

February 2024

Stakeholder Newsletter



"LOGIC WILL GET YOU FROM A TO B. IMAGINATION WILL TAKE YOU EVERYWHERE."

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

You'll notice that it's a slightly shorter newsletter this quarter and this is in part due to some of the unavoidable capacity issues that you'll read about within. In a few weeks time I'll have the pleasure of attending the Community Rail Awards where we have been shortlisted for two categories. It's an honour for the CRP to be recognised amongst so many other fantastic projects nationwide. At a time when industrial action and the weather are causing disruption with our services, these community rail projects serve to remind us that the rail industry is about more than just getting people from a to b. Imaginative projects from CRPs and volunteers across the country help to tackle social isolation, encourage community engagement and action, and provide a space where all members of our society can join together for a common cause.

Malcolm Holmes, Chair of Heart of England CRP

NEWS & STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE:

- Staffing Update
- Education
- Station & Neighbourhood Improvements
- Platforms for Change
- Inclusivity & Community Links
- Sustainability
- Partner Events & Dates for Your Diary



Our Coventry Adopters trying out the new station piano

Staffing Update



It is with sadness that we announce that Madeleine will be leaving us at the beginning of March. Madeleine joined us in June 2023 and has made a huge impact to the CRP, leading trips, developing education projects and running workshops as part of wider CRP activities. Due a move across the country, Madeleine is no longer able to stay at the CRP but we wish her all the best in her new adventures and hope she'll come back to visit the groups she's had such a positive impact on.

We will be going out to recruit to replace Madeleine and will share details in due course.

Unfortunately it coincides at a time when our Lead CRP Officer, Julia, is currently working reduced hours due to an ongoing health condition so the CRP is working at a reduced capacity. This means that we are revising our activities for the year ahead and at our AGM and launch of our annual report in April (date TBC) we will be able to give an update on our 2024 projects and activities.

Education



Research and Development

Some of our readers might be aware of some consultations we have been doing with some of our station adopters between Leamington Spa and Birmingham Moor Street. This is part of an upcoming biodiversity project we hope to start with schools in the coming year called Wild Rails. As Madeleine is leaving, we will be passing this along to the new CRP Officer once they are appointed. But stay tuned for more updates to come on this exciting new project.



Baginton Fields Trip to Warwick Castle

At the end of this month Madeleine will be taking Baginton Fields School, a SEND secondary school in Coventry to Warwick Castle on the train! This trip is part of the ongoing rail confidence programme we have been delivering over the past few months to build independence for their pupils with moderate to severe learning disabilities.

Students will be getting the train from Coventry to Warwick, building vital travel skills. Whilst at the Castle they'll be learning some sword and battle skills from a real knight, watching an incredible birds of prey show and exploring the Castle grounds. Watch out for pictures on our socials!



Rail Safety in Schools

We have been out and about delivering rail safety sessions to Newdigate Primary School in Bedworth. This time, we were visiting KS1, introducing rail safety to the younger years in a fun and interactive way. Here at the Heart of England CRP we believe that it's never too early to get kids excited about rail and build in key elements of rail safety from the get-go.

Station & Neighbourhood Enhancements



Rugby Colour Palette

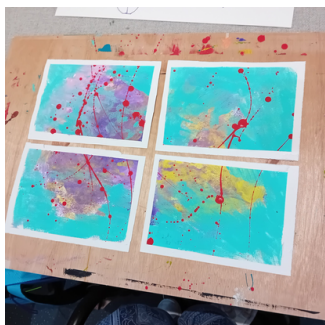
We have now finalised the Rugby Colour Palette and are working with the Colour Palette Company, Graphic Arts and Avanti West Coast on an installation date ready for an official launch. You'll have to wait so see the full design, but in the meantime, enjoy this sneak peak! Can you guess what the colours represent?



CRP Small Grants Fund

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. The £175 will reset at the start of every financial year (April 6th). We have now made the form available to fill in online and for more information about the grant, please email us.

[Apply online](#)



Artist on my Street - Art in the Interchange

Our lovely adopters from the Life Path Trust at Coventry Station have just started 4 weeks of workshops with local artist Donna Preece. With thanks to funding from Avanti West Coast, we've partnered with Coventry Artspace to commission Donna to work with the adopters to create 10 new pieces of artwork to replace our current Curious Trails exhibition in the tunnel leading to the bus interchange. The exhibition will be installed in mid-April.



