

April 2021

# Stakeholder Newsletter

Heart of  
England || Community  
Rail Partnership



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

**Julia Singleton-Tasker, CRP Officer**

The arrival of Spring and the easing of Covid-19 restrictions have brought a new sense of purpose and energy to the country and the world of Community Rail is no different. As we start to emerge from a very difficult year, Community Rail is moving forward and developing plans of how it can support TOCs with their Safe to Travel message and to build rail passenger confidence. We are optimistically planning for the year ahead, where we hope we can do many more face-to-face events and continue to reach out to the communities we serve. With events like the City of Culture and the Commonwealth Games coming up, there's certainly plenty to look forward to!

NEWS & STORIES FOR  
THIS ISSUE:

**CRP News:**

- 2021 AGM
- New Station Adopters

**TOC Update**

**Friends of the  
Shakespeare Line  
Update**

**Funding Opportunities**

**Events**



## 2021 AGM

We hope you are able to join us for our AGM on the 10th May. We will be presenting our 2020 Annual report, highlighting some of the fantastic work our volunteers do on the railways and we will be looking forward to our projects for the next year. In addition, we will be inviting guest speakers to join us, with opportunities for attendees to ask questions of our panellists.

To register please click [here](#) and to see the agenda please keep an eye on our website and on your emails.



We are very pleased to welcome 3 new station adoption groups in the Heart of England area. Claverdon, Lapworth and Coventry Arena have been adopted by local people, looking to make a change. Plans include, enhancing the wildlife at Claverdon, displaying local history at Lapworth and making Coventry Arena a welcoming station for the return of the Sky Blues this summer.

The first station adoption group to benefit from our Small Grants Fund were the Friends of Solihull Station. They now have some new tools to help them maintain their beautiful planters. Remember application periods for this fund are in January, April, July, and October and each group can apply for up to £175 per year.



If you have any information you would like to share on this newsletter, or if you would like to unsubscribe, then please email: [juliasingletasker@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:juliasingletasker@warwickshire.gov.uk)



# TOC Update

**West Midlands Railway** has resumed a 2 hourly service between Nuneaton and Leamington Spa from the 26th of April. Plans for the hourly service are yet to be confirmed, but this is great news for the line and the communities it serves.

**Avanti West Coast** launched a Facebook group to connect their disabled community. It's a place to share inspiration and support. A chance to provide feedback and be the first to hear about new initiatives. So, if you're passionate about accessible rail travel, they'd love for you to join. [Facebook Link](#).

**CrossCountry** has announced it is extending its support of the Rail to Refuge scheme, which offers free train travel to individuals fleeing domestic abuse. To find out more about this programme please click [here](#).

**Chiltern Railways** introduced a new timetable on Monday 12 April to coincide with the next step in the Government's roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions in England. The new timetable will increase services on the London Marylebone – Amersham – Aylesbury line as well as providing more services between London and Oxford, and London and Birmingham, as non-essential retail reopens, and other activities are able to resume.

**Vintage Trains** have announced their Tyseley Locomotive Works Open Weekend on the 23rd and 24th October. This will include the 70th anniversary of volunteering party. For further details click [here](#).



## Friends of the Shakespeare Line Update

We have welcomed Heart CRP's support in providing up to £175 through its small grants fund for each station on the Shakespeare Line in the CRP's area; this includes the stations between Stratford upon Avon and Shirley.

Despite the constraints of the 2nd lockdown, we managed to get 66 station planters built, delivered, filled with compost and topsoil and installed at all of the stations requesting them, between Birmingham and Stratford upon Avon. Thanks for this activity that has ensured station adopters can transform their stations this year is due to Ian Taylor, our committed Line Manager from West Midlands Railway and Earlswood Garden & Landscape Centre with whom we have forged a great partnership.

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## **Friends of the Shakespeare Line Update Cont...**

Mains water supplies with lockable taps have been installed at Spring Road, Hall Green, Yardley Wood, Shirley and Wythall. As I write, we are entering into a temporary licence with Network Rail to enable the installation of a lockable standpipe at Henley in Arden, allowing the use of its existing water supply. We continue to work on getting water finally restored to platform 2 and 3 at Stratford upon Avon. We will shortly be installing water butts donated to us by Severn Trent at several stations where there is no mains water.

We have launched a new website dedicated to our line and covering the route between Birmingham Snow Hill and Stratford upon Avon. The site explains what the Friends of the Shakespeare Line does, who its trustees are, and uses a mixture of archive and modern photography to showcase the heritage and interest along the route. You can access the website at [www.friends.org.uk](http://www.friends.org.uk)

We have been pleased to support the erection of replica GWR station running boards at Wilmcote. Fixed to the original posts that have remained in place for many years but without boards, the new replica boards have added some authentic heritage to this lovely ex GWR village station. It's been all Wilmcote station adopter John Douglas's work, and we were happy to support and fund John, who made the four signs and has done a superb job.

