



# Robin Hood Line



## Community Rail Partnership

## Annual Report 2025





Whitwell Station

# Foreword

**2025 has been exceptional for the Robin Hood Line Community Rail Partnership (RHL CRP), defined by meaningful projects, strong community engagement, and well-deserved recognition.**

From creative arts and safety education to confidence-building programmes and career inspiration, our work has continued to make a real difference to young people and, families within our local communities.

We proudly celebrated national success at the Community Rail Awards, where our partnership

received recognition for its impact and innovation.

A healthy and secure budget, ensures we are well placed to continue delivering high-quality projects, strengthening local pride, improving station environments, and deepening our connections with the communities we serve.

I look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead and continuing to champion the value of community rail across the Robin Hood Line.

*Justyna Majer, Community Rail Partnership Officer*



Welcome to the 2025 Robin Hood Line CRP Annual Report which covers a year during which the rail industry celebrated Rail 200 with numerous amazing events which some of you may have been able to attend.

As you will see, we have been very active over the year with a wide range of projects completed and others which are ongoing. All of this could not have happened without the help and support of all of you who are members of the CRP so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work and commitment. I would particularly like to thank Justyna for all that she has done and continues to do to coordinate all the various projects and for producing this report.

On a personal level, I had the privilege of representing the CRP at the Community Rail Reception that was

held at the Houses of Parliament in July which was a great experience. You can read more about this within the report.

I am sure that 2026 will be equally, if not more exciting for the partnership therefore if you have any ideas for projects or if there is anything else you would like to raise, do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the team.

*Andy Norton, Chair of the RHL CRP*





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 East Midlands Railway (EMR) as the main train operating company and other partners. The CRP follows the Community Rail Development Strategy working on the four following pillars:

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, Langwith Parish Council, Shirebrook Town Council, Community Safety Partnership, Derbyshire County Council, Ashfield District Council, Mansfield District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, and Community Rail Network, Department for Transport, East Midlands Railway 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 submit to, to support projects along their lines.

[eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk](http://eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk)



## Financial statement/profile

The funding of **£80,000** has been secured for 2026/2027. This financial support 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 is room for growth and development.

The total spend from April 2025 to March 2026 has been **£47,000**

This expenditure has included the following projects:

- Hucknall Station Biodiversity Project
- Distraction project/You vs Train
- Rail Safe Friendly
- Fusion Learning – Dragonfly metal sculpture
- School Trips and Rail Safety Education
- Rail trails
- Creswell Art
- Others – events/promotional materials



# Hucknall Station Biodiversity Project



The Hucknall Station Greening Project is a leading sustainability initiative delivered by the Robin Hood Line Community Rail Partnership (RHL CRP) in collaboration with East Midlands Railway (EMR), Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT), local authorities, and the station adoption group. The project

builds on a two-year partnership between DWT and EMR, which developed a GIS-based biodiversity mapping tool to identify opportunities for ecological enhancement across the rail network. Hucknall Station was highlighted as a priority site due to its urban character and limited existing vegetation.

The project set out to show how even small, constrained rail environments can be transformed into biodiverse, welcoming spaces that support wildlife and enrich the passenger experience. Its aims included introducing green infrastructure into an urban station, creating habitats for pollinators, engaging volunteers in sustainable action, improving the visual appeal of the station, and supporting modal shift by making rail travel more attractive. These goals aligned with national ambitions for biodiversity net gain, inclusion, and decarbonisation, while demonstrating the value of community-led environmental action.

## Project Delivery

Following an ecological assessment confirming the station's potential to support pollinators, the partnership designed and installed a bespoke "green bench"—a seating structure integrated with planters containing native wildflowers. Additional planters were placed along the platform, filled with species chosen to attract insects, provide seasonal colour, and thrive with minimal maintenance.

The project was delivered through strong partnership working. Volunteers from the station adoption group, EMR staff, local authority representatives, and community members took part in planting days and continue to support ongoing maintenance. The design prioritised low-maintenance, high-impact features to ensure long-term sustainability and create a model that can be replicated at other stations along the Robin Hood Line.

