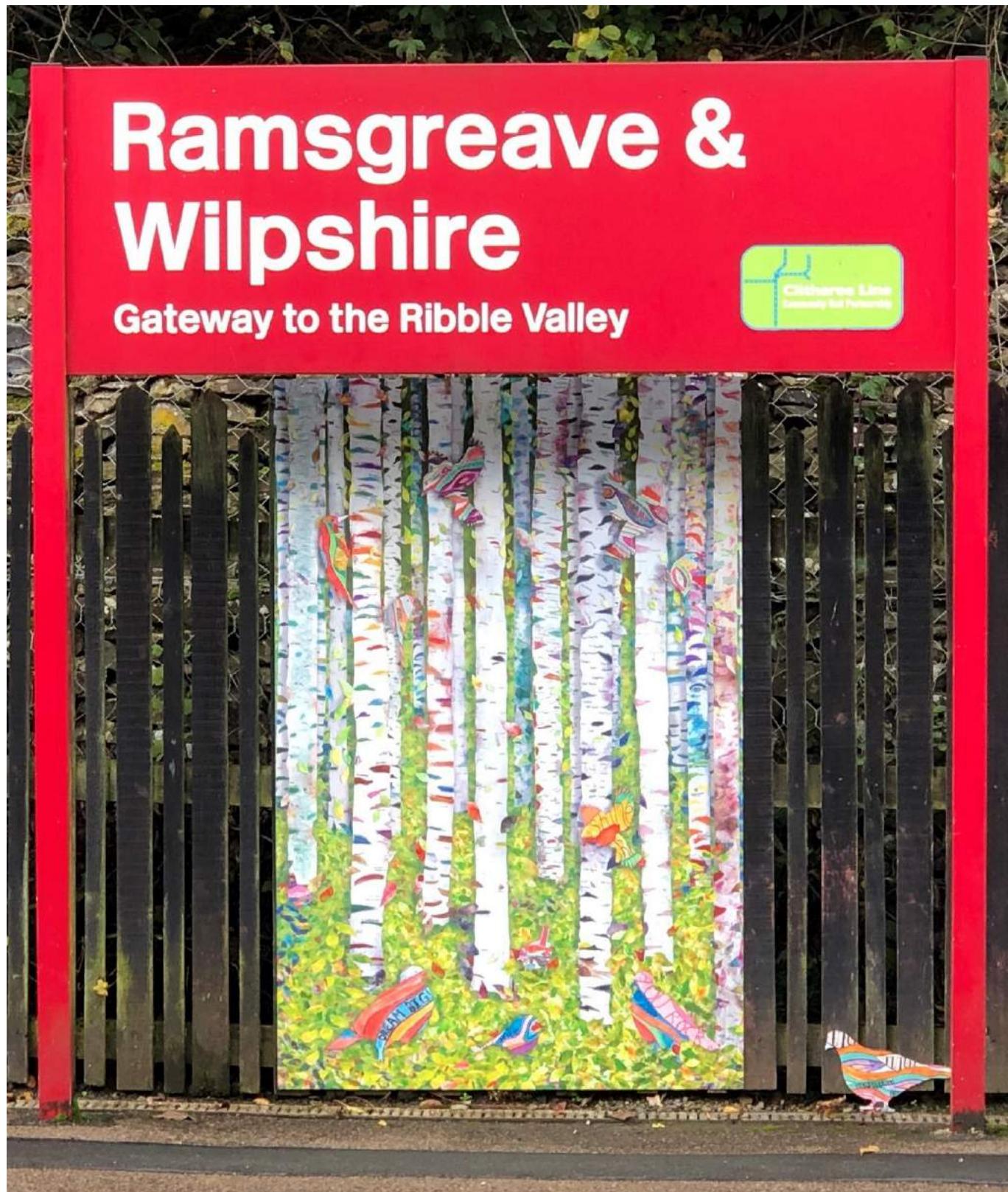


# COMMUNITY RAIL LANCASHIRE

## ANNUAL REPORT 2020



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2020 Annual Report for Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and the four Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) that it supports.

In 2020 and early 2021 the principle work carried out by CRL has been the continuation of its education engagement programme; assisting the 4 CRPs develop projects along their lines and working with stakeholders on a growing number of Restoring Your Railway projects. A lot of this has been done using 'virtual means'. CRL also welcomed a new member to its team.

## STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT:

Page	3	<b>Community Rail Lancashire Chair's Report</b>
Page	8	<b>Comments from the Chairs</b>
Page	15	<b>Celebrating A Decade of Educational Engagement</b>
Page	16	<b>Restoring Your Railway</b>
Page	17	<b>Manchester Recovery Task Force</b>
Page	19	<b>Avanti West Coast</b>
Page	20	<b>Financial Report</b>
Page	21	<b>Major Projects &amp; Grants</b>
Page	22	<b>Community Rail Awards 2020</b>
Page	23	<b>Virtual DalesRail</b>
Page	24	<b>Education Programme</b>
Page	27	<b>100 Women 100 Journeys</b>
Page	28	<b>Creative at Home</b>
Page	29	<b>Along the Line</b>
Page	30	<b>Award Winning Scrubs Project</b>
Page	31	<b>Other Projects</b>
Page	33	<b>Sponsorship, Website &amp; Guided Walks</b>
Page	34	<b>Who's Who</b>

# CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

## Introduction

Firstly welcome to the 2020 Annual Report for Community Rail Lancashire. It covers the activities of CRL and the 4 Lancashire CRPs over last 12+ months. I hope you find it interesting but if you have any questions or want further information please do not hesitate to email me at [richard.watts.crl@gmail.com](mailto:richard.watts.crl@gmail.com) although you may well get a response from my normal email address but please don't tell Simon that!

Well 2020 wasn't the year we planned for! It has been a strange year dominated by the global Covid-19 pandemic and for community rail it could have been a showstopper if it wasn't for the resourcefulness and innovation of the many people involved in it including the CRL team. Many activities have moved online and lots of us have become experts in Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype etc. for meetings and for those involved in educational work for delivering online lessons. This report showcases some of the highlights and the ways in which CRL and the four Lancashire CRPs have adapted to the new environment. We are now in 2021 as I write this report and although we are now in lockdown 3 a roadmap back to more 'normal' times has been issued by the Government.

The plaque below is one young person's feelings about 2020. I just love the thought of 'Home Brew Comfort' being very partial to a cup of tea as some of you may know!



## Back on Track a project with Child Action NW (CANW) - soon to be displayed at Darwen station.

Despite all the issues we have faced in 2020 the Lancashire team did extraordinarily well at this year's **Community Rail Awards** with recognition for the many projects that CRL has been involved in. The highlight was of course receiving the Community Rail Network's award for the Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail for the **Education Network**. Well done to Karen Bennett who chairs and inspires this expanding network (**see also page 24**).

CRL continues to sponsor the 'Small Projects Award – under £500 category and we congratulate all those who submitted an entry and especially the Friends of Hunmanby Railway station for coming first – well done.

# CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

## Re-Accreditation

Well we did it again. CRL and the 4 Lancashire CRPs received notification from the DfT on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 that we have been re-accredited for a further year. So many thanks to all the CRP Chairs and the CRL team who all contributed to the successful meeting with Brian Barnsley last October at which we summarised what had been an interesting and challenging year.

Accreditation recognises the hard work done by the CRL Directors, the CRP management groups, the CRL team and of course the many volunteers who help at stations and in normal years provide a large number of guided walks.



## Snapshot of 2020+

Despite the pandemic much has taken place over the last 12 months as this report will illustrate but here are a few of the things that stand out for me:

- In partnership with Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) we completed three projects Connecting Brierfield, Memorable Journeys at Accrington and Along the Line at Ramsgreave & Wilpshire;
- The Education Network went online and has been expanding its reach ever since;
- We have managed to continue to engage with schools, colleges and other youth groups;
- DalesRail went virtual;
- Accrington will benefit from an upgrade to the access ramp to platform 1 as a result of a study CRL commissioned as part of the DfT's Access for all Mid-Tier programme; and
- Restoring Your Railway projects are being developed virtually for the Clitheroe and South Fylde lines.

## CRL Staffing

As in previous years there have been a few changes to the CRL team:

- Daisy Chapman-Chamberlain left CRL to join KTN – the Knowledge Transfer Network. Daisy keeps in touch with us and is still a Board Member of the Community Rail Network.
- Caroline Holden joined CRL on the 1<sup>st</sup> April as a Community Rail Development Officer (CRDO). It couldn't have been a more difficult time to take up a new role right at the start of lockdown 1. However, Caroline hit the deck running and has developed exciting projects across the CRL patch.
- Katie Musgrove is now a full time member of the team. Specialising in special education needs Katie also has plays a big part in CRL's development of short, and not so short, video films using amongst other things Doodly and her gimbal.

Other changes are anticipated for 2021. CRL plans to appoint an additional full time CRDO; Simon Clarke is planning to further reduce his hours and Marjorie Birch is standing down as the long serving Chair of the East Lancashire & Clitheroe Line CRPs.

## CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

### Volunteers

A lot of what happens across the Lancashire network is undertaken by volunteers which includes the CRP Chairs. Special mention must be made of the sterling work undertaken by Tony Ford at St Anne's and along the South Fylde Line and Marjorie Birch at Clitheroe station.

Many of the stations across our patch are looked after by volunteers who devote many hours to making their station special. The CRL team are happy to help them and of course special thanks go to Northern for not only helping fund their activities but also for the help they receive from Martin Keating and Rebecca Styles. Station adoption work has been severely impacted by the pandemic with periods when they have been asked to cease their work.

Mention must also be made of the help CRL receives from the Lancashire Rail Ramblers. In a normal year they provide a series of guided walks from East Lancashire stations as well as putting on a superb programme of guided walks and coach links from DalesRail. Sadly 2020 saw most of this activity cease and DalesRail was suspended. However, unless the roadmap changes the guided walk programme will restart and DalesRail will operate in 2021.

CRL is delighted with the support given by Peg Crawford who has been helping Katie Musgrove with expanding the Autism Friendly Line especially by carrying out a series of interviews.



### Funding and grants

CRL is once again indebted to Northern for the core funding it receives for the work of the Lancashire CRPs. In addition, CRL also receives an additional grant to support the work of the education team. To ensure we keep on track the education team has developed a 'Four Year Strategic Education Plan' which is approved by the CRL Board and is reviewed and commented on by Carolyn Watson, Northern's Director of Stakeholder & Community Engagement, and also by ComREG, the Community Rail Executive Group. The plan sets out the key actions the team plan to undertake as well as any special projects they plan to initiate. As ever with any plan it is a fluid document enabling the team to respond rapidly to changing circumstances.