More colour is coming to our stations along the route, like the daffodil avenue that spectacularly appeared in March and April and that we planted at Danzey last autumn. As Spring arrives, we look forward to summer, hopefully, with further relaxation of restrictions. It has been so pleasing to tell our adopters to get along to Earlswood Garden & Landscape Centre and pick their plants and materials. The ability to fund plants and materials is what makes the real difference to all those that volunteer their time and commitment to benefit their community, rail users, visitors, but also the railway and its real estate.

**Fraser Pithie**

**Treasurer**

**Friends of the Shakespeare Line**

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## Funding Opportunities

**Small Grants Fund** - The second round of our Small Grants Fund closes today, the 30th April, and the next application window opens on the 1st July.

**CrossCountry** - CrossCountry have reopened their Community Engagement Fund. The fund aims to make significant impact within the communities they serve. Any project will be considered for inclusion, and there are no financial barriers to requests (subject to available funds). However, bids for projects above £5,000.00 will require assessment at a one-off meeting of a funding board and applicants will be advised within four weeks of the meeting. For more information on this please contact us.

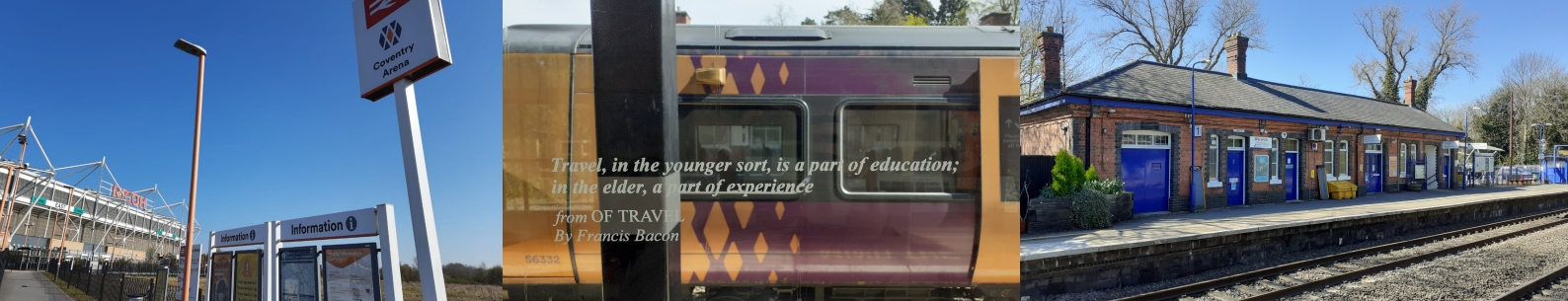
**Community Rail Network** - If you are a member of CRN, then you can apply for grants of up to £1000. Membership for a year is £25 +VAT and you can find out more details here [www.communityrail.org.uk/join-us/station-adopters-small-groups/](http://www.communityrail.org.uk/join-us/station-adopters-small-groups/)

**Grow Wild** - There is a funding opportunity for 14-25year olds for up to £500. These are grants for young people with a project idea to celebrate UK-native plants and fungi. Wow them with idea & bring projects to life. The deadline is May 17th and to apply click [here](#).

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## Events

### Heart of England CRP:

#### AGM

Date: 10 May, 2021 10:30 – 12:30

Register [here](#)



### WiCR South:

#### Breathing Space Session – How to do Risk Assessments and Method Statements

Date: 11 Jun, 2021 12:00 – 13:30

This session is open to all involved in Community Rail and it will be a peer-led session where all are welcome.

To register, please click [here](#)



### Community Rail Network:

#### Sustainability part one – Promoting rail's green credentials

Date: 8 Jun, 2021 10:00 – 11:30 and

Sustainability part two – Encouraging and enabling modal shift through community communications and engagement

Date: 22 Jun, 2021

10:00 – 11:30

Full timings and presenters TBC. Further details will appear on their social media feeds and Community Rail News bulletin.



### Community Rail Awards 2021

Date: 9 Dec, 2021

Location: Southampton

CRN are aiming to run a prestigious hybrid presentation event at the iconic Guildhall in Southampton, which will include both live and digital attendees.

Note: Entries will open and close later, on 14 June and 2 August respectively, and the live element of the event dependent on Covid 19 restrictions being lifted sufficiently to enable it to take place. [Take a look ahead to this year's awards.](#)

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