevant parties to promote the construction of a passing loop which would permit a more frequent and reliable service.
- Extend the Hidden Gems and station history projects at the remaining stations with CRL staff engaging with local schools and community groups.
- Build on the use of the social media channels to promote the line and the leisure and retail opportunities that can be accessed from stations on the South Fylde line.
- Look forward to the successful outcome of the Restoring Your Railway SOBC and work with Fylde Council and partners on the next stage of the project.
- In conjunction with Network Rail, develop a community project to repair and repaint Ansdell footbridge using community artists and residents.

### Longer Term

- Maintain the DfT's accreditation and secure ongoing core funding.
- Continue to support and promote the Restore Your Railway project to enable an increase in service frequency.
- Ensure the CRP management group reflects the diversity and make-up of the local community.
- Maintain effective links and relationships with the railway industry, local authorities and community groups and further develop links with local businesses.
- Invest in the future of community rail by recruiting more station adopters and volunteers.



## Cumbrian Coast line

**CRP Officer:** Warren Birch

**Website:** [communityrailcumbria.co.uk](http://communityrailcumbria.co.uk)

**CRP Chair:** Eddie Pollock

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### Key highlights of 2021-22

- Community Rail awards for “The Rails which Circled the World” at Workington station and station volunteer Dave Wallace.
- Flimby Primary School unique station artwork celebrating “Our Flimby” – an expression of village life during lockdown.
- Creation of indoor accessible waiting room at Millom Heritage and Arts Centre.
- Creation of innovative poetry and writing room at Millom Heritage and Arts Centre.
- Twinning initiative with Blaydon station.
- Bootle station commemorative exhibit of 1945.
- Contribution to Future High Street plans for Maryport, including key developments for the railway station and surrounding area.
- Adoption of Sellafield railway station by local youth group – all stations along the line now have a registered volunteer group.
- Continued working in partnership with Turning Point to deliver station adoption projects at Green Road railway station.
- Continued participation with local authorities regarding:
  - Energy Coast Rail Upgrade
  - Nuclear Transport Group
  - Whitehaven Parking Strategy
  - LCWIP programme that links walking and cycling routes to the local railway stations



- Extensive contribution to Millom Town Deal plans – seeking £1.2million investment for programme of railway station access/connectivity improvements.
- Member of the focus group for Copeland Borough Council’s ‘Connecting Cumbria’s Hidden Coast’ initiative.
- Contributed to the ongoing timetable reviews.

## Next 12 months

- Millom Heritage & Arts Centre (formerly Millom Discovery Centre):
  - Continue liaison with Network Rail and the Arch Company to resolve the issues around the transfer of Millom station building lease
  - Support the educational aspect of the centre with the trustees
  - Actively support and promote Millom Discovery Centre with ongoing business plans
- Contribute to the delivery of the final events and displays for the 175 anniversary celebrations.
- Develop twinning initiative with Blaydon station.
- Support Tyne Valley CRP with plans for Hadrian's Wall celebrations.
- Continue working with Sellafield Ltd to further develop modal shift opportunities - passenger surveys, carpark issues, improved catering offer, station building improvements, mental health project.
- Support and develop station adoption groups:
  - Plan and host a virtual station adopters engagement event with the CRP for Furness line and Lakes line.
  - Support the groups from Shackles Off to start developing projects for both Seascale and Sellafield railway stations
- Maintain and develop engagement of the Cumbria Better Connected forum to consider and plan for building back better, restoring confidence in rail travel and the potential staycation influx.
- Engage with train operating companies regarding May and December 2022 timetable reviews seeking to improve connectivity and reduce skip stopping patterns.
- Work in collaboration with local authorities, the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and stakeholders to ensure rail is at the heart of travel and transport schemes such as Local Walking and Cycling Investment Plans, Town Deals, Place Deals, Local Plans, station hub developments, cycling and walking initiatives, travel plans, tourism-based ventures.
- Actively participate in local government reform discussions.

## Longer Term

- Maintain accreditation and ongoing financial/staffing sustainability of the CRP.
- Develop sustainable plans for the continuation and expansion of 'The Better Side of the Tracks' beyond 2023.
- Continue to develop the educational thread and the concept of the 'outdoor classroom' now firmly embedded along the Cumbrian Coast line.
- Develop the platform 2 area at Carlisle railway station.
- Work with borough councils and local authorities as town regeneration plans emerge ensuring development of rail related enhancements.
- Timetable stability allowing, develop a programme of promotional/marketing activities focussing on key 'destination stations'.
- Maintain close links with Turning Point and consider potential for future initiatives including the development of plans for the refurbishment of the station building at Green Road.
- Further develop the Millom Marketing Centre initiative and enhance the travel information provision – consider a second 'Scenic Rail Journeys' brochure.
- Collaborate with train operating companies and bus companies to explore opportunities for improving train-bus connectivity.



## Lakes line

**CRP Officer:** Kerstin Esbjornsson

**Website:** [communityrailcumbria.co.uk](http://communityrailcumbria.co.uk)

**CRP Chair:** Tim Owen

A ten-mile, scenic route linking local communities Windermere, Staveley, Burneside and Kendal to the West Coast main line at Oxenholme and regional capital Manchester, with direct services to/from the airport. The Lakes line provides an important local transport link and sustainable travel to and from the World Heritage Lake District.

### Key highlights of 2021-22

- 175 anniversary celebrations for Furness railway and Lakes line held throughout 2021/ 22 including: train naming Pride of Cumbria, rail safety workshops, station roadshow, historic talks and exhibitions.
- Continued participation with Cumbria County Council and Network Rail to develop a business case for line capacity improvements.
- Ongoing engagement with station adopters who look after all stations along the line.
- Ongoing liaison with Lakes line Rail User Group and train operating companies.
- Contributions to reviewing planned engineering work – works often takes place over holiday periods adversely affecting Cumbria’s visitor market, one of the county’s primary economic generators – explore alternative approaches to work scheduling and the planning of replacement transport provision.
- Contribute to the development of local authority plans and strategies, for example Local Cycling & Walking Investment Plans, Town Deals, Place Deals.
- Pro-active contribution to the Lake District National Park Authority’s plans for Windermere Gateway.
- Engagement with Northern’s timetable planning team regarding temporary timetables due to lockdowns and December 2022 timetable.

- Funding secured and ongoing collaboration with Avanti West Coast to develop Oxenholme as a Gateway to the Lake District.

