

October 2022

Stakeholder Newsletter



"TRAINS ARE WONDERFUL... TO TRAVEL BY TRAIN IS TO SEE NATURE AND HUMAN BEINGS, TOWNS AND CHURCHES, AND RIVERS, IN FACT, TO SEE LIFE."

— AGATHA CHRISTIE

Malcolm Holmes, Chair of Heart of England CRP

On the 15th October, I was able to join the CRP's A Day Like This day trip with families from Syria experiencing, for many of them, their first train trip. The delight of adults and children on trains reminded me of the importance of making the railways more accessible for the areas of our community that have barriers to train travel, be that cost, language or confidence. Community Rail plays a huge role in empowering people to access all the opportunities the railways have to offer, from projects such as the Coventry Station Community Day, to local station adopters welcoming newly arrived people into their groups.

Personally, it's an exciting time to be involved with the Heart of England CRP and to see more of these projects being planned across the West Midlands.

NEWS & STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE:

- Completed projects
- Upcoming projects
- Station adoption and partner updates
- Funding
- Other Events



Meeting the locals at
Mary Arden's Farm

Completed Projects



A Day Like This

Throughout October, with thanks to funding from CrossCountry and Community Rail Network, the Heart of England CRP worked with Highly Sprung Performance on a project to empower and inspire newly arrived families to travel by train. Working with participants referred through the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, we hosted three workshops focussing on rail safety, the previous rail experiences of the families, where they could travel to from Coventry and how to buy tickets and navigate Coventry Station.



On the 15th October, we took a trip down to Wilmcote to spend the day at Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's Mary Arden's Farm. Families enjoyed a range of activities from scavenger hunts to pottery painting and they were encouraged to take photos throughout the day to document the trip through their eyes. On the 29th October, in the community room at Coventry Station, we hosted a screening of the film of the day and this, along with a full report of this joyous project will soon be available on our website.

STEM + Challenge Days

Between March - July 2022, we worked with the Smallpeice Trust to provide 4 Railway Engineering STEM+ Challenge Days in 4 Secondary Schools across the area. Thanks to funding from CrossCountry, 230 students benefitted from the STEM day with a staggering 88% saying that they'd learnt new skills and 86% gaining an increased appreciation of what railway engineers do.



We were also able to provide funding to Nazeefah Ali from Bordersley Green Girl's School to attend the Birmingham University Rail Course. Nazeefah is now seriously considering a career in the railway engineering! Read more about her experience and the impact summary of STEM+ days [here](#).



Completed Projects



Stakeholder Event

On Friday 30th September, we held our first in-person stakeholder event since Covid. Despite horrendous weather, we had representatives for local authorities, Train Operating Companies, Community Rail Network, local community representatives and station adopters attend. We had some great feedback and ideas for future Community Rail Partnership activities and over the next few months we will be reviewing these to see how we can incorporate them into our activities and we'll be answering any questions that were raised during the session.



Download a [summary](#) of the event!

FEEDBACK COMMENTS ETC

- Our table interacted well together and we offered some ideas on the post it notes. This was effective and not sure what else could be done to improve on this.
- Great event and a massive well done to Julia, incredible work.
- Congratulations for all the amazing work to have done to catalyse the community. Looking forward to seeing how much more emerges when you get the much deserved extra pair of hands.
- Good to see what is being done.
- Relaxed and informal atmosphere helped participants to feel comfortable.
- Thank you for the invitation to the session. I was pleased to have attended and get to know a bit more about what the CRP is all about.
- It was a very informative and enlightening event and great scones!! It would have been good to have a quick intro to who was on the room - this would be useful to have in advance of the event.
- Great to be able to get out and about, even in the bad weather!
- Very well organised.
- This was a good mixture of information sharing and table discussions. Maybe there could be an event (whilst not appealing to everyone) where stakeholders can go out to help the CRP practically in some way?

Community Rail Awards

On the 6th October, we were honoured to win Best Community Engagement Project at the national Community Rail Awards for our Coventry Station Community Day.

Thanks to the amazing partnership with Highly Sprung and funding and support from Avanti West Coast and Coventry City Council, we were able to hold a day filled with fun, transport innovation, creativity and culture, with industry partners, local organisations, businesses, creatives, performers and schools coming together to showcase the best of Coventry.

The full report of the project and a special photobook of the event can be found [here](#).

It was also a night full of inspirational stories and projects from across the UK and truly showed how special and important the Community Rail family is.

Heart of England Community Rail Partnership

We're taking part!

ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA
CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL
10th - 18th December 3-7pm | All Saints' Parish Church

Upcoming Projects



Rail Week at Finham Park 2

Next week we will be at Finham Park 2, a secondary school based in Tile Hill, bringing a whole week of cross-curricular rail activities to 120 Year 8 students. With guest speakers from the rail industry, teachers from the school and the CRP all leading sessions on themes such as sustainability, rail safety and art and food on the railways, it promises to be an amazing week.

Plans for 2023 - 2024, Nuneaton - Leamington Line

We are developing plans for the next year focussing on increasing patronage and developing a line identity for the Nuneaton to Leamington Line. There are three phases to our plan, outlined below and we are planning for lots of community and school engagement around the project. More details will be shared in the near future!

Spring Term 2023

School and Community Engagement

Working with schools to develop ideas about what makes the stops along the line good places to visit. Investigate opportunities and attractions along the line and looking for common themes to tie the line together.

This will lead on to inviting entries for a new name for the line. A shortlist will be decided by a panel before a public vote with groups we've worked with and the wider communities deciding the new name for the Nuneaton - Leamington Line.