We also welcome the core funding we now receive from Avanti West Coast and we look forward to bidding for grants to support a range of initiatives at Preston station.

I would also like to place on record the support we continue to receive from Merseytravel and Blackpool Council. Full details can be found in the Financial Report.

In addition to the core funding received by CRL we have also been very fortunate in being able to secure grants from a variety of sources towards the many projects we have undertaken. So thank you Community Rail Network and Northern for the grants we have received from the Community Rail Development Fund, the Small Grants Fund and Northern's Seed Corn. Full details are set out in the Major Project Grant section of this Annual Report on **page 21**.

## CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

### The virtual world

2020 has certainly been different with so much activity done online using one of the many virtual platforms. CRL has certainly exploited this to good effect here are just six examples:

**Team meetings:** the CRL team meets every (well nearly every!) Monday using Google Meet. It enables us to keep in touch and to see what everyone is doing and planning to do. Meeting virtually saves time and that is possibly one of the significant lessons to come out of 2020. We do not need to always meet face to face and in fact meeting online can save time and allows us to be more efficient.

**The Virtual Education Network:** CRL has hosted meetings of the Education Network for some time but at the start of lock down this moved online and initially met every 2 weeks. This format will continue along interspersed with some more conventional meetings once we return to more normal times.

**The Virtual DalesRail:** well we may not have been able to operate DalesRail this year so instead it went online. It may only be second best to the real thing but it was fun collecting the many experiences and sharing stories from DalesRailers. **This is covered in more detail on page 23.**



**Virtual history posters:** Not content with developing actual history posters for display at stations we now have a growing series of 'virtual' history posters. What better than to watch the one about the Accrington, 'the home of Community Rail Lancashire'? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkEtAlaoojs>

**Virtual launches:** CRL, working with Connecting East Lancashire and local artist Karen Allerton, has completed a project at Ramsbottom & Wilpshire station called 'Along the Line'. Due to lockdowns and social distancing we have not been able to physically launch the project at the station so a virtual launch took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 which can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O98TOjMuIc>.

## CRL CHAIR'S REPORT

**Restoring your Railway (RYR):** it has been strange discussing potential new rail projects and services entirely by virtual means. The two projects involved are Clitheroe – Hellifield led by Ribble Valley Borough Council and the South Fylde Line passing loop and enhanced service led by Fylde Borough Council. Both are fascinating projects and both have their challenges. For the Clitheroe scheme all project group meetings, meetings with stakeholders and more recently with the consultants have been on line. You can read more about these two schemes on [page 16](#). As I write this an application to the third round of the RYR Ideas Fund is now being prepared by Pendle Borough Council. This is for a passing loop and enhanced service between Rose Grove and Colne. We wish it well.

It will be interesting to see how these projects develop and if in the next annual report we can celebrate the success of any of them.



Ramsbgreave & Wilpshire station - the Gateway to the Ribble Valley

### Final words

Special thanks go to Simon Clarke for so ably looking after CRL's website and social media links; to Karen Bennett, Shahiesta Raja and Katie Musgrove for all they have done this year in challenging circumstances to develop our educational engagement programme and the Education Network and to Caroline Holden who joined us just as the first lock down started.

My thanks also go to the various creative people we have worked with this year including Karen Allerton, Alastair Nicholson and Caroline Eccles.

I extend a big thank you to all the volunteer station adopters who give so much of their free time to help make stations across Lancashire more attractive and welcoming places and to the walk leaders who have had a frustrating year hanging up their boot laces! They will need dusting down for 2021 though.

A big thank you to the CRL Board who provide positive encouragement as well as a steady hand and to the CRP Chairs and Management groups who oversee the work that takes place across our community rail lines. I would also like to personally thank Carolyn Watson, Owain Roberts, Martin Keating, Rebecca Styles and Richard Isaac of Northern; Dan Coles and Devon Wall of Network Rail and Matt Worman and Millie Woodhead of Avanti West Coast for all their help and encouragement. We literally can't do any of this without you.

It is pleasing to see that after nearly two years Lancashire County Council has been able to appoint a new Rail Officer to fill my old shoes – well they are fairly large! Some of you may know Mike Cliffe and I am sure we all wish him well in his new role at a challenging time for the rail industry. We look forward to welcoming Mike to our CRP meetings.

**Richard Watts, Chair Community Rail Lancashire Ltd**

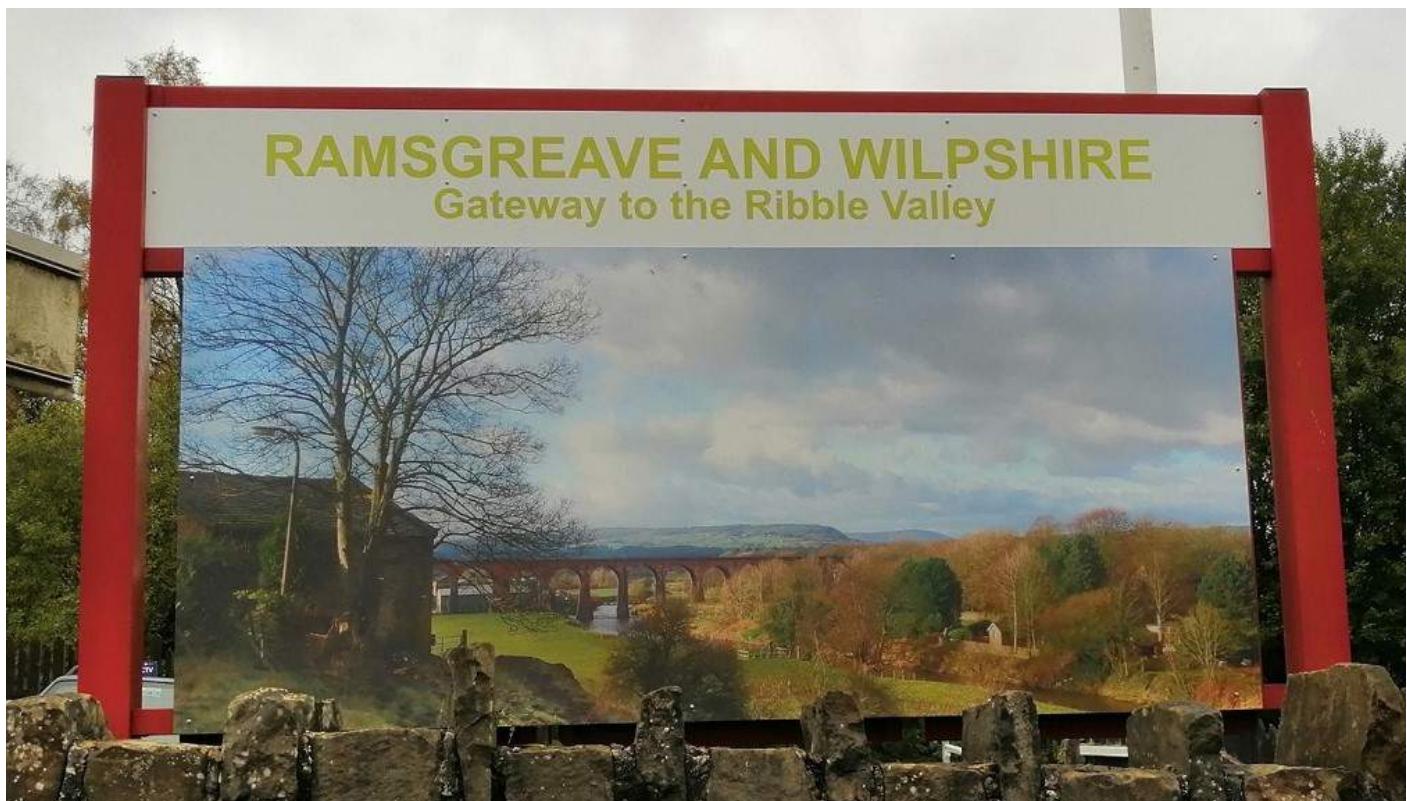
**7<sup>th</sup> March, 2021**

## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - CLCRP

### Clitheroe Line Community Rail Partnership

2020 has been a year for innovation and creative thinking. With Covid 19 lockdown beginning in March new ways of working had to be initiated. The work with Primary schools could not be carried out in the traditional way and the team produced curriculum packages which were available on the Down the Line website and taught rail safety via zoom

A Connecting East Lancashire project called “Along the Line” involved pupils from Ribblesdale High School, Clitheroe; students from Blackburn College along with the Child Action NW (CANW), the local Alzheimer’s Society and the Friends of Station group worked to produce a range of artwork and signage for RamsGreave and Wilpshire station. This was to make the station more visible from the main road and create a colourful and interesting environment for the passengers. The project was launched on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021. More information can be found at <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Along-the-Line.pdf> and a series of short films about the project can be viewed at: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lets-connect/>.



Community Rail Lancashire welcomed Caroline Holden to the CRL team as a Community Rail Development Officer. Caroline will work with both the Clitheroe Line and East Lancs. Line Community Rail Partnerships and replaces Brian Haworth who retired from the post.

Northern apprentices were involved in a project involving Nightsafe, a charity working and educating homeless young people, and CRL's 'Artist in Residence' Alistair Nicholson at Blackburn station. A bright banner has been installed on platforms 1 & 2 called 'Recycle- Reuse – Regenerate' which replaced the first piece of artwork produced by Nightsafe



## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - CLCRP

A further project with Child Action NW (CANW) was developed for Darwen station called ‘Back on Track’ and it is hoped to install the completed artwork once the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

DalesRail the popular Sunday service from Lancashire to the Yorkshire Sales and Eden Valley was suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic. Full details of the ‘virtual’ DalesRail can be found in the East Lancashire CRP report.

One of the highlights of the year was Ribble Valley Borough Council successfully bidding to the DfTs Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund. The bid was looking for the provision of regular passenger services between Clitheroe and Hellifield and possibly beyond. Work has been ongoing throughout the year and the consultants Stantec are currently consulting with Parish Councils, Rail groups and other interested bodies before submitting the business case to the DfT. The options being considered are:

- To extend some or all of the existing Rochdale/Manchester to Clitheroe services to Hellifield;
- To extend some or all of the existing Rochdale/Manchester to Blackburn services to Clitheroe and Hellifield;
- To introduce a new service between Preston and Clitheroe/Hellifield. To look at options to operate services beyond Hellifield building on the success of the Lancashire DalesRail Service.

The Partnership continues to press the railway industry and Transport for the North to improve the line speed between Blackburn and Clitheroe from the current 45mph to improve the journey time to Manchester. If the RYR project is successful there may be a case to improve the line speed northwards to Hellifield as well.

