



'Outstanding Contribution to Community rail'



Community Rail Cumbria – Helping to build the Future of Cumbrian Railways

Chairman's Statement

This past year has seen the welcome expansion and development of station groups along all our lines. Already, the fruits of their labours are there to be enjoyed as you pass through the stations and I commend the volunteers for their hours of hard work improving the environment for our passengers. Station groups play a vital role in linking the railway to the local communities that it serves and I look forward to seeing the benefits that will naturally arise as a result of these efforts. My thanks go to all those who give up their time to make our railway a better place to travel.

Working closely with the Cumbrian LEP, local authorities and developers, the CRPs have been instrumental in advising on plans and business cases for infrastructure investment in the Cumbrian network. It is rewarding that our role as a critical adviser is highly valued and that our input is helping to shape long term strategic documents which will influence the future development of our lines.

May 2018 sees the biggest shake up of the timetable for many years. The CRPs have been at the heart of the consultation process with Northern and several positive amendments to the original draft have been made as a result of discussions which aimed to take account of the requirements of local businesses and schools along the lines. I should like to thank Northern for the excellent consultation process and we look forward to similar engagement as we head towards the December 2018 timetable.



Chairman, Tim Owen

The reliability of our train services this last year has unfortunately been affected by breakdowns, extensive staffing difficulties and industrial action. Together with the delay of the electrification programme across the North, our daily services continue to suffer with dire consequences for our communities and visitors. The CRPs continue to press Northern and those responsible for the management of the franchise for sustainable improvements across the network.

We look forward to supporting resolutions for current challenges and drawing closer to a reliable service which restores passenger confidence and brings regional growth.

I will conclude by thanking our Rail User Groups who are often well placed to support our communities locally and use their voice to lobby pro-actively for improvements and developments. My thanks finally, to my fellow officers for all their input and support.



Foreword

To stand under the spotlights at the Roundhouse in Derby and receive the award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail' topped off a truly amazing year. So many community initiatives and projects seemed to come together during 2017, ranging in scope from developments at individual stations, strategic input into rail infrastructure enhancements and extending to schemes aimed at the most marginalised communities.

Yet nothing would have been achieved without the outstanding support and commitment of each and every one of our stakeholders and partners. For me, the two most important words in the CRP vocabulary are 'Community' and 'Partnership', and 2017 proved beyond doubt how lucky we are to have such a huge reservoir of Cumbrian goodwill that helps Community Rail Cumbria to achieve our objectives.

And it was exactly this goodwill and support that translated into success in so many areas – many of which are reflected in this report! Special mention and acknowledgement must go to the residents and staff at Turning Point, to the Trustees and staff at Millom Discovery Centre, to all our valued adopters and Friends groups, and of course to Northern and Direct Rail Services for their unwavering commitment to our Cumbrian Communities.

How to sum up this amazing year? Simply to say that the 'Outstanding Contribution' is very much a story of shared success – something that will continue in 2018 and beyond!

Dawn McGough Community Rail Manager



Cumbrian Coast Line

Workington Transport Hub

After several years planning with Cumbria County Council we were delighted to finally open the transport hub at Workington railway station in Spring 2017.

Designed to stimulate rail travel under the new services scheduled to commence in May 2018, the transport hub has completely transformed a large area of derelict land directly adjacent to the station. With spaces for almost 200 cars, combined with step-free access, the use of contrasting materials and attractive landscaping throughout, this development has won high praise from rail travellers.

Funded through the Regional Growth Fund at a cost in excess of £3m, the transport hub is proving an instant success, particularly for workers employed at the Sellafield nuclear complex.

The Rail Journey to Recovery

Painting a fence on a wild and windswept day at a railway station on the Cumbrian Coast really isn't the most glamorous occupation in the world! Yet for the residents undergoing rehabilitation for alcohol and substance abuse at Stanfield House in Workington it's become an integral part of their structured programmes of support.

The 'Rail Journey to Recovery' – a collaborative venture between the Cumbrian Coast Community Rail Partnership and the national charity Turning Point – developed throughout 2017. Designed to build confidence, skills and self-respect in people trying to break free from the shackles of addiction, the project is also a vivid illustration of how Northern's community commitment can reach out and help the most marginalised of groups.