Easter 2023

Coventry Station Community Day

Following this year's community day success, we will host another community day with a mix of stalls, activities and entertainment for all on the boulevard in front of the station.

The day will include the unveiling of the new Nuneaton - Leamington line name and a prize giving to the winning entry.

May 2023 - May 2024

Art along the line

Using the new line name as inspiration, we will create artwork at all stations on the line. An individual artist would work at each station with input from the local community and schools in the form of workshops/surveys etc with the final art works being installed Easter 2024.

Legacy...

Strong draw to visit the stations along the line.

Can replicate on other lines.

Ongoing engagement with schools and community groups.

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

Station Adoption and Partner Update



Friends of Leamington Station

The Friends of Leamington Station, formed in 2004, enter the Royal Horticultural Society annual Heart of England It's Your Neighbourhood scheme where the gardens are usually assessed as Outstanding.

This year we achieved a score of 97%, better than ever before, after a particularly difficult hot and dry summer.

No doubt about Outstanding yet again.

A dozen or more active gardeners work at the station every week of the year – plus smaller groups, and their dedication has certainly paid dividends this year.

Green waste has always been composted on site before distribution around the gardens and rainwater from the garden shed roof is saved for use.

The Friends are grateful to Community Rail Partnership, Community Rail Network and Royal Leamington Spa Town Council for financial support for all they have achieved on the station gardens over the last 18 years. The trust and encouragement from Chiltern Railways has been unswerving.



Strikes

The RMT have announced strike action on the 5th, 7th and 9th November. Please check you travel arrangements on and around those dates in case your trip is affected.

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

Partner Updates



West Midlands Rail

WMR have recently created a new Community Rail Strategy, this will provide the business with a vision to focus on for the duration of the National Rail Contract with the support of their colleagues and community partners. The Strategy has been designed on the key topics which have emerged from applications to our Customer and Communities Improvement Fund, CRPs annual activity plans and funding applications for our volunteer groups. The five strategic themes are Youth Engagement, Wellbeing, Personal Safety, Encouraging Modal Shift, Rail Recovery and will be delivered under the vision for supporting local social and economic regeneration. The themes in the strategy complement the four pillars featured in the Department for Transport's 2018 Community Rail Development Strategy.



WMRE

The West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) are updating the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy and need your support.

Help WMRE plan the next 30 years of rail in the region by reading their draft strategy and completing the online survey.

When completing the survey you only need to answer the questions that are relevant to you. The survey includes an option to upload a document detailing your feedback.

The survey is open until 11.59pm on Monday 28 November.

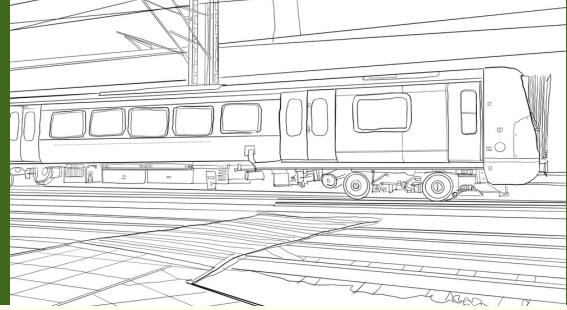
The draft strategy sets out how WMRE's plans to tackle key challenges, including bouncing back from Covid, maximising the benefits of HS2 and Midlands Rail Hub, and contributing to net zero.

Share your views: wmre.org.uk/consultation



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

Funding Opportunities



WEST MIDLANDS RAILWAY: Small Grants Fund for WMR STATIONS

There is a facility for small grants of up to £500 at WMR stations for enhancements and volunteer projects, examples of schemes include gardening schemes, planters, and arts. The application process requires an outline of the project and details of any matched funding available, which can include the value of volunteer hours.

For more information contact fay.easton@wmtrains.co.uk

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/

For more information on different funds and tips on grant funding, check out the CRN [website](#).

Alternatively, get in touch and we can help to research funding opportunities that are available for station volunteers and for projects you may wish to partner with us on.



Have you seen the latest addition to the Colour Palette family?
Spot the Warwick Colour Palette on display at Warwick Station!

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

Upcoming Events



Leamington Christmas Tree Festival.

The Heart of England CRP will be sponsoring and decorating a tree for the very first Leamington Christmas Tree Festival. Come along to All Saints Church to see all 40 trees sparkle and shimmer and to get everyone into the festive spirit.

The festival itself will be open to everyone from Saturday 10th – Sunday 18th December between 3 and 7pm. Entrance is free, with donations to All Saints' Church and The Ups of Downs charity.

Community Rail Network Events -

You can register and find out more about all CRN events [here](#).

:

Community Rail Network AGM and board elections

Date: 1 Nov, 2022

Location: Online via Zoom 14:00-15:30

Community Rail Network will hold its next Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday 1 November 2022 (14:00-15:30). The AGM will take place using Zoom and registered attendees will be sent log-in details shortly before the AGM takes place. Please register using the above link.

Webinar: Station buildings

Date: 15 Nov, 2022

Location: Online

Join CRN for this online session taking an in-depth look at what community rail groups need to know before taking on redundant railway buildings and developing them for wider community benefit.

Our panellists will focus on the process, responsibilities and potential hurdles to consider, so groups can feel confident to revitalise station spaces while managing risks for their own organisation.

The discussion will also explore how to engage your community and other key partners, to ensure the successful transformation of unused railway property into thriving hubs of activity.

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