

Community rail partnership's outstanding work recognised

January 28, 2021



A network of community volunteers who work to improve railway stations in Worcestershire have been given formal accreditation from the Department for Transport (DfT).

The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership (WCRP) was set up in 2019 to bring together the local rail industry and volunteers who give up their time to make their local stations both pleasant places to visit and an asset to the local community.

These include volunteers in Evesham, who have tended to the station's garden and the Community Forest group at Malvern Link who planted a mini orchard.

While the landscape of COVID-19 has made it difficult to keep initiatives going, WCRP has risen to the challenge.

They recently teamed up with Woolly Mammoth Stitch Works CIC for a [large-scale tapestry stitch project](#), bringing together new and existing volunteers to instil a sense of community during the pandemic.

Other achievements include a video, promoting local tourist attractions and businesses near stations on the Barnt Green to Redditch line, and a website highlighting areas of interest in easy reach via the railways.

This new mark of quality from the DfT recognises WCRP as a trusted voice and advocate for the local community.

Collaborations between the rail industry, local councils, residents, businesses and tourist attractions are improving the rail experience for all users.

Peter Chapman, Community Rail Officer for Worcestershire Community Rail, said: "I feel really proud of the hard work of all involved in the rail partnership. Being accredited shines a light on all the outstanding work taking place across Worcestershire to improve the railways and empower the community."

Fay Easton, Head of Stakeholder and Community for West Midlands Railway, said: "The communities we serve are the lifeblood of our railway network which makes it so pleasing when groups like the WCRP come together with creative ideas to improve the passenger experience."

"We look forward to working together on joint projects to upgrade our stations and help restore confidence in rail as people begin travelling in numbers again later this year."

Great Western Railway's (GWR) Community Manager, Emma Morris, said: "Community rail plays a fundamental role, connecting stations to the communities they serve, and we are delighted the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership has been accredited by the Department for Transport."

"We at GWR have been working hard to make sure that people can be confident to travel safely, and that includes running as many trains and carriages as we can to make extra room, as well as enhanced cleaning and social distancing measures – and this partnership helps to ensure a welcoming station environment for all."

The accreditation will also bring new funding opportunities for community groups, enabling the partnership to support and bring together even more people in 2021 and beyond.

Photo credit: West Midlands Rail Executive