### Next 12 months

- Continue collaboration with Network Rail, Cumbria County Council and Northern to develop the business case for line capacity investment.
- Complete programme of events and displays for the 175 anniversary celebrations.
- Build on engagement, particularly with schools, emanating from the 175 celebrations.
- Work with Avanti West Coast to deliver improved passenger information and welcome ambience at Oxenholme station encouraging travellers to use the Lakes line and travel further afield.



- Support and develop station adoption groups along the line:
  - Plan and host a second virtual station adopters' engagement event with the Community Rail officer for Cumbrian Coast line.
- Progress volunteering initiatives for improved mental health and recovery, for example The Well, Kendal, The Well, Barrow, Ulverston MIND.
- Work with station adopters, Northern and Network Rail to continue to deliver a programme of rail safety initiatives with schools and community groups along the line.
- Re-engage with Sandgate School, a special needs school to collaborate on rail based travel initiatives.
- Maintain and develop engagement of the Cumbria Better Connected forum to consider and plan for building back better, restoring confidence in rail travel and the potential staycation influx.
- Work in partnership with Northern to produce the timetable guide for May and December 2022.
- Support next steps for the Access for All bid for Staveley station.
- Continue to liaise with the Lakes line Rail User Group and train operating companies.
- Support Lakes line Rail User Group with passenger surveys identifying travel patterns, reasons for travel and economic benefit to the area.
- Contribute to the Lake District National Park Partnership's Sustainable Transport Group.
- Support Cumbria Tourism on the development of a 'window gazer' guide for the line.
- Collaborate with Network Rail, train operating companies and stakeholders to develop plans for the Levelling Up Fund.
- Engage with train operating companies regarding May and December 2022 timetable reviews seeking to improve connectivity and reduce skip stopping patterns.
- Work collaboratively with local authorities, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and stakeholders to ensure rail is at the heart of travel/transport schemes, for example Local Walking and Cycling Investment Plans, Town Deals, Place Deals, Local Plans, station hub developments, cycling/walking initiatives, travel plans, tourism-based ventures.

### Longer Term

- Maintain accreditation and ensure financial/staffing sustainability of the CRP.
- Develop a sustainable business plan for expansion of rail travel initiatives with Sandgate School.
- Collaborate with South Lakeland District Council and Kendal Town Council as Kendal Vision emerges and seek improved integration of Kendal station in transport plans – signage, pedestrian/cycle access to and from the town centre, links with the bus station, etc.
- Continued collaboration on securing investment for line capacity improvements.
- Timetable stability allowing, develop programmes of promotional and marketing activity stimulating sustainable visitor travel to and from the Lakes exploiting the benefits of new services and rolling stock.
- Develop opportunities to engage local businesses and trade organisations with railway initiatives,
- Collaborate with Avanti West Coast and other train operating companies to consider art, design scheme for Oxenholme underpass.
- Seek timetable improvements which open up Sunday morning employment opportunities.
- Collaborate with train operating companies and bus companies to explore opportunities for improving train-bus connectivity.



## Furness line

**CRP Officer:** Kerstin Esbjornsson

**Website:** [communityrailcumbria.co.uk](http://communityrailcumbria.co.uk)

**CRP Chair:** Tim Owen

### Furness Railway 175 celebration

When the Community Rail Partnership approached David Stubbins to chair a working group to celebrate 175 years since the formation of the Furness Railway, he was not aware what a remarkable journey he was going to embark on!

From a fairly low-key start, the Northern publicity team produced a superb poster. A train naming was incorporated, Furness Railway steam locomotive number 20 appeared at our launch at the Barrow Festival of Transport and a series of roadshows, showcasing our event to the public took place at stations along the Furness line.

Moreover, in October 2021, a Northern train was given the honorary name 'Pride of Cumbria'.

The Furness Railway and Lakes line opened in 1846, transforming the way goods and passengers were transported in the county.

The Class 195 train's new name was unveiled at a ceremony on Friday 01 October at Barrow-in-Furness station by Mayor Helen Wall. And proudly displays its new nameplate as it provides services along the line in Cumbria as well as on routes in the north west and Yorkshire.

The event was attended by Simon Fell, MP for Barrow and Furness, as well as dignitaries from Northern, Community Rail Cumbria, station volunteers and the 175 Committees.

New boards detailing the history of the local railway have also been displayed in the waiting room at Barrow-in-Furness station for customers to enjoy.

Graphic artist Dez also known as Loveartpix donated artwork of Grange-over-Sands station in honour of the event.



The station is a favourite of visitors to the area and was recently named Best Small Station of the Year at the National Rail Awards.

David Stubbins, Chair of Furness Railway 175 Anniversary Committee, said: "It's been an honour to have been asked to Chair the Delivery Group for the Furness Railway 175 celebrations. Despite many challenges brought about by COVID-19, the Group have put together a series of roadshows at stations in the area which have showcased the history of the railway and the work of the Station Adoption Groups. I'm grateful to the other members of the group for their support."

Embracing the northern shores of Morecambe Bay from Barrow-in-Furness to Carnforth with services extending north to Carlisle and east to Lancaster, Preston and Manchester, this busy lifeline railway offers stunning views of the coast and fell whilst connecting commuters, students, residents and visitors along the south of Cumbria and beyond.

### Key highlights of 2021-22

- 175 anniversary celebrations for Furness railway and Lakes line held throughout 2021/22 including: train naming Pride of Cumbria, rail safety workshops, station roadshow, historic talks and exhibitions.
- Exhibition display at Barrow station of all 10 Furness line stations unique way finding panels.
- Grange-over-Sands station achieving first place for Best Small Station in National Rail Awards.
- Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) three study for access improvements at Ulverston station delivered and funding secured for ground investigation surveys. Continue to work with Cumbria County Council and the rail industry to develop full application to Access for All scheme.
- Ongoing engagement with station adopters who look after all stations along the line.
- Improved partnership working with local authorities and the police to reduce issues with anti-social behaviour at Dalton station and other stations within Cumbria.
- Contributions to the review of planned engineering work – work often takes place over holiday periods adversely affecting Cumbria's visitor market, one of the county's primary economic generators – the group is exploring alternative approaches to work scheduling and the planning of replacement transport provision.

- Contributed to the development of local authority plans and strategies, for example Local Cycling & Walking Investment Plans, Town Deals, Place Deals.
- Engagement with Northern's timetable planning team regarding the temporary timetables due to lockdowns and December 2022 timetable.

