

Outgoing Chairs Report

2020 has been a year like no other and has brought technology to the forefront. Zoom and Teams now have new meanings but have allowed us to keep in contact and keep organisations running.

Northern, Network Rail and TfGM have ensured that services have run throughout the pandemic providing transport for essential workers. Local authorities have been at the forefront of ensuring grants have been allocated to small businesses, food boxes to those in need and a help point for the community.

Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) has provided online education packs, a national rail safety competition and provided a meeting place for others through the Community Rail Network.

Women in Community Rail (WiCR) have established support for community rail staff through the Breathing Spaces project. Our Friends groups, have when permitted, continued their work at the stations and kept in touch through zoom meetings and newsletters.

We have been fortunate to have two projects selected by the Restoring Your Railways project for further development. The two projects involved are Clitheroe – Hellifield led by Ribble Valley Borough Council and a passing loop and enhanced service between Rose Grove and Colne led by Pendle Borough Council.

We are now faced with new challenges, new ways of working and delivering services. Commuting five days a week to your place of work will become a thing of the past flexible working will become the norm and the rail industry has to respond to this through flexible ticketing and attractive prices. It is going to take a lot of publicity and confidence building to encourage people to leave the car at home and use public transport.

Everyone has a valuable contribution to make whether you're a volunteer, an officer from a local authority or a manager for the rail industry. Partnerships excel by bringing together, experience, knowledge and creative thinking to deliver rail services that meet the needs of the community.

Thank you for your support of the work of the partnership and the help that you have given to me as Chair. I know that Melanie will continue to lead the partnership through these challenging times.

Marjorie Birch, April 2021