

NEWSLETTER

Updates for Stakeholders

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We are online and on social media Find us at heartcommunityrail.org.uk, on Twitter or Instagram [@HeartCRP](https://www.instagram.com/HeartCRP)

If you would like to submit anything to be shared on social media, or news stories that you'd like on the website, then please just email me.



CRP Update

Normally at this time of year, I'd be thinking about events we could be doing at stations in December, such as Christmas Carols and craft stalls. However, the effects of COVID-19 are still creating uncertainty and, with different restrictions in force in different areas of the county, it is difficult to plan even a month ahead. However, this has not stopped a huge amount of community involvement in the CRP area. The enthusiasm and motivation shown by our volunteers has been fantastic and we finish the year with the majority of stations in the CRP area adopted. The work of the CRP is also ongoing, with plans for some very exciting projects for next year being developed. In the next few months, I'm hoping to get out more to visit stations and we will be continuing to establish and develop our links with the wider communities that we serve.

If you have any information you would like to share on this newsletter, or if you would like to unsubscribe, then please email: juliasingletontasker@warwickshire.gov.uk



TOC update

Avanti West Coast:

Avanti West Coast have opened their £22.2m Customer and Communities Investment Scheme (CCIS). Please click [here](#) for further details.

The UK's first fully-wrapped Pride train has been named 'Progress' and is now in regular service on Avanti's West Coast Main Line.



CrossCountry Trains:

The Department for Transport (DfT) has awarded a new three-year contract to CrossCountry Trains to keep operating its passenger services across Great Britain.

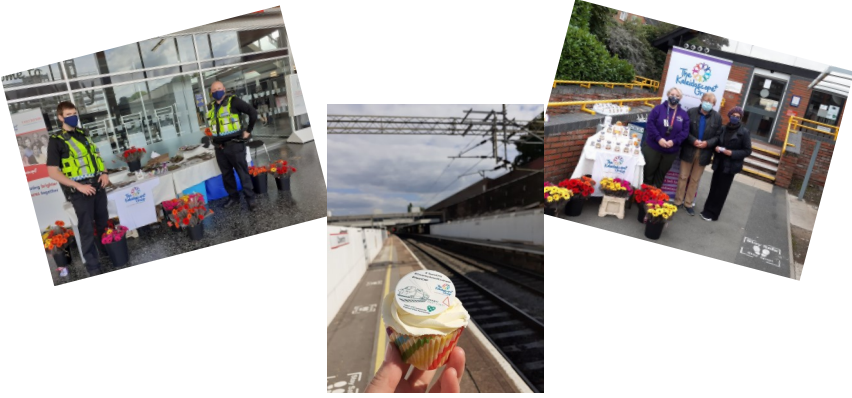
Small Grants Fund

The Heart of England CRP is pleased to announce a new fund that is open to all station adoption groups. Each station adoption group will be able to apply for up to £175 per year from the CRP to fund ongoing costs such as CNR membership, seeds, tools etc. The fund is in the process of being set up, so keep your eye out for further details arriving soon!

Stakeholder Zoom Meetings

Thank you for your continued support and engagement of our Stakeholder Zoom meetings. We have now held a further 2 meetings, covering a range of topics from different funding opportunities to points to be raised at CRP Steering Group meetings, as well as an additional session where Alex Peel, Training and Development Coordinator from Community Rail Network, introduced us to the Impact Tool. With COVID restrictions still firmly in place, we will continue our online meetings until such time when we can meet in person. The next meeting will be on Friday 20th November and an email with all the details will be sent out separately. This will be our last meeting before Christmas, but keep your eyes peeled for a special event at the start of 2021 to celebrate the first year of the CRP being fully operational.



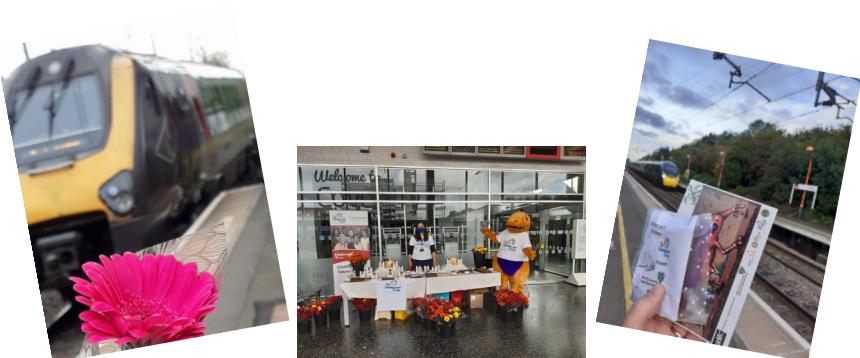


Coventry Acts of Kindness

Between the 4th and the 10th September, the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership and The Kaleidoscope Plus Group teamed up to bring #CoventryActsOfKindness to three stations in Coventry. Thanks to a grant from Avanti West Coast, we sourced beautiful flowers from CreScent Flowers, delicious baked goods from Wicked Cookies and Buttercream Dreams and inspirational art postcards from Brink Contemporary Arts to give out to people passing through Coventry, Tile Hill and Canley Stations. Leofric Lions supported us at all three stations and handed out extra goodies to children as well as bringing along Leo the Lion Mascot to join Barney the Kaleidoscope Dinosaur!

