



# Community Rail Partnerships and Station Adoption Groups

## South Western Railway

# Between the Lines

Issue 4 | June 2023

Welcome to the fourth edition of Between the Lines, South Western Railway's community rail newsletter. It has been an exciting and busy start to the year, with some fantastic events across the network. Our wonderful station adopters and Community Rail Partnerships have been working hard to brighten up their stations and bring them back into the heart of the communities they serve.

If you have any community rail stories to be included in the next edition of the newsletter, please email me at [matthew.parkinson@swrailway.com](mailto:matthew.parkinson@swrailway.com).

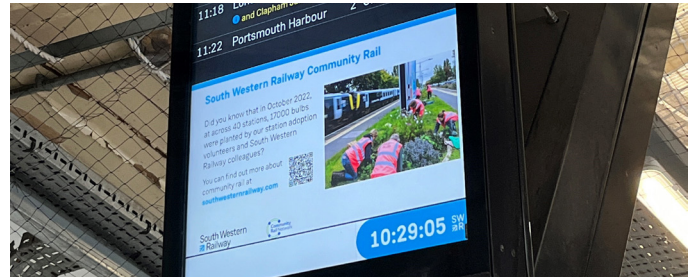
**(Front Cover): Huw Merriman MP, Rail Minister, visiting Waterloo Station during Community Rail Week.**

**(Below): Community Rail information is starting to appear on various totems and screens around the**

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## Stations in Bloom 2023

Stations in Bloom is back for a second year thanks to Blackmore Vale Community Rail Partnership. Following the success of last year's event, this will be another example of communities coming together to celebrate the effort that goes into making their stations brighter and more welcoming spaces.

In total, 59 stations will be visited by the judging panel, an increase from last year's numbers.

We look forward to coming together and celebrating in October this year, once again at the beautiful Castle Gardens in Sherborne.



## Alton Walking Festival

Alton Walking Festival ran throughout the course of May. It hosted a large variety of walks around the local area, led by knowledgeable volunteers, and suitable for all abilities.

There was a selection of town walks, countryside walks, storytelling, and many more. It was an opportunity for enthusiastic walkers to explore Alton and its stunning surrounding countryside, exploring its rich heritage.

All walks were organised by Alton Town Council. The photo to the right shows one of the groups, led by Paul Ebbutt, Alton Station Adoption Group, completing their walk from Basingstoke to Alton on Saturday 27th May.



## Spotlight on Sustainability

A large crowd of friends, colleagues, and supporters gathered at London Waterloo on Tuesday 14th March to see Operations Trainer Steve Wardle name a train in memory of his son Alex, who died tragically of Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome (SADS) in 2016. The Alex Wardle Foundation was set up in memory of Alex, a medical student. It has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of SADS and to provide defibrillators for communities, and is now one of our charity partners at SWR. Steve unveiled the logo, alongside Claire Mann, on train number 444 023, with the number 23 having the added significance of being Alex's age when he passed away.



Alongside the unveiling, we also announced that we will be supporting the Foundation's work by installing defibrillators at all 154 staffed stations on our network. These will be placed as close as possible to the front entrances so they can be used day or night in the event of a cardiac arrest. As part of this initiative we have run awareness workshops, which 112 colleagues attended from across the network.



### Sustainability Heroes Awards

On the 24th April, the Sustainability team held an event at the Barbican Conservatory in London for all the sustainability heroes internally and externally at SWR. The event included welcome drinks and a terrarium workshop which everyone got to take home, followed by lunch and speeches from some of SWR's directors and the Head of Sustainability, as well as Robin Hutchinson from The Community Brain. The nominees in the 'Stations and Spaces' category were:

**Solent Remade**  
**Petersfield Free Shop**  
**Shawford Cafe**  
**Andrew Ardley**

Nominated in the 'Community Support' category were:

**Swaythling Free Shop**  
**Lynette Marshall - Petersfield Free Shop**  
**West Byfleet Station Adopters**  
**Fiona Berryman - Woolston Station**

The Sustainability team is hoping to run the event again next year and hopefully will see some more community groups invited.



Nominees for the 'Stations and Spaces' category



Nominees for the 'Community Support' category

## Age UK Richmond - Try The Train

On Monday 3rd April, SWR and Hounslow & Richmond CRP hosted a group from Age UK Richmond, who very much enjoyed a familiarisation trip on the train, with a complimentary trip down memory lane at the Poppy Factory. They discovered the charity's fascinating 100-year history and made their very own poppy. For some, it was the first time they had used the train in a while.

