



# Robin Hood Line



## Community Rail Partnership

## Annual Report 2024



Whitwell Station

## Foreword

**I am delighted to welcome you to the third annual report and to celebrate a successful year for the Partnership. Throughout this report, you will see the remarkable achievements of the past year, fuelled by the enthusiasm of everyone along the Robin Hood Line—partners, volunteers, stakeholders, the rail industry, funders, and our dedicated officers.**

The past year has showcased the power of collaboration, with so much accomplished and even more planned

for the coming months. As we look ahead, I am excited to see existing projects flourish and new initiatives take off. I hope you share my excitement, and I extend my heartfelt thanks for your continued support.

*Councillor Duncan McGregor,  
Chair of the Robin Hood Line  
Community Rail Partnership*



Looking back over last year I am so proud to have been part of all that was achieved in the Robin Hood Line (RHL) Community Rail Partnership (CRP). I appreciate our funding partners for their continued support, providing crucial funding for our work. This year, they have also generously contributed significant resources, enabling us to deliver our projects and support station groups and community initiatives.

Arron Johnson is stepping down as a Community Rail Officer and he has been instrumental in shaping and driving the success of the Robin Hood Line projects over the past few years. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank him for his hard work, dedication, and outstanding contributions.

*Justyna Majer, Community Partnership Rail Officer*







Shirebrook Station

## Robin Hood Line

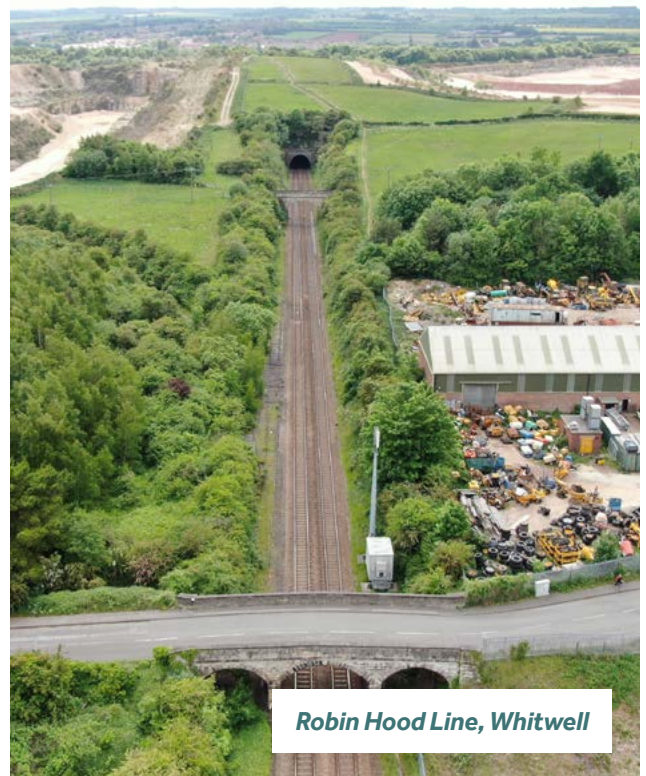
**The Robin Hood Line is a CRP which runs from Worksop to Nottingham with 13 stations in total cutting through various parish, district, county and city wards.**

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, Whitwell Parish Council, Elmtown with Creswell Parish Council, Langwith Parish Council, Shirebrook Town Council, Community Safety Partnership, Bolsover Partnership, Ashfield District Council, Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, and 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](http://eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk)



## Financial statement/profile

Funding of **£68,500** has been secured for 2025/2026 which will undoubtedly provide a strong foundation to continue driving impactful projects and initiatives. Whether it's greening stations, creating walking routes, or other community-driven programs, this funding ensures there's room for growth and development.

The total spend from April 2024 to March 2025 has been **£85,000**.

The expenditure has included the following projects:

- Whitwell Sensory Community Garden
- Distraction project/You vs Train
- Rail Safe Friendly
- Bulwell platform for change - Outstanding Volunteer
- Fusion Learning – Woolly Mammoth
- School trips and rail safety education
- We are Nottingham



# Whitwell Sensory Community Garden

**This project was initiated nearly three years ago. The project came to a halt after a few stumbling blocks due to funding being frozen by the DfT. Despite this, the officers remained dedicated to ensuring the project was complete. The disused piece of land at the Whitwell train station has now been transformed into an amazing community space!**

The transformation of the Whitwell Community Sensory Garden is a testament to the power of community collaboration and dedication. Once an overgrown and neglected piece of land adjacent to the car park and railway line, this area has been revitalized into a beautiful sensory garden where local residents can enjoy peaceful walks, bring their dogs, and engage with nature.