### Next 12 months

- Complete the programme of events and displays for the 175 anniversary celebrations.
- Build on engagement, particularly with schools, emanating from the 175 celebrations.
- Progress delivery of the Access for All application for Ulverston station access improvements.
- Maintain and develop engagement of the Cumbria Better Connected forum to consider and plan for building back better, restoring confidence in rail travel and the potential staycation influx.
- Continue to embed rail safety and travel initiatives with schools and community groups along the line.
- Maintain collaboration with the Barrow Business Improvement District Manager to develop plans for way-finding signage between the railway station and town centre.
- Support and develop station adoption groups:
  - Plan and host a second virtual station adopters' engagement event with the Community Rail officer for Cumbrian Coast line.
- Progress volunteering initiatives for improved mental health and recovery, for example The Well, Barrow, Ulverston MIND, The Well, Kendal.
- Engage with train operating companies regarding May and December 2022 timetable reviews seeking to improve connectivity and reduce skip stopping patterns.
- Work in collaboration with local authorities, the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and stakeholders to ensure rail is at the heart of travel and transport schemes such as Local Walking and Cycling Investment Plans, Town Deals, Place Deals, Local Plans, station hub developments, cycling and walking initiatives, travel plans, tourism-based ventures.

## Longer Term

- Maintain accreditation and ongoing financial / staffing sustainability of the CRP.
- Develop a sustainable plan for the expansion of rail safety and travel initiatives along the line.
- Work with the Arch Company to consider opportunities for community use of the Ulverston station building.
- Build the business case for developing wasteland at Dalton station for car parking or other community initiative.
- Continued collaboration with relevant stakeholders to secure investment for service, capacity and connectivity improvements.
- Timetable stability allowing, develop a programme of promotional and marketing activities focussing on key 'destination stations' and exploiting the benefits of the new services and rolling stock .
- Secure funding, appoint resources and develop final plans for a new community project, 'Tree-mendous Cark!', at Cark station inspired by the planting of 75 trees beside the station, aiming to raise awareness of the wonders of the natural environment and draw attention to climate change – closely linked to the 'Boom Project' supporting the preservation and reintroduction of rare insect/plant species at Barrow station and along the coast.
- Collaborate with train operating companies and bus companies to explore opportunities for improving train-bus connectivity.

## West of Lancashire Community Rail Partnership

**CRP Officer:** Caroline Holden supported by Simon Clarke & Rickard Watts

**Website:** [communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/west-of-lancashire](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/west-of-lancashire)

**CRP Chair:** Marion Atkinson

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### Key highlights of 21-22

- The CRP covers the (Manchester) Wigan Wallgate to Southport and Preston to Ormskirk (Liverpool) lines.
- A focus during the past year has been on the Preston to Ormskirk line to help the recovery of passenger confidence in the line as COVID restrictions eased.
- The adoption by Burscough St John's Catholic Primary School of the disused platform at the Burscough Junction Station under licence from Network Rail.
- Working with Burscough St John's Catholic Primary School on the 'Positive Train of Thought' project. As part of the project the pupils developed artwork and bee and bug hotels which are now on display at the station.
- Shahiesta Raja also talked to the pupils about safe rail travel. A best practice paper about the project can be viewed online [communityraillancashire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Positive-Train-of-Thought-Report.pdf](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Positive-Train-of-Thought-Report.pdf)
- Taking part in the first Community Rail week by arranging a series of events at Burscough Junction station on Monday 18th October 2021, including:
  - Launching the 'Make A Bee line for the West Lancashire line' line guide and poster. Full details can be viewed online: [communityraillancashire.co.uk/make-a-beeline-for-the-west-lancashire-line](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/make-a-beeline-for-the-west-lancashire-line)
  - Taking pupils from St John's Catholic Primary School on a 'Try the Train' experience to Rufford to walk back to school along the Rufford Branch and Leeds and Liverpool canals recently featured in a film which can be viewed online: [youtube.com/watch?v=EFJdVp0-eNQ](https://youtube.com/watch?v=EFJdVp0-eNQ)
  - For more information a news item about the event can be read online: [communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/community-rail-week-starts-in-burscough-junction](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/community-rail-week-starts-in-burscough-junction)
- Commissioning Huckleberry Films to produce a short film to describe an easy walk between Rufford and Burscough Junction stations along the Rufford Branch and Leeds and Liverpool canals. This is forming part of a series of films called 'Explore Lancashire By Rail'. This delightful film can be viewed, along with the others in the series, at [communityraillancashire.co.uk/lancashire-by-rail/](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lancashire-by-rail/) and at [communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/make-a-bee-line-for-the-west-lancashire-line](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/make-a-bee-line-for-the-west-lancashire-line)
- At Rufford new artwork has been installed promoting the link to Rufford Old Hall. This is the start of a project to promote attractions that can be visited from Rufford station. Rufford CE Primary School is looking to focus on promoting Mere Sands Wood nature reserve, an ancient woodland, with ponds famous for its trees and waterfowl and the school will be working with artist Karen Allerton on the project.
- Reintroduced the very popular, credit card sized, mini timetables for the Preston to Ormskirk line. These are distributed by the station volunteers to local shops, pubs, cafes and local attractions.
- Responded to the consultation by the Manchester Recovery Task Force on the proposed December 2022 timetable changes. In particular, the response highlighted concerns raised by users of the Southport to Manchester service.
- Responded through Community Rail Lancashire to Great British Railway Transition Team's Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP) consultation.
- Installed a Community Rail Lancashire branded community notice board at Bescar Lane at the request of the station adoption group.

### Next 12 months

- For 2022/23 the key priority will be to continue to rebuild confidence and usage of the Preston to Ormskirk line.
- The CRP will continue to print and distribute its highly popular mini timetables for the line.
- School engagement will remain a high priority with projects being developed with Rufford CE Primary School and, in the early stages with a primary school in Croston.
- The Rufford project involves working with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust at their reserve at Mere Sands wood.
- The Croston project is likely to be based on Community Rail Lancashire's highly successful hidden gems theme.
- Links with the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust site at Martin Mere will be re-established and the walking route from Burscough Bridge/New Lane stations will be revisited to ensure it is okay and clearly signposted.
- A new series of self-guided walks on the Wigan to Southport line will initially focus on the linear walks from stations along the Leeds and Liverpool canal.
- During 2022/23 it is hoped to make some improvements, in partnership with Avanti West Coast, to platforms 3c and 4c – the platforms used by trains to Ormskirk. Proposed for the platforms are hanging baskets, seating and poster cases.
- Ormskirk, Preston and Southport Travellers Association the line user group will restart their passenger surveys along the Preston to Ormskirk line.
- The CRP will continue to work with the Station Adoption groups along both lines.
- Marion Atkinson will be standing down as Chair of the CRP at the Annual General Meeting in April. Marion has been a tower of strength in the development of the CRP.