Travelling from Whitton to Richmond, the travellers were impressed by the help offered by SWR using the help button on the platform and the support of the Guard and station staff. On arrival, they had no difficulties using the totem for their onward journey and finding out more about the local area.

There was some positive feedback from the day:

*'It really boosted my confidence – Now I know how to get help I am going to try a trip on my own'*

Following the trip, Age UK are really keen to encourage more people they work with to Try the Train and will pass on the useful information.



## Weymouth Cubs - Try the Train

The local Cubs group in Weymouth had a great evening on a Try the Train trip from Weymouth to Dorchester South, with Chantelle Bacon (South Wessex CRP Officer) and Bryce Hunt (Weymouth Station Manager).

The group was excited to learn about railway travel and safety, and asked questions about everything from signals to how to get help if they need it. They were given the opportunity to get to know the ticket machines, Smartcard validators, and help points at the station. They enjoyed the train ride too - some had never been on a train before!



# Platform 1 for... Shawford Community Cafe

In January 2023, Platform One, the community cafe at Shawford station opened its doors to the public after extensive refurbishment project. Thanks to the hard work of Three Rivers CRP, supported by funding from SWR Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF), this former ticket office has been transformed and brought back to life.

## It is open every day of the week:

Mon - Fri 07:30 - 17:00

Weekends 09:00 - 17:00

It is a Coffee House, Gelato, and Community Hub all in one, and lies midway along the Itchen Way, a popular walking route between the historic city of Winchester and the nearby town of Eastleigh. Their varied menu includes a mix of speciality coffee, Italian gelato, and homemade bakes. It's dog-friendly, and has plenty of spaces available for bikes outside, making it a perfect pit-stop for a dog walk or countryside cycle ride.

You can visit their website for more information here: [www.platformone.uk](http://www.platformone.uk)

## Go Jauntly

SWR's Innovation team has partnered for a trial with Go Jauntly, an app which provides detailed directions and information on a variety of walking routes. So far, four walks have been launched on the SWR network, with one starting at Shawford station and following the Itchen Trail. Other SWR walks are from Chessington South, Brockenhurst, Beaulieu Road, and Sway.



Marco, the owner of Platform One, stood proudly in front of the cafe.

# Coronation on the SWR network

One of the highlights of this year so far has been the Coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6th May 2023. In the weeks leading up to the big day, our CRP's, station adoption groups, and SWR station staff held their own events and decorated their stations in celebration of this monumental day.

## Reading to Windsor CRP Coronation Parties

Reading to Windsor CRP, part of South East Communities Rail Partnership, held three Coronation parties on the week of 24th April. At all three events, food was provided by Optalis, the Windsor & Eton Riverside station adopters.

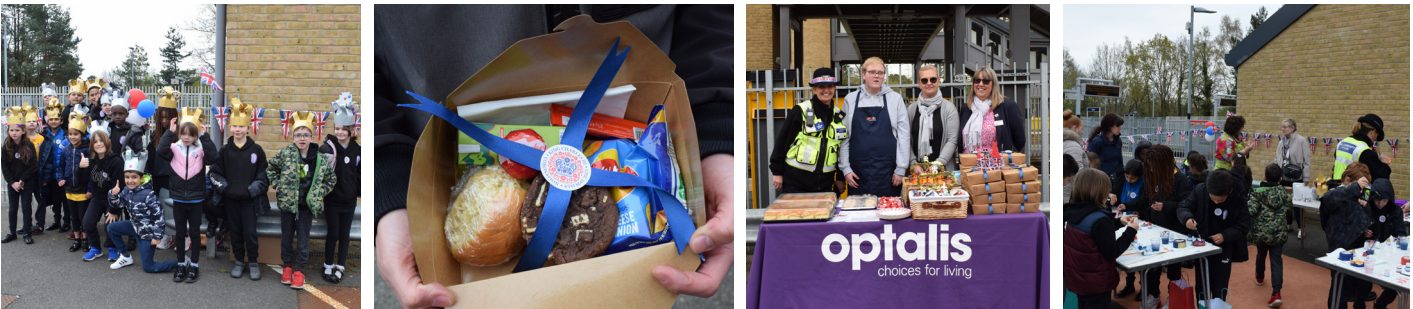
### Staines, Tuesday 25th April

In Staines, members of the local community and pupils from local schools gathered at the soon-to-be community garden.



