

# Community Rail Week is asking people to 'give the train a try' for a healthier, greener future

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Community groups and volunteers across Britain are coming together for this year's Community Rail Week to encourage people to 'give the train a try'.

They are especially encouraging the many families and individuals who rarely or never get on a train or bus, and instead rely on cars, to consider the benefits of making at least the occasional switch to greener, healthier, more social forms of travel.

Community Rail Week, organised by [Community Rail Network](#) and sponsored by Rail Delivery Group, runs from 23-29 May, and involves hundreds of community rail partnerships and volunteer groups inviting people to 'give the train a try'.

- **Community Rail Partnership helps lift peoples' spirits on Mental Health Awareness Week**
- **Coventry and Warwickshire community rail partnership to be chaired by WMRE executive director**
- **Former rail minister Norman Baker back on track with community rail role**

Community events and activities are planned nationwide – all the way from Edinburgh to Cornwall – raising awareness about local railways, encouraging more widespread use of rail (combined with buses, walking and cycling), building travel confidence among those who are less familiar, and encouraging the switch from car to train for a healthier, more sustainable future.

Among the initiatives planned, there will be ‘Try the train’ trips for groups who are underrepresented as UK rail users and people with accessibility needs to help them to use rail safely and confidently; exhibitions in community spaces; promotion of walking trails and cycling routes linked to the railway; partnership efforts with local businesses on joint initiatives; and engagement with schools and colleges. Highlights include:

- To kick the week off, on Monday 23 May Rail Minister Rt Hon Wendy Morton MP travelled from Bradford to Bingley with a South Asian Women’s Group working with Community Rail Lancashire, discussing their experiences of travelling by train. At Bingley Station, she met the Action Stations group, volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure Bingley Station is inclusive and vibrant. The Minister saw a range of initiatives helping to put the railway at the heart of local communities, such as a volunteer-tended garden celebrating the local Five Rise Locks, British Sign Language boards and a book exchange, as well as hearing about the ground-breaking efforts of the Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership to make the Bentham Line the first dementia-friendly railway in Britain.
- A national Community Rail Showcase will take place on Wednesday 25 May, when community rail partnerships across the UK will promote their local leisure and tourism offer via interactive, themed displays in public spaces such as larger rail stations, shopping centres and tourism attractions. Events will take place in Manchester, Birmingham and London to name but a few.
- On Thursday 26 May, Community Rail Youth Day will see young people across the network take part in activities and make their voices heard. Jools Townsend, chief executive of Community Rail Network, will join students from Ashford College and travel to Maidstone, hearing their views on how we can break down barriers to travel and the role rail can play in tackling the climate emergency.

Community Rail Week looks to drive change at a community level through the efforts of 74 community rail partnerships and 1,200 station friends groups across Britain – working to help people get out of their cars and onto trains and other sustainable modes of transport.

Jools Townsend, chief executive of [Community Rail Network](#), said: “Community Rail Week, and its call to action of ‘give the train a try’, is all about connecting local communities with their railways and encouraging and enabling more people to travel sustainably by train. Community rail has an inspiring track record of doing just that: promoting travel confidence and increasing access to opportunity, while bringing people together, giving communities a voice, and putting railways and stations at the heart of community life. Community rail partnerships and volunteers the length and breadth of Britain are this week mobilising en masse, engaging local people and partners to raise awareness about the importance of rail, and get people enthused about its benefits. We want to help people who feel less confident with train travel to give it a go, and get across the positive difference it makes switching even the occasional journey from car to public transport, for our planet, healthy living, and local communities.”

Jacqueline Starr, Chief Executive Officer of the Rail Delivery Group, said: “We encourage people to give the train a try not only because it’s one of the greenest forms of transport, but also because it boosts local

businesses and the wider economy.”

Rail Minister Wendy Morton said: “I am honoured to be involved in this year’s Community Rail Week as we encourage people to ‘give the train a try’ and welcome more passengers to our railways.

“The rail network is an integral part of our communities, connecting us together and providing opportunities that improve our lives in many different ways.

“I encourage everyone to try and make a trip on a train this week and experience our brilliant railways first-hand.”