High Peak and Hope Valley
COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

KEEPING YOU ON BOARD

Partnership newsletter



Issue 38
November 2026

Hello and welcome to our Autumn newsletter.
We hope you are all keeping well.

Over the summer months we have been busy promoting rail travel to our stations; thousands of Steel Cotton Rail Trail flyers were distributed in Birmingham and Nottingham as well as Sheffield and across the Peak District.

One of our key activities has been to work with the Community Rail Education Team to support 'Try The Train' projects in the Hope Valley, one of which is working with students at Hope Valley College. Train trips are planned for November so we look forward to updating you on the whole project in the next newsletter.

We were pleased to be able to secure funding from TransPennineExpress to support the very successful and popular Hope Valley Art Trail by Rail in September. The event has already gained real momentum and interest and made a significant impact on participants' travel choices.

We were delighted to be awarded Accreditation by the Department for Transport in October and look forward to continuing to work with you all in encouraging everyone to reach the Peak District by Train.

We hope you enjoy reading about the variety of projects on the High Peak and Hope Valley railway lines and look forward to hearing from you if you have something to share! Please do get in touch and keep us up to date on your projects.

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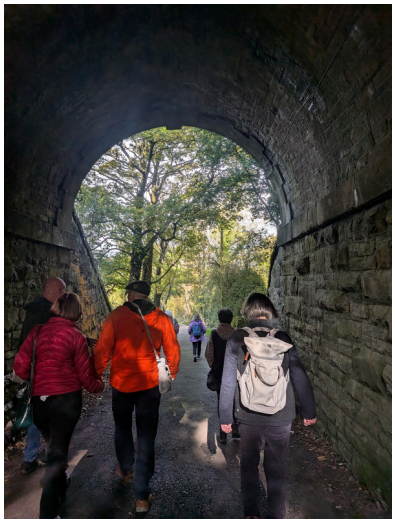
Networking Day

Chapel-En-Le-Frith Station

We had a great time in Chapel-en-le-Frith for our recent Networking Day! A huge thank you to the Friends of Chapel Station for giving us a fantastic tour and highlighting all the amazing work they've been doing. We also enjoyed a lovely walk down into the town, where we had a great catch-up, shared updates and exchanged ideas.



Enjoying the new garden area



Walking into Chapel town

The Friends of Chapel-en-le-Frith have been busy working on a number of exciting projects to enhance the local area.

In partnership with Chapel High School, the group is developing a creative art display to brighten up the grey backs of the poster cases in the car park, bringing a welcome splash of colour to the space.

The group has also made fantastic progress on transforming the Network Rail land behind Platform 1 at Chapel station. Having secured a licence to work on the site, volunteers have put in a tremendous amount of effort to create an attractive garden area.

This will provide a peaceful place for people to sit and relax, while also offering a pollinator-friendly habitat to support bees, butterflies and other wildlife.

Looking ahead, the Friends are planning a special event in February 2027 to mark the 70th anniversary of the Chapel station train crash in 1957. The commemoration will honour the memory of railwayman John Axon, who tragically lost his life in the accident.

Updates from Northern and TransPennine Express Conference:

Train operators and Network Rail are working closely together in preparation for the introduction of Great British Railways next year.

A key priority is to simplify and streamline ticketing arrangements, making it easier and more convenient for passengers to plan and purchase their journeys. This collaborative approach aims to deliver a more joined-up, efficient and passenger-friendly railway.

Supporting Biodiversity at Stations

An update was also shared on Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's biodiversity audit system designed specifically for use at railway stations. This will enable station Friends groups to assess the biodiversity already present at their stations and identify practical ways to enhance it.

The approach encourages groups to consider the surrounding natural environment, ensuring that improvements complement local habitats and give plants and wildlife the best possible chance to thrive.

Sue from Chapel-en-le-Frith also recommended iNaturalist, a free nature identification app which she has used successfully to record and identify local wildlife.

Find out more: iNaturalist - A Community for Naturalists



Buxton station was one of 6 pilot stations in Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's biodiversity audit

Celebrating 30 Years of the Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership

In the autumn of 2027, we will mark the 30th anniversary of the Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership and we will be looking to mark the occasion in some way.