## South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership

**CRP Officer:** Dr Steph Dermott

**Website:** [southeastlancscrp.org.uk](https://southeastlancscrp.org.uk)

**CRP Chair:** Prof. Paul Salveson

### Key highlights of 21-22

- Our Hate Crime Awareness Project took place in February to March 2021, commencing during Greater Manchester's Hate Crime Awareness Week. The project was funded by Bolton CVS, and the content was adapted to operate within Covid guidelines. The project consisted of, a social media campaign, an online survey, 6 artist-led workshops on Zoom, an exhibition in the P5 Gallery & online, and a final written project report. The CRP Officer has presented the project at a CVS event and at the Northern community rail conference, and we were proud to win first place at the Annual Community Rail Awards for 'Involving Diverse Groups'.
- Our mural project at Wigan North Western station began in Summer 2021, and was funded by Avanti West Coast. The CRP Officer worked with a local artist to develop designs through community engagement with a range of organisations including Wigan Youth Zone, independent businesses, general public and station staff. We also used social media to get people involved in nominating a 'Wiganese' word or phrase to feature in the mural. The final design was printed by a local company, and installed in November 2021, followed by a launch event attended by the Mayor of Wigan and council representatives. The project was very well received online and has been highlighted by Avanti and Wigan Council in multiple print and online publications.
- Our Rivington Bus Project was funded by Community Rail Network and Cross Country Trains, and saw the first public transport link to serve Rivington Country Park in decades. We worked with Diamond Bus NW to extend an existing service from Bolton Interchange from April to October 2021, and engaged with local businesses to publicise the project. We were proud to receive Third Place at the Community Rail Awards for Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability, and are hoping to revise the route running a dedicated service from Horwich Parkway this year.

- Our 'Haigh Woodland Wanderer' integrated transport project saw multiple partners working together to provide a community bus connecting Wigan Town Centre to Haigh Woodland Park from July to October 2021. We worked alongside Wigan Council, TfGM and Friends of Haigh Woodland Park, with the help of funding from Community Rail Network, to commission a weekend service run by local operator Finches. A comprehensive marketing plan was delivered by Wigan Council, including radio, print & social media, and an online and in-person survey was used to collect passenger feedback. A full evaluation report was also produced by Wigan Council, and will be used to develop the bus projects we are hoping to run again this year.

### Next 12 months

- We have just received funding from Avanti West Coast to run pop-up wellbeing sessions at Manchester Piccadilly. Our '60 Second Stress Relief' workshops will aim to decrease anxiety related to returning to rail travel, and to increase the wellbeing of passengers and staff.
- We also look forward to completing two other projects funded by Avanti West Coast – our Clocktower Trails walking route from Wigan to Bolton, and our wildflower meadow and beehives project at the Swan & Railway Hotel opposite Wigan North Western station.
- We are hoping to run both the Haigh Woodland Wanderer service, and the revised Rivington Bus route this year, as well as developing an additional integrated transport link between Walkden station and RHS Bridgewater.
- We have a number of projects in place at Bolton Station, including a bike hub, platform planters and film workshops in collaboration with Bolton Station Community Partnership. We are also hoping to launch a 'Stations of Sanctuary' project in partnership with City of Sanctuary Bolton and a number of other local community organisations.
- Projects are also being developed alongside Community Rail Lancashire at Entwistle Station, and a bid has been submitted to the DfT Loneliness Fund with Wigan Council to create community facilities at Wigan North Western station.



## North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership (NCCRP)

**CRP Officer:** Marina Farey

**CRP Chair:** Garfield Southall

**CRP Chair:** Marina Farey

**Website:** [northcheshirecrp.org](http://northcheshirecrp.org)

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### Key highlights of 21-22

- Frodsham, Helsby and Ellesmere Port received a Cheshire Best Kept Stations Award and the Community Rail officer arranged presentations at stations.
- The Community Rail officer and Chair delivered a presentation about the CRP and Community Rail at the GoGreen festival hosted by the University of Chester.
- In collaboration with Mid Cheshire CRP, we organised and delivered an artwork exhibition at the Chester Cathedral exhibiting the artwork created to celebrate the re-opening of the Halton Curve.
- In collaboration with Cycle North Cheshire we produced and distributed cycle maps covering the areas around Helsby and Frodsham.
- In August 2021 we produced a promotional postcard “days out by rail” in support of the Community Rail Network’s campaign.
- Our volunteer groups continued looking after the station gardens.
- We re-engaged with the Ince and Elton community and proposed some mutually beneficial projects to them.



## Next 12 Months

- Print and distribute more “days out by rail” postcards.
- Frodsham station / Castle Park display boards linking to the Castle Park art project phase two.
- Seek further exhibition opportunities for the artwork.
- Continue working with the university’s departments: communications, GoGreen and careers, exploring potential projects and the involvement of students.
- Work with Cheshire West and Chester Council on Rural Mobility Fund projects.
- Little Sutton station restoration project.
- Further volunteer recruitment.
- Website blog by CRP Chair offering interesting cycling and walking routes.
- Develop new cycling and walking maps.
- Work with Ince and Elton community on creation of a recreational area at the station.
- Engage with scout groups in Ince and Elton, Helsby, Frodsham and Runcorn East.
- CRP marketing brochure.
- Warrington Bank Quay – explore project opportunities with the local groups and work with Avanti West Coast and Warrington Council on the “way finding” scheme.
- Explore possibilities on engaging with industry and business in the area.
- Work with North Cheshire Rail User Group in organising a “station party” event.
- Continue promoting the CRP and Community Rail.