Key to the remarkable success of this project has been the adoption of Green Road station. Located on the edge of the Duddon estuary and overlooked by the Lakeland fells, this remote station has provided the perfect base to contribute to the rehab process. Weekly activities for the residents include restoration and cleaning of the shelter, restoring the award-winning gardens to their former glory, encouraging the local wildlife through regular feeding and building bird and bat boxes during the breeding season, photography, group therapy sessions, walks to aid healthy living, etc. It's exactly these type of activities that embody and reinforce the sense of satisfaction experienced by the residents in 'giving something back' – a recurring theme in the regular feedback sessions at Stanfield House.

Other factors come into play which illustrate both the unique nature and positive outcomes of the 'Rail Journey to Recovery' project. Complete social isolation is so often a consequence of alcohol and substance addiction, and the smallest of everyday gestures – such as

a joke with the conductor or a 'thank you' from a Green Road resident – can have a massive and lasting impact. Thanks to both Northern's ComREG and Direct Rail Services funding the CRP also helps residents undergoing rehab to travel by rail to their home locations. These visits are an essential part of the rehab process, as addiction often leads to fractured family relationships. In the words of one Stanfield House resident, 'working in rail has helped to build bridges I thought were broken.'

The CRP has produced an evocative video which embodies the 'Rail Journey to Recovery' in its entirety.

See <http://vimeo.com/239789281/bc5e415aa1> or visit our website www.communityrailcumbria.co.uk and go to our Projects page



An Unsung Hero

In 2017 we said a sad goodbye to Stuart Burn, station adopter at Millom for more years than anyone could possibly count! Come hail, rain or snow Stuart would cycle to the station day in and day out, picking up the litter, gardening, talking to the children – a stalwart Cumbrian, totally committed to the Coast line and the Friends group, often referred to as a ‘gentleman’s gentleman.’

It was a fitting tribute to Stuart when a packed waiting room attended a dedication ceremony organised by the CRP when his widow Kitty accepted a wooden seat contributed by the CRP in Stuart’s memory.

Stuart’s dearest wish was to see Sunday services operating along the length of the Cumbrian Coast line. We hope he’ll be there in spirit to see it in May 2018!



The Rail Room

Following three years in the planning the Rail Room at Millom Discovery Centre finally opened its doors in 2017. This facility – jointly funded through a wide variety of organisations including ACoRP, DFT, CRP, Heritage Lottery and Copeland Community Fund, is a remarkable project celebrating the role in which rail has played in Millom’s rich social and industrial heritage.

From inception the Rail Room was designed to achieve twin aims – to operate as a unique tourist attraction in this remote part of Cumbria and also to act as a catalyst for learning for children attending primary schools at locations along the Cumbrian Coast and Furness lines.

The Rail Room project also created new employment opportunities and sustained existing jobs within an area of recognised need. To judge by the increasing visitor numbers in 2017 and comments in the visitor’s book, the project is already an outstanding success!



Santa Train

Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without a Santa train rolling merrily along the tracks from Whitehaven to Carlisle – and 2017 was no exception!



Groups of children and parents from primary schools in Whitehaven, Workington, Flimby and Maryport were treated to all the Christmas goodies during the journey – including a visit from Santa himself!

Special mention and thanks to Duncan Bates, Vicky Reveley, Keith Little, Network Rail and all the on-board volunteers who made the day such a memorable experience.



Maryport Transport Hub

The transport hub development at Maryport was completed in December 2017. This project proved complex and challenging, owing to the numbers of organisations involved, land ownership issues and site difficulties. Now complete, the project responds to the increasing demand for rail travel from workers heading to the Sellafield nuclear complex, as well as stimulating Maryport's local economy. With spaces for almost 100 cars, the transport hub also serves to alleviate local traffic congestion.

Associated platform improvements are scheduled to commence early in 2018.



Furness Line

2017 has seen a tremendous boost in the number of stations being adopted by local communities along the Furness line to the extent that by December 2017 every station was registered as a Friends Group! Here are some of their stories:



Friends of Kents Bank Station & Foreshore

The first Volunteer Day, involving Northern, Network Rail, and CRP staff plus a large group of local volunteers took place at the station and has been followed up by further success with gardening and art projects. The fence has been renewed, and others painted, and a gate has been installed into the developing Wildlife garden. The efforts of the Friends of Kents Bank station resulted in Britain in Bloom and ACoRP (Silver) awards this year.

Friends of Cark Station

Great progress has been made by the new station adoption group, clearing weeds and vegetation from the site. The Friends also have plans to relocate the recycling centre at the front of the station which will enable easier access to the station.