Knowledge-sharing was embedded throughout the initiative. Insights from Hucknall are now informing future greening strategies across the line, helping partners navigate challenges such as limited space, urban constraints, and the need for durable, low-resource solutions.

## Outcomes and Impact

The transformation at Hucknall Station has been both visible and measurable. The station now offers a more vibrant, welcoming environment, with passengers and staff providing positive feedback on the improved appearance and sense of place. Early observations show pollinators already using the new planting, demonstrating genuine biodiversity uplift and validating the ecological assessment.

Community engagement has been central to the project's success. Volunteers report increased pride in the station, and the initiative has sparked wider conversations about nature, sustainability, and the importance of green spaces in urban life. The green bench has become a focal point for rest, reflection, and informal environmental education.

The project was guided by pre-planned evaluation, including habitat condition assessments and biodiversity metrics, ensuring outcomes were evidence-based and aligned with national sustainability goals. Lessons learned—from species selection to volunteer coordination—are now being shared across the network to support future greening projects.

## Recognition

Reflecting its innovation and community impact, the Hucknall Station Greening Project has been shortlisted for the Community Rail Award in the category Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability.



# Engagement and Events

Over the past year, RHL CRP was proud to participate in several community and sector events that brought people together and highlighted the importance of accessible, sustainable rail travel. These occasions allowed us to share our projects, learn from partners, and celebrate the contributions of volunteers and local groups.

## Bolsover Pride



RHL CRP were delighted to be part of Bolsover's Inaugural Pride, standing alongside partners to celebrate diversity and community spirit. Our involvement helped raise awareness of community rail, encourage sustainable travel, and support an event that fostered pride, belonging, and connection.

## Parliament Visit



RHL CRP attended the parliamentary reception hosted by the Community Rail Network at the Palace of Westminster, where nearly 200 members, MPs, and rail partners gathered to celebrate the impact of community rail. It was inspiring to hear the Rail Minister Lord Hendy speak with such enthusiasm about the value of community-led initiatives in improving sustainability, inclusivity, and local stations.

## Career Day at School



RHL visited Ashgate Croft School on World Workday together with Bolsover District Council staff and a Councillors to promoting RHL and to talk about different jobs/volunteers opportunities in railway industry and community.

## Station Adopters Meeting



RHL hosted the first Station Adopters meeting at Mansfield Town Football Club, which had an excellent turnout and generated a wide range of ideas for the year ahead.

## Litter Picker - British Spring Clean Event



RHL took part in several community litter-picking action days this year. One highlight was our



involvement in the Great British Spring Clean, where we teamed up with Bolsover CVS and station adopters to give our stations a much-needed refresh. We also joined forces with local businesses and Ashfield District Council to carry out additional clean-ups across other stations, helping to create safer, more welcoming spaces for everyone.

## White Ribbon Day



RHL supported White Ribbon Day at Nottingham Station alongside EMR staff and choir, standing together to raise awareness and take a united stance against violence towards women and girls.

## Community Rail Week Celebration



In May 2025, RHL CRP with others CRP's celebrated the work of Community Rail Partnerships and station volunteer groups, while encouraging more people to choose rail as a sustainable way to travel. This year, we were at Nottingham Station and Worksop

Market to speak with people and hand out some free promotional merchandise to promote awareness.

## Remembrance Day



This year, our Remembrance Day activities brought communities together across the line. At Mansfield Station, local children created handmade poppies to honour those who served, adding a heartfelt touch to the station. At Shirebrook Station, volunteers shared stories in two languages, celebrating remembrance through both heritage and inclusivity.



## World Book Day



To celebrate World Book Day, the RHL CRP Officer visited Mansfield Primary Academy and Langwith Bassett Primary Academy to read Arlo's Adventure, an engaging story that teaches children about staying safe on platforms and trains. The sessions were warmly received, creating a fun and educational experience that helped young pupils learn the importance of rail safety in an enjoyable way.

