

Willington WI share station adoption success

June 4, 2020



A group of volunteers from Willington WI have shared how adopting their local railway station has strengthened their community pride.

Willington WI is helping to raise awareness of East Midlands Railway's Station Adoption Scheme as part of National Volunteers' Week, which takes place 1-7 June every year.

The group want to share how volunteering at their local railway station has made a difference to their lives.

Station adopters do a range of important roles: they make sure the station is welcoming; keep an eye out for any unusual activity; report any faults and issues; and maintain planters and gardens. They make a huge difference to every single passenger.

Willington WI adopted the station in 2015 after seeing a poster asking for volunteers in their local post office.

The group now has ten members and over the past five years have completed several projects which have benefited their local station. These have included the installation of four large planters and fence planters, a flower border and developing a beleaguered dark corner plot into an area of colour and interest.

Their latest project in 2018 involved clearing and redesigning the area at the entrance of the station.

Volunteer Andrea Walkman said everyone in the group was very proud of how they had transformed the station.

She said: "We have worked hard to make it look more welcoming and these efforts were particularly special in 2018. Of course, it was the centenary year for the end of the World War One. As a result, we decided to meet as a small group to recognise the date.

"We chose to meet at the front of the station, and even though we had not advertised it, we were joined by more than 40 local people. It was very special."

Andrea is sharing the group's experiences to encourage others to adopt their local station.

She said: "It has been a very rewarding experience, and with the support of East Midlands Railway, we have achieved a lot and made a positive difference to our community."

Another volunteer Janet Warner said: "Willington station is right in the centre of our village and easily seen by walkers, motorists, rail passengers and villagers alike. So, when I saw the appeal for station adopters, I felt this was something our WI could do to make our village better."

While Val Shelton said she got a lot of satisfaction from seeing how people in the village had reacted to their efforts.

She said: "When rail passengers and villagers see our brightly coloured flower displays it puts a smile on their faces – that has been lovely to see."

Donna Adams, Community Engagement Manager at East Midlands Railway, said: "We were delighted when Willington WI said it wanted to adopt its local station and they should be really proud of what they have achieved in the last five years.

"The team have made a real difference in improving the stations appearance and are a great example of how station adopters can improve their local community by volunteering on the scheme."

Photo credit: East Midlands Railway