



Robin Hood Line



Community Rail Partnership

Annual Report 2023





Whitwell Station

Foreword

I am pleased to welcome you to our second annual report and hope you will join me celebrating a successful year for the Partnership, especially becoming an accredited partnership formally recognised by the Department for Transport (DfT).

As you will read in this report much has been achieved over the second year and it is brilliant to see so much enthusiasm along the Robin Hood Line from all involved – partners, volunteers, rail industry, funders, and our own officers. It has been a great

example of partnership working with so much achieved over the second year, and so much planned for the coming months. I am looking forward to the coming year, seeing existing projects flourish and new projects start to take off, I hope you are too and finally, thank you for your continuing support.

*Councillor Duncan McGregor,
Chair of the RHL CRP*



The Community Rail Partnership (CRP) has recruited an additional member of staff allowing it to flourish and provide even more opportunities for the local communities to become connected to the rail network through school trips, creative pieces, and rail safety education.

Some changes to the governance of the CRP occurred during the Annual General Meeting

(AGM) with Chris Fridlington stepping down as Chair, Councillor Duncan McGregor stepping up to Chair and Andy Norton from Mansfield District Council coming in as Vice Chair.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank Chris for all his hard work and dedication to the CRP in its first year of operation.





Shirebrook Station

Robin Hood Line

The Robin Hood Line is a CRP which runs from Worksop to Nottingham with 13 stations in total cutting through various parish, district, county and city wards.

The line is rich in heritage with an abundance of nature, historical and leisure attractions within easy reach of the 13 stations.

The CRP is an accredited line supported by the Department for Transport (DfT) working with EMR as the main train operating company and other partners. The CRP follows the Community Rail Development Strategy working on the four pillars as follows:

1. Provide a voice for the community
2. Promote sustainable, healthy and accessible travel
3. Bring communities together to support diversity and inclusion
4. Promote social and economic development

The CRP is supported by Bolsover District Council, Bolsover Partnership, Whitwell Parish Council, Elmton with Creswell Parish Council, Langwith Parish Council, Shirebrook Town Council, Community Safety Partnership, Ashfield District Council, Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Community Rail Network, DfT, EMR and Cross Country Trains.



Robin Hood Line, Whitwell



East Midlands Railway

EMR, owned by Abellio, is the main train operating company in our region. EMR is committed to working closely with community rail lines across their network. The Robin Hood Line is the 11th and newest CRP. As part of their commitment to the Department for Transport there are several funding options for CRP's and station adoption groups to bid in to, to support projects along their lines.

eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk



Financial Statement/Profile

A total of **£216,256** has been secured in funding from the following partners into the CRP since the inception in September 2021.

The total spend so far from October 2022 to October 2023 has been **£93,245**.

The expenditure has included the following projects:

- Heritage Interpretation Project
- Mansfield Underpass and Platform Artwork
- Fusion Learning
- Bullwell Station Project
- Whitwell Land Development
- School Trips and Rail Safety Education
- Continuation of the You Vs Train Initiative



Engaging with young people

Engaging young people and schools that reside along the Robin Hood Line is at the heart of the CRP. The Robin Hood Line provides a strategic pathway to exposing the young people to rail travel, rail safety, increase in skills provision, higher education, and career opportunities. The CRP provides excellent opportunities to increase social mobility and tackle social isolation. Since the inception of the CRP, through engagement with local schools, over 300 young people have accessed the train for school visits to various locations.

One of our dedicated officers for the Community Rail Partnership has delivered 12 sessions of rail safety to four local schools along the Robin Hood Line, engaging 300 plus children. This formed part of a package for the schools along with a school trip, utilising the Robin Hood Line as a form of sustainable travel, visiting local attractions such as Creswell

Craggs, Willow Tree Farm and Mansfield Town football Club in the community.

This exposed the young people to travelling by rail with over 30% never using rail before as a form of transport. This aligned strategically with the Partnerships priorities to reduce social isolation and increase social mobility.