# Rail Safe Friendly and Try a Train

The Rail Safe Friendly Programme, delivered with Learn Live, continues to strengthen rail safety awareness across schools along the Robin Hood Line. Launched in September 2024 and funded annually for three years to ensure long-term reach, the project has so far engaged around 2,000 young people across six schools in 2025/26, helping pupils understand the hidden dangers at stations, trains, and around the tracks.



Formerly, RHL CRP also supported a Try a Train experience, giving 113 pupils, teachers, and volunteers the chance to build confidence in using



rail services following a safety session supported by a Network Rail colleague. Notably, 31% of participating pupils had never travelled by train before, yet after the trip 93% reported feeling more confident about using the railway.

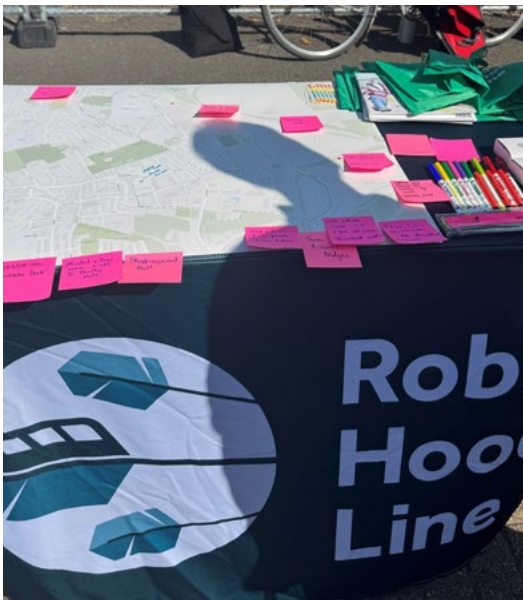
RHL CRP is proud to support these initiatives, ensuring schools along the line have meaningful opportunities to educate young people and promote safe, confident use of the rail network. This activity also delivered significant social value, calculated at nearly 640%.

## Rail trails

The Community Trail project forms a key strand of RHL CRP's commitment to widening access to active travel by creating welcoming, accessible walking routes linked directly to the Robin Hood Line. Designed for individuals and families with limited experience of walking, wheeling, or cycling, the project focuses on encouraging exploration of Bolsover District through three new community-designed trails starting from Shirebrook, Creswell, and Whitwell stations. Delivered in partnership with the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, the project strengthens the connection between rail travel and local heritage.

Working with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, the team identified Shirebrook, Creswell, and Whitwell stations as ideal starting points for routes linking into the wider Bolsover Loop. Each route was checked for accessibility, and a two-stage community engagement process helped shape the themes, features, and final map designs. The trails are aimed at families and are designed to encourage both residents and visitors to explore local green spaces, heritage sites, and amenities while making greater use of the Robin Hood Line.

Community engagement formed the backbone of the project. Three initial workshops were held at local



places to gather early ideas on route themes and map design. Engagement levels were strong with the local community offering detailed feedback on accessibility, points of interest, and potential extensions.

Across all workshops, participants expressed enthusiasm for the project and its potential to attract visitors via the Robin Hood Line.

A second round of workshops enabled communities to refine the designs and contribute illustrations and local knowledge. These sessions revealed a strong sense of place and nostalgia, with residents pleased to see familiar landmarks represented. The final maps were produced using ArcGIS and Adobe Creative Suite, following CRP branding guidelines. Each map includes a two-page layout: an overview showing connections to the Bolsover Loop and National Cycle Network, and a detailed page featuring local facts, images, and accessibility information.

The completed routes range from 1.8 to 2.7 miles, with accessible alternatives where needed. Each highlights key community assets such as Creswell Craggs, Shirebrook's Archaeological Trail, and links to Whitwell Woods. Maps are available digitally on the Robin Hood Line website [www.robinhoodline.com](http://www.robinhoodline.com)

Overall, the Community Trail project has delivered three thoughtfully designed, community-led routes that promote



active travel, support wellbeing, and strengthen the relationship between local communities and the Robin Hood Line.

# Community Rail Award



The Community Rail Awards are national awards that celebrate projects, partnerships, and volunteers who use rail to support local communities and promote sustainable, inclusive travel.