For many people, travelling by train and going into train stations may feel overwhelming for many reasons. People will have concerns about their health whilst travelling or worrying about the economic or the social impact that COVID-19 has had on them. The idea behind the Coventry Acts Of Kindness was to make people feel welcomed into the station and to encourage them to not view train travel as something to be intimidated by. Many mental health issues will also have been exacerbated during lockdown, so The Kaleidoscope Plus Group were on hand to talk to people with any concerns and signpost them to services that could help them.

We had a fantastic response to the event and even managed to inspire others to do their own acts of kindness!



Samaritans Course

We have been offered the chance to run a Managing Suicidal Contacts course through the Samaritans free of charge to any of the volunteers in the CRP area. The course is a 3 hour online course and aims to equip delegates with the skills and confidence to approach someone who is emotionally vulnerable on the railway and help them to safety and to further outside help.

This course can touch upon subjects that people may find difficult so please do consider if this course is right for you at the moment.

Please let me know by Wednesday 4th November if you would be interested in attending this course so I can book in a suitable date.



Upcoming Online Events

4th November—*Women in Community Rail (WiCR) South* are hosting a series of Breathing Space Sessions. These sessions are open to all involved in community rail. The next session will focus on Mental Health Awareness with Kelly Burton from Avanti West Coast. Further information can be found [here](#).

11th November—*Community Rail Network* is hosting its annual AGM and elections for members of its board. The event will be hosted via Zoom. The AGM is your chance to find out more about the organisation's activities over the last year and have your say on its forthcoming plans. It will start at 14:00 and run until approximately 15:30. All Community Rail Network members are welcome to attend and a full agenda will be published later. Full details can be found [here](#).

13th November—*West Midlands Railways* are hosting their Annual Community Rail Conference 2020 from 10:00-12:00. The conference this year is a Webinar, and the title is 'Restoring Confidence in Rail'. The content of the event will cover efforts towards rail recovery, the work with and by their communities throughout the Covid 19 crisis and the regional focus on localism and economic and social revival. To register, please click [here](#).

16th November—*Chiltern Railways* are holding their Stakeholder Conference from 13:00 to 16:00. The new Managing Director Richard Allan will be sharing his vision for the future of Chiltern Railways and hearing directly from you how our timetable, services, and activities can adapt to best-fit the changing needs of their customers and stakeholders. The conference will also provide an update and answer questions on plans for recovery from Covid-19. To register for the conference, please click [here](#).

9th December—*Community Rail Network* are hosting their virtual Community Rail Awards on Wednesday 9 December. For full information on the event and to find out who's on the shortlist for an award, please click [here](#).

Station Adoption Group Update.

Despite the difficulties that COVID has presented, we are thrilled that we now have many more additions to our station adoption groups, including all the stations along the Shakespeare Line (with thanks of the Friends of Shakespeare Line for all their work involved with this), as well as Tile Hill and Canley.



Canley Station celebrated it's 80th birthday with an exhibition of photos by writer and photographer Peter Rosier, and a rather spectacular cake! The ribbon was also cut on the new station garden, which the station adopters have worked hard on clearing and growing a range of herbs,

Volunteers at the newly formed Friends of The Lakes planning their planting projects.



The Friends of Kenilworth Station have announced an art competition for a potential mural at Kenilworth Station. The competition is open to all children under the age of 16 and is asking for designs that fit one of the following themes: The Community, Wildlife, Train Station, and Kenilworth.



Friends of Solihull Station finished planting these beautiful new planters outside the station.

Friends of the Shakespeare Line

Contributed by Fraser Pithie, Secretary for SLPG

It's been a hectic few months between Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon, although, as a result of COVID-19, most trains are carrying a few essential workers and lots of fresh air. Nevertheless, the number of stations adopted on the Shakespeare Line has gone from 5 at the start of the year to all 17 adopted. This transformation has been achieved by getting out into the communities along the line and seeking their involvement.

Crucially, it also shows the benefits of Rail User Groups (RUG's) reaching out to the communities served by the railway, engaging local people and groups with their station and encouraging and building a positive relationship with the train operator and Network Rail.

To continue this fantastic achievement, SLPG has formed the "Friends of the Shakespeare Line". The purpose is to provide support for station adopters at each station along the line enabling them to get on with the things they want to do to bring value to their station and enhance it for the community and visitors.

In what is believed to be another first SLPG engaged with Earlswood Garden and Leisure Centre which is directly adjacent to Earlswood station. As a result, EG&LC have adopted Earlswood station. The real prize though is a partnership with the Friends of the Shakespeare Line that will see EG&LC provide plants and horticultural supplies to all 17 stations along the route, including delivery and planting advice where requested.

The people power that has been unleashed by over 60 station adopters in little over six months will make a positive difference in establishing the foundations of success for our line from 2021 onwards. We are grateful for the input and support from Julia at Heart of England CRP to the Henley-in-Arden station adopters and the development of a Shakespeare Garden and the involvement of the Bee Friendly Trust. We are also looking forward to the benefit along the route from Heart of England CRP's project that Julia is leading with the Canal & River Trust that will encourage local tourism through the use of the waterways, walking routes and the Shakespeare Line.

We look forward to continuing to work with Heart of England CRP as well as West Midlands Trains, Vintage Trains, West Midlands Rail Executive and Birmingham City Council.

Our railway line links and serves some of England's most lovely countryside and places with some of the most socially deprived areas in the UK. Every one of our stations serves a community, and the Friends of the Shakespeare Line will do all it can to help and support each one in the best way to improve and enhance the well-being of as many as possible. It's energising stuff!