



NEWSLETTER

Updates for Stakeholders

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Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the Heart of England CRP's Stakeholder newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to keep stakeholders up-to-date with any changes or developments within the HoE CRP and also to provide an opportunity to share the exciting work that is happening across the region.

Introduction to the Partnership

The Heart of England CRP covers 36 stations over 3 train lines operating between Birmingham, Coventry, Nuneaton, Leamington Spa and Stratford-Upon-Avon. It is formed of 11 principal partners and funders: Coventry City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Warwickshire County Council, Warwick District Council, Avanti West Coast, Chiltern Railways, CrossCountry, West Midlands Railways, Vintage Trains and West Midlands Rail Executive.

I came into this position in January and my role is rather varied. Community is at the heart of what we do and we want to make stations integral parts of their communities as well as supporting local economic and social development. Having come from a background of working with different communities through teaching and personal training, I am looking forward to working with local communities and businesses to enhance the services already provided. I enjoy finding opportunities to enthuse people about volunteering and communicating the benefits of having a station and a railway to be proud of. It's an exciting new phase for Community Rail in the Heart of England!



Partnership update

As you are all aware, work as far as the CRP goes is slightly limited by the lock-down. I am working to put plans into place for when lock down ends. I have been working with various groups to build and promote the line identity of the Shakespeare Line. I am also working closely with numerous Local Authorities, Train Operating Companies and National and Local Charities on the issue of mental health and how we as a partnership can help with people's mental well-being.



Good progress is being made on our website. Thank you to all those who have contributed so far. If you would like any information to be added about your station adoption group then please let me know. I would also appreciate any photos that people would be happy for me to share on the website.

Lastly, thank you all for your continued support of the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership.

Support Your Local Businesses

Many small businesses will have been severely affected by COVID-19. If you know of any local businesses that are offering things like home delivery to enable people to shop safely, then please let me know so I can add them to our website. Community Rail is about more than just trains, it's about supporting the communities around them and it would be great if we can signpost people to useful amenities and services.





Lockdown Activity Inspiration

During the current Covid-19 crisis, most voluntary work at stations has ceased in line with government advice. There is still plenty that volunteers can do from home. See Community Rail Network's article <https://communityrail.org.uk/ten-things-a-station-adoption-group-can-do-from-home/> to motivate and inspire you during these strange and unusual times.

Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF)

It's never too early to start thinking about applying for funding for specific projects. West Midlands Trains have a Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) that is an annual fund and will run until the end of the franchise.

The 2021/22 fund will be launching in early summer this year.

To be considered, bidders need to have community projects with 'passenger focus' and clear rail connections.

Individuals can't bid as it's for social enterprises/public sector/community interest companies.

The projects have to be delivered within one calendar year.

Matched funding is desirable.



Digital Wayfinding Trial

Avanti West Coast will be running a digital wayfinding trial at Birmingham International, enabling passengers with visual impairments to find their way around the station easily with the help of an app. They may also look to extend the functionality to include general wayfinding assistance for all passengers.

They need this to be user tested, first and foremost by those with visual impairments and have asked if there are any organisations/charities that would be willing to help with a project like this?

As well as this, they will be introducing Regional Accessible Stations Panels across the network. These will comprise local groups and users with accessibility needs, giving feedback on their plans and giving them lived experiences of the full Avanti journey. There will be a panel in our area, and they are looking for individuals who would be interested in being on this panel.



Please contact me if you would be interested in participating in the trial or being on the panel.