



Between the Lines

Special celebration edition | November 2022



Stations in Bloom

On Wednesday 19th October, Blackmore Vale Community Rail Partnership hosted the Stations in Bloom awards. This recognised the efforts of volunteers and station staff in developing stations across the railway network into neighbourhood hubs and havens for nature.

The ceremony was held at Castle Gardens in Sherborne and sponsored by The Gardens Group, and celebrated all the good that a railway station does to add value to local communities and environments.

SWR Managing Director, Claire Mann, (right - with Mark Miller of East Hampshire CRP) presented the awards alongside Chairman of the BVCRP, Derek Beer. South Wessex CRP, Devon & Cornwall CRP, Purbeck CRP, and Three Rivers CRP also took part, with 40 stations visited across their areas.



Contact Details

Paula.Aldridge@swrailway.com
Paula Aldridge, Community Rail Manager



The Big Bulb Plant Out

The awards ceremony followed SWR's 'The Big Bulb Plant Out', during which staff and volunteers planted over 17,000 bulbs across the network as part of National Customer Service Week.

Planting took place at 35 of our stations, including West Byfleet, Wool, Effingham Junction, Feniton, Shanklin, Feltham, and Templecombe (left).

The spring bulbs will breath colourful new life into stations when they begin to bloom early next year, helping to make our network more welcoming and enjoyable for customers.

They will also enhance the biodiversity of the network, creating places for animals and insects to thrive. Paula Aldridge, SWR Community Rail Manager, said *It is really great to see so many of our station adopters and volunteers coming together to create a pleasant environment for customers.*



SWR Community Rail Conference 2022

Our annual Community Rail Conference was held this year at Salisbury Guildhall on Thursday 29th September. Over 80 Station Adopters, Community Rail Partnerships, and stakeholders attended the event. Claire Mann, SWR Managing Director, gave a business update shortly after a welcome to Salisbury from Cllr Tom Corbin, Mayor of Salisbury. Following this, there were also talks from various speakers including Anna Jipps (Railway Heritage Trust), Jools Townsend and Dan Wright (Community Rail Network), and Marcia Burnett (Network Rail). Popular YouTuber, Geoff Marshall, closed the event with a talk about the least used stations in Britain.

We were delighted by the response from the attendees who agreed that the day had been very beneficial, one comment being *'I will confess to being slightly sceptical about the potential value beforehand but once we got into the practicalities of what can be done, and the fantastic examples brought forward, I was enthused.'*

Community Rail Network Awards

On Thursday 6th October, Community Rail Network hosted their annual Community Rail Network Awards Ceremony in Manchester. We were delighted that we had seven shortlisted entries. These were:

- Hampshire CRP/Winchester Go LD: Try the Train
- Feltham Arts Association, Feltham in Bloom, the Reach Hub: Feltham Station Gallery
- Friends of Brockenhurst Station: Rail and Ramble
- The Community Brain: #ZiggyReturns #Celebrate72
- Alton Town Council/SWR: Alton Walking Festival
- Solent Cycle Project c/o / Solent Remade: Havant Old Parcels Office
- Sheree Wheren/Friends of Hedge End Station: Supporting the community

Well done to all of these groups for being shortlisted, such an achievement in itself. Congratulations to Solent Remade who were placed second, and to Winchester Go LD with a worthy third.



Attendees from the SWR area to the Community Rail Awards in Manchester.



SWR colleagues getting involved with the Big Bulb Plant Out at Winchester, alongside the station adopter Winchester SALT, led by Emma Back, and Josephine from Three Rivers CRP.

Front cover photograph: West Byfleet Community Gardening Group bulb planting at West Byfleet Station. Photo courtesy of Bob Holmes.