Along with Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and the other three Lancashire CRPs, the Clitheroe Line CRP was successful in being reaccredited by the DfT. This recognises the hard work of the paid staff, management group and station volunteers.

With the return to schools in March and people slowly moving from home working back into their work premises we need to develop and support a return to rail travel strategy. It will take time for people to regain their confidence in public transport and community rail staff and volunteers are well placed to support any initiative

**Marjorie Birch, Chair Clitheroe Line CRP**



Pupils from Ribblesdale High School on fact finding trips for the Along the Line project

## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - ELCRP

### East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership

Although 2020 was a difficult year with most face-to-face physical activity stopped due to the coronavirus pandemic the East Lancashire CRP still managed to complete several projects.

Two projects, however are still waiting to be completed as the pandemic has stalled various installations;

- The first at Rishton where some Dibond panels have been fixed to the fence but some life-size art work for the 'Mills to Tower' project is awaiting installation following a licence agreement with Network Rail.
- The second is a project in partnership with South Ribble Borough Council at Lostock Hall where we are waiting to install some colourful running in boards and also refreshing some of the platform planters.

The CRP continued to work with Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) and concluded projects at Brierfield and Accrington with some other smaller projects in the pipeline or underway.

'Connecting Brierfield' was launched on 4th March 2020 and 'Memorable Journeys' on 18th September 2020. The latter project has seen artwork displayed at Accrington station which has been created by pupils from Peel Park and Hyndburn Park primary schools. More information about Memorable Journeys can be found in a best practice paper at: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/best-practice/> and there are a series of short films showing the various stages of both projects at <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/lets-connect/>.



October saw the partnership along with CRL and the other three CRPs gain reaccreditation following a meeting with the Community Rail Network. This recognises the hard work of the paid staff, management group and station volunteers.

DalesRail the popular Sunday service from Lancashire to the Yorkshire Dales and Carlisle was suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic and more information about this and the birth of an online project called 'Tales from DalesRail' can be seen on page 23.

Despite the pandemic the partnership, working with the CRL education team, has maintained contact with schools along the line including Broadfield Specialist School, Peel Park and Hyndburn Park primary schools, Accrington; Blackburn College; Al Hayat Language Centre and Crosshill Special School, Blackburn. It has also been possible to do some face-to-face lessons but in most cases education engagement has become virtual.

## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - ELCRP

Seed Architects was commissioned to look at how to improve access to platform 1 at Accrington. The study enabled Northern to make a successful bid to made to the DfT's Access for All mid-tier fund. Work is due to start shortly.

At Blackburn station CRL working with Nightsafe, local artist Alastair Nicholson and Northern Apprentices an attractive banner has been installed at Blackburn under the title 'Recycle – Reuse - Regenerate'.

CRL and the ELCRP has continued to develop its award-winning Autism Friendly Line project. Two trial station films of Accrington and Rose Grove have been produced taking people on the autism spectrum on a virtual tour of a station prior to using the train. <http://downtheline.org.uk/projects/autism-friendly-line/>



Screenshot of the Accrington Autism Friendly Line Film

In support of the Amazing Women by Rail promotion the Partnership has commissioned two films to show case the work of Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth (Burnley) and Kathleen Ferrier (Blackburn). In the meantime, a short film about Ethel Carnie Holdsworth (Church & Oswaldtwistle & Hebden Bridge) is also available to watch: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/amazing-women/>

The Partnership continued the successful mini timetable guides for the Todmorden Curve service but sadly this had to be put on hold when the pandemic struck.

**Marjorie Birch**  
**Chair, East Lancashire CRP**

## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - SFLCRP

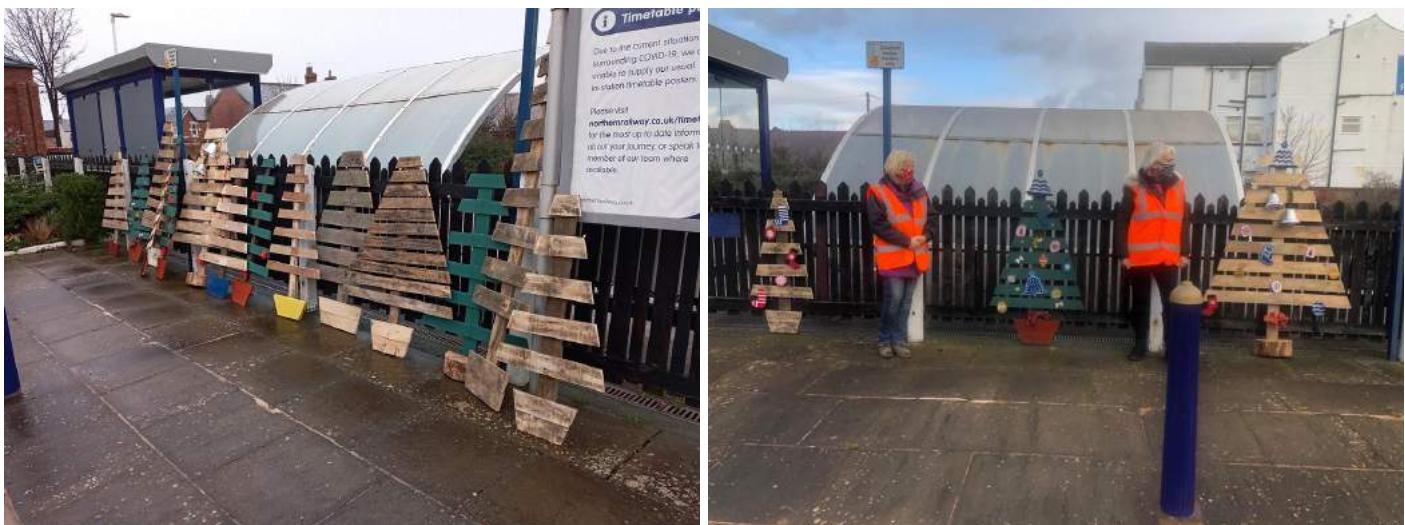
### South Fylde Line Community Rail Partnership

Along with Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and the other three Lancashire CRPs, the SFLCRP received its re-accreditation during the year, recognising the hard work of volunteers and the paid staff along the route.

The SCRUBS project was a huge success, with volunteers making sets of scrubs, bags and hats for local medical facilities at the height of the pandemic. Read the full story on page 30.

Where the published guidance has allowed, work has taken place at virtually every station along the South Fylde line with volunteers continuing to make their stations look as colourful and as cared for, as they could.

Volunteers working from home created Christmas trees from discarded pallets to add some seasonal cheer for passengers and station users. These proved so popular that orders were placed and donations made to the St Anne's Station Adopter's funds. The idea was then taken up at Ansdell & Fairhaven and at Squires Gate stations.



To see a short video of SFLCRP Chair, Tony Ford and Friends of Station member Barrie making the Christmas trees click this link <https://youtu.be/DtmaapfrzR0>

Friends of Squires Gate station continued to work on clearing the overgrown platform 2. The apples from the tree were harvested, pulped, pressed and turned into delicious apple juice which was shared out amongst the volunteers. Recently volunteers have built new wooden planters to replace the life-expired half-barrels.

Sadly there has been no progress on finishing the step-free access on Platform 1 at Squires Gate station. It just needs a little bit of effort and some determined leadership to enable a 'quick win' – it is so close to completion.

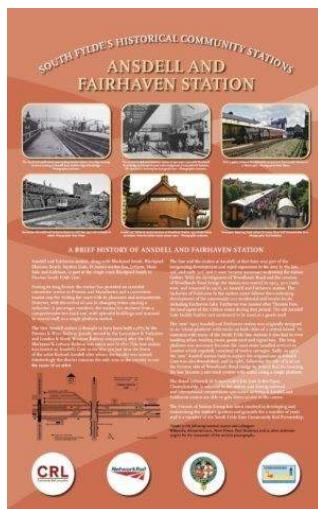
Once again volunteers from one station have gone to help colleagues at other stations supporting projects and activities. This has improved communication and volunteer involvement along the line.

Efforts to develop a Friends Group at Kirkham & Wesham station as well as more wide-ranging work have been thwarted by COVID restrictions, though a Railway Trail Walk is under development, plans are being drawn up for Hidden Gems Artwork and proposals have been put forward to brighten up and enhance the booking hall with historical photographs of the station.

The popular mini timetables for the line had to be suspended but the CRP was grateful for the willing volunteers who helped to distribute them and hopes this can be picked up once the pandemic is over.

## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - SFLCRP

The CRP is supporting the efforts by Fylde Borough Council to improve service frequency through its recent successful bid to the DfT's Restoring Your Railways Ideas Fund for the provision of a passing loop on the line. The project is now developing a Strategic Outline Business Case.



Caroline Holden, the Community Rail Development Officer for the South Fylde line has been working with the various friends of stations groups to help them to gather the information together to create more of the series of CRL Station History posters.

The first to be produced and displayed on the station was the poster for Ansdell & Fairhaven and this was unveiled on 28th October 2020. Thanks must go to Peter Fitton who grew up in the area and has photographed his local railways for over 60 years and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of railway history.

To see the collection of railway history posters visit the CRL website on this link: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/history-posters/>

**Tony Ford**  
**Chair, South Fylde Line CRP**

## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - WoLCRP

### West of Lancashire Community Rail Partnership

Well, 2020 wasn't the year we planned for! It has been an unusual year and for the CRP it could well have been a showstopper if it wasn't for the resourcefulness and innovation of the people involved in it. Many activities have moved online especially for meetings and for those involved in educational work for delivering on-line lessons.

Along with Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) WoLCRP was formally re-accredited by the DfT following a review meeting in October 2020. Once again this recognises the hard work of the paid staff, the CRP's Management Group and the many volunteers along the lines.

The CRP welcomed Caroline Holden to the CRL team who has taken on some project work for the CRP and also the recently formed Bolton & South Lancashire CRP (now the South East Lancashire CRP) to its Management Group and plans are being developed for joint projects.