The Hope Valley line stations all look splendid with their Midland Red signage and nearly all now have new fencing. We will be aiming to support station groups to continue their station enhancement projects to really give the line a consistent visual style.

Exploring New Uses for Former Signal Boxes

The group also discussed the Box on the Bay project near Morecambe as an inspiring example of how former railway signal boxes can be given a new lease of life.

This prompted an interesting discussion about potential sites across our area where redundant signal boxes could be repurposed in the future, preserving an important part of our railway heritage while creating valuable new spaces for local communities.





Box on the Bay project near Morecambe

Bee Network Integration

We also updated from Manchester's Bee Network that the rail integration will not be extending beyond Middlewood to Buxton as has previously been talked about, but that Glossop will be incorporated into the scheme and we are working with Manchester colleagues to ensure that arrival at a Derbyshire station remains visually prominent for passengers.

Introducing the Cotton Springs Rail Trail

We are excited to share the name and branding for the Cotton Springs Rail Trail, a developing station-to-station walking route from Manchester Piccadilly to Buxton. The trail will initially follow Manchester's canal paths before joining the Buxton line at Disley.

The branding deliberately reflects the Steel Cotton Rail Trail, creating a recognisable identity for the High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership. The word Cotton has also been retained to celebrate Manchester's industrial heritage.

Tour de France Femmes Comes to Our Area in 2027!

In 2027 the Tour de Femmes will be taking place in our area on 31st July, cyclists will be speeding from Manchester, out past New Mills Central, Newtown, Furness Vale, Whaley Bridge and Buxton stations before bypassing Hope, skirting the edge of Chinley and heading over to Glossop. It's an exciting event which will see thousands of spectators travelling to our area, arriving at our stations and viewing the spectacle from roadsides.



We'd like to get involved and will be keeping in touch with Northern and Community Rail Network and with Friends groups to enhance our stations in the best way we can.

Community Updates:

Disley: the Friends of Disley station have been working with local schools to create colourful bottle top artworks which will be displayed at the station. They are also preparing to participate in community Christmas events and decorations at the National Trust's Lyme estate.

Dore & Totley - The station car park will be out of use for 3 months due to engineering works needed to install a new bridge over the railway. There are 40kg of daffodil bulbs waiting to be planted and these will go in as soon as the works are complete and all machinery has moved off site. An artist is preparing work for a shelter mural based on nature and Christmas preparations are underway for the station.

Edale - Very pleased to have been awarded Silver Gilt in the East Midlands in Bloom Awards this year. The loading dock has been mainly cleared and in doing so, some sleeper chairs were discovered dating back to 1888/1896. The group are organising volunteers to do the final clearance. They are still looking for a guard's van, wagon or similar to fix onto the track as a historical feature. Information boards for the site will be developed in 2027. They are ordering new 'Don't Sit on the Plants' signs and mini totem badges in Midland red. They now have a full set of timelines on each platform.



Blooming Success for Buxton and Edale Stations!

Congratulations to Buxton and Edale stations, which have both been recognised in the East Midlands in Bloom Awards 2026!

Buxton station was awarded Gold, while Edale proudly achieved a Silver Gilt, recognising the fantastic efforts of their dedicated station volunteers.

These awards celebrate the hard work that goes into creating attractive, welcoming station environments that also help wildlife rthrive.

A huge thank you to the Friends groups and everyone involved in making our stations such wonderful gateways to the Peak District. Your efforts not only brighten passengers' journeys but also support biodiversity and encourage local pride. Well done to everyone involved!



Buxton station Friends planting



Edale Friends collecting their award

New Community Art Display at Glossop Station

The Friends of Glossop Station have welcomed a colourful new Community Art Display in the station waiting room, featuring the work of local artist Wendy Turner. Wendy's quirky and distinctive style proved a big hit with passengers when she first exhibited at the station last year, and she's back with another wonderful collection of paintings.

This year's display includes a special collage featuring all the stations along the Glossop Line, celebrating the area's railway connections through art.

