

Between The Lines

SWR Community Rail Newsletter

Issue 1 | June 2022

Welcome to the first South Western Railway (SWR) community rail newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading about all of the exciting things that are happening out and about on our network. We love hearing all of your wonderful stories, so please keep sending me these on a regular basis to be included in future editions. Email: Matthew.Parkinson@swrailway.com.

SWR/RSPB Partnership

We are now involved in a new and exciting partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Some of our stations will be transformed into hubs for wildlife, by installing nest boxes, cutting holes in fences for “hedgehog highways”, planting wildflowers, and many more initiatives. The stations which are currently set to become wildlife hubs are **Brading, Ashurst (New Forest), Havant, and Sunningdale**. These four have been chosen due to their close proximity to existing habitats and nature reserves. The aim is to encourage commuters and other station users to take wildlife-friendly actions in their own homes.

Green Wall at Weymouth

There have been lots of positive comments from members of the public in **Weymouth**, now part of the new **South Wessex CRP**, in relation to the newly installed living green wall. It has certainly made an impact within the community.

The idea behind these living green walls is to improve the environmental impact around the station, and also to make the station look more pleasing. There are some more green walls already up on our network, for example one at **Portsmouth Harbour**.



Shawford's Community Café

In **Shawford**, the team at **Three Rivers CRP** are busy with the restoration of the old station building. They plan to turn it into a community café and bike hire point.

It's taking shape quickly, and should be ready by summer of this year. It will look stunning in its historic Southern Railway Green colour scheme. Definitely somewhere to bring the people of Shawford, and elsewhere, together.

A date for your diary

On **Thursday 13th October 2022**, we will be holding our SWR 2022 Community Rail Conference. The venue is yet to be confirmed, so keep an eye out for when we confirm.



Swaythling Free Shop

In **Swaythling**, near Southampton, **Three Rivers CRP**, have done an amazing job setting up a free shop at the station. With recent events, their successful baby bank has donated some equipment, clothes, and food to Ukraine. They have made over 420 collections of food from local supermarkets and local private donations. This is the equivalent to 8,100kg in weight or 19,286 meals.

New Banners at Honiton

Three new banners are now in place at **Honiton** station. The theme is around Transport Through the Ages. It was organised by SWR and **Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership**, and supported by the **Friends of Honiton Station**, and Honiton Town Council. The artwork was designed by Littledown Primary Academy, Honiton Community Academy, THG's Masterpieces Support Group, and by members of the Honiton Carers Support Group.



Food on the Move

Recently, SWR's Managing Director **Claire Mann** took some guests from the Department for Transport to visit the **Island Line**. Whilst they were there, they paid a welcomed visit to the Gaslight Café at **Sandown Station**, where, throughout the pandemic, the **Isle of Wight CRP** have been supporting those residents in need with freshly prepared hot meals.

The program was also successfully developed on the mainland, and the CRP Officer **Bobby Lock** worked extremely hard to secure funding to continue the project for nearly two years, helping to deliver **42,000** food packages across the area.