In 2025 RHL CRP won in two categories. Outstanding Volunteers Contribution where a Station adopter has shown exceptional dedication to Bulwell Station, consistently improving the passenger experience and supporting community events. Her commitment to keeping the station safe, clean, and welcoming has made a significant positive impact on both staff and travellers.

RHL CRP was also proud to receive the Involving Children and Young People Award for its partnership project with Direct Education Business Partnership

## Silent Star

The Silent Stars project was developed to inspire young people by combining technical learning with personal development, helping students build confidence, communication skills, and future career aspirations. Delivered through a series of workshops in schools and at Bolsover Castle, pupils were introduced to engineering, robotics, and creative problem-solving, giving them hands-on experience with STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics skills in an engaging and supportive environment.



A key element of the programme was a two-part confidence and resilience workshop, where students explored self-expression, positive mindset, and

(DEBP) and Engineered Learning, which enabled twelve students at risk of becoming Not Engaged

in Education or Training (NEET) to gain hands-on engineering experience and a Level 1 NCCE qualification. Their work culminated in the creation of a striking metal Woolly Mammoth sculpture at Creswell Station—now a celebrated landmark that reflects the students' achievements and the project's positive impact on skills, confidence, and social mobility.

RHL CRP is proud to have been shortlisted for the 2026 Community Rail Awards in the categories It's Your Station, Outstanding Volunteer Contribution, and Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability. The winners will be announced at the finals event in March 2026.



strategies for overcoming challenges. These sessions helped participants strengthen their communication skills, develop self-belief, and build practical tools they can use in everyday life.

The project culminated in a Careers Day on the Robin Hood Line, where students used a train simulator



to explore the role of a train driver and practised selling tickets. Another part of the day involved meeting representatives from different departments across the railway industry, including Operations, Careers & Apprenticeships, Fleet & Engineering, Marketing, and of course, Community.

Silent Stars aligns strongly with RHL CRP's annual strategy by promoting educational engagement, raising career awareness, and deepening young people's connection to their local area. The project broadened students' understanding of future opportunities, strengthened their confidence and resilience, and fostered pride in local heritage and the railway network.

## Distraction project

RHL CRP supported Bolsover District Council's Leisure Officer in delivering the You vs. Train Distraction Project, designed to engage young people in Creswell through sport and physical activity while promoting essential rail safety messages. Delivered at the Creswell Heritage & Wellbeing Centre, the programme used informal, youth-friendly sessions to build trust, reduce risky behaviour around the railway, and share safety information through discussion, leaflets, and videos.

Between April and December 2025, the project recorded 277 attendances, averaging 31 young people per month, successfully reaching those who may not normally access organised sport or formal safety education. The programme was delivered on time and within budget, with weekly structured sessions, robust monitoring processes, and strong partnership working.

Key learning included the value of introducing rail safety messages gradually, offering a choice of sports to maintain engagement, and building informal, trusted relationships that encouraged meaningful conversations. The inclusion of OzBox - non-contact boxing and fitness sessions added a new dimension of discipline and engagement, while flexible data-collection approaches ensured accurate reporting despite some reluctance from participants.



## Creswell Art



RHL CRP supported a creative placemaking project with pupils from Creswell Junior School, who worked alongside a local artist through a series of in-school workshops to design artwork celebrating the railway and Creswell's rich heritage. The final pieces will be installed on the wall and underpass next to Creswell Station, creating a brighter, more welcoming environment and giving young people a sense of pride in their community.

The project aims to improve the station surroundings, enhance local identity, and engage young people in meaningful co-creation.



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## The Community Rail Partnership is supported by:

- Bolsover District Council • Whitwell Parish Council
- Langwith Parish Council • Shirebrook Town Council
- Community Safety Partnership • Derbyshire County Council
- Ashfield District Council • Mansfield District Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council • Community Rail network
- Department for Transport • East Midlands Railway
- Cross Country Trains.

You can keep up to date with our work throughout the year by visiting the RHL CRP website [www.robinhoodline.com](http://www.robinhoodline.com) and following us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and X.