It's another lovely example of how station spaces can showcase local talent, brighten passengers' journeys and strengthen links with the community.





Celebrating the Joy of Reading at the Station

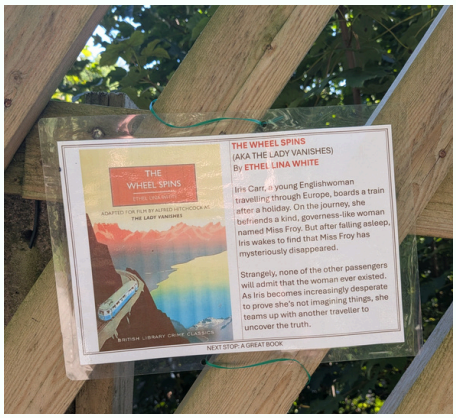
The Friends of Glossop Station have launched their final Poetry Platform Display of 2026, created in partnership with Glossop Bookfest to celebrate the National Year of Reading. For this special edition, local writers were invited to contribute new work, bringing a creative close to a year dedicated to encouraging people of all ages to rediscover the joy of reading.

The National Year of Reading, a Department for Education initiative delivered in collaboration with the National Literacy Trust, has encouraged communities to embrace reading through its Go All In campaign, connecting books and the written word with people's everyday interests and passions.

With reports suggesting renewed enthusiasm for books, particularly among younger readers, the display is a fitting celebration of the power of reading and writing to bring people together.

A huge thank you to the Friends of Glossop Station, Glossop Bookfest and all the contributing writers for bringing creativity and inspiration to the station throughout the year!





The Friends of Grindleford Station are helping to inspire a love of reading by sharing book recommendations with passengers. Their thoughtful selections offer travellers a little literary inspiration while waiting for their train, perhaps encouraging them to discover a new author or pick up their next great read.

It's a lovely, simple initiative that brings a personal touch to the station and celebrates the joy of reading. Well done to the Friends for another creative way of making their station a welcoming and engaging place!

Community Rail Network and EMR conferences

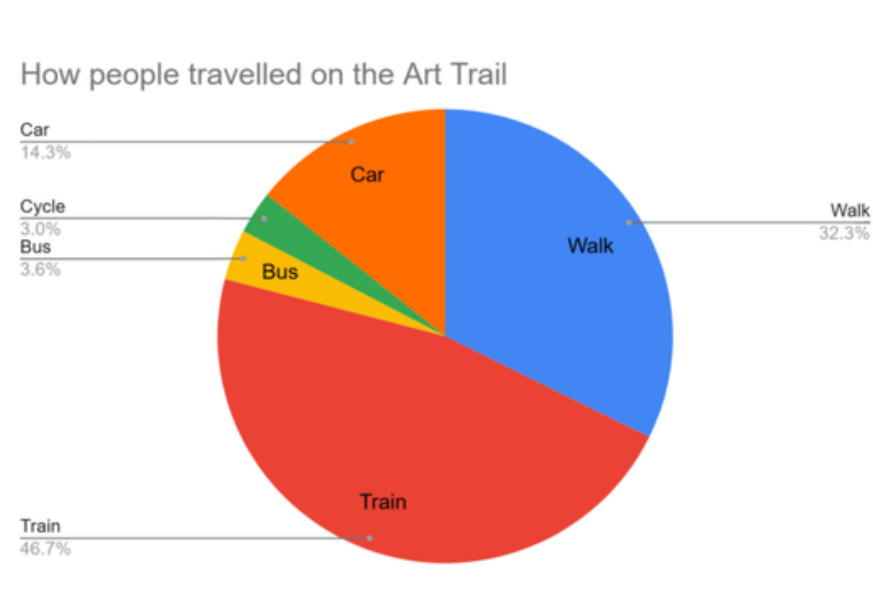
Catherine, Helen and Jemma attended the CRN conference in Derby mid October. Key takeaways from this were updates on rail reform and how community rail is embedded within this; social value reporting and how we can include our work effectively as well as 'Open Platform' sessions.

Catherine attended EMR's conference