The project began with the involvement of the Station Adopter - Just Good Friends Club, who took on the responsibility of adopting the land after a local building company, the Chapman Brothers, agreed to sign the land over on a peppercorn lease. With funding secured from EMR, CRN, Cross Country, Tarmac Lefarge, Co-op and Archers Trust, the land was cleared and developed into a community space in partnership with local contractor Killingley that would not only serve as a haven for relaxation but also as a hub for educational and social activities.

One of the key aspects of the Whitwell Community Sensory Garden is its role in engaging local groups and schools. Students from nearby schools have been actively involved in planting and caring for the garden, learning about horticulture and the importance of green spaces. This hands-on experience has provided valuable educational opportunities and fostered a sense of pride and ownership among the young participants.

In addition to the educational benefits, the sensory garden has become a perfect place for local residents



to connect with nature and unwind. The garden's design incorporates various sensory elements, including fragrant flowers, textured plants, and tranquil seating areas, creating a soothing environment for visitors of all ages.

The Just Good Friends Club members visit the garden regularly to ensure it is well-maintained and it provides them with the opportunity to be more physically active.

Their dedication to the project has been instrumental in its success, and they continue to play a crucial role in the garden's upkeep.

The Whitwell Community Sensory Garden is more than just a green space; it is a testament to the power of community engagement and the positive impact of collaborative projects. It has provided a valuable asset to the local area, offering a peaceful retreat for residents, educational opportunities for students, and a sense of pride and accomplishment for all involved.

As the garden continues to flourish, it stands as a shining example of what can be achieved when a community comes together with a shared vision and a commitment to making a difference.







# You vs. Train

Everyone loses when you step on the track

## Distraction project – You vs Train

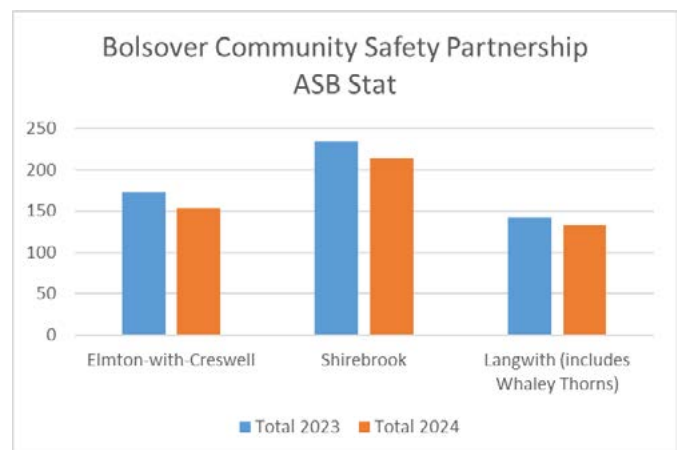
The You vs Train programme has been operational for almost three years along the Robin Hood Line station areas of Creswell, Langwith-Whaley Thorns and Shirebrook. This diversionary programme gives young people the opportunity to engage in physical activity and learn about railway dangers through leaflets and staff-led lectures. The areas covered have high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) among young people, and the project is helping to support ASB reduction.

The project has facilitated strategic collaboration among the CRP, Bolsover Community Safety Partnership, Parish Councils, Police and local Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Bolsover District Council. This collaboration has built trust with young people and engaged them through sports and physical activities, leading to a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

The results of the programme show strong connections between the teams contributing to the Community Safety Partnership. The information

gathered is shared among all key partners to ensure everyone is informed.

Following the project, there was a noticeable reduction in the number of young people loitering around the station areas, a decrease in anti-social behaviour, and an increased sense of safety within the community.



## Rail Safe Friendly

**Rail Safe Friendly is a programme aimed at improving rail safety awareness in all schools along the RHL. This initiative allows for quick engagement and provides more opportunities to connect with students. Schools can choose the level of interaction that best suits their needs at any given time. The project started in September 2024 and has reached a total of 2742 young people across seven schools.**



Feedback from one of the schools highlights the importance of educating young people about the hidden dangers they might encounter at the station, on the train, and around the tracks

'They were surprised that electricity could jump from the cable. They had practical questions about railway lines without wires overhead. (We are directly next to a train line at school and ours does not have overhead cables). They had a long discussion about the choices you have to make when out with your friends, concerning following what they might want to do vs what is the right thing to do.' – Creswell Junior School

RHL CRP is proud to support Rail Safe Friendly and give the schools opportunities to educate young people about hidden dangers that the rail network presents.



