

November 2023

# Stakeholder Newsletter



**"GIFTS OF TIME AND LOVE ARE SURELY THE BASIC INGREDIENTS OF A TRULY MERRY CHRISTMAS.."**  
— RUTH ELEANOR "PEG" BRACKEN

You will notice a slightly different layout to our newsletter this month. This year we have been working on how to make the work of the CRP easier to access and understand from those outside of the industry. As well as ensuring that our activities cover the 4 pillars of community rail, we have identified 4 key strands that we plan our projects around:

1. Education
2. Station and Neighbourhood Enhancements
3. Inclusivity and Community Links
4. Sustainability

Our newsletter now reflects these 4 strands with clear updates on CRP projects within each one.

As 2023 draws to an end, I would like to wish all of you a peaceful and happy holidays and we look forward to working with and for our communities in 2024.

Malcolm Holmes, Chair of Heart of England CRP

## NEWS & STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE:

- 4 Strands
- Education
- Station & Neighbourhood Improvements
- Inclusivity & Community Links
- Sustainability
- Partner Events
- Funding Opportunities



Fun at our Community Day in September

# 4 Strands

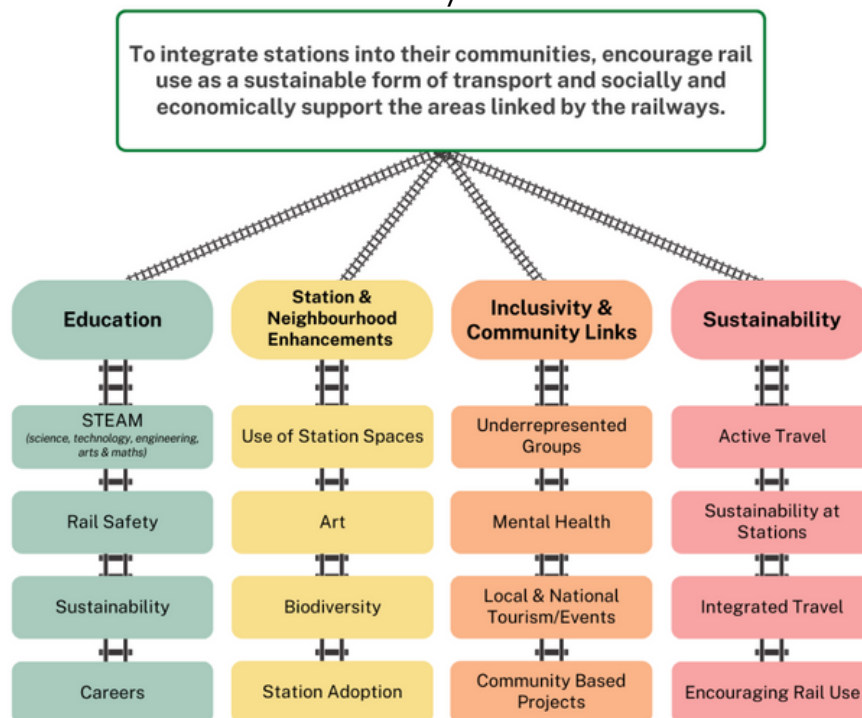


It's not always easy to describe the work the CRP does. We cover areas that serve diverse communities that have different needs and our projects reflect the huge amount of variety within our area. We have been working on a way to make it easier for people to understand the work we do and how they might be able to work with us.

As well as ensuring that our activities cover the 4 pillars of community rail, we have also identified 4 key strands that we plan our projects around:

- 1. Education** – we work on projects with schools and young people that cover topics such as STEAM, rail safety, sustainability, and careers.
- 2. Station & Neighbourhood Enhancements** – our projects look at how we can improve our station spaces and the way they connect with the local community. We work on projects that bring art to stations, look to improve biodiversity, and find new ways to use station spaces.
- 3. Inclusivity & Community Links** – a key role for us is understanding barriers that people may have to train travel and working with project partners to find ways to overcome them. We also host local events and support community-based projects.
- 4. Sustainability** – everything we do is with the aim of encouraging people to use the railways to travel more sustainably. We encourage active travel to and from stations and aim to educate people about the environmental benefits of rail travel.

With these 4 strands we want it to be easier for individuals and groups to not only understand what we do, but to also approach us with ideas of how we might work together on projects that will benefit the local community.



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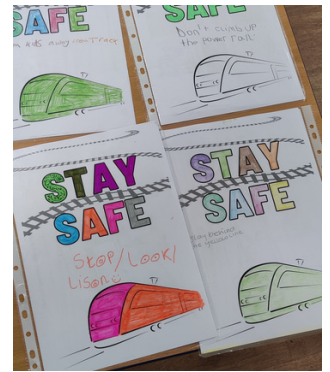


## STEM 5

Continuing our work with the Smallpeice Trust, we have already helped deliver three year 9 STEM days at three secondary schools in our area since September as part of the STEM 5 project. The STEM days provide pupils with hands on experience with solving engineering problems, introduce them to careers in the rail industry and give pupils the chance to earn The Crest Award. Next term we'll start taking year 10 pupils who took part in our STEM days last year on trips highlighting exciting STEM careers in the railway industry in fun and interactive ways.