The whole engagement and school trips came at no cost to the schools and was fully funded through the partnership.

RHL CRP purchased a book call Arlo's Adventure There and Back. The book demonstrates rail safety in a fun and interactive way. The children really enjoyed the book and so did the parents. A parent of one of pupils from Creswell School said "My son asks me to read it every day before bedtime and it is in first place in the ranking of books"



Andrea Alder teacher from Creswell Church of England Infant School said "The nursery children, parents/carers and staff of Creswell Infant and Nursery School had two wonderful days out together visiting Willow Tree Farm in Shirebrook. The children learnt some railway safety facts before we travelled and then got to put them into practice on our visits. The train was the perfect way for us to travel, having Creswell train station on our doorstep and we were lucky to have the support of the Community Rail Officer.

Events

In July 2022 the RHL CRP hosted the CRPOs catch up day, organised by EMR to showcase the Creswell Craggs Rail Discovery Trail and go in the caves. The trip was a great day out for fellow CRP officers from up and down the country and really sparked the creative thinking to develop such educational trails along their respected lines.

In March 2023 the RHL CRP through Community Rail Network, Community Rail Conference invited CRPOs from across the country to visit the Creswell Craggs Rail Discovery trail and visit the museum in the visitors' centre.





One of our officers along with the station adopter provided a Halloween themed train day for passengers giving out sweets and generally raising the spirits of the patrons. It was very well received with the patrons asking for themed trains days in the future.

Our officer also attended and supported the Community Rail week at Workop and Nottingham stations, strengthening partnerships with fellow CRP's.



AGM

The AGM took place in October at the Creswell Events Centre showcasing the inaugural annual report and the achievements over the past year.





Remembrance Day 2022

The RHL CRP had the pleasure of taking part in the Routes of Remembrance and producing artwork along with our Station Adopters Rhubarb Farm.

The workshops took place at Rhubarb Farm with Artist Mel Langton. A piece of artwork was co-produced and displayed next to the War Memorial at Nottingham and Langwith Train Station's.

Community action day at Sutton Parkway

Our rail officer arranged a community action day at Sutton Parkway which involved 28 volunteers for 2 hours which was a huge success!

The team of volunteers included the station adopters, local businesses and Ashfield District Council employees and volunteers. They cleared a total of 26 black bags of rubbish from the station and surrounding areas which was a fantastic achievement.

The community action day generated a total of £1,135.20 in social value, which is amazing considering that £20 was spent for refreshments for the volunteers. This is another great example of partnership working and the success of the Robin Hood Line Community Rail Partnership.

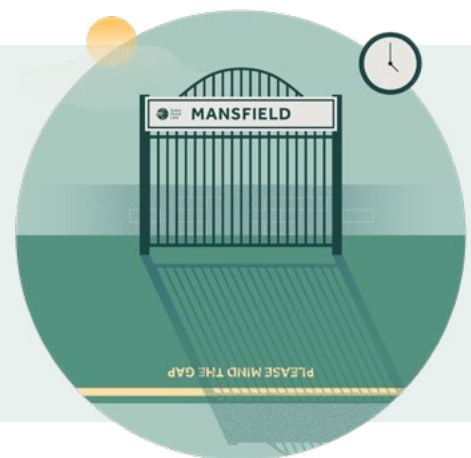


Robin Hood Line in numbers:

Funding secured: **£216,256**

Number of stations adopted: **11**

Number of station adopters: **30**



Robin Hood Line website and rebranding

The website is now live and the rebranding is prominent at each station and on any material used by the CRP. Take a look at the website at robinhoodline.com





Distraction Project

You vs. Train

Everyone loses when you step on the track

20-1240

After a very successful 24 months of delivery through the You Vs Train initiative. The project has continued to be funded for a further 24 months through joint funding, including EMR, Community Safety Partnership, Whitwell Parish Council, Elmton with Creswell Parish Council, Langwith Parish Council, Shirebrook Town Council, and funds through the

UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The project has seen 5633 attendances since it started in December 2021 engaging 182 individuals.