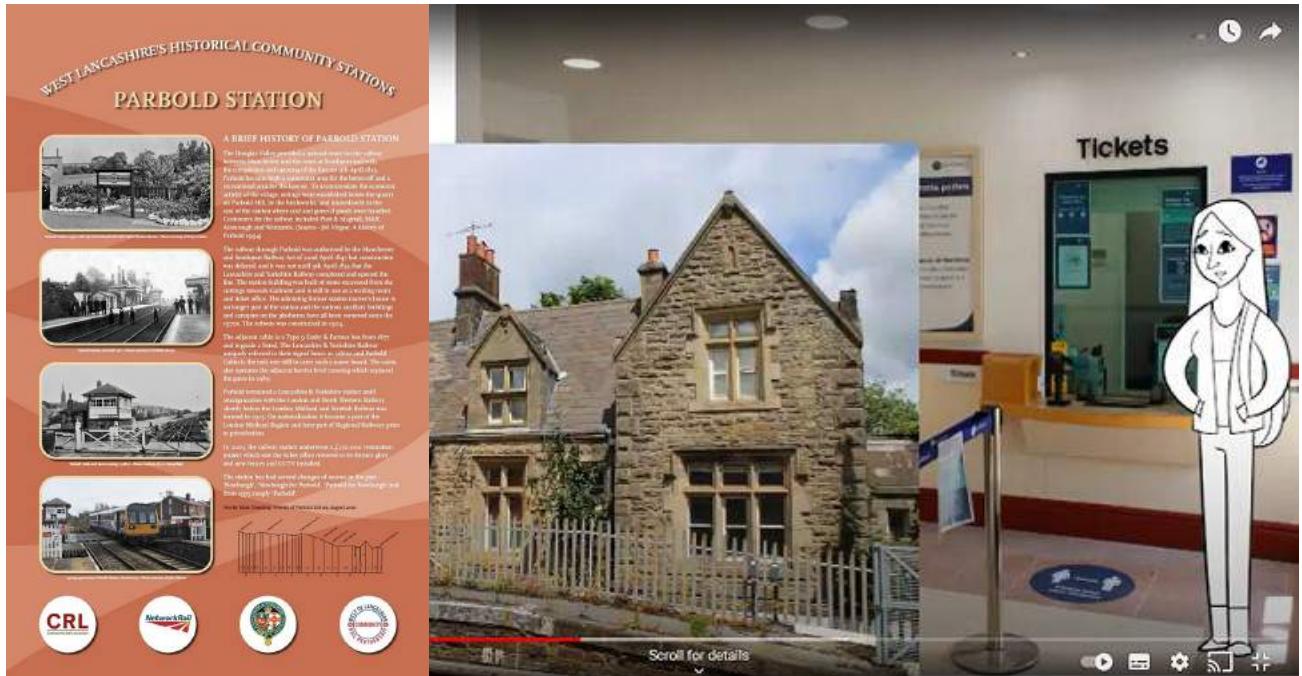
The pandemic has understandably meant there have been many changes to train services on both our lines with Preston to Ormskirk line suspended during the first national lockdown and services to Southport reduced. Over time trains were reinstated to the Ormskirk branch and there have been frequency improvements to Southport.

Station adoption work has also been affected with many gaps when groups were advised to suspend their activities during the three national lockdowns.

Marketing of the lines has also had to be suspended with the December 2019 mini timetable for the Preston to Ormskirk line being the last promotion and that had to be withdrawn in February 2020.

## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS - WofLCRP

For the CRP this has meant a complete change in the way we do things with much now taking place by 'virtual' means. With the first lockdown and the suspension of station adoption work the CRP working with Community Rail Lancashire's (CRL) Caroline Holden and Katie Musgrove took the opportunity to invite adoption groups to develop history posters for their station. To provide inspiration for this and to ensure they followed a format used on other Lancashire lines a short 'how to' Doodly was created, which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/2iICFRVNZwY>.



There has been a good response to this. The most ambitious has been developed by the **Friends of Parbold Station** and Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 saw the launch at Pardold station. The poster was produced by the Friends of Parbold Station with help from the Friends of Parbold Library, John Sloane, Tony Graham and Mark Dowding. The poster can be viewed at: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/history-posters/> and the virtual poster can be seen at <https://youtu.be/0o0Sr3B6-Hk>

Other history posters are being developed for Meols Cop and Burscough Bridge stations.



A further highlight in 2020 has been the '**Hidden Gems**' project. This is a photography project that engaged school and community groups across Merseyside and West Lancashire. Through this project we have provided a platform for people to explore, discover and share the places that were of interest to them. A full report about the project can be viewed at: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/best-practice/>

**Marion Atkinson**  
**Chair, West of Lancashire CRP**

# A DECADE OF EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

## Educating the Passengers of The Future

For over a decade Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) has been involved with schools, starting back in 2006 with its first tentative contact with Daisyfield Primary School in Blackburn and continuing today with involvement at primary, secondary and college level, including those with special educational needs, across the North of England.



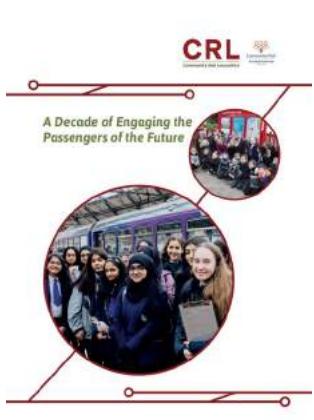
Railway Confidence Programme



St. John's RC Primary, Burscough

CRL has produced a glossy booklet that tracks its multi award-winning involvement in 'educating the passengers of the future' and providing 'railway confidence' over the last fourteen years and can downloaded or ask us for a printed copy on [communityraillancashire.crl@gmail.com](mailto:communityraillancashire.crl@gmail.com)

**Richard Watts, Chair of CRL**, says; "It has been a privilege to watch over and foster the development of the educational programme that is today, delivered by Community Rail Lancashire. It is with great pleasure that I can look back at over a decade of community rail in Lancashire engaging with schools, colleges and many other groups."



On the Autism Friendly Line

**Carolyn Watson, Community & Sustainability Director, Northern**, added; "Community Rail Lancashire has been at the forefront of community engagement, notably with young people since its inception. Northern is proud to have supported its work, through the individual Community Rail Partnerships and more recently with the establishment of the education team."

Carolyn went on to say; "The Community Rail Lancashire team is delivering pioneering work and sharing best practice amongst the community rail sector and beyond. Long may they continue, so congratulations to the team past and present, and we look forward to working with them in the decades to come."

Download a copy of the booklet here: <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/a-decade-of-crl/>

## RESTORING YOUR RAILWAY

Restoring Your Railway (RYR) is about restoring connectivity to the rail network that has been lost since the publication of the Beeching Report in 1963 (and earlier as a number of lines had closed prior to this). This can be about re-opening lost links, restoring capacity stripped out of a route in past economies or new stations, although there is a separate stations fund covering this. The Department for Transport launched the £500m RYR Fund in Lancashire where the first project to be funded is the possible restoration of the route between Poulton and Fleetwood.

Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) is involved in two Restoring Your Railway projects for the Ribble Valley Line with a focus on the underused stretch of line between Clitheroe and Hellifield and the South Fylde Line (SFL) where a passing loop will enable a more frequent service to operate. I have been privileged to be part of the project steering groups for both of these. CRL has also been involved in one stakeholder event organised by Lancashire County Council for the Poulton to Fleetwood project as well.



Hellifield station – Network Rail



RYR is a staged exercise. Stage one is to get your application into the Ideas Fund and then cross your fingers that you will be one of the successful applicants. Ribble Valley Borough Council was successful in the first round and Fylde Borough Council in the second. A third and final round has been announced and I understand that a number of applications may be coming forward for projects in Lancashire – but these can wait for next year's Annual Report!

Once you get your application approved the next stage is to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). This fearsome sounding stage is only part of a staged approach of sifting the wheat from the chaff! The SOBC has 5 chapters of which the most important are the strategic and economic cases for your project. For the Ribble Valley, Stantec has been commissioned to develop the SOBC and this has led to some interesting thoughts and conversations about the future role of DalesRail. Marjorie Birch in her report sets out some of the service options that are being considered. By the time you read this report the SOBC will have been completed and there will be a longish pause as it, along with all the other round one SOBCs, are considered by the DfT. For the SFL the project is just getting off the starting blocks so no doubt you will hear much more about this in next years Annual Report.

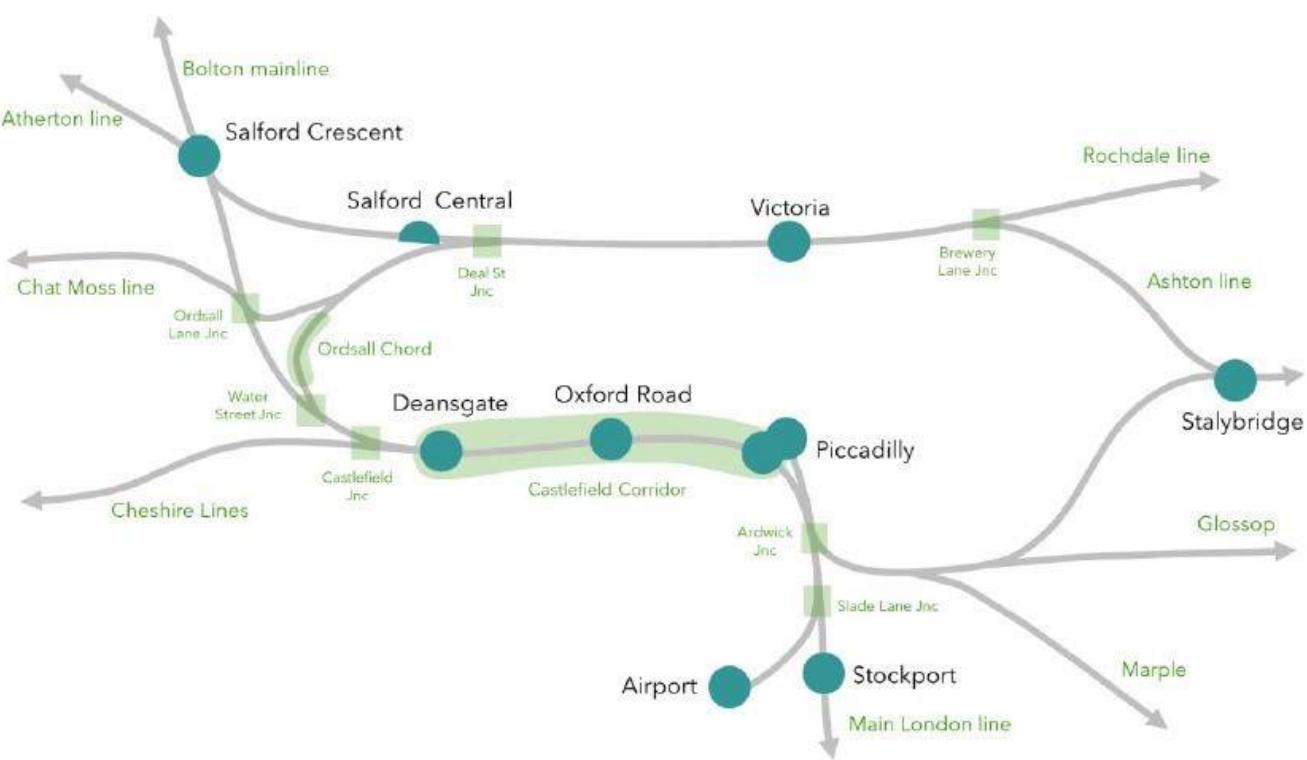
RYR is a great opportunity but I guess the fund set at £500m will soon be used up. That said the pandemic may well change the landscape of travel across the UK with changes in the key markets that rail serves. If, as is being said, leisure will form a bigger part of the market to start with then the approach to train service provision, fares and marketing will need to be given a long hard look. What worked well for a commuter dominated railway may not work so well for a leisure based market.