### Ascot, Wednesday 26th April

At Ascot station, children from a local school enjoyed making their own crowns, decorating them with jewels, before tucking into a delicious lunch.



### Windsor & Eton Riverside, Friday 28th April

At Windsor & Eton Riverside, a stone's throw from Windsor Castle, members of Age Concern Windsor enjoyed dancing and lunch whilst really getting into the Coronation spirit.



# Isle of Wight and New Forest Coronation Parties

The Community Rail Partnerships in the New Forest, and the Isle of Wight also celebrated the Coronation

Organising multiple schools to come to a CRP event is always challenging. Throw in the ingredients of 'make a crown competition', excited children, a train ride to a Coronation Tea Party with games, jelly and ice cream and you have a mixed dish of noise, laughter, but with a strong underlying flavour of teacher control, which all the teachers did, brilliantly!

Children from primary schools in Lymington, the New Forest and on the Isle of Wight were hosted first in Brockenhurst Village Hall and the next day, at the Broadway Centre in Sandown. Volunteers were also invited from both partnerships with SWR staff for a cream tea and a bit of Union Jack waving. 'Pin the Jewel on the Crown' was one of highlights of the afternoon, especially for the winner on the Isle of Wight who won a knitted bear from Sandown Green Towns Volunteers. However, and as every child will tell you, the train ride was definitely the best bit.

Community Rail Manager for both Partnerships, Bobby Lock said

*"The two tea parties were a real success, and it was lovely to, with the help of the Gaslight Community café and helpers, provide the party for volunteers and particularly the children to make a memory that will last a lifetime."*



**DINOSAUR FUN DAY**

Sandown Railway Station  
**MONDAY 3rd APRIL 2023**  
10am to 4pm

**Come and Join the Dinosaur Fun!**  
On the Train and at Sandown Station's Gaslight Café

- Real Fossils
- A Pop-up Dinosaur Skeleton
- A Competition with Prizes
- Decorating Dinosaur Cakes

Follow the dinosaur footprints in the Jurassic Los Altos Park and discover the Dinosaur Eggs!

**10% OFF ENTRY** TO DINOSAUR ISLE DURING THE EASTER HOLIDAYS  
Bring a valid SWR Island Line rail ticket to qualify.

This event is supported by:

## Dinosaur Day

Also on the Island, the CRP held a Dinosaur Fun Day on Monday 3rd April in the Gaslight Cafe at Sandown station. There were real fossils, a pop up dinosaur skeleton, competitions with prizes, and decorating dinosaur cakes. The CRP also worked with Dinosaur Isle for a 10% discount to those who brought a valid Island Line train ticket throughout the Easter Holidays.

## Swanage Railway Returns to Wareham

On Tuesday 4th April, the Swanage Railway ran their first train onto the mainline at Wareham, as part of a new trial for the Summer months between Swanage and Wareham. The trains are timetabled to connect with South Western Railway services from destinations such as London Waterloo, Southampton, Bournemouth, or Weymouth.

The trial service is running on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays until Sunday 10th September, with trains departing Wareham for Swanage at 11:19, 13:05, 15:19, and the 17:19 which goes as far as Corfe Castle.



*The first arrival into Wareham being spectated by those attending to mark the special occasion.*

A large crowd of enthusiasts, members of the local community, and many more, gathered at Wareham Station to witness the first train arriving.

Swanage Railway had previously run trial services between the mainline at Wareham and their terminus of Swanage back in 2017, when they hired some rolling stock and locomotives from West Coast Railway Company. In 2018 and 2019, South Western Railway ran Summer Saturday services to Corfe Castle for steam train connections to Swanage.



*The new service awaits departure from Wareham on the last train of the first day of operation, the 17:19 to Corfe Castle. Tuesday 4th April 2023.*

## RSPB Arne Shuttle Bus Returns

Also from Wareham, until Wednesday 30th August 2023, RSPB Dorset will run a shuttle bus service for a second trial period. The registered service 2RN (to Arne) will take passengers from Wareham station to RSPB Arne Nature Reserve. This year, it will also run from the Purbeck Park which includes Norden 'Park and Ride' and Norden Park link for the Swanage Railway service.

A trial last year proved the bus to be popular with those who want to leave the car behind and use sustainable transport options to visit the nature reserve.