The project has allowed strategic working through the CRP, Community Safety Partnership, parish councils, and police, building the trust of the young people and engaging them through sport and physical activity showing a result in the reduction of anti-social behaviour.

Here's a fantastic news story of one of the participants.

Kian has been attending regularly now for over a year and has an interest in refereeing. Kian has become a "mini assistant" to the staff, organising teams and officiating sessions. Kian has used his initiative and has attended a refereeing qualification and started referring grassroots football. We have signposted him to our contacts at Chesterfield Football Club how they can support him with paid work and continued professional development. Kian attends Heritage High School and we have encouraged him to take part in the Sports Leaders Level 2 that runs in the school. This qualification could help Kian to join our team as an Activity Assistant and enable him to deliver these sessions in his own community.

- Kian, Creswell

Heritage Interpretation Project

Once the funding was in place the project to research and interpret the history of the Mansfield to Worksop Railway commenced in September 2022. The project included associated commercial and social history to show how valuable the line was to local communities.

With a project officer in place, volunteers were recruited who had an interest in either local history or railway history. With their support railway and associated social history was soon researched and collated. Using this information, a set of heritage interpretation boards were designed to be installed on each station platform

between Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Worksop. Then a six panelled mobile exhibition was created to tour around the adjoining towns and villages. These were followed by the production of an A4 booklet for distribution and the project officer also created two Powerpoint presentations: one for schools and one for community groups.

The station boards are now in situ (Elmton & Creswell pictured adjacent), the exhibition is currently touring the area, the booklets are in several outlets, schools have been visited and talks to community groups have commenced.



The following are a few statistics for the project:

2000 A4 booklets

Distribution outlets include:

- Worksop library
- Mansfield library
- Mansfield Museum
- East Midlands Designer Outlet
- Wellow Heritage Centre
- Whaley Thorns Heritage Centre
- Via the project volunteers and project officer who distributed them to their many connections
- The booklet has been made available alongside the exhibitions.
- Taken to talks and school presentations.



Community Presentations

Offered to over 20 organisations with the following taking up the opportunity:

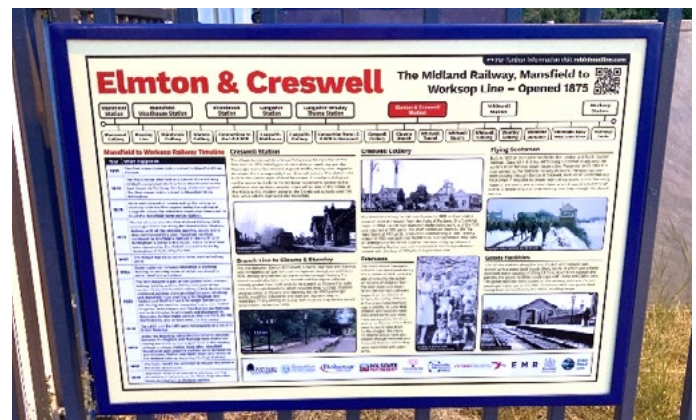
- 22 June 2023 with the Bassetlaw Railway Society (14 in attendance)
- 26 September 2023 with the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society at Nottingham
- 26 October 2023 with the Worksop Arch and Local History Society at Worksop
- 3 November 2023 with the Rail & Canal Society at Beeston
- 9 November 2023 with Rhubarb Farm
- 16 January 2024 at the Mansfield Library
- 21 February 2024 at the Worksop library
- 7 March 2024 with the Creswell Local History Society
- 11 April 2024 Mansfield Woodhouse U3A at Mansfield Woodhouse

Mobile Exhibition

Offered to over 20 locations with the following taking up the opportunity:

- Bolsover District Council headquarters, Clowne (May 2023)
- Nottinghamshire Local History Fair, Mansfield Library, (May 2023) – Estimated 300 visited the exhibition.
- Nottingham Station (June 2023)
- Worksop Station (June 2023)
- Mansfield Station (July 2023)
- Pleasley Pit Visitor Centre (August 2023) – Estimated 400 visited the exhibition.
- Mansfield Library (January 2024)
- Worksop Library (February 2024)

The project has been a real pleasure to be involved in and provides a wonderful insight into the heritage of our railways, acting as a valuable educational tool for our young people.