Richard Watts  
9<sup>th</sup> March 2021

# MANCHESTER RECOVERY TASK FORCE

There are some who seem to think that community rail doesn't do trains that its focus should be on the community. Well, it is not a view I share. If CRPs are about anything it is about promoting the railway to the community and that to me is a package. Stations, trains, fares, journey time, reliability, performance, frequency, usefulness and above all else the timetable. If the timetable doesn't work for the community no amount of engagement will make very much difference.

So after that tirade this is leading onto why I felt the consultation document issued by the Manchester Recovery Task Force (MRTF) was worth spending quite a bit of time on. I am sure regular traveller's will recall the awful timetable meltdown following the introduction of the May 2018 timetable. What should have been a big and bold step change following electrification and other improvements turned out to be something of a disaster with performance falling through the proverbial roof especially in the Manchester area. Of course, things that go wrong in Manchester have a tendency to ripple out across a large swathe of the Northern network as the MRTF consultation document highlights. This has consequences such as extended journey times as trains are delayed or cancelled, missed connections for those travelling further afield, missed interviews and of course commuters either late to work or worse late home in the evening!



Simplified diagram of railway stations, lines and junctions in central Manchester

Unsurprisingly the DfT set up a task force to look into this and to come up with recommendations for improving the performance of trains through the bottleneck known as the Castlefield Corridor between Deansgate and Manchester Piccadilly. There are lots of reasons why things went wrong in 2018 which I won't rehearse here but you can read about them in the consultation document which can be viewed via this link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/951401/manchester-recovery-task-force-public-consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/951401/manchester-recovery-task-force-public-consultation.pdf) .

# MANCHESTER RECOVERY TASK FORCE

Of greater importance are the various options set out in the document to address the problem. In essence there are three main options presented all of which are forecast to help improve performance. All rely on reducing the number of trains that use the Castlefield Corridor and on a degree of standardising timetables as an aid to overall performance to both Manchester Piccadilly and Victoria.

CRL attended a workshop on the proposals on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 which enabled some discussion to take place with the TfN representative about the different options. There was then an opportunity to respond to the various proposals and the closing date for them was the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 – the day I am writing this!! Needless to say CRL working with the 4 CRPs has responded to this consultation as some of the proposals have an impact on the services and communities we serve and support. I won't detail our response here but if anyone would like to see our response who hasn't already then please email at [richard.watts.crl@gmail.com](mailto:richard.watts.crl@gmail.com).

At this stage I don't envy the MRTF its task of sifting through the responses it will have received and in disappointing some of those who have responded. The aim is to introduce the revised timetables by May 2022 or as a backstop December 2022. To achieve May will be quite tight but not impossible. Whilst the consultation has been underway the task force has continued its work of refining its proposals. It then has the task of selling its preferred outcome to the MRTF Board, the Rail North committee, DfT and last but not least the Treasury as of course all options have financial impacts on contracts between the DfT and train operators.

I look forward to the outcome and hope that it really does sort out the Castlefield issue and more importantly starts a discussion about what needs to be done to improve the central Manchester rail network that benefits the whole of the north of England. Not an easy task.

Richard Watts

10<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## COMPANY DIRECTORS

Community Rail Lancashire currently has six directors and they can be contacted by email to the Chair on [richard.watts.crl@gmail.com](mailto:richard.watts.crl@gmail.com). The six directors are:

**Richard Watts - CRL Chair**

**Simon Clarke - CRL Secretary**

**Tony Ford - CRL Vice Chair & Chair of South Fylde Line CRP**

**Marjorie Birch - Chair of Joint Clitheroe Line & East Lancashire CRPs**

**Gerald Townson - Chair of Leeds, Morecambe CRP**

**Melanie Taylor - Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council & Vice Chair of Joint Clitheroe Line & East Lancashire CRPs**

If you think you have what it takes to join the CRL Board then please contact the Chair on the email address above.

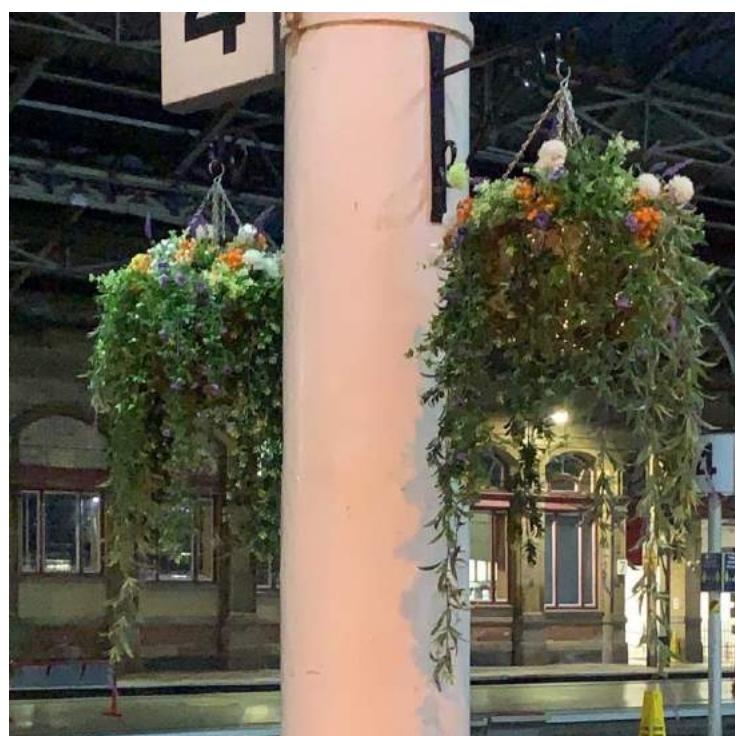
## AVANTI WEST COAST

CRL is delighted with the support it is receiving from Avanti West Coast both in funding and also the enthusiasm the Avanti team bring to working with the community. The disappointment is that it has not been possible due to the restrictions brought about by Covid-19 to do more with the community during 2020. That said we have not been idle in developing this relationship with many conversations taking place with different members of the Avanti team.

The CRL team has also been able to take part in a number of meetings and conferences arranged by Avanti. One of these has the unusual acronym of RASPs – which stands for the Regional Accessible Stations Panel. This body is looking at a range of issues affecting the accessibility of stations along the West Coast Main Line and how this might be addressed.

A key station for us is of course Preston with its impressive 1880's train shed but its poor links between platforms. I would be a rich person if I had a pound for every time I have heard about the issues of getting from platforms 3&4 to platforms 1&2 - the situation hasn't changed since I came to Lancashire and taught in Blackpool in 1976 – well actually one thing did change the original goods lifts were made available to passengers who were able to use them without the need for assistance. Otherwise for the last 45 years that I have lived in Preston access arrangements have changed very little. So it is to be hoped that RASPs along with the proposed changes required for HS2 services that something radical takes place at the station to improve access arrangements. Apart from the big ticket items RASPs is also looking at softer measures that can help passengers who, for example, may be on the autistic spectrum.

You will read **on page 32** of this Annual Report about the hanging basket project we have delivered with Avanti. This is just a start with more ambitious projects to follow. We hope to engage UCLan or a college in an art project based on the overbridges at the station and at the same time try to find a better 'classroom' so that school groups can be brought to the station. The current facility is woefully inadequate and unable to hold a class of 30 primary children. In the meantime, it is hoped to revamp the station planters with help from the Samaritans etc and possibly to look at art displays in the subway.



There is much else that can be done to improve Preston station but of course one of the areas we will all be looking at is how to reassure passengers that rail is a safe mode of transport. Personally, I don't need convincing and have used rail throughout the pandemic, but many others have been made to think rail is very unsafe following the unfortunate messaging from Government. So, as with Northern, helping that recovery and reassuring passengers will be a key activity once some semblance of 'normality' returns. CRL's education network is also looking at this issue.

**I would like to place on record CRL's thanks to Matt Worman, Jo Buckley and Millie Woodhead for their support and encouragement this year.**

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## INCOME 2020/21

£

### Core Funding

Northern Railways	113,448
Avanti West Coast	14,406
CRL Education Grant	110,531

### Other Income

Merseytravel	10,000
Others	11,000
Grants	52,482 a

**Sub total** **311,867**

Deferred income (estimated)	100,000
Connect East Lancashire	55,000

**Sub total** **155,000**

**GRAND TOTAL** **466,867**

## EXPENDITURE 2020/21

Projected to 31.03.21 **355,000**

**BALANCE** **111,867**

### Notes:

- a. This includes Northern Seed Corn Fund, Community Rail Development Fund and the Community Rail Network's Small Grants Fund

**More financial details of the grants and projects can be found on the following page and a copy of the accounts can be requested by emailing [communityraillancashire.crl@gmail.com](mailto:communityraillancashire.crl@gmail.com)**

# MAJOR PROJECTS AND GRANTS

## Community Rail Lancashire – summary of grants received

### Clitheroe Line & East Lancashire CRPs

<b>Project</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>£</b>
Prayer Bead project (a)	CRDF	1,509
Mills to Tower project (a)	CRDF	2,145
Let's Connect Ramsgreave & Wilpshire	CRN Small Grant	1,085
Clitheroe Shelter project	CRDF	12,737
Crosshills School art project	CRN Small Grant	500
Back on Track CANW	Seedcorn	3,000

### South Fylde Line CRP

<b>Project</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>£</b>
KKM poster panels	Fylde BC	300

### West of Lancashire CRP

<b>Project</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>£</b>
Hidden Gems (a)	CRDF	2,781
Croston poster panels	CRN Small Grant	935

### Community Rail Lancashire

<b>Project</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>£</b>
Backtrack 1	Darlington BC	330
Backtrack 1	LNER	330
Backtrack 1	XC	330
Backtrack 1	Warwickshire CC	330
Backtrack 2	Penistone Line CRP	300
Backtrack 2	AmcoGiffen	300
Best Practice papers (a)	CRDF (a)	500
100 Women 100 Journeys	Seedcorn	3,990
RYR Clitheroe to Hellifield	CRDF	20,000
Love to ride posters	Love to Ride	1,080
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>52,482</b>

#### Note:

a = Carried forward from 2019/20

# COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2020

The 2020 Community Rail Awards were unable to take place as usual in October as a live event due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the event was eventually held virtually with over 500 people online to get involved.