Friends of Silverdale Station

Successful funding bids to Northern and ACoRP have enabled the CRP to support the installation of electricity in the station shelter due to be completed in early 2018. This is the next stage in developing the shelter into a community arts centre and will be followed by a volunteer day to complete de-vegetation and clearance work around the shelter.



The Friends of Silverdale Station (FOSS) have also raised funds for and have completed the construction of two replica Furness Railway benches for the station. Talks continue with the RSPB and Network Rail about the access problems at Silverdale and the CRP has confirmed its position that a passenger footbridge, with an access link into the Leighton Moss Nature Reserve is needed.

Friends of Ulverston Station

A new adoption group has also been formed at Ulverston and volunteers are introducing an “Incredible Edible” scheme at the station complimenting local aspirations for Ulverston to become a nationally recognised “Healthy Town”. Plans are also underway for the station to be involved in the local Flag Festival. Several ideas have been considered by the CRP and FoUS regarding community use of the empty space at the station but Network Rail’s desire to attract a commercial rent from the property is proving a challenge.



Friends of Dalton Station

Dalton Tidy Town Group has become part of the new station adoption group and volunteers have been busy ensuring the gardens were looking superb during the summer months and are maintained ready for Spring 2018. Plans to restore the derelict station rooms and bring them into community use are on hold until the issues around tripartite leases are resolved. Vandalism has been reduced following the closure of the old passageway to the platform.



Friends of Barrow Station

The CRP is delighted that local rehab centre, The Well, has adopted Barrow Station. There are clear synergies here for the CRP to emulate the work achieved with Turning Point and develop effective programmes of work for the people under the care of The Well. Much of the station infrastructure was improved under the previous franchise but the gardens and station environs are in need of some TLC. There is also local ambition to improve signage between the station and the town centre which Northern has agreed to support.



Barrow Station has recently had ticket gates installed as part of Northern’s Station Improvement Programme.



Friends of Roose Station

Another new station adoption group is in the early stages of formation at Roose Station. The Furness Line CRP is also working with Furness Line Action Group (FLAG), Network RAIL AND County Highways to try and resolve some of the concerns around parking at the station.

Friends of Grange Station

Members of the Grange in Bloom group have banded together with other local volunteers to take the station under their wing. Plans to improve and maintain the gardens and flower beds is high on the list of priorities and should see the station blooming in no time at all!

Friends of Arnside station

The well established volunteer group is now being supported by officers from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty office which is housed in the former station building. We look forward to working on new, innovative ideas for promoting the local area and improving the station environment.

Lakes Line

The Lakes Line Rail User group has also become the Friends of the Lakes Line taking on station adoption responsibility for each of the four stations. Working closely with the CRP, the volunteers carried out extensive passenger research during the summer season with a two day survey and a "Welcome" day on the trains. Sadly, the line has been affected by a significant number of train cancellations throughout 2017 and, for the first time in many years, there has been a slight fall in passenger numbers using the stations.

Thanks to contributions from local stakeholders and Northern ComREG funding, the CRP commissioned the Lakes Line Feasibility Study, produced by The Railway Consultancy Ltd in May 2017. This study considered the case for investment in capacity and accessibility measures required along the lone. The report proved to be the catalyst for further work looking at a Vision for the whole line and the radical redevelopment of Windermere station.

With World Heritage status for the Lake District, the CRP has been working with the Cumbrian LEP, Cumbria County Council, the Lake District National Park Authority and Cumbria Tourism to make the case that capacity on the line needs to be quadrupled in order to cope with the projected increase in visitors to the area.

The Vision for the line includes the need for greater capacity, eventual electrification and the much needed access improvements at Staveley and Burneside stations.

Smaller projects undertaken during 2017 include the resurfacing of part of the station access road at Burneside by Cumbria Highways and a project to replace trees with smaller bushes at Kendal station by the Friends group.

A new station art project is underway at Oxenholme station and the CRP is working in collaboration with Virgin Trains, Kendal College and business sponsors to complete this for the Spring of 2018.



Plans for 2018

Rail Journey to Recovery

Ambitious plans are underway for the Turning Point team to restore Green Road station building as a nature centre which draws on the tranquillity and beauty of the local area to restore and empower people's emotional, mental and physical well-being.