School Presentations

Offered to over 60 primary schools with the following taking up the opportunity:

- Shireoaks Primary School (25 children and two adults)
- The Bramble Academy Primary School, Mansfield Woodhouse (26 children and one adult)



Pictured left: The room in which the first community presentation was presented – Retford Station.



Mansfield Underpass and Platforms Project

This community-based initiative was created to revitalise the public underpass and the platform areas at Mansfield Railway Station, Nottinghamshire by installing a permanent art piece. The selected artist(s) worked in partnership with First Art, Robin Hood Line Community Rail Partnership and Sutton Road Primary School to co-design the piece of artwork.

After a day of interviewing three artists who conducted three workshops with three classes of 30 children at Sutton Road Primary School. Peachez and Kunstudy were selected by the school children and the interview panel.

The students worked with Lick of Paint artists Peachzz and Kunstity in a series of workshops to develop ideas for what should feature in the artworks.

The artists said: "We felt the ideas from the children added to the magic and wonder of the overall designs, creating some charm and life in these areas."

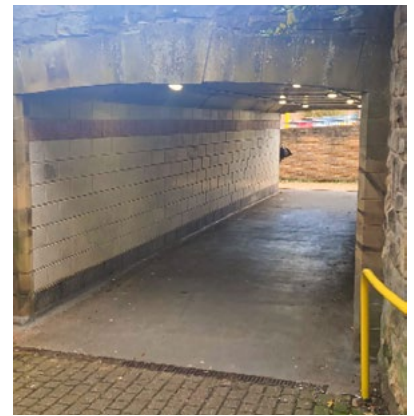
Karl Greenwood, First Art Director, said: "We're bowled over by the new artworks. The difference they've made has been phenomenal.

"The input from the students has been a key part of the project. The underpass was kept open during the painting, and many people commented on how much

better it looks. The designs certainly bring a smile and that's got to be a good thing."

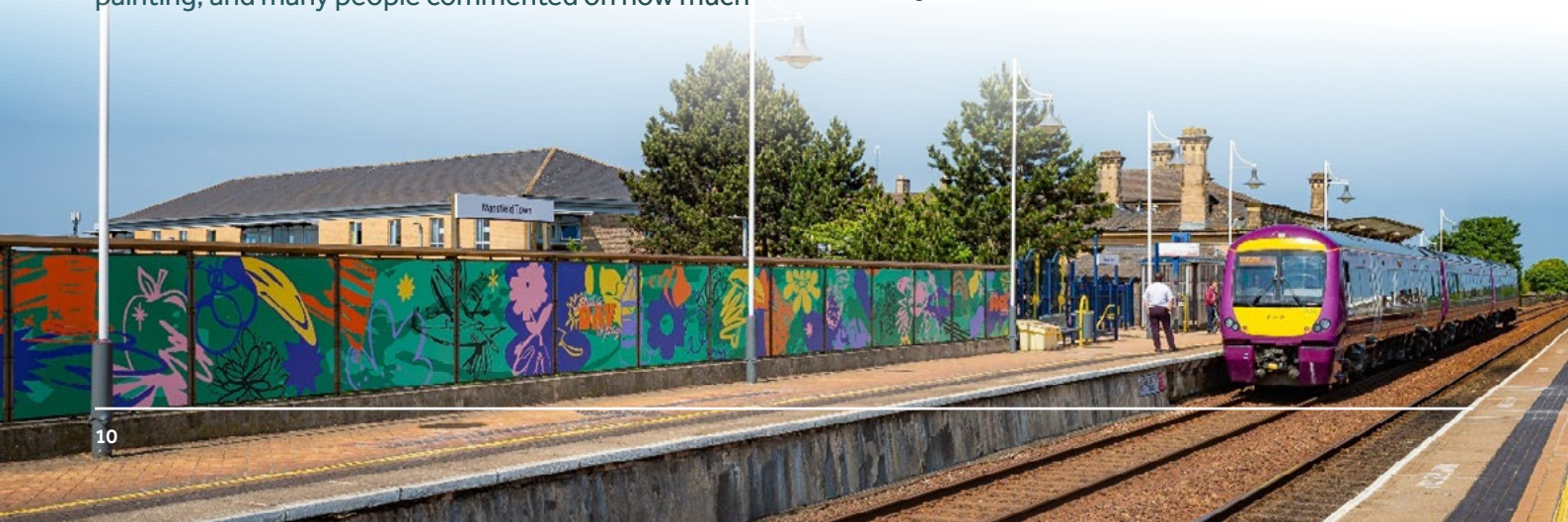
A small exhibition of the students' work for the project is featured in the First Art shop in Mansfield's Four Seasons Shopping Centre.