## Feel Good Field Trips

Congratulations to Community Rail Lancashire who have just reached a milestone of over 2000 students benefitting from the Feel Good Field Trips programme, [click here to read more](#). We have continued to support the delivery in our area of CRL's Feel Good Field Trips programme in partnership with Avanti West Coast. These trips take primary and secondary school groups out on the train to travel to incredible places across Avanti's network. We've had some great feedback from schools this year including one teacher who said: "Some of our children had never been on a train or visited London and were so grateful for the chance to do this. Many told us at the end of the day that it was the best day they had ever had!"



## Baginton Fields School

This Autumn we developed and delivered a rail confidence programme with Baginton Fields School, an SEND secondary school in Coventry for pupils with moderate to severe learning disabilities. It has been a pleasure to work with Baginton Fields to support their travel training with direct experience of being at a station, practice buying tickets and following key rail safety guidance. We are very excited to be planning a trip on the train to Warwick Castle in the New Year with Baginton Fields.

## LearnLive - Rail Safe Friendly

With the support of our Steering Group we have recently made the decision to partner with LearnLive to help deliver rail safety to 45 schools in the area we cover. LearnLive have worked with Network Rail to produce Rail Safe Friendly, a programme that runs live broadcasts with railway professionals to educate pupils on rail safety. With hundreds of schools to cover across Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, we hope this partnership will help us reach more schools than ever and improve young people's rail safety in our area.



# Station & Neighbourhood Enhancements



## Rugby Colour Palette

Our consultation period for the Rugby Colour Palette project has come to an end. We have received over 180 unique suggestions for people, places or things that the local community think are synonymous with Rugby. We have also held 6 workshops in local primary schools thanks to Ruby Road and a couple of community consultations at festivals and with community groups with the support of Warwickshire Towns Network. Artist Stacey Barnfield from the Colour Palette Company will now be working his magic to create a Rugby Colour Palette, for installation at the railway station by the end of March 2024.

## Kenilworth Visitor Information Point

Kenilworth Town Council have recently completed a wayfinding scheme and we were delighted to be able to fund the new finger post and visitor information point at Kenilworth Station.



## Platforms for Change

A project is being developed between Community Rail Network and the Scouts to enable Scout groups to undertake station adoption work alongside friends' groups. Scouts can achieve a 'Platforms for Change' badge as well as others including gardening, safety and fundraising.

Friends groups can pass on their skills to a new generation of potential adopters. The project is still in development but the idea is that it will be entirely flexible around the needs of the adoption groups and the local Scouts groups. For example, an adoption group can register their interest in a local Scouts group coming to work on a particular project for a set time period, or for a more long term collaboration. A map will be available online for Scout groups to find their local station or CRP offering to support the project and if you'd like more information or to be kept up to date with the project, then please contact Karen Bennett at [karen@communityrail.org.uk](mailto:karen@communityrail.org.uk)



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**Coventry Community Day**

On Saturday 9th September, we were joined by Coventry-based community organisations for our 2nd Coventry Station Community Day. On what turned out to be the hottest day of the year, we took over the boulevard in front of the station and provided members of the public with activities from groups like Men's Shed, Creative Kindness and Coventry Urban Eden, Entertainment from Highly Sprung's The Honeyz, and information about initiatives and campaigns such as Urban Goodies CIC's food drive, the Curious Boys and Girls Club and Coventry and Warwickshire Mind. Coventry Transport Museum provided plenty of play opportunities for our younger visitors and The Herbert hosted a reminiscence stand. We welcomed Zarah Sultana MP and colleagues from Chiltern Railways, WMRE, Coventry City Council and Avanti West Coast who supported the day.



# Inclusivity and Community Links



## Railway Explorations

We have now launched our Railway Explorations project. Working with Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre and Positive Youth Foundation in Coventry, and Solihull MBC's Refugee and Resettlement Officer we have already delivered 2 rail confidence sessions at Coventry Station and taken a group of 20 young people to ThinkTank. In the New Year, we will be delivering 5 rail confidence sessions to asylum seekers based in Solihull as well as taking them and participants from PYF and CRMC out on more trips where they can discover the railways.

## White Ribbon Day

On Saturday 25th November, we joined colleagues from West Midlands Trains at Snow Hill Station to raise awareness of the campaign to end violence against women and girls. We collected over 200 signatures from people pledging to #ChangeTheStory, spoke to many more and gave out postcards designed for us last year by Emily Kaye Illustrations, with more information about the campaign. If you'd like to find out more about White Ribbon UK, please visit [www.whiteribbon.org.uk](http://www.whiteribbon.org.uk)

## Tracks of our Lives

Escape Arts are an amazing charity who work with communities throughout Warwickshire with the vision to bring people together through creativity, to address isolation, improve wellbeing and build strong, vibrant, inclusive and happy communities. We are delighted to be partnering on Tracks of our Lives, a powerful, 6-month cross-demographic Artist in Residence programme from the Escape Arts Arts and Health hub at the Station Gallery, Nuneaton Station. The project links to wider rail connections across the country linking oral histories to local cultural and locations along the rail line that hold industrial heritage and significance. Sessions are under way and we joined Rugby-based illustrator Jessica Hartshorn for one of the workshops in Nuneaton a couple of weeks ago where participants were exploring the relationship between the canals and the railways and developing their own pop-up books.