CRC is also working closely with Stanfield House to develop a new initiative, "Broken Lives Mended", which is a natural evolution from the Rail Journey to Recovery. 'Broken Lives Mended' will consolidate lessons learned, allow greater transparency of the initiative to other organisations and look at how the railway can be such a positive influence for vulnerable and damaged people.

Edge of Empire

With the completion of the Maryport Hub and subsequent programme of platform improvements, the CRP initiative, Edge of Empire, can finally proceed to conclusion. Hampered by process delays and the arrival of travellers to the site, the CRP has been frustrated in its planned delivery of this project. However, de-vegetation of the platform has now been undertaken, drawings and narrative for the educational story boards are well underway and landscape plans for the roman gardens are ready. The CRP thanks ACoRP and DfT particularly for their support and looks forward to celebrating this new roman themed gateway to the increasingly popular visitor destination of Maryport.



Carnforth Station

Recent budget proposals from Lancashire County Council plan for the permanent withdrawal of staff from Carnforth booking office. Staff have been displaced during the centre's closure throughout much of 2017 as a result of extensive structural building work due to be completed Spring 2018. The CRP is working with Lancashire Town Council, local CRPs and interested groups to seek a solution which retains a staffed presence.

Arnside

The access road was repaired in 2017 using a grant obtained by the CRP but has subsequently been repaired again by contractors and is likely to need future repairs. The CRP continues to seek support for a long term solution.

Kendal

Discussions between the CRP and Network Rail continue to seek a suitable community project to refurbish a retaining wall which forms part of Kendal station. The wall is currently an eyesore and plans for an art or design piece are being considered.



Marketing

The CRP continues to work with Morecambe Bay Partnership on plans to install picturesque destination map panels at all the stations along the line. Whilst original plans for hi tec digital displays at Grange station have not been taken forward, this new approach will benefit a wider area around the Bay.

Northren Timetable Change

“The Northern May 2018 timetable will be introduced on 20 May and sees the introduction of Sunday services along the full length of the Cumbrian Coast line for the first time in decades! The team are working closely with Northern to develop a range of promotional materials and events throughout 2018.”

West Coast Partnership

Discussions began late 2017 and will continue through 2018 with the shortlisted franchise bidders for operation of the West Coast Main Line services. Key points highlighted include the significant leisure and tourism market only set to increase with the World Heritage status; the issues of skip stopping at Oxenholme and Penrith; the need to retain Carlisle as a stop for HS2 services; the importance of connectivity, reliability and punctuality so the CRP can help market travel in and out of the county.



CRC Staff

2018 will see the team sorry to say goodbye to one of the Gurus of Community Rail, Jim Trotman. But happily, not for long! Jim will join the Lakes Line CRP Board as Vice Chairman in due course. A huge debt of gratitude to Jim for all his contributions to CR over the years and a very personal thanks from the team for his unwavering support, the infamous all day breakfasts and a surprising number of discount cards for tea and sticky buns!

Similarly the year will bring change for resident CRP expert Laurence Hilland who plans to retire later this year. Watch this space!

Whilst we are losing our stalwarts, we are also delighted to welcome new blood and ideas with Kerstin Esbjornsson and Warren Birch who joined the team in 2017 and have been training up under the watchful eyes of Jim and Laurence. Both are taking on existing and new projects and will ensure the team continues to thrive going forward.





CUMBRIAN COAST LINE

Want more time to soak in the views? Explore the hidden places and quaint seaside spaces of the dramatic Cumbrian Coastline – the home of varied wildlife, historical sites and Cumbrian heritage.

FURNESS LINE

Leave the car at home and climb aboard the Furness Line – the quickest & easiest way to soak up the sights of Morecambe Bay's pretty beaches, striking sandbanks and dramatic cliffs.

LAKES LINE

Traversing through the classic tourist hotspots of Windermere, Kendal and Oxenholme – the Lakes Line is perfect for visitors travelling to and from the Lake District, now a World Heritage Site.

Thanks to Stakeholders

CRC would like to extend a warm thank you to all the stakeholders and volunteers who support our local railways, the stations, the gardens and the communities. Particular thanks go to the following organisations who directly resource the team and its work: Northern, Direct Rail Services, Sellafeld Limited, Windermere Lake Cruises, Cumbria County Council, Allerdale Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Copeland Borough Council, South Lakeland District Council, ACoRP, DfT, Network Rail.

Stop Press: New website now live – www.communityrailcumbria.co.uk