The artists then began to hold further workshops with the school children to co-design the artwork with the 90 school children, and what a success it was!



Pictured: before (top) and after (bottom)

A grand opening took place involving all the school children, Mansfield Mayor Andy Abrahams and all other partners including EMR, XCT, CRN, Mansfield District Council, MTFC in the community and RHL CRP. bit.ly/mansfieldrailart

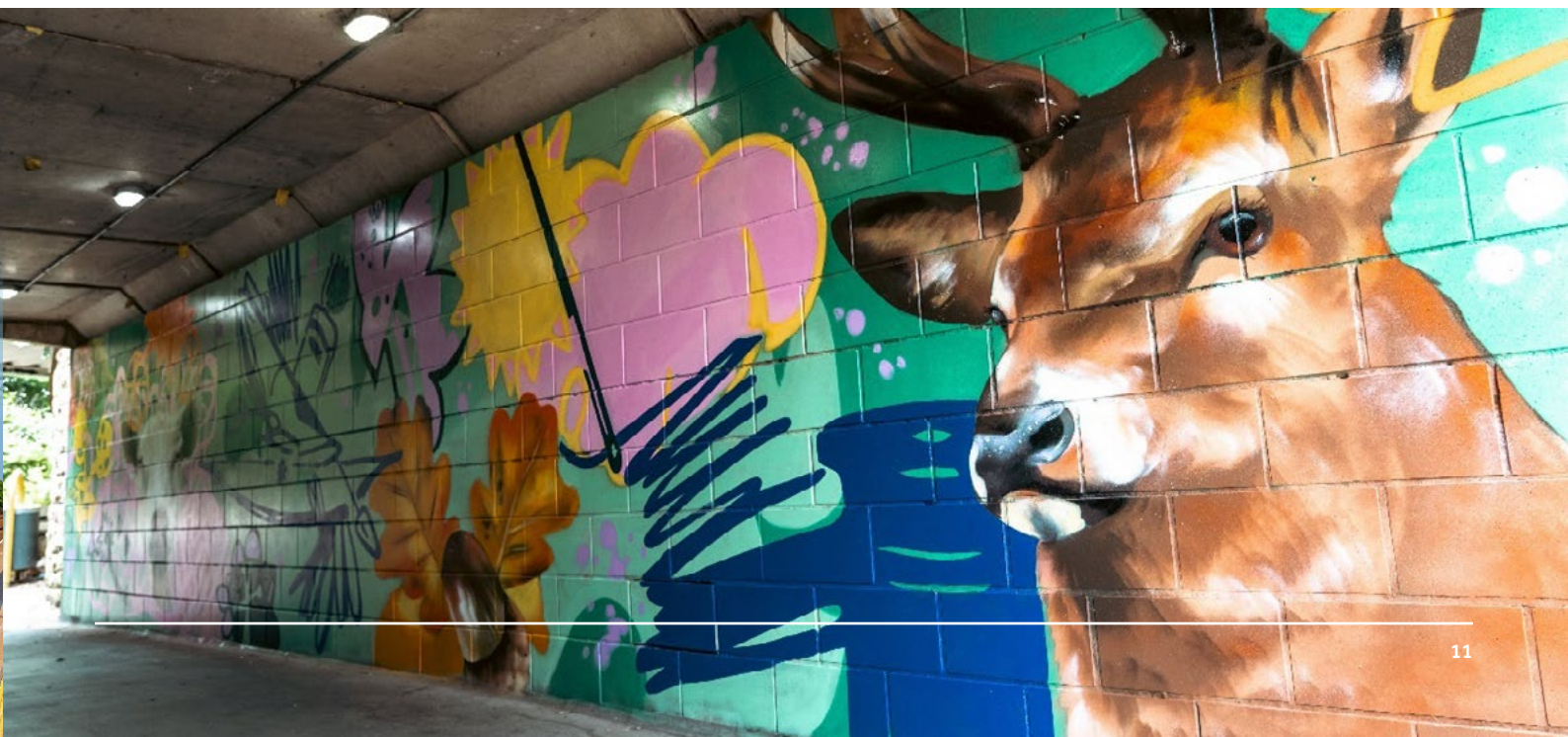
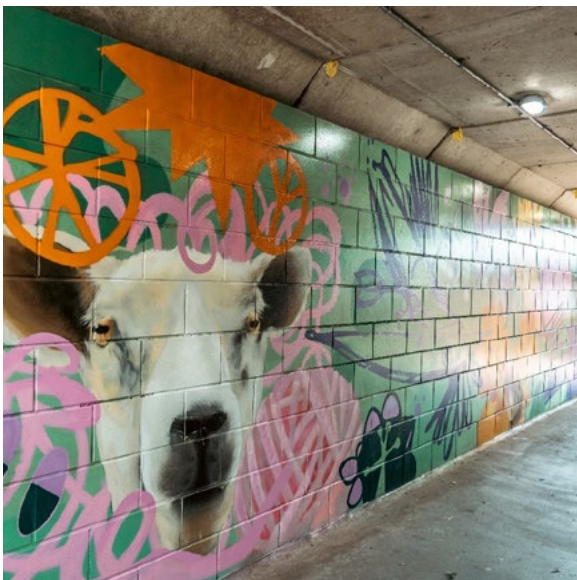




