

Network Rail continues to brighten up York bridges and help tackle graffiti

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Network Rail has worked with a local artist and community group to brighten up Love Lane footbridge in York as part of a wider project to tackle graffiti in the area.

Graffiti near the railway is unpleasant for people in the community and for passengers. As well as being illegal, it can lead to other crimes. But cleaning it costs millions of pounds of taxpayers' money and uses valuable time, which could be used making improvements to the railway.

Chris Goodwin maintains the area around the railway and responds to any issues, whilst making sure train services can run safely and reliably. His team have had to paint over graffiti on Love Lane bridge – which runs over the East Coast Main Line – multiple times.

With ongoing problems at Hospital Bridge in York and Dragon Bridge in Harrogate, they organised a project to make people think twice about targeting the sites.

Instead of returning yet again with more grey paint, they commissioned East Riding Voluntary Action Services, known as ERVAS, and artist, Emma Garness, to design and paint a piece for the three bridges.

Work was completed over the weekend on Love Lane bridge. The artwork includes detailed mallard ducks, representing the local area and nearby nature reserve, Hob Moor.

Hospital bridge will have an NHS theme and local school children are getting involved to help design the artwork on Dragon bridge.

Chris said: "We organised this project to help brighten up the area and the artwork at Love Lane bridge looks amazing.

"Network Rail is determined to tackle graffiti on and near the railway, but unfortunately it's an ongoing problem. We have spent valuable time covering graffiti on these bridges, only to have to return when the area is targeted again.

"There have been so many positive comments from people in the community already and I can't wait to see the work completed at Hospital Bridge and Dragon Bridge."

Devan Witter BEM, Engagement and Development Officer for East Riding Voluntary Action Services, said: "We are really pleased with the results of the ongoing community arts project in York that has been commissioned by Network Rail.

"Love Lane is one of the areas which has been identified as a graffiti hotspot and we teamed up with Emma Garness to tackle this issue and brighten up the local community. The positive comments so far have been fantastic."

Emma Garness, artist, said: "It's been a breath of fresh air painting this 40-metre footbridge for Network Rail. Under normal circumstances, I would have involved the local community in the painting of this mural.

"The next best thing I could do was to connect it with references to the immediate location – the mallard ducks on Hob Moor and the 1000 bluebell bulbs planted by volunteers in November on Little Hob Moor. These two areas are enjoyed by the local community.

"All of these visual connections help make this footbridge a light, positive and bright place to walk across. Whilst painting it, I had some lovely conversations with the local families who have told me how much they appreciate the work."

This project follows the work they completed in January at Temple Lane road bridge in Copmanthorpe.

If you see someone graffitiing on the railway, please report it to the British Transport Police by calling 0800 40 50 40 or texting 61016. You can also call Network Rail's 24-hour national helpline on 03457 11 41 41.

Photo credit Emma Garness