## The Mid Cheshire line

**CRP Officer:** Stephen Forde (interim)

**Website:** [midcheshirerail.org.uk](http://midcheshirerail.org.uk)

**CRP Chair:** John Oates

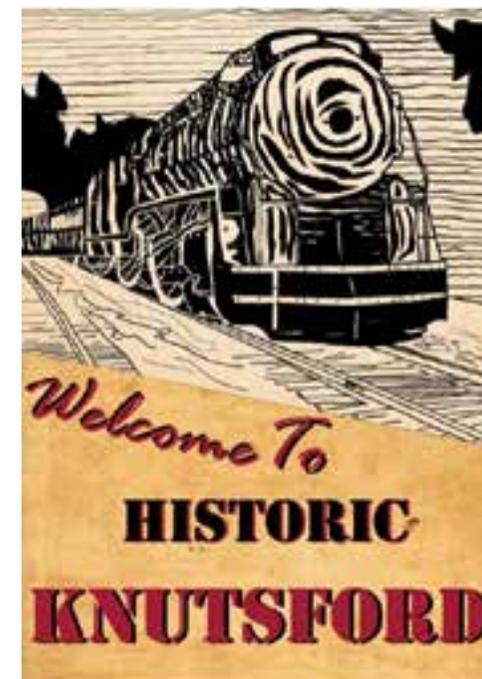
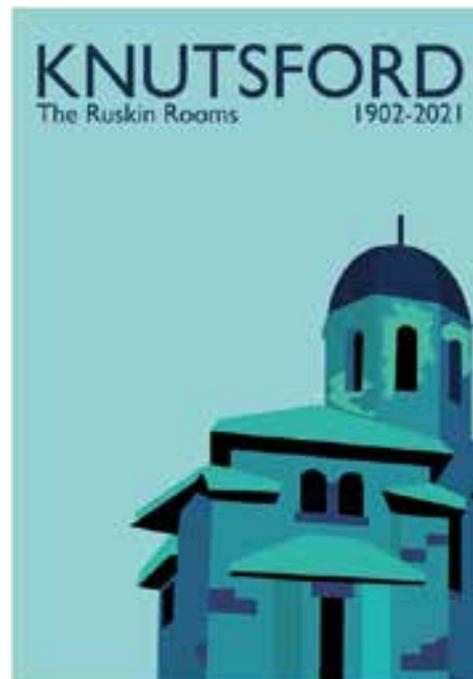
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### Key highlights of 21-22

- The CRP achieved its accredited partnership status.
- The historic City of Chester and its cathedral hosted Pete Waterman's Making Tracks Model Railway Exhibition which was supported by Nicky Thompson's Marvellous Days Out Railway Poster Exhibition, that features locations along the Mid Cheshire line.
- The 74-foot West Coast main line layout stretched along the length of the nave at Chester Cathedral. The Model Railway Exhibition was supported by Hornby Model Railways and the Chester Model Centre.
- Poster gallery that was sponsored by the Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership in collaboration with the North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership. The railway art posters tell a simple story of where you can take days out by rail on the Mid Cheshire and the North Cheshire lines.
- Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership joined the national campaign encouraging people to 'go green by train'.

We along with other community partnerships and volunteer groups across Britain sought to spearhead a national campaign highlighting sustainable travel as a key factor in changing travel behaviour in the build up to COP26.

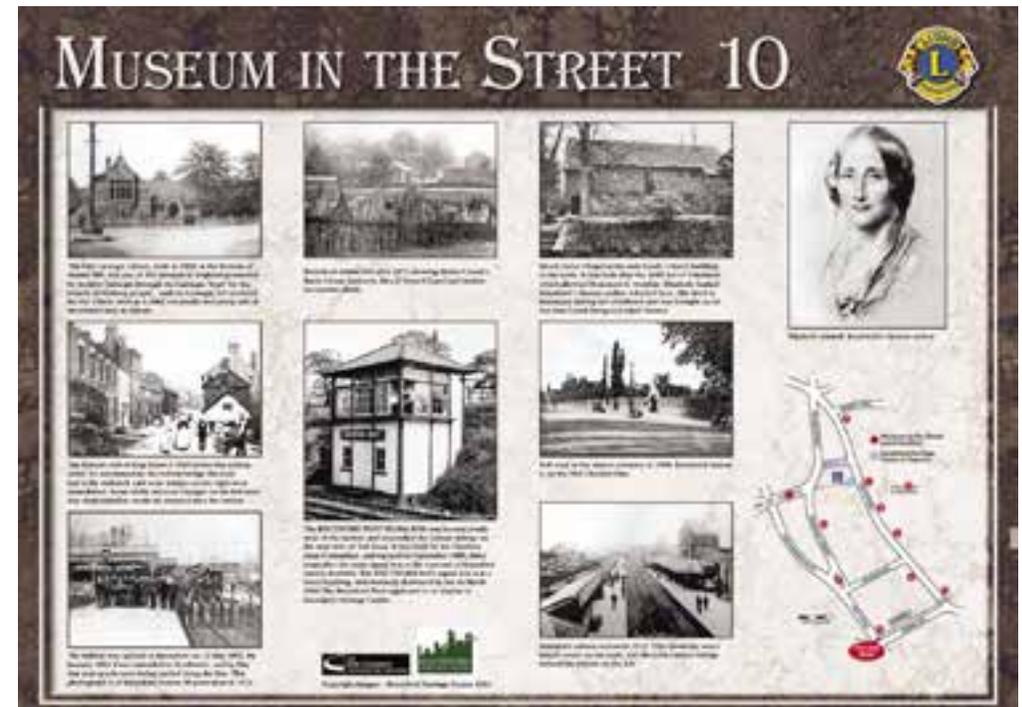
- Knutsford station hosted a 'pop-up' stall that supplied warm winter clothing to less advantaged people living in and around the Knutsford area. The stall was a great success and more information is available on page 12.
- The CRP was happy to support the 'Access for All' application for Northwich station (Feb 2022).



## Next 12 months

- Recruit a permanent and full time Community Rail officer. The previous post holder has recently moved on and the position is currently being covered on a part time interim basis. The CRP will be recruiting a replacement as soon as possible in 2022.
- Appointment of a new chair person. John Oates after many years of service as chair is relocating away from Cheshire and is therefore having to relinquish his position. A new chair will be appointed shortly. John has agreed to remain as a board member for at least a year to ensure a smooth transition.
- Developing a new website. As technology advances and expectations around accessibility grow, the CRP recognises that its current website needs updating to enhance both the usability of the site and the visibility of the CRP.
- Appointment of a part time social media officer. In addition to updating the CRP website, a new social media officer will be working with the Community Rail officer to broaden the reach and engagement of the CRP across multiple channels.
- The line has three Mid Cheshire rail walks booklets which were revised in 2019. The updated versions were completed and reprinted in 2020 to promote sustainable travel and tourism along the line. The CRP wishes to expand the collection of walks, and this will include developing more accessible routes for those who are less mobile helping to bring the benefits of outdoor exercise to a larger audience.
- The CRP has worked in partnership with the Knutsford Academy in creating several pieces of art that will shortly be installed at Knutsford station. The artwork highlights locations and venues around Knutsford and within easy reach of the railway station.
- In partnership with Knutsford Heritage, artwork under the theme of museum in the street will be installed on Knutsford station this spring.
- Having received Landlords' Consent the CRP working with Friends of Altrincham Interchange will be installing 'Tommy Silhouette' remembrance statues at Altrincham station.
- The CRP will be working with volunteers to bring back the music train which was a firm favourite with commuters and leisure travellers along the line.