The Community Rail Lancashire team was thrilled to have all six of its entries into the Awards shortlisted and we were extremely pleased that on the evening all six were placed in the top three in their categories.

The outcome of each entry can be seen below:

- + Category 1, Involving Children & Young People, **Ticket to Pride** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place
- + Category 2, Involving Diverse Groups, **From Seats to Sacks** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place
- + Category 3a, Community Art Schemes (Permanent & Larger), **Horizons** – 1<sup>st</sup> Place
- + Category 3b, Community Art Schemes (Renewable & Smaller), **#BeeFree MCR** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place
- + Category 6, Best Community Engagement Project, **Women in STEM** – 1<sup>st</sup> Place
- + Category 8, Influencing Positive Change & Sustainable Development, **The Autism Friendly Line** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place



At the Horizons Launch Ceremony, Dewsbury Station



Women in Stem 2020, NRM, York

To cap what was already a brilliant evening the Community Rail Network Award for Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail was awarded to the **Community Rail Education Network**, a project conceived and led by Community Rail Lancashire.

A special award, sponsored by the Rail Delivery Group, was created for 2020 to recognise individuals within the rail industry and community rail who have gone the extra mile to support their communities during the coronavirus pandemic and this was won by the South Fylde Line's Shellene Divall & Christine Holland for their **Scrubs Project**.

**More details about each project can be found in the Projects section later in this report.**



Education Network meeting, Accrington Bunker



Handing over Scrubs, Blackpool Victoria Hospital

## VIRTUAL DALESRAIL 2020

The iconic DalesRail service was suspended in 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic kicked in and issues with shortages of train crew due to shielding. The problems with social distancing and large groups of people gathering would have precluded any guided walks taking place.

The service may not have operated in 2020 but that didn't stop CRL from asking the regular DalesRailers to share their many interesting experiences and memories about journeys, favourite walks, fascinating anecdotes and pictures to create a 'Virtual DalesRail'.

'Virtual DalesRail' turned into 'Tales from DalesRail' and featured heavily on the main CRL website as news items and on [www.dalesrail.com](http://www.dalesrail.com) with its own page highlighting over 30 of these memories and over 160 images available to download and view. The page can be seen on this link <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/tales-from-dalesrail/> and some sample images can be seen below.



Pen-y-Ghent - John Barnes



Ribblehead station 1980s - Craig Ward



Signposting the way - Richard Watts



Familiarisation trip July 2007 - Simon Clarke

Hopefully these will give people an idea of what the DalesRail service has to offer and to encourage them to join us when the service resumes in 2021.

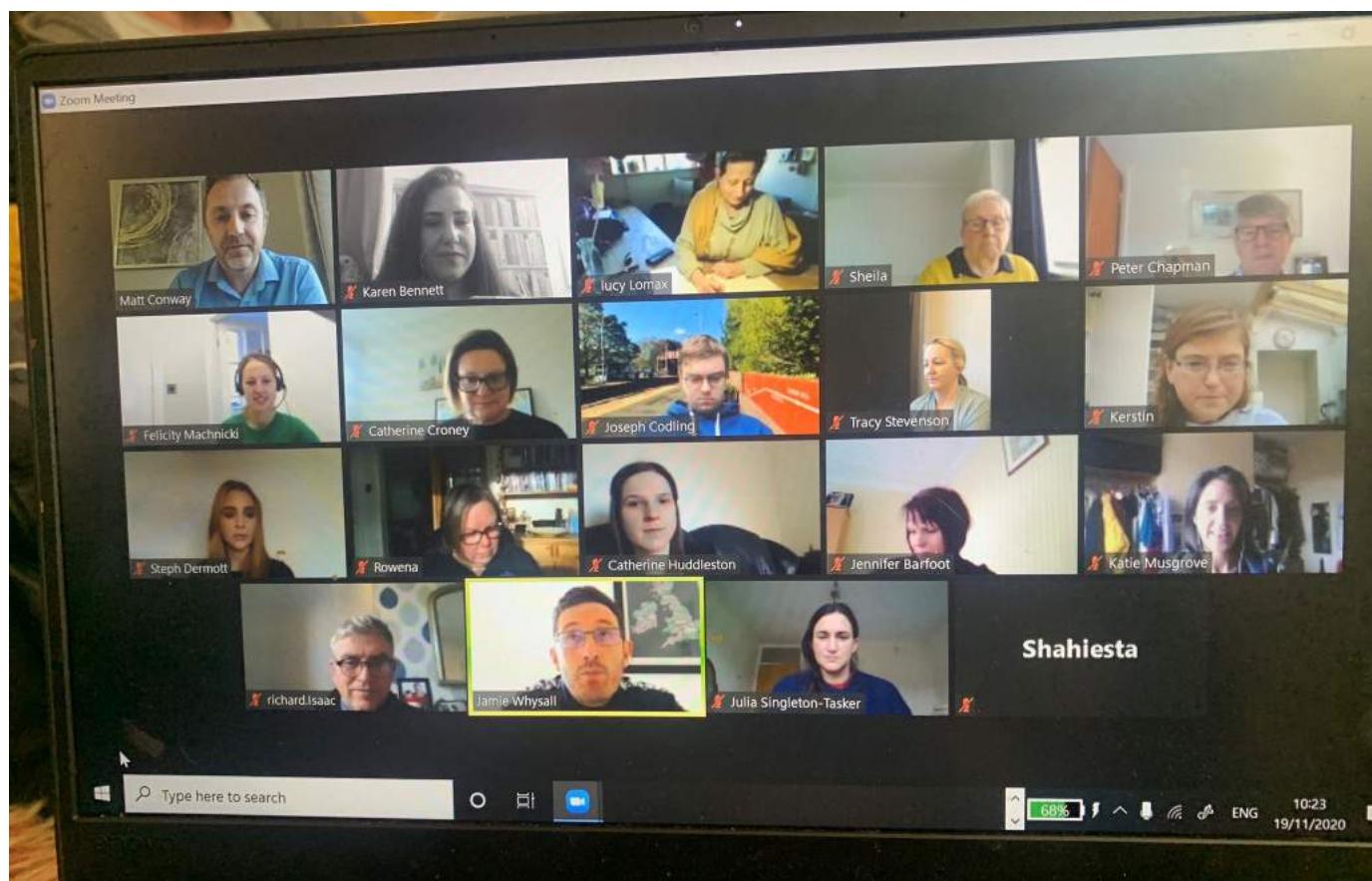
Nodrog (Gordon Head) a railway vlogger has made a short tater film about the service and this can be seen on <https://youtu.be/YxB6Y8ipp64> and Katie, a member of the CRL team, has made a short Doodly animation to give details of 'Tales from DalesRail' and this can be viewed on [https://youtu.be/Ci\\_-caTba3c](https://youtu.be/Ci_-caTba3c) and if you have any 'Tales from DalesRail' you would like to add to Virtual DalesRail 20230 then please email these to richard.watts.crl@gmail.com or simon.clarke.crl@gmail.com and includes any images to add to the gallery.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMME

During the past year, the Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) education team have had to adapt their practice to navigate through the Covid-19 outbreak. Before the pandemic, they focused on educating young people on safety and careers, supporting other Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) with education in rail and engaged local communities with the railway including making station enhancements. When working from home became the new normal, plans were devised to ensure those objectives could still be met.

During the adaptation to home-based education, the team created rail-related activities that covered National Curriculum objectives. These were uploaded onto the *Down the Line* website and shared on social media. The *Creative at Home* programme saw seven animated rail-inspired tasks to keep children active and creative during lockdown. When restrictions eased, videos were made to show people how to use the train safely and in particular on the *Autism Friendly Line*. Videos were also made about the history of some of Lancashire's stations and a collection of stories from the *DalesRail* programme were put together virtually.

When schools had settled back into a new normal in the latter part of 2020, online safety sessions took place over zoom. Schools commented how glad they were to have virtual visitors to the classroom. Some uniformed groups such as the cubs also took advantage of the online sessions. Safety sessions were also held in person at the Al Hayat language centre in Blackburn. A week of live sessions was planned for late January 2021, but due to lockdown, it was decided a video would be sent to pupils instead.

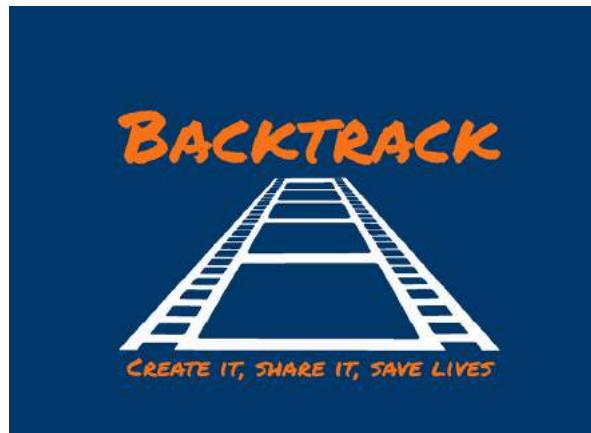


Prior to the pandemic, CRL hosted triannual Education Network meetings for stakeholders across the Northern franchise network. Usually based in Accrington or Preston, these were an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and undertake training – such as suicide awareness or learning about autism. In March, these meetings moved to zoom to give the regular attendees an opportunity to talk about their newfound working arrangements and the Community Rail Network suggested invitation to the group could be opened-up nationally.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Since moving online, the network has been able to provide peer to peer and external training in topics such as filmmaking. With a view to continue these throughout 2021, a training budget has been allocated. The switch to an online format during a challenging time for the community rail family helped the Education Network receive the *Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail* award in December 2020.

The Education Network also nurtured a major project that CRL co-led in 2020. When a Network Rail representative approached the group for support in reducing trespassing, *Backtrack* was born. A small working party made of representatives from CRL, Bishop Line, Tyne Valley and South Eastern CRPs met weekly and created a national competition for teenagers.



During 2020, CRL continued to encourage young people to look at careers in the railway industry. In October they hosted an event for *Rail Week*. *The Right Track to Diversity* was an online seminar which saw three rail employees from underrepresented groups discuss their experiences of the industry. The seminar was broadcasted live but videos of the event have been edited and uploaded to *Down the Line* for schools and colleges to use. In December and January, several more careers' sessions took place online involving schools and colleges.