That wasn't the end of the adventure for the children! As part of the project all 90 children had two school trips. One was a visit to Mansfield Town Football Club in the community where they had lessons on rail safety provided by our Community Rail Officer, healthy eating as well as fun activities and a stadium tour. The children then visited Creswell Crags Rail Discovery Trail over three days via the train. This was

very educational as over 50% of the children had never travelled by train before. Each child received an Arlo's Adventure booklet, designed around rail safety, all the trips were fully commissioned through the partnership and received excellent feedback.

The project generated a social return on investment of £299,283. That's a value of £19.50 for every pound spent on the project.



Blossoming Trains at Bulwell

The aim and purpose of this project was to help deliver the project for people living around Bulwell's Train Station and achieve the following:

- boost their creativity through developing stories and poems about trains and journeys,
- connect them with their local train station,
- bring people together in a way that supports their mental health and wellbeing,
- empower and help to make a positive change locally,
- develop outdoor space that would be more environmentally friendly and look better.

Buzzing Roots CIC is an organisation who has led on the project. The project started in July 2023 and at the beginning faced significant challenges as volunteer attendance was lower than expected. After moving the sessions from Tuesday to Saturday, the attendance improved. Due to the delay of the project commencing, it will now be complete in spring 2024. The positive changes have caught the attention of the local authorities and schools and the community has shown a strong commitment to the project and a keen interest in becoming station adopters.

Community voices:

"I come here to just make a place more beautiful, but also healthier and more inclusive."