Home – [Marvellous Days Out](#)



## East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership

**CRP Officer:** Simon Clarke, Caroline Holden, Shahiesta Raja, Katie Douglas

**CRP Chair:** Melanie Taylor

**Website:**  
[communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/east-lancashire](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/east-lancashire)

### Key highlights of 21-22

#### Accrington station

- Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) has been working with The Bahja Initiative and Inspire Motivate Overcome on a wellness project for women in Accrington. Both these charities are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of the people in their communities by collaborating with various organisations to provide new opportunities.
- A series of informal sessions took place at a local community centre and at the Bunker at Accrington station. These included workshops on mental health and wellbeing, diet and nutrition, exercise, and travel for leisure. The women were given the opportunity to learn how to travel by train with confidence and for the purpose of improving their physical and mental health by walking and using the train to travel for leisure instead of the car.
- Community Rail Lancashire took part in world Hijab Day on Tuesday 1 February 2022 ([communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/world-hijab-day-2022/](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/world-hijab-day-2022/)). World Hijab Day is an annual event founded by Nazma Khan in 2013, taking place in 140 countries worldwide. Its stated purpose is to encourage women of all religions and backgrounds to wear and experience the hijab as a way to promote understanding and cohesion.
- Meeting at Burnley Manchester Road station participants were encouraged to bring a scarf to wear. They were welcomed at the station by Stations of Welcome women's group who were on hand to help with fitting hijabs if required.
- After arriving at Accrington station, the group spent some time exploring the town's biggest and newest mosque and the visit, which was open to everyone was a great success.



### Brierfield station

- On Thursday 2 December 2021, in partnership with the Connecting East Lancashire project and supporting partners, Northern and Pendle Borough Council, Community Rail Lancashire officers launched a celebratory event to showcase the Pennine cycleway and hidden gems that can be appreciated from Brierfield station.
- A new cycle shelter showcasing some of the most picturesque locations around Brierfield station was unveiled, featuring many local residents, businesses and community organisations. A news item covering the event can be viewed online: [communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/connecting-brierfield-launch](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/connecting-brierfield-launch)

### Nelson and Colne College

- CRL are working with the Business Studies year one cohort at the college. The students have visited the Bunker to learn how a not-for-profit organisation operates and also take part in career talks and will be working together to plan an event to encourage more people to use the train.

### Rose Grove station for Padiham

- Working with local creative company Huckleberry Films, a film was produced highlighting a two and a half mile walk from Rose Grove station to the Memorial in Padiham, taking in canals and the Padiham Greenway.
- We have also been working on a project based on the life and work of Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth with Padiham Green Primary School. She is one of the women who features in the booklet 'Discover Amazing Women By Rail' and we hope to use this project to promote leisure travel to Rose Grove and Padiham to visit Gawthorpe Hall. This will be launched during 2022.

### Church and Oswaldtwistle station

- The partnership has worked with the station adoption group and produced a leaflet to help them recruit new members.

### Burnley Central station

- As reported in the Education Team report, CRL is working with a group of Northern apprentices to make a difference at Burnley Central station.

### Blackburn to Manchester via Todmorden

- A series of films have been made at stations along the Autism Friendly line to help grow confidence in using the stations and rail travel. A QR code is available on the Community Rail Lancashire website that will take you to each film. [communityraillancashire.co.uk/autism-friendly-line](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/autism-friendly-line)

### Next 12 months

Planned projects over the next few months include:

#### Preston station

Dick, Kerr Ladies

- During October filming took place at Preston station and on an Avanti West Coast train for the making of a film about one of the Dick, Kerr Ladies football legends, Lizzy Ashcroft.
- A youth engagement project is now in place and Katie Musgrove, CRL Special Educational Needs Officer, will be working with a group of supported internship students based at County Hall to create a series of postcards about the Dick, Kerr Ladies. The group will be visiting the National Football Museum in Manchester, taking a tour of the Deepdale Stadium, hearing from Gail Newsham and working with a local artist.

Platforms 3c and 4c

- There are plans to make improvements to platforms 3c and 4c where trains from East Lancashire arrive before going onto Ormskirk.

### Other plans:

- During 2022 we will launch projects at Blackburn, Rose Grove and Burnley Central as well as the iconic DalesRail service. Mini timetables and posters will be produced for the Todmorden Curve service.

## Clitheroe line Community Rail Partnership

### Community Rail Partnership Officer:

Simon Clarke, Caroline Holden,  
Shahiesta Raja, Katie Douglas

### Website:

[communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/  
clitheroe-line](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/clitheroe-line)

### CRP Chair: Melanie Taylor

[communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/  
dalesrail](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/dalesrail)

### Key highlights of 21-22

#### Blackburn station

- Pre pandemic, Community Rail Lancashire had strong links with Crosshill Special School in Blackburn and working on an art project for Blackburn station was a great way of rebuilding our connection. In June 2021 our community rail Special Educational Needs Officer, visited the school to deliver a rail safety workshop followed up by a rail experience day once the artwork has been installed. In addition to learning important safety the students created artwork for the two metre long 'Welcome to Blackburn' sign. This is yet to be installed but should be complete by spring 2022 and will provide a wonderful colourful welcome to those visiting Blackburn and the station.
- After being awarded a grant from the Community Rail Development Fund (CRDF) a project called 'Fantastic Recycled Plastic' has seen Community Rail Lancashire officers work with Newfield School, a secondary school for pupils with varying physical and educational needs in Blackburn. Working in partnership with a local artist, it was decided that the children would develop an art project that promoted sustainability and rail travel. After initial discussions between the school and artist the Fantastic Plastic project was born. Utilising the plastic from milk bottles, the plastic was melted down and made into tiles that were used to form a piece of artwork. The artwork has now been completed and will be showcased at Blackburn station with a replica displayed at the school.
- Due to the fact that many of the children at Newfield School have some profound disabilities that can prevent them from travelling on public transport without





adequate support, the Community Rail Lancashire team will liaise with staff and parents and in partnership with Northern will produce a directory of contacts that will make travelling by train safe and accessible for all. This can then be used by the school any time they wish to travel with the pupils.