Some artwork has been created and displayed during these testing times. The *Memorable Journeys* banners were erected at Accrington and a small-scale launch was held in September. At Castleford, a banner created through the medium of Zoom with a local primary school went on display in December. Along the *Line* saw a total re-vamp at Ramsgreave and Wilpshire and an online launch took place in January. The *Hidden Gems*' photo collage boards were finally revealed on the West of Lancashire lines in August. *Be a Gem* was a project that took place remotely during the early stages of lockdown. A template of a gem shape was sent out to vulnerable groups across the Lancashire area and participants were instructed to fill the gem with things they loved using any media. The entries gathered were made into posters which are now displayed along the Lancashire lines.



## EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Knowing how to use public transport can be a barrier for young people to access opportunities and so CRL continues to be involved in a number of Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs). During 2020 the activities of many of LCEPs have been severely affected by the pandemic with most activities on hold. However, some contact has continued and in particular with the Blackburn group who showed a presentation on Lancashire County Council's City of Culture bid for 2025 and contact was made with the local NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) group leader. It is hoped that after Easter 2021 that these groups will pick up again and that a fuller account can be given in next year's Annual Report.

Since 2018, CRL have hosted an annual's women's project to address the gender imbalance of employees in rail. Knowing that taking groups on rail trips was unlikely, the group planned 100 women - 100 journeys, a project which would see women across the globe penning memoirs of rail journeys. The brief was to retell stories that would make the reader laugh, cry or be inspired. Rail employees wrote accounts of their jobs to inspire women into the industry. Others contributed tales of how they met friends or travelled to breath-taking locations, with an aim to tempt people back to the railway when it is safe to do so. A booklet of the stories was launched on International Women's Day 2021 and after the physical and online booklet will be shared far and wide.



**CRL #100WOMEN100JOURNEYS**  
Community Rail Lancashire

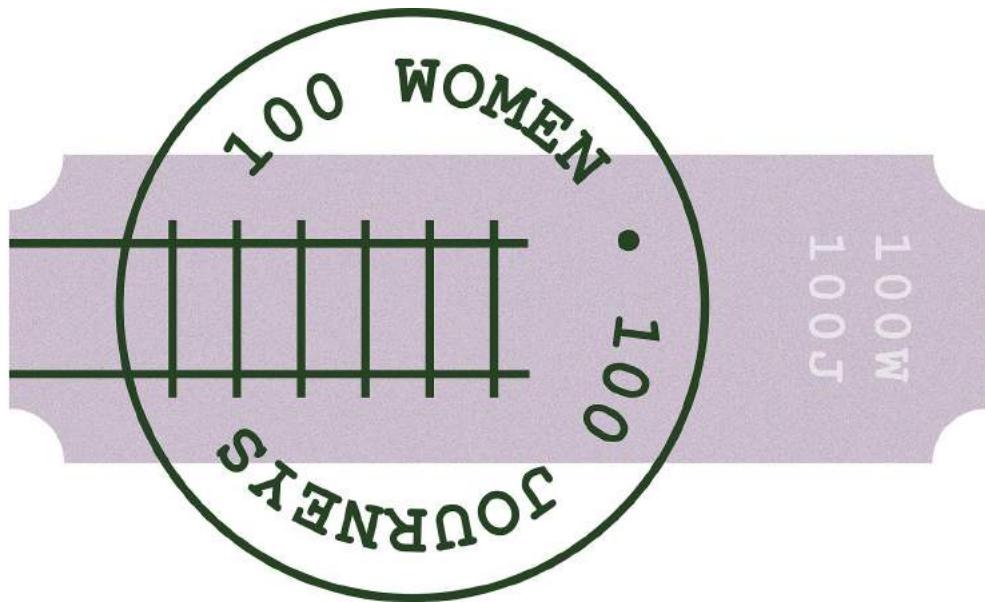
Looking ahead to the next year, the team are tentatively planning for projects which continue to deliver safety and careers education and connect local communities to the railway. They recognise the importance of their role in enticing passengers back onto the railway during recovery from the effects of the pandemic. Unsure of how quickly things will open-up, they want to plan for all eventualities to ensure work can continue – whatever restrictions are in place. Details of the plan are included in the four-year strategic education plan which is regularly reviewed at Community Rail Executive Group (ComREG).

**A short video has been made with feedback from members of the Education Network on the success of the virtual format and this can be seen on <https://youtu.be/xRvQnDajer0>**

## 100 WOMEN 100 JOURNEYS

For the past three years Community Rail Lancashire has delivered an annual project focussed on demonstrating the rail industry as a viable employment option to young women and encouraging confident travel. Starting off as Women Who Wander for the first two years and in 2019/20 becoming Women in STEM - (see page 21) the project has continued to grow and help to lessen the gender imbalance across the rail industry.

When Covid-19 struck in spring 2020 it was clear that a different approach would be needed and that it would more than likely have to be done under lockdown conditions and so 100 Women 100 Journeys was born.



100 Women 100 Journeys was an opportunity for the project to go international and women across the globe were asked to submit stories about a journey they had made by rail, whether this was for business or pleasure or even just because they could.

As well as promoting an industry, in which there is still a stark gender imbalance, 100 Women 100 Journeys seeks to inspire passengers back onto the railway after a year's hiatus.

All 100 stories are included in a booklet and launch day was 8th March 2021 to coincide with International Women's Day. The booklet can be downloaded on this link: [https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/100W\\_FINAL-compressed.pdf](https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/100W_FINAL-compressed.pdf)



**CRL** #100WOMEN100JOURNEYS  
Community Rail Lancashire



**CRL**  
Community Rail Lancashire

#100WOMEN100JOURNEYS

CRL gives special thanks to all the storytellers; thank you for sharing your funny, thought-provoking and, on occasion, sad memories of train travel.

More information about the project visit [www.downtheline.org.uk/100-women-100-journeys](http://www.downtheline.org.uk/100-women-100-journeys)

## CREATIVE AT HOME

Creative at Home is a project that came about from the lockdown measures first introduced in March 2020 following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The idea was to create a repository of ideas and projects for young people to do whilst they were unable to go to school.



One of the early things CRL got involved with was a project called Kids in the Kitchen that was being led by The Larder in Preston, a social enterprise that promotes healthy, local, seasonal and low waste food ideas.

Volunteers from The Larder made a series of videos aimed at children to encourage them to start cooking and some examples are; Squish Squash Soup ([https://youtu.be/YAjfppAEa\\_4](https://youtu.be/YAjfppAEa_4)) and Game of Scones Pizza (<https://youtu.be/FjRWuM8oIG4>) and many other fantastic recipes that are easy to make and can be seen on <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/kids-in-the-kitchen/>.

Another great idea was a home based art project called Be A Gem which provided a gem shaped template for children to colour or decorate and then either scan or photograph and send in to us here at CRL. The best gems were then made into a double royal sized poster that has been displayed at stations across the CRL area.



CRL also used the Down the Line website to promote a huge collection of ideas from across the rail industry for those stuck at home to get involved in and these can be seen on this link <http://downtheline.org.uk/projects/workpacks/>

One worrying aspect of lockdown was a sharp increase in the number of young people trespassing on the railway. To inform youngsters of the dangers of going on the tracks, CRL asked 11-18 year olds to create a movie, song, script or storyboard to share with their peers. The project called Backtrack was very successful and to read about the winning entries click on this link <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/backtrack-winners-announced/>.

**Backtrack will be back in later in 2021 so watch this space for this year's competition.**

# ALONG THE LINE

'Along the Line' was developed jointly by Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and Connecting East Lancashire (CEL) 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 station friends' group. The project commissioned local artist Karen Allerton to develop artwork and Huckleberry Films to produce three films showing 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 is in a cutting, concealed by trees and has been an easy target at times for anti-social activity 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 community involvement. Here are some of those involved:

**Ribblesdale High School, Clitheroe:** everyday many of its students travel 'along the line' to school. So, a group of 18 students took on the task of creating bright artwork for display at the station. The students visited the station and the Walker Art Gallery in Manchester. On the way they asked passengers about their journeys and ideas for improving the line. Their bright artwork focused on the trees and wildlife around the station.

Photographic students from **Blackburn College** developed a series of montages that now adorn the platform entrances showing features that can be seen 'along the line'.

The local **Alzheimer's Society and Child Action North West (CANW)** have been able to show historical references and pictures of the line in the platform shelters. As passengers 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 & Wilpshire 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.



**"If someone's having a bad day at work, they're gonna go to the railway station and they're gonna see all the bright colours ... and it might make them happy".** Keira, a pupil from Ribblesdale High School, Clitheroe. We hope this project brings a smile to people's faces and brightens their day.

## THE AWARD WINNING SCRUBS PROJECT

An auntie and niece team who “brought the railway family and communities together” to support NHS staff during the Covid-19 pandemic have received a coveted national award.

Shellene Divall and Christine Holland, both ‘community rail’ volunteers, won the Railway Family Supporting Communities Award, sponsored by Rail Delivery Group, at the 16th national Community Rail Awards, on 9 December 2020.

This new award was created this year to recognise those within the rail industry and community rail who had gone above and beyond their usual activities to help communities during the pandemic and made a difference to people’s lives.



When Covid-19 hit, Shellene and niece Christine helped tackle the huge demands placed on the NHS by making much-needed scrubs and bags for their local hospital, Blackpool Victoria, other medical centres and care homes. Between them, they sourced materials and threads from friends and sewing groups, and secured donations and support from local businesses.

The pair are both volunteer station ‘friends’ at St Annes Station on Lancashire’s South Fylde Line, and leading by example, took it upon themselves to encourage more people to get involved, working with volunteers at other nearby stations to support the project, bringing communities linked by rail together.

The Community Rail Awards, organised by Community Rail Network, recognise the important, often unsung, work by community rail partnerships, station friends, and other community rail groups across Britain. They shine a light on vital projects across this growing grassroots movement, highlighting community rail’s contribution to sustainable mobility, social inclusion, community development, and wellbeing.

**Jools Townsend, chief executive of Community Rail Network**, said: “Our congratulations go to Shellene and Christine, whose inspirational efforts brought the railway family and local communities together at a time of national crisis. They are a credit to the community rail movement, and show how station volunteers work together and support their local areas with rail as a focal point.

**Tony Ford**, who nominated Shellene and Christine for the award as chair of both the South Fylde Line and the Friends of St Anne’s Station, added: “This year has been difficult for everyone, but Shellene and Christine stepped in, saw there was a need for scrubs and got organised. They were supported by other volunteers from stations along the South Fylde Line who, as well as sewing items together, donated materials that were used to create washbags as well as sets of scrubs. It was a great example of those involved in community rail putting in time and effort to engage with their local communities in a productive and worthwhile way.”