# Bulwell platform for change – outstanding volunteer



**The Station Adopters play a vital role not only as a volunteer who look after stations but also the partnership work they are involved in with local residents, schools, scouts or other community groups. Station Adopter (the youngest within EMR) Jaymii from Bulwell Station has demonstrated outstanding volunteer contribution at Bulwell Station, consistently going above and beyond in serving both passengers and the station's needs.**

Jaymii organised a community action day for local council volunteers to litter pick the car park at Bulwell. The volunteers not only picked up a lot rubbish on the platform and the surrounding area but also prepared the flower beds for planting. Since this initial event has taken place Jaymii, and volunteers from other organisations regularly visit the station to weed and make sure the station looks stunning.

Working with community groups fosters a sense of local pride and ownership, encouraging creativity and cooperation in designing the space. This involved creating a garden by installing a custom made train planter, made from a whiskey barrel. The local Scouts were involved as part of the Platform for Change initiative. The 4th Hucknall Scouts helped prepare the site where the train planter will be sighted . The Cubs

have made a plaque with the name of the flowers so that passengers using the train know what flowers are growing on the platform. This was an interesting, inspiring educational game for the young Cubs and other volunteers. Through this initiative the Cubs achieved the badge for Platform for Change which

gave them confidence and has inspired them to take part in future projects with Community Rail.

After such a positive experience of working with the 4th Hucknall Scouts, Jaymii established contact with other local Scouts Group to collaborate on another platform garden project. 7th Scouts Nottingham were engaged to name the train planters.

Jaymii has led all these activities: organising a competition to name the train planters, engage in rail safety and a day out utilising the train as the form of travel.

Through such collaboration, Jaymii has helped bridge the gap between the station and the community, turning the platform into more than just a transport hub, but a meaningful and welcoming part of the landscape.

Jaymii, won first place in the Community Rail Award 2025 for Outstanding Volunteer Contribution, recognising her exceptional work at Bulwell Station and her dedication to fostering community engagement through initiatives like platform gardens and collaborative projects with local groups.





# Fusion Learning – Woolly Mammoth



## Concept and aims

The Robin Hood Line Community Rail Partnership, Direct Education Business Partnership (DEBP) and Engineered Learning worked collaboratively to engage with young people in two secondary schools alongside RHL to deliver a community rail project offering opportunities to gain valuable work experience and an accredited qualification. This resulted in an ambition to design and construct a large metal sculpture of a woolly mammoth. Once constructed this was sited at the entrance to Creswell Train Station, and is a connection to the local tourism attraction and heritage site Creswell Crags, once home of the real Woolly Mammoth. The project wouldn't have been possible without the support from East Midlands Rail, Cross Country Trains, Community Rail Network, Robin Hood Line Community Rail Partnership and Bolsover Partnership all working together to support our young people on their journey.

## What happened

Twelve secondary school students who had been at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) embarked on their journey and attended Engineered Learning



for 24 sessions. They all gained valuable skills in engineering and a qualification in fabrication; an industry which has a shortage of skilled workers nationally. Rich Topley, Assistant headteacher at The Bolsover School said: "I had the pleasure of visiting Engineered Learning and was blown away by the focus and enthusiasm of the pupils who were previously disengaged in the school environment. The work of Dan (from Engineered Learning) and the Fusion Project and partners is nothing short of transformational."

The students have gained valuable skills in engineering and gaining a qualification in fabrication, an industry that has a shortage of skilled workers. All 12 students completed their academics at school and went on to Local Further Education Colleges to continue studying in an engineering discipline, Level 2 Apprenticeships in a variety of engineering specialisms and Level 2 Welding position at Direct Engineering Army Foundation College (Harrogate) - Royal Engineers.

## The collaboration and partnership dynamics

The success of Fusion Learning lies in the collaborative efforts of its partners. Local schools, including The Bolsover School and Heritage High



School, identified students who were at risk of becoming NEET and enrolled them in the programme. Engineered Learning, a specialist provider in Derby, delivered hands-on training in welding, fabrication, and engineering, helping students develop industry-specific skills while working towards an accredited in Industry Specific Engineering Skills.

The partnership with the Robin Hood Line Community Rail Partnership added a unique dimension to the programme by connecting the students' work to a broader community initiative. The creation of the two meter high and two metre long woolly mammoth sculpture not only provided students with a tangible project to showcase their skills but also helped to raise awareness of Creswell Station, a key stop on the Robin Hood Line, and its proximity to the Creswell Crags heritage site. That great collaboration ensured that the final piece would be displayed at Creswell Station, offering a permanent reminder of the students' achievements and providing a cultural landmark for the local community.