#### **Darwen station – Back on Track project**

- The launch of this project took place in June 2021 and now provides Darwen station with some beautiful and inspirational artwork. Working with Child Action North West, the project provided young people with the opportunity to think about the impact that lockdown was having on their lives both the highs and the lows and their hopes for the future. An inspirational piece of artwork that now shines at Darwen station and one that hopefully instils hope, confidence, ambition and potential in everyone who sees it.

#### **Blackburn, Darwen and Entwistle stations**

- These stations have recently been dressed with posters to promote the local cycling and walking network across the borough. All stations now have information on how local residents and visitors can freely download the local cycling app and walking app, showcasing local cycling and walking events in the area.

#### **Next 12 months**

Planned projects over the next few months include:

#### **Darwen and Entwistle stations**

- Producing another film to encourage local people to explore Lancashire by train. Working with a local creative film company, a walk from Darwen station to Darwen Tower will be commissioned with another film being made from Entwistle station.

#### **Blackburn station**

- Arts2Heal is a charity based in Blackburn that works with the local community to help with mental health issues through art therapy. We are working with Arts2Heal to brighten up the subway area at Blackburn station by designing a piece of art that will aim to make the area feel more welcoming for passengers. Banu Adam and her team of artists have been visiting different stations for inspiration and are in the process of designing an uplifting piece of art.

## Crewe to Manchester and South East Manchester Community Rail Partnerships

**CRP Officers:** John Kenny and Sarah Morgan

**Websites:**  
[crewe2manchesterrail.org.uk](http://crewe2manchesterrail.org.uk)

**CRP Chair:**  
Mark Barker – Crewe to Manchester  
Craig Wright – South East Manchester

[semcorp.org.uk](http://semcorp.org.uk)

### Key highlights of 21-22

- John Kenny and Sarah Morgan were recruited as Community Rail officers to work together across both partnerships after the previous Rail officer left in early 2021.
- New steering group chairs are in place for each CRP as part of a restructure for the partnership accreditation process, for formal approval at the first meeting of the new steering group.
- We have improved engagement with connecting CRPs for joint projects and will be holding regular meetings to share ideas.
- We are developing a relationship with Crewe Heritage Centre with a view to holding community rail events at the centre and supporting the promotion of Crewe Heritage Centre as a major destination on the line.
- We have supported the Cheshire Best Kept Stations by being active members of the organising committee, with the awards event taking place on 1 April.
- We have worked with Avanti to acquire a grant to support the Feel-Good Field Trips project, which will involve up to 170 school children travelling by rail to attend a cookery experience session in East Didsbury.
- We have submitted an expression of interest to the DfT Tackling Loneliness with Transport Fund to design and deliver rail journeys and walks to older people at risk of loneliness.

- We have supported many activities with our station adoption groups in partnership with Northern: -
  - Publication of a brief history of Manchester to Birmingham (by Tony Wright of the Friends of Holmes Chapel)
  - 25th anniversary of Friends of Handforth Station
  - 10th Anniversary of the Friends of Heaton Chapel
  - Unveiling of a new bench at Heaton Chapel
  - Alderley Edge – new book exchange and multiple new artworks
  - Friends of Goostrey station awarded £10,000 National Lottery towards station building improvements to allow community use
  - New group established for the Friends of Hyde Loop



## Next 12 months

- **Station Connections Artwork – 180th anniversary of the Manchester to Birmingham railway Art Exhibition Tour**

The complete collection of the Station Connections art project, covering stations on both the Crewe – Manchester and South East Manchester CRP areas will be displayed at several locations throughout 2022 to celebrate the 180th Anniversary of the Manchester Railway and to promote rail travel and the work of the friends of groups.

The website for the artwork is [stationconnections.co.uk](http://stationconnections.co.uk)

- **Edgeley approach art project at Stockport station**

Local community groups and schools will be approached to produce 40 pieces of artwork for display along the east wall along the Edgeley approach to Stockport station.

The artwork will be based on the idea of a view from a train window with the themes of landscapes, destinations that people have travelled to (by train) or of people, including significant members of the community past and present.

The Community Rail Partnership will work with and engage with Arts in Recovery in the Community – [arc-centre.org](http://arc-centre.org) to co-ordinate this project.

- **Working with the Community Rail Network and stakeholders to achieve accreditation of the two CRPs**

The Community Rail officers are working hard to make progress towards accreditation by preparing financial statements and budgets and reorganising the structure of the steering groups which will improve governance of the CRPs.

- **Development of a path linking Rose Hill station platform with the Middlewood Way**

A proposal has been discussed with TfGM and Network Rail and the rail partnership will now work to develop plans for the new path in partnership with Network Rail and colleagues at Stockport Council.

- **Development of accessible walks with Mid Cheshire and North Cheshire CRPs**

The Community Rail officers from each of the three partnerships are working to bring together accessible walks connecting with accessible stations across the three areas.



## High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership

**CRP Officer:** Helen Wright/  
Catherine Croney

**Website:** [peakdistrictbytrain.org](http://peakdistrictbytrain.org)

**CRP Chair:** Cllr Jean Wharmby

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### Key highlights of 21-22

**Profile:** We raised our CRP profile by designing and producing line guide leaflets, posters and banners for each of the three partnership lines. In February 2022 we organised a first 'Friends Conference' to inspire, reconnect and build on success. Over 40 friends and stakeholders participated at the Palace Hotel in Buxton.

**Awards:** Friends of Buxton Station scooped three awards at the Community Rail Network annual awards event in December 2021 and were also awarded a prestigious Queen's Award for their voluntary efforts to boost the local community and businesses during the COVID pandemic.

### Projects

- Friends of Edale Station are very happy to see the new fence installed and have enhanced the presentation of the station with new panoramic landscape images along with totems and signs in the traditional Midland Red.
- Neil Williams at Friends of Glossop Station worked with partners to produce a series of Glossop line heritage information boards, displayed at each station along the line.
- Friends groups participating in the Buzzing Stations project created more bumblebee friendly planters, led bumblebee safaris for the local community and displayed bumblebee identification posters at their stations, all working with support from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust's 'Pollinate the Peak' project.



## Collaboration

- We are currently working with Northern, Network Rail and Chinley and Buxworth Transport Group to submit an application for access to Chinley station.
- As Derbyshire County Council staff, we are also involved in consultations, meetings and workshops to increase and support sustainable travel across the High Peak and Hope Valley.