More info here: [http://ectcharity.co.uk/services/areas/dorset/local\\_bus\\_services](http://ectcharity.co.uk/services/areas/dorset/local_bus_services)





## Pinhoe's Planter

At Pinhoe, the furthest West station managed by SWR, a flowerbed of the station name, inspired by a similar one at Carbis Bay in Cornwall, has been installed by Network Rail Western for the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership. The flowerbed displays the station name 'Pinhoe' in stone letters; a welcoming first sight when arriving to the area by train. Whilst the flowerbed and stones itself were constructed and installed by Network Rail, funding was thanks to the Community Rail Development Fund and Cross Country's Community Engagement Fund. The planting was carried out by volunteers from the local Community Hub who are the station adopters.



## Winchester Go LD Certificate

SWR and Hampshire CRP joined members of local charity Winchester Go LD at the Platform One cafe at Shawford station on Tuesday 25th April, for an evening of celebrating the success of the Travel with Confidence project.

The project helps members improve and develop their skills through different station visits, Try the Train trips, and a series of videos which break down the process of a rail journey into an easy-to-understand step-by-step guide.

Betty Chadwick, Winchester Go LD's CEO, said:

*"I am immensely proud of our team of staff, members, and volunteers who've worked so hard in delivering such a brilliantly successful project.*

*"It's wonderful to see our Winchester Go LD members thrive through developing more independent life skills and we hope that they can inspire other adults with learning disabilities to enjoy using the train too."*



# Community Rail Week 2023 Launch at Tolworth

## #ConnectingCommunitiesByRail

This year, the national Community Rail Week was launched from Tolworth station, adopted by The Community Brain. Organised by Community Rail Network and sponsored by the Rail Delivery Group, the aim of the week was to showcase and celebrate community rail with all its innovative projects and initiatives around the theme of #ConnectingCommunitiesByRail.



From left to right, Sir Ed Davey - Leader of Liberal Democrats and MP for Kingston and Surbiton, Jools Townsend - Community Rail Network CEO, Cllr Andreas Kirsch - Leader of Kingston Council, Robin Hutchinson - Director of The Community Brain.

Coinciding nicely with Community Rail Week, The Rail Delivery Group also launched their 'World Cup of Stations' which, this year, had the theme of community rail. On SWR's network, we had two shortlisted stations - Tolworth and Swaythling.

## Rail Minister Visits CRP Officers at Waterloo

It was a pleasure to host the Rail Minister, Huw Merriman MP, at London Waterloo Station on Tuesday 23rd May to meet some of our inspirational CRP Officers, who held a display on the concourse during Community Rail Week 2023. Throughout the day, Officers from some CRPs across the network spoke to customers about community rail, promoting travel to the fantastic destinations on the network. Lots of leaflets and postcards were handed out and plenty of conversations were had. Customers were all enthusiastic and some even learned that they can visit their favourite place by train.