## Results

All 12 Year 11 students achieved a Level 1 NCFE Award in Industry Specific Engineering Skills, moving them closer to the labour market. These students were previously at risk of permanent exclusion from education. The project provided them with a qualification and practical welding and fabricating experience, along with personalised support to



build their confidence and aspirations. The woolly mammoth sculpture stands as a permanent community feature, encouraging future generations and serving as a landmark promoting Creswell Station and Creswell Crags.

The project was embraced by a wide range of community and railway stakeholders, and has been featured on Bolsover TV ([www.youtube.com/@bolsovertv](http://www.youtube.com/@bolsovertv)) and social media as a good example of social mobility with a great case study. To view these videos scan the QR codes adjacent.



The project cost £50,000 and achieved a Social Return on Investment value of £78,730.

### Outcomes:

- 100% post 16 offers secured.
- Significantly improved attitude towards learning.
- Improved attendance and attainment.
- Raised aspiration and goals for the future.

RHL CRP won first prize in the Community Rail Awards in the category of 'Involving Children and Young People' for this project. This remarkable initiative engaged at-risk secondary school students in designing and constructing a metal sculpture, offering valuable work experience and accredited qualifications while connecting the community to the Creswell Crags heritage site.





# School trips and rail safety education

**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 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.**

Last year the CRP engaged with 180 young people, by providing Rail Safety Awareness talks providing an interactive story book, Arlo's Adventure There and Back, along with the Stay Safe -Activity Book provided by EMR. The sessions educated young people, among others about the dangers of trespassing on the railway track, platform behaviour and railway awareness of level crossing safety.

After the awareness sessions the CRP engaged the young people and provided free rail travel along the Robin Hood Line as a form of sustainable travel. This experience provided the young people with practical skills, increased confidence and encouraged responsible behaviour when on the platform and travelling by train. The trip involved visiting local attractions such as Willow Tree Farm (Shirebrook), National Justice Museum (Nottingham City) and Creswell Crags.

More than a quarter of the young people had never travelled by train or travelled beyond their local area. The CRP aims to expand on this initiative and increase social mobility as a regular activity.

By engaging with the schools and young people, the RHL CRP can foster a safer, more responsible, and sustainable rail culture for the future generations.





# We are Nottingham

The Nottingham Mural project was a collaborative community initiative led by EMR, involving multiple partners including the Poacher Line and Robin Hood Line CRPs, Base 51 youth group, and Imageskool. The project aimed to transform a dull wall at Nottingham Station into an impactful artwork reflecting the experiences and ideas of Nottingham's young people, particularly focusing on growing up in the city and early train journeys.

The process included workshops with Base 51 to develop concepts, feedback sessions to finalise designs, and active participation by the youth in creating the mural. Traditional Nottinghamshire colours were chosen to represent local heritage.



The Robin Hood Line is proud to have been part of this fantastic project. The mural not only brightened the station area but also fostered community pride and cohesion, particularly among young participants. This partnership has continued, with EMR supporting Base 51 in future activities like a train trip and fundraising efforts. The project showed how art can bring people together and build skills. Following this, the project was shortlisted for the Community Rail Award 2025 in the category of 'Community Creative Projects and Station Arts.'

## Robin Hood Line Community Rail Partnership online

**Over the last few months, RHL CRP has been more active on social media. We want to stay connected with you and keep you updated on our latest news and activities.**

Please follow us on social media to stay informed and engaged with our community initiatives:

Facebook – '[robinhoodlinecrp](https://www.facebook.com/robinhoodlinecrp)'

LinkedIn – [www.linkedin.com/company/robin-hood-line](https://www.linkedin.com/company/robin-hood-line)

X – [@RobinHoodLine1](https://twitter.com/RobinHoodLine1)

## The future

- RHL CRP is playing a vital role in creating walking and cycling routes that connect train stations to local destinations, bringing significant benefits to individuals, communities, and the environment. To build on this vision, an initial meeting was held with Sustrans to design a safe and visually appealing walking route. The aim is to create a pathway that is not only practical but also enjoyable for everyone, encouraging sustainable travel and healthier lifestyles for all.
- Following the success of the artwork created at Mansfield Station in collaboration with First Art, a local school, and an artist, RHL CRP is excited to bring a splash of colour to Creswell. This time, the project will involve Creswell Junior School and First Art, who are already prepared to get started. Together, they aim to transform the station area into a vibrant and welcoming space that reflects the local community's creativity and spirit.





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## **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 • Elmlton-with-Creswell Parish Council
- Langwith Parish Council • Mansfield District Council
- Nottingham County Council • Shirebrook Town Council
- Whitwell Parish Council

