

# PROJECT REPORT

2020 | DECEMBER

# ALONG THE LINE

**Lead:** Caroline Holden, Community Rail Development Officer

**Lines:** Clitheroe Line

**Budget:** £15,000

**Funders:** CEL and CRL





## OVERVIEW

'Along the Line' was developed by Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) in partnership with Community Rail Lancashire (CRL), with support from the Platform Gallery, Clitheroe; Blackburn Museum; students from Ribblesdale High School and Blackburn College; the local Alzheimer's Society; Child Action North West (CANW) and the Friends of Ramsgreave & Wilpshire station. The project commissioned local artist Karen Allerton to develop artwork for display at Ramsgreave & Wilpshire station and Huckleberry Films to produce three short films about the development of the project.

The project focussed on Ramsgreave & Wilpshire station as it is situated close to a large residential area, is the railway gateway to the scenic Ribble Valley and is well used by commuters and students. Yet the station itself is in a cutting, concealed by trees and foliage and has been an easy target at times for anti-social activity, particularly by young people looking for places to meet in privacy especially in the evening. The station was growing a reputation as a place to avoid especially after dark!

So 'Along the Line' was developed to try and turn round this negative image by engaging young people and the local community to look at ways to increase the visibility of the station through artwork and thus encourage more people to use it.

## APPROACH

The following sets out the approach adopted in taking this project forward:

**Ribblesdale High School** was keen to be involved as a number of its students already travelled 'along the line' to commute to school. The project involved the students travelling to view the station by train and then further 'along the line' into Manchester where they visited the Walker Gallery. During the journey the students asked passengers about their journeys and ideas for improving the line.

From visiting the station and the art gallery the students decided to focus their artwork on the trees and wildlife that surround the platforms.

Photographic students from **Blackburn College** developed a series of photographic montages that now adorn the platform entrances showing some of the features that can be seen 'along the line'. These provide visual impact at the station entrances and also help direct people to the right platform.

The work with the local **Alzheimer's Society and Child Action NW (CANW)** was able to bring yet another aspect of the line to life. They have been able to present historical references and pictures of the line in the platform shelters. As passengers walk to and from the platforms, they can read some of the stories from local people who have used the station in the past. Through all this the project was supported by the **Friends of Ramsgreave & Wilshire station**.

This broad range of engagement has culminated in a large number of artworks being displayed, beautifully brought together by Karen Allerton who has fused the different aspects into a harmonious medley.

## OUTPUTS

- 18 pupils from Ribblesdale High School and 6 students from Blackburn College were involved in the project – learning about railsafety and the benefits of rail travel.
- Artwork has been produced and is displayed on the platforms, in the shelters and at the station entrances and walkways to the platforms.
- A new poster board featuring a montage of the students photographs was provided which has a big poster facing Ramsgreave Road saying 'Ramsgreave & Wilshire Gateway to the Ribble Valley'.
- An explanatory poster about the project is displayed at the station.
- News items and tweets about the project can be viewed on the CRL website – see Links below.
- Three short films about the project have been produced and can be viewed on the CRL website.
- As a direct result of the partnership developed with CANW, a further project has been initiated called Back on Track 2020.

## OUTCOMES

- The project engaged with Ribblesdale High School, Blackburn College, the Alzheimer's Society, CANW and the Friends of Ramsgreave & Wilshire Station.
- Students were introduced to the benefits of rail travel and also experienced it first hand.
- Students undertook a passenger survey to find out more about who uses the Clitheroe Line and why and their ideas for improving the service, providing an opportunity for them to improve their people skills.
- Students were able to learn about potential careers in the railway.
- The project has helped develop a sense pride and ownership of the station and a sense of achievement in the various groups who produced the artwork.
- A very useful link has been made with Huckleberry Films who filmed some of the sessions and have produced three informative films.
- The project has raised awareness of the anti-social behaviour at the station and there is a greater willingness to try and prevent it.



## WHAT WORKED WELL

- The collaboration of a range of partners and their willingness to contribute resources, meeting rooms, expertise, knowledge, local contacts and skills.
- The enthusiasm of the school, other partners and staff.
- The diversity of the groups engaged including the all-female group at the high school and a wide range of age groups.
- Offering students the opportunity to learn new skills and to work with a professional artist.
- Local people able to share their memories of travelling along the line for work and leisure, bringing happiness and satisfaction to those involved.
- The employment of Karen Allerton, a professional artist, who was willing to work flexibly with the partners including the school sessions that were arranged outside of normal class times.
- It was an opportunity to discuss rail-based careers with the pupils from Ribblesdale High School.
- The willingness of all involved to adapt to the changing pandemic restrictions.
- Huckleberry Films being able to film the progress of this project and to work flexibly during the pandemic and
- the ever changing restrictions.

## LESSONS LEARNT

It was valuable to the success of the project to call on the local district partners and gain the involvement of the station friends group to facilitate the introductions to the organisations; an ideal way to gain trust quickly.

Keeping flexible and adaptable! We were fortunate that the artwork sessions had already been completed before the restrictions around the Pandemic were implemented. However, the COVID-19 situation meant that the production, installation of the artwork and celebration of the completion of the project became a challenge, but with everyone's constructive assistance this was overcome, meeting the restrictions and being able to celebrate the work.

To consider producing a poster at the station at the beginning of the project to inform rail users of what's happening in readiness for any installation.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT & LINKS

Consider ways to connect with the new housing developments by preparing a handout about the local railway.

- [www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/lets-connect](http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/lets-connect)
- [www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/along-the-line-artwork-installed](http://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/along-the-line-artwork-installed)