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## Choose How You Move

### - earn rewards and win prizes for rail travel

Residents and workers in Warwick District can earn rewards and win prizes for travelling by train, bus, bike or foot. The Choose How You Move challenge has reached almost 2,000 people through the free-to-use BetterPoints app. Participants earn points and prize draw entries for travelling in environmentally friendly ways. Points can be spent at local businesses, with high street brands, or donated to charity. Join today to take part in the Countdown to Christmas campaign. By travelling car-free, you can win a share of £50 every day, plus panto tickets, a gym membership and a restaurant gift card. Find out more and join in at: [chym.betterpoints.uk](http://chym.betterpoints.uk).



## South Birmingham Ramblers AGM

Thank you to the South Birmingham Ramblers who invited us to talk at their recent AGM about Rail Trails. The Ramblers were instrumental in setting up the 36 walking routes in the project and it was a privilege to share updates from the scheme and how we're continuing to promote and use the Rail Trails with the public and in our projects.

## Rail Trails

Since the launch of our social media and promotional videos and campaigns such as our Walks for the Weekend, we've doubled the number of visitors to our Rail Trails webpage. Please do share your adventures using the Rail Trails with us, either by using the #HeartRailTrails or tagging @HeartCRP on social media, or by emailing us.

## Conferences

We always welcome opportunities to share the work we do and to continue to highlight the value of community rail. Chiltern Railways invited us to speak at their community conference in October where we were able to share the latest news from the CRP. The Abbey Line CRP invited us to share our A Day Like This project at their stakeholder event in October and we'll be speaking at the Avanti West Coast Community Rail Conference in December.

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# Upcoming Partner Events



## Young Enterprise Trade Fair

**Date:** 9th December 2023

**Time:** 10:00 - 14:00

**Location:** Coventry Railway Station Boulevard

Support local young entrepreneurs by visiting the Young Enterprise Trade Fair. Teams from schools in Warwickshire have created their own businesses and this will be an ideal opportunity to purchase Christmas presents from your nearest and dearest. On sale will be:

Christmas Cards and Decorations  
Fidget toys to support mental health  
Sustainable jewellery  
Eco-friendly stationary  
Pamper boxes  
A date night in a box  
Beeswax wraps and see bombs  
Chalk board plant pots

## Community Rail Network:

**Skillshare:** Trails and Walking routes

**Book your place**

**Date:** 13th December 2023

**Time:** 10:00 - 12:00

**Location:** Online

Come along to this online session if you are thinking about developing trails and walking routes, if you've been involved in a project and you'd like to share your experiences with other members or if you'd like to hear about some successful projects and consider whether it might work at your station or along your line.

During the session we will:

- Discuss the value of trails and walking routes to community rail
- Hear from community rail members who have developed or who are working on developing routes and trails.
- Share learning points and successes
- Identify support/resource needs

This session is for Community Rail Network members only. If you are not a member and you'd like to find out more about community rail projects please subscribe to our regular e-newsletter or visit the News section of our website.

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# Funding Opportunities



## CRP Small Grants Fund

Over the past year we have had a dedicated Small Grants Fund for station adopters to apply for. Each station adopter group in the CRP area can apply for up to £175 a year to spend on things like bulbs, tools, CRN membership etc. Up until now there have been 4 application windows for when groups can apply, however we are now changing this so that adoption groups can apply at any time of the year. The £175 will reset at the start of every financial year (April 1st). For more information about the grant, please email us.

## Avanti West Coast - Customer & Communities Improvement Fund

Now in it's 4th year, Avanti have just opened their CCIF for applications from registered charities, community groups and other not-for-profit organisations, business partnerships, Local Authorities, town councils and parish councils who are located within 10 miles of one of their stations or a station that they serve across the West Coast Mainline.

The maximum amount that can be applied for is £75,000 and the applications timeline is:

1. Application window open – 27th November 2023
2. Application window closes – 12th January 2024
3. Applications will be reviewed and shortlisting process to take place – January 2024
4. A list of projects Avanti West Coast would like to support will be submitted to the DfT for approval – February 2024
5. A decision will be made on which projects will be taken forward – February / March 2024
6. Successful applicants will be notified, and funding granted – April 2024

**[Find out more and apply](#)**

## Community Rail Network

If you are a member of CRN, then you can apply for grants of up to £1000. Membership for a year is £25 +VAT and you can find out more details [here](#)

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