

# Rail industry cares for community garden in Staffordshire village of Hixon

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Volunteers from the rail industry have repaired a memorial garden honouring the victims of a level crossing accident on the West Coast main line more than 50 years ago.

The site in Hixon, Staffordshire, commemorates a tragic collision between a train and a low-loader lorry on a level crossing in the village in 1968.

In recent years the garden has become overgrown and damaged.

Building on the excellent work already started by the local community, staff from Network Rail and CrossCountry stepped in to help make the garden a fitting memorial to those who lost their lives in the rail disaster.

John Robson, CrossCountry regional director, who led the work, said: "The railway in the UK is the safest in Europe. Tragedies such as this one are rare. But our industry must remember events like these in order to understand the lessons learned, and why we do things the way we do. It is a real privilege to work alongside Adam and other Network Rail colleagues to support the villagers of Hixon so that we never

forget those who lost their lives.”

Adam Checkley, senior programme manager for Network Rail, said: “When we heard about the state of the memorial garden, it was only right that we lent our support to make it a peaceful and pleasant place for local people to use and for those to remember loved ones who lost their lives. Thankfully, level crossing safety has come a very long way since 1968 with stringent measures in place to prevent such tragedies between vehicles and trains happening today.”

Network Rail has closed more than 1,250 level crossings and major improvements have been made to the management of level crossings over the last five decades.

Since the memorial garden work, train operator CrossCountry and Network Rail are working closely with the community on a series of other memorial plans to reflect the importance of the accident all those years ago.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*

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