

Successful Greater Anglia Class 321 Farewell charity train raises £22,200 for charity

May 5, 2023



Greater Anglia's Class 321 Farewell charity charter train, which ran last Saturday (29 April), was a great success, raising £22,200 to be shared between three charities.

The special event, held to mark the impending withdrawal of the Class 321s from use on the Greater Anglia network, was aimed primarily at rail enthusiasts, and was run in support of three charities relevant to the Greater Anglia operating area – East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH), Havens Hospices and the Railway Mission.

Over 300 people booked on the trip and the tickets sold, combined with a raffle held on the day, generated an impressive return of £22,200.

In glorious weather the charter train ran from London Liverpool Street to Clacton, Walton, Harwich Town, Stowmarket, back to Shenfield, to Southend Victoria and finally back to London Liverpool Street, covering many of the core routes with which the Class 321s have been closely associated for much of their life.

The trip also included journeys over a number of loops and sections of track not normally used by

scheduled passenger trains.

The Class 321 electric units have been used on suburban and commuter services in East Anglia for over 30 years, but are now being replaced by Greater Anglia's brand-new Class 720 trains, which have a number of benefits for passengers including more seats, plug and USB points, enhanced performance characteristics and better accessibility arrangements. However, the Class 321s have provided sterling service for over three decades, so the special trip provided an opportunity for enthusiasts and anyone else interested in this notable milestone, to take a final trip on them to many of the destinations they've served during their operating life.

The event follows previous enthusiasts' charity specials run by Greater Anglia in the region in 2016, 2017 and 2019 using Class 37 locomotives, Class 68 locomotives, and Class 37 locomotives respectively.

With hospices in Milton (Cambridgeshire), The Nook, near Norwich (Norfolk) and The Treehouse, near Ipswich (Suffolk) and offering support across those three counties and for families from Essex too, EACH provides services across a similar area to Greater Anglia. Havens Hospices supports families in a similar way in mid and South Essex. The Railway Mission is a charity which offers friendship and a listening ear to anyone connected with our nation's railways – be that members of staff, customers or the wider public – during an individual's time of loneliness, stress, depression, bereavement, or illness.

Jonathan Denby, Head of Corporate Affairs for Greater Anglia said: "We're delighted that our special Class 321 Farewell trip was such a success. It was a great way to mark the impending withdrawal of Class 321s from use at Greater Anglia, as the full roll out of new trains on to every single GA service is now imminent. We're glad to be raising funds for three charities with strong links to the Greater Anglia network – EACH, Havens Hospices, and the Railway Mission.

"They are all extremely worthwhile causes focused on the region we serve and supported by many of our employees. Our thanks go to everyone who joined us on the day, who helped generate such a significant sum for charity and to everyone at Greater Anglia, Network Rail, Eversholt Rail and others in the rail industry, who helped organise and operate such an excellent tour."

Photo credit: Greater Anglia