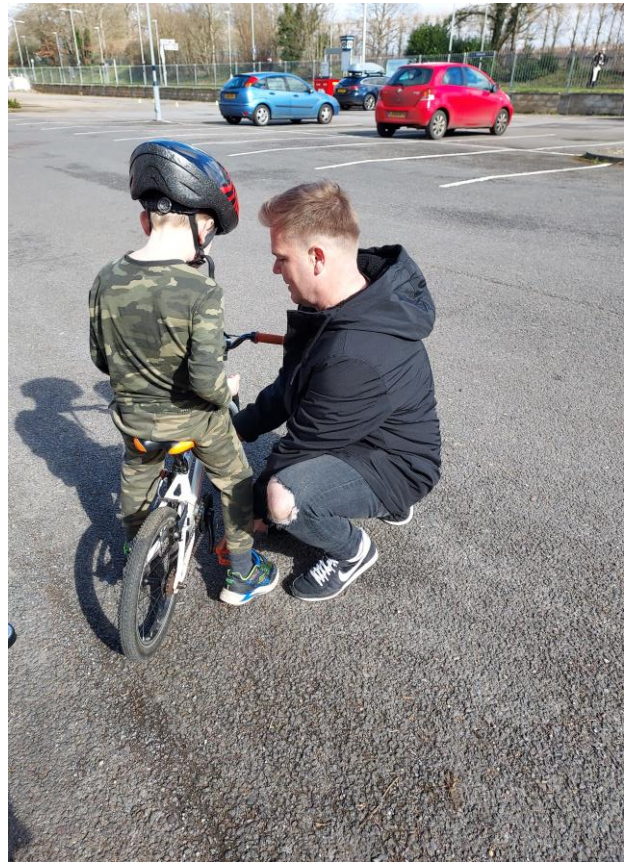
The Cycologist Visits

Between January and March, visitors to stations between **Farncombe** and **Haslemere** were pleased to see not just cars in the car park, but also the local Bike Dr. Locals were invited along to receive a free basic health check to make sure their bikes were roadworthy. Almost 100 visitors had their bikes checked, which is excellent. The local **MP Jeremy Hunt** even made a visit.

Welcome to the Team!

At South Western Railway, we would like to send a warm welcome our two latest CRP officers: Hannah McCormack, from **Hounslow & Richmond CRP**, and Chantelle Bacon, from **South Wessex CRP**.

Hannah said “I’ve been working with a new station adoption group based at **St Margaret’s Station**; a group with some lovely proposals for planting and community outreach. I have also been working on some exciting plans for **HRCRP’s** new website and social media launch.”



Blackmore Vale: Go Green by Train

The amazing **Blackmore Vale CRP** have recently released a short three minute promotional film showcasing some ‘environmental days out’ from along their patch of line between **Tisbury** and **Crewkerne**. Click the photo to watch the film.

Visit to Devon

I was delighted to be given the opportunity to visit the **Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership** – more specifically Betsy Saunders. She is the person behind their social media pages. One of the platforms I was particularly impressed by was their TikTok (@great.scenic.railways). We both filmed our own videos of a ‘walk from the railway’ – filming the easy bus connections at **Axminster** towards **Lyme Regis**, and a countryside/coastal walk around the area. You can watch my video [here](#).

Matthew Parkinson, Communications Apprentice (SWR)



Stations in Bloom

Stations in Bloom is flying the celebration flag in recognition of the wonderful efforts of station volunteers and railway staff across the SWR and GWR network. Community Rail Partnerships across the region are joining together in a new ground-breaking project, the first project of its kind on the railway network across Southern England. The ethos of Stations in Bloom reflects the nurturing attitude supporting everyone who participates in volunteering and initiatives which have turned stations into welcoming spaces for rail-users and visitors.

The project is funded by SWR Community Rail and is led by the **Blackmore Vale CRP** with **Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership**, **East Hampshire CRP**, and the newly formed **South Wessex CRP** on the GWR route from **Frome to Weymouth**.

Station judging is taking place between 18th July – 29th July 2022.

For more information, email:
crp@blackmorevaletrains.com



A New Adopter at Havant

Chaos Support is a day service based in **Havant**, which opened in 2013 with the goal to help young adults with a learning disability or additional needs. The main goal is to help young adults learn independence, employment, and other life skills.

As seen in the adjacent photograph, this is a new group that will be undertaking a Railway Community Challenge.

They made an excellent start by decorating some crowns to be displayed at **Havant** station, and also entered into the 'Create a Crown' competition.

The group will undertake more activities, such as litter picking and gardening, at the station.

Jubilee Celebrations

If you pass through **Liphook** station, you will be blown away at the sight of a crown created by local care home Bramshott Grange.

Residents and staff have spent endless hours finding images of the Queen's favourite things including her Corgis and images of her journey throughout her life.

The **East Hampshire CRP** came up with the idea of running a competition to create a crown fit for a Queen, in which this crown has been entered. Annabelle Groves, Activities Manager at Bramshott Grange, said 'We are so proud of what the ladies and gentlemen have achieved. This was a really exciting project that brought back lots of memories. Our activity program, is designed to encourage lots of interaction and promote wellbeing amongst those who live in our home and they thoroughly enjoyed being part of such an exciting time.'

If the Queen would like to wear her crown, she might find it a little too big and heavy to fit on her head. You need to see the crown in person to really appreciate the size of it!



Another Jubilee event was the Big Lunch at **Windsor & Eton Riverside** station. Some SWR colleagues and members of the local community gathered together on the concourse of the station to enjoy a celebratory lunch, served by the station adoption group **Optalis**. The event was a huge success, and everybody who attended had a very enjoyable time.

And finally, many of our station adopters have been busy preparing their stations for the Jubilee celebrations. Here is just one example of a planter installed at **Feltham** by the **Bee Friendly Trust**.