Would you benefit from some extra help at your station now and again?

Would you be willing to host groups of Scouts to help out with tasks such as painting, gardening etc and at the same time pass on your skills to the younger generation?

Community Rail Network has been working with the Scouts and wider rail industry to deliver a programme to encourage more young people to partake in Community Rail. 'Platforms for Change' will see groups ranging from Squirrels (4 year-olds) to Explorers (up to 18) visit their local stations and support adoption activities.

There is a specific badge that has been designed for this, but also the groups can achieve some of their other badges including: gardening, volunteering, nature, photography and writing.

Benefits to members will include: physical support with activities like painting, gardening, DIY, making items like bird boxes, promoting to recruit more volunteers, local fundraising for new items for the station etc.

Scout leaders will have relevant paperwork like DBS and be safeguarding trained.

The host station's role is to provide a location for the groups to visit and pass on skills. How many groups visit your station and how often is totally up to you. Once you have signed up as an interested host station, your station will feature on the map on our website and then you will be linked up with interested Scout groups. Your station can come off at any point.



[Register here to find out more](#)

Inclusivity and Community Links



Railway Explorations

We've had to delay the start of the Solihull part of our Railway Explorations project, however we have led two trips for groups from Coventry since January. On the 4th January, 20 young people from Positive Youth Foundation enjoyed a trip to Warwick Castle to go ice skating, followed by a warming hot chocolate at the Market Hall Museum before heading back to Coventry.



On the 16th February, Madeleine led a group of families from the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre on a trip to Warwick. The group met at Coventry Railway Station for a safety briefing before travelling to Warwick for an explore of the Market Hall Museum. Madeleine then delivered a workshop exploring the work of Coventry-based Angela Brazil. Angela wrote some of the first and very prominent fiction books for girls and was a talented botanical illustrator. It was these illustrations that inspired the groups botanical watercolours and abstract flower paintings.



These trips are so well received by the groups with most of the participants having never experienced rail travel in the UK and some having never been on a train at all. We always talk about how to stay safe on the railways and we help to build their confidence negotiating their local railways. It also provides them the opportunity to explore the area without the need for a car.



Take A Moment

We've been delighted to be able to support the installation of Escape Art's Take a Moment Exhibition at Nuneaton Station. Local Artist Maxine Tuffin led photographic workshops with a variety of community groups across Nuneaton using smartphone and macro lenses to create a series of close-up photographs, inspiring these panels. Explore more of the photography used to make the exhibition and meet artist Maxine at a special exhibition taking place in the Station Gallery in March. See the poster on the next page for all the details



TAKE A MOMENT



AN **ESCAPE ARTS** COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT
WITH ARTIST **MAXINE TUFFIN**: WORK DEVELOPED WITH
GROUPS ACROSS NUNEATON.

STATION GALLERY

NUNEATON

LOCATED ON PLATFORM 1, NUNEATON TRAIN STATION

info@escapearts.org.uk

**Fri 15th, Sat 16th
Sun 17th March**

10.00am-4.00pm

escapearts.org.uk



Warwickshire Ramblers AGM

On the 10th February, we were fortunate to speak to 70 members of the Warwickshire Ramblers at their AGM. The Ramblers invited us to talk about our Rail Trails in which they had been instrumental in setting up.

If you know any groups who would be interested in finding out more about our Rail Trails or any locations that would like to stock the leaflets, then please do get in touch.

Upcoming Partner Events and Dates for Your Diary



Community Rail Network host numerous events in person and online throughout the year that are available for their members. Below are snapshot of upcoming events, but the full calendar of events can be found [here](#).

Sustainable growing for stations, run by Garden Organic

Date: 11 Mar, 2024 18:30 - 20:30

Online

This online session on Monday 11 March, 6.30-8.30pm, will give you lots of useful tips for creating and maintaining attractive station planters that can be sustained with minimal resource. This will include:

- Choosing edibles suitable for container growing that give regular harvests
- Making the best use of limited resources including water and sustainable plant feeds
- Creating planters that will benefit wildlife all year round
- An opportunity for discussion in smaller break out groups

Open to Community Rail Network members. The session will be on Zoom and booking closes on Friday 8 March at 10am.

[Book your place](#)

Dates for your Diary

18th March [Community Rail Awards](#)

April (Date TBC) [Heart of England CRP AGM](#)

11th - 12th May [Stratford Pursuits Festival](#)

20th - 26th May [Community Rail Week](#)