## OTHER PROJECTS

### Bonded Together with a Prayer Bead

Community Rail Lancashire has been working with Arts2Heal, a small charity that was set up to help and support people with issues of anxiety and depression through the medium of art.

The idea of Bonded Together with A Prayer Bead came about during a series of meetings in Blackburn that were facilitated by Near Neighbours, which is an initiative that aims to bring people together in communities that are religiously and ethnically diverse, so that they can collaborate together on initiatives that improve the local community in which they live.

Working with Near Neighbours, Arts2Heal developed an idea that would bring the diverse communities in Blackburn together. As many religious faiths use prayer beads Art2Heal's idea was that people from the different faiths would each decorate a prayer bead. Each individual bead is 8 cm across – which on completion would go towards the aim of a 1000 bead long thread which would be nearly 100 metres in length.



The project culminated in a trip to Cambridge to display the amazing thread of beads at the Cambridge Eco Mosque. The aim of this trip was to showcase the thread of beads that had been contributed to by 1000 people but also to retrieve a missing bead that was taken by a member of the Woolfe Institute in Cambridge as a way of encouraging the group to visit. The mosque was a revelation with symbols uniting the afterlife and the Earth, represented in floor tiles and Quran verses on the walls.

The mosque's sustainable credentials are outstanding, with majority sustainable wood construction, water and energy conservation, rain-water use alongside solar panels and much more. The Imam explained the belief that the planet is entrusted to humans from God, with the 16 soaring 'tree' columns representing openness to all people.

### Pacer Photograph Competition

To coincide with the final Pacer (142 units) leaving active service on the Northern network, Community Rail Lancashire, the South Fylde Line CRP and the line's friends of stations groups decided to run a competition to find the best photograph of a Pacer taken anywhere on the Lancashire Triangle. Submissions were invited from photographers to cover the Preston to Blackpool South, Preston to Ormskirk and Preston to Colne routes and a good selection was received. Three winners, one from each route were chosen and they each received a 1000 piece jigsaw of their photograph as a prize.



142046 on approach to Rufford  
Martyn Hilbert



142052 at Church & Oswaldtwistle  
Kev Hall



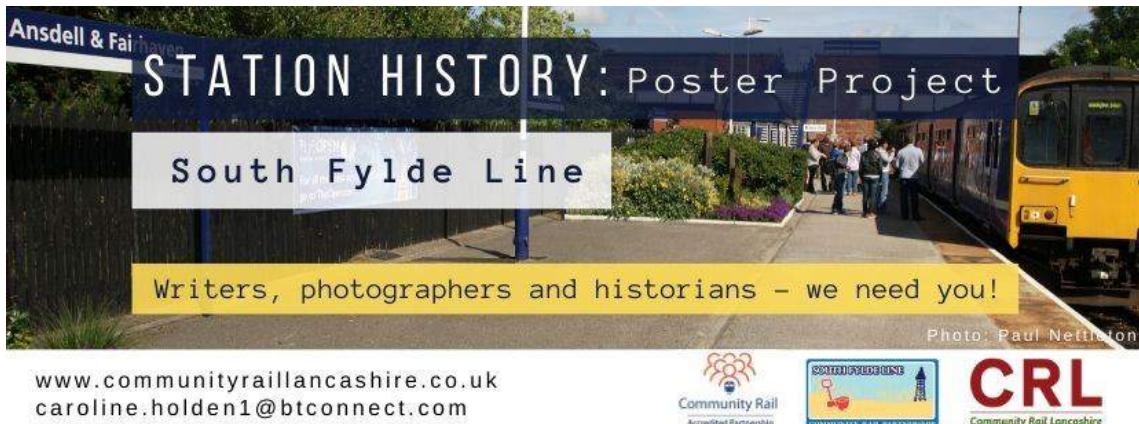
142020 at Squires Gate  
Paul Nettleton

## OTHER PROJECTS

### Your Station Has a History

Caroline Holden, CRL's latest recruit started under lockdown conditions but still hit the platform running and got straight into this project to help develop additional station history posters to join the ones done in previous years.

Working with the station friends groups a number of posters have been finished and number of others are being worked on ready for printing and displaying at the stations.



Completed posters have been installed at Ansdell & Fairhaven on the South Fylde Line and at Parbold on the Wigan to Southport line. Work is underway on a poster for Moss Side, St. Annes-on-the-Sea and for Burscough Bridge. To see the completed posters and all the others done in previous years visit the CRL website at <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/history-posters/>. Along with the printed posters CRL has been allowed access to a number of audio files that record the history of our local railways in words. These can be found on this link <https://communityraillancashire.co.uk/audio-files/>.

### Hanging Baskets at Preston



Katie Musgrove and Caroline Holden from the CRL team have worked with Avanti West Coast Community Champion, Millie Woodhead on this jointly funded project, and the finished baskets were installed on Friday 5th March.

Caroline said, "We have been delighted to work with Millie at Preston Station. This is the first time we have collaborated and have further plans to connect with local communities to make Preston Station even more pleasant for passengers and local people."

All the flowers and foliage in the baskets are artificial, but amazingly life-like and for those of you who know your plants that won't be a surprise, as they are mostly types that are only found as artificial or ones that you wouldn't typically see as real plants in a hanging basket.

Katie has filmed the making of the baskets and also the installation and the videos will be uploaded to YouTube in due course. The video to show anyone interested how to make their own artificial hanging basket and can be watched on this link: <https://youtu.be/8mpTE23a9ZQ>

## SPONSORSHIP

Community Rail Lancashire normally sponsors a number of events across the area such as Real Ale Festivals and the Great British Rhythm & Blues Festival in Colne but Covid-19 put paid to most of those so the only thing we sponsored was the Small Projects Award (under £500) at the 2020 Community Rail Awards and won by the Friends of Hunmanby Railway Station for their project Attracting Passengers to Hunmanby's New Hourly Train Service.

## CRL WEBSITES & SOCIAL MEDIA

The two Community Rail Lancashire websites have continued to attract visitors to their pages even throughout the difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic. Details of the last 12 months can be see below:

### [communityraillancashire.co.uk](http://communityraillancashire.co.uk)

Users	Page Views	Age
21,672	52,349	25-34

#### TOP FIVE PAGES

- Home page
- DalesRail
- The Bentham Line
- News
- East Lancashire Towns Great For Commuting

### [downtheline.org.uk](http://downtheline.org.uk)

Users	Page Views	Visits
3,972	9,963	5,174

#### TOP FIVE PAGES

- Backtrack
- Home page
- Projects
- 100 Women 100 Journeys
- Activities At Home

The CRL Twitter account @crl\_live has seen 532 Tweets over the last 12 months with 129 new followers and 3,998 profile views where other Twitter users have visited the @crl\_live profile for more information.

The Instagram account crl\_live has 133 followers and there have been 114 posts over the last year.

## CRL GUIDED WALKS

Unfortunately due to the Coronavirus pandemic that swept the country during 2020 and still continues today, the programme of guided walks normally provided across the East Lancashire lines had to be suspended.

We would like to thank the Lancashire Rail Ramblers for their continued support in reconnoitring the walks and leading walks when able to do so. The group are preparing a programme of walks for 2021 and hopefully the walks will be to resume later in the year. They are also working on a programme of walks for the 2021 DalesRail season.

Photographs and other images in this report courtesy of:

Simon Clarke, Caroline Eccles, Karen Allerton, Katie Musgrove, Tony Ford, Source Creative, Daisy Chapman-Chamberlain, James Barnes, Network Rail, Manchester Recover Task Force, Caroline Holden, Shahiesta Raja, Eddy (Tangerine Photography), John Barnes, Craig Ward, Richard Watts, Karen Bennett, Jodie Greenwood (Wedge Collective), The Larder, Candida Wood, Lyra Gravestock, Martin Hilbert, Kev Hall & Paul Nettleton

## WHO'S WHO

Richard Watts	Partnership Secretary & Chair Community Rail Lancashire Ltd.	<a href="mailto:richard.watts.crl@gmail.com">richard.watts.crl@gmail.com</a> 07487 699341
Simon Clarke	Community Rail Development Officer	<a href="mailto:simon.clarke.crl@gmail.com">simon.clarke.crl@gmail.com</a> 07399 563599
Caroline Holden	Community Rail Development Officer	<a href="mailto:caroline.holden.crl@gmail.com">caroline.holden.crl@gmail.com</a> 07973 312844
Karen Bennett	Community Rail Education Development Officer	<a href="mailto:karen.bennett.crl@gmail.com">karen.bennett.crl@gmail.com</a> 07365 138233
Katie Musgrove	Special Needs Education Officer	<a href="mailto:katie.musgrove.crl@gmail.com">katie.musgrove.crl@gmail.com</a> 07490 771857
Shahista Raja	Community Rail Education Development Officer	<a href="mailto:shahista.raja.crl@gmail.com">shahista.raja.crl@gmail.com</a> 07366 799979
Marjorie Birch	Chair Joint CL & ELCRPs	<a href="mailto:margebirch@icloud.com">margebirch@icloud.com</a> 01200 441549
Tony Ford	Chair SFLCRP	<a href="mailto:tonyford19@gmail.com">tonyford19@gmail.com</a> 07831 415482
Marion Atkinson	Chair WoLCRP	<a href="mailto:marion.atkinson@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk">marion.atkinson@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk</a> 0151 3301027

**Along with the core members of the management groups there are a number of other industry members who regularly attend the meetings along with representatives from local councils, Station Managers and from local Rail User Groups and Friends of Stations.**

Owain Roberts	Regional Stakeholder Manager (West)	<a href="mailto:owain.roberts@northernrailway.co.uk">owain.roberts@northernrailway.co.uk</a> 07583 087862
Martin Keating	Regional Community & Sustainability Manager (West)	<a href="mailto:martin.keating@northernrailway.co.uk">martin.keating@northernrailway.co.uk</a> 07500 447392
Rebecca Styles	Regional Community & Sustainability Manager (Central)	<a href="mailto:rebecca.styles@northernrailway.co.uk">rebecca.styles@northernrailway.co.uk</a> 07786 174411
Dan Coles	Community Rail Team, Network Rail	<a href="mailto:daniel.coles@networkrail.co.uk">daniel.coles@networkrail.co.uk</a> 07710 938406
Devon Wall	Community Rail Team, Network Rail	<a href="mailto:devon.wall@networkrail.co.uk">devon.wall@networkrail.co.uk</a> 07701 064801
Ian Davis	Operations Officer, North Community Rail Network	<a href="mailto:ian@communityrail.org.uk">ian@communityrail.org.uk</a> 07376 124962

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