"Before getting involved in Blossoming Bulwell, I never knew how potent my voice could be. Now, I've got the confidence to have my say in community meetings and put forward ideas, as I can see how this idea works, and I can see that in other areas communities could get together to make a change too."



Whitwell Community Garden

The flagship project highlighted in the inaugural annual report has hit a few stumbling blocks due to funding being paused through DfT. Not to be deterred though, the officers and partners have worked extremely hard to secure funds.

Wildscapes designs, creates, renovates, improves and maintains outdoor spaces to bring people together with the natural world to learn, improve their health, grow food, and support wildlife.

www.wildscapescoop.org.uk

The tender process is now complete, and we are pleased to announce that Wildscapes won the tender process.



Fusion Learning

Education partners are currently experiencing severe challenges in being able to provide learners with consistency and stability for their education. The legacy of the pandemic, combined with the current cost of living pressures, is being felt considerably by schools, and there are widespread challenges across the education sector that include:

- Recruitment and retention of staff.
- Behaviours being exhibited by learners facing personal challenges.
- Increased safeguarding needs.
- Budgetary concerns.

Each of the aforementioned challenges have a myriad of implications for school communities.

In partnership with Direct Education Business Partnership (DEBP), Engineered Learning (EL), East Midlands Rail (EMR), Community Rail Network (CRN), Heritage High School, The Bolsover School and Whitwell Parish Council, a project specification was designed to offer a quality Alternative Provision for 12 students within secondary schools.

This project aims to showcase what KS4 learners can achieve when offered an opportunity that both matches their interest and skill level. The learners who take part are likely to represent these qualities below and/or they have been disadvantaged by one or more external barriers:

- Currently at grade 4/level 1 or below in English, Maths and Science and aspiring to achieve above this.
- A positive interest in engineering, in particular rail engineering or showing similar skills and abilities that relate to this sector i.e. good dexterity, excellent problem solving, ability to use equipment safely, etc.
- Undertaking a related GCSE such as Engineering, Design & Technology, Construction or similar



in school or as off school provision. They can secure a short reference from the teacher that demonstrates their ability/interest.

- They aspire to follow a work based post-16 pathway such as an apprenticeship, traineeship, or internship.
- They have experienced challenges within a full time mainstream educational setting and whose strengths are well suited to alternative provision.

The project has two elements. The rap around support, careers guidance and skills qualifications provided by DEPB and the hands-on practical element delivered by Engineered Learning.

Engineered Learning teach young people to weld and fabricate and offer students accredited awards. The development of hands-on skills and experience in an authentic workshop provides an opportunity to manufacture for industry and have a track record of giving young people the skills and experience they need to enter the workplace.

Engineered Learning have a proven track record and have empowered young people to:

- Achieve at school and show marked improvement in behaviour, attendance, and attainment.
- Manufacture for (and therefore invest in) their own communities, the social return being a downturn in anti-social behaviour.
- Reduce the likelihood of becoming a young offender
- Achieve the skills and experiences employers are looking for.
- Gain accredited awards at Level 1 and Level 2 in Engineering.
- Improve their future.
- Reap the mental health and wellbeing benefits that working with your hands offers.
- Engage with other students, form friendships, and develop team-working and social skills.

Engineered Learning specialise in working with any young person:

- Who is a NEET young adult aged 16 to 30.
- Is a student aged 14 to 16 and needs support outside the mainstream curriculum, such as those at risk of exclusion.
- Those with special educational needs.
- Young offenders and those at risk of becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

The students have embarked on their journey and attended two taster session days with the project in November for 24 sessions.



The Community Rail Partnership is supported by:

- Ashfield District Council • Bolsover District Council
- Bolsover Partnership • Community Rail Network
- Community Safety Partnership • CrossCountry Trains
- Department for Transport • Derbyshire County Council
- East Midlands Railway • Elmton-with-Creswell Parish Council
- Langwith Parish Council • Mansfield District Council
- Nottingham County Council • Shirebrook Town Council
- Whitwell Parish Council