# Launch of a great new children's educational book



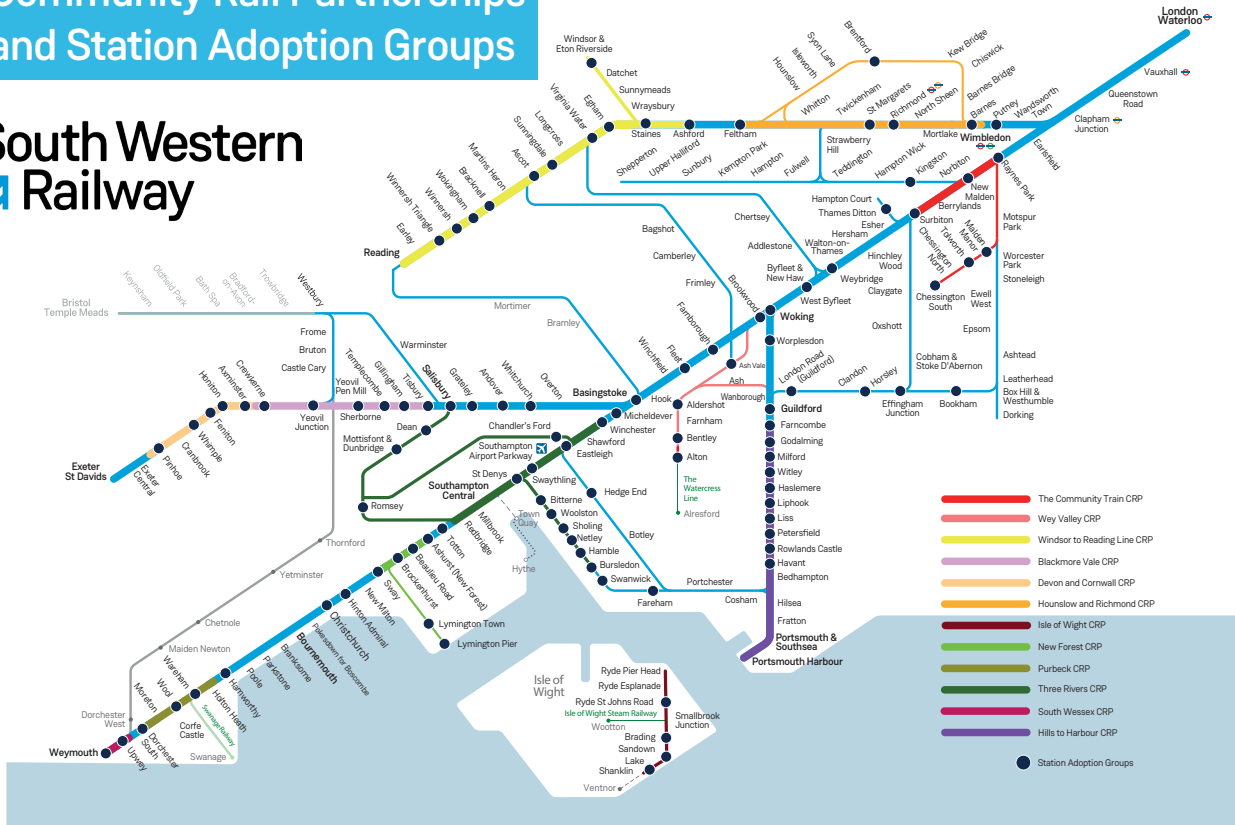
*The Tale of Sevenpence the Templecombe Station Cat* is based on a true story known only to the railway community. The story handed down by oral tradition from Victorian times is retold by author Christine Scott.

The book was launched at the Gartell Light Railway on Saturday 20th May, followed by a reading of the story on the train to children from Abbas & Templecombe CE Primary School on Tuesday 23rd May. The children had a wonderful time on the train, and even had a ride on the steam train at Yeovil Railway Centre.



## Community Rail Partnerships and Station Adoption Groups

**South Western Railway**



CRP and Station Adoption Groups Map, as of May 2023.

**South Western Railway**

# Dan Wright writes...

## Community Rail Week

Thank you to everyone who took part in Community Rail Week, whatever you did. We had a record number of events and participants this time. SWR was well represented, with the new Community Train CRP hosting the launch event at SWR's Tolworth station, and the rail minister visiting London Waterloo the next day to meet CRPs from across the SWR network and hear about the great work they do.

## Events

3-28 July: Days Out by Rail:

We are encouraging all members to promote their lines and stations through our month-long campaign; a chance to tell the world why they should visit you on the train. It will be delivered through our tourism project Scenic Rail Britain. If you want to get involved contact our leisure promotions coordinator Alice Mannion (alice@communityrail.org.uk).



Community Rail Awards:

While entries won't open until Autumn (the Awards ceremony will be in spring next year, in Swansea) we will imminently be releasing guidance for station adopters on collecting good evidence over the summer for their projects, as gardens in particular will look their best at that time. Keep an eye on Community Rail News for more details. Which brings me on to...

## Community Rail News

If you haven't signed up for Community Rail News please do. We email it out fortnightly with the latest news and information about Community Rail from across the country. You don't even have to be a member of Community Rail Network to get it (tell your friends and family?) and you can sign up here: <https://communityrail.org.uk/news/community-rail-news-sign-up/>

## Corporate Partners volunteer days

Community Rail Network has a number of corporate partners who are increasingly seeking opportunities for their staff to do volunteering days. We also sometimes get similar enquiries from other large companies, plus industry bodies like Department for Transport, Great British Railways Transition Team, and Network Rail.

If you have a project that would benefit from a team of people to give you a hand for a day, please let me know (daniel@communityrail.org.uk) with details of what the project is and where it is. It's useful to have a bank of projects we can put our corporate partners and other enquirers in touch with. Recent beneficiaries of corporate volunteer days have included the Community Brain garden at Tolworth, and an embankment clearance project at Raynes Park, organised by the station volunteer groups at those two stations.



CRP Officers promoting community rail at London Waterloo



Coronation crown making at Ascot station

# Tolworth



The Community Brain and their supporters stood outside Tolworth station at the Community Rail Week launch.