## Next 12 months

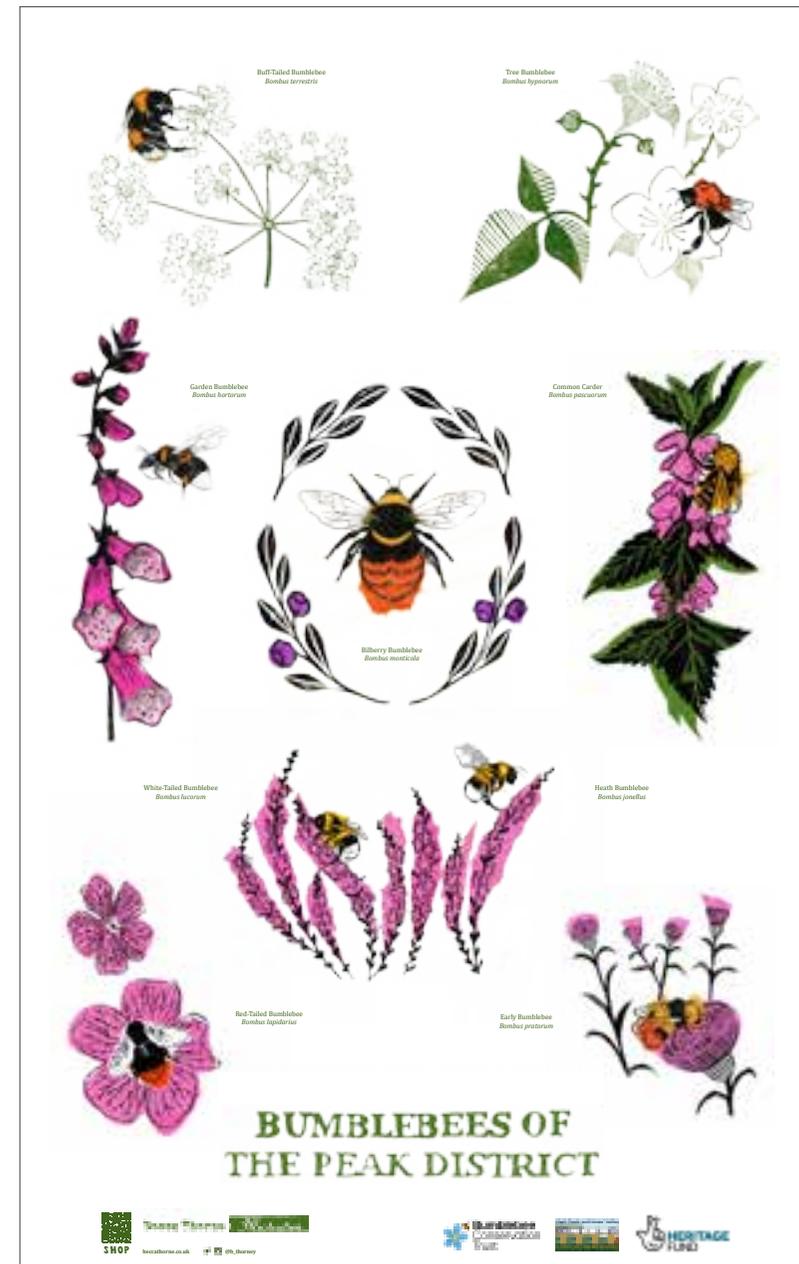
- Follow up on actions and ideas from the Friends Conference including
  - developing self-led walking routes
  - supporting the development of friends collaborative groups on each line
  - building on Buzzing Stations with more nature-friendly gardening
  - developing links to dementia friendly guided walks with the Peak District National Park
  - supporting the formation of collaborative Rail User Groups as distinct groups, alongside Friends groups

## At stations

- Hope station will see a new fence and car park planter installed.
- Eamonn Murphy designed panels at Whaley Bridge station to be installed.
- Village information panels at Grindleford and Chinley stations to be erected.
- Working on developing support for New Mills stations with Transition New Mills and Incredible Edible New Mills.
- Water butts to be installed at Edale and Chapel en le Frith.

## Marcomms

- Create a marketing and communications planner to cover web, social media, posters, public relations, newsletters, leaflets.
- Link in with Community Rail Network campaigns.
- Focused promotion of the Buxton line with 'days out to' information for stations along the line.
- Mid-week promotions for the Hope Valley line.



## 4. Our commitments

# Community Rail funding

The distribution of funds to the Community Rail Partnerships takes account of the Secretary of State's Community Rail Development Strategy. To inform this funding cycle, Northern undertook a consultation process taking into account the views of Community Rail Network (CRN) and Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs). This enabled Northern to understand their aims and needs and the funding required to achieve these.

The consultation was undertaken in the summer of 2021 and key themes of feedback were:

- 'Core' funding should be available to accredited CRPs only. Or those actively working towards accreditation (in the case of new CRPs). Therefore, values included in the accompanying table assume all CRPs will be accredited or keep accreditation.
- The value of a three-year funding cycle to help with long term planning and stability.
- Maintain a broadly equal split of core funding to CRPs wholly within the Northern network (noting accreditation above).
- Acknowledgement that a number of new CRPs are in development across the Northern network which may require future funding. And that this would need to be from within existing funding parameters.

Northern has been pleased to offer station adoption and seed corn funding again this year, which have benefitted a wide range of projects. At the time of writing this report around **£75,000** has been awarded from the seed corn fund and **£70,000** from the station adoption fund.

We are currently undertaking a review of our project fund criteria and application processes to ensure they can deliver maximum value for the communities we serve.

<b>CRP</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Settle - Carlisle	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Leeds - Morecambe (Bentham line)	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Yorkshire Coast	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Penistone line Partnership	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
North Nottinghamshire & Lincolnshire	£8,539	£9,205	£9,205
Bishop line	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Tyne Valley	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Esk Valley	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
South Fylde line	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
West of Lancashire	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Cumbrian Coast line	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Furness line	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Lakes line	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
North Cheshire	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Mid Cheshire	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
East Lancashire	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Clitheroe line	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
South East Manchester	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
Crewe - Manchester	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
High Peak/Hope Valley	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
South East Lancashire	£28,759	£31,003	£31,003
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£583,719</b>	<b>£629,265</b>	<b>£629,265</b>

We also provide funding to Community Rail Network and Community Rail Lancashire's Education Programme

Community Rail Network	£197,471	£212,874	£212,874
Community Rail Lancashire Education Programme	£112,078	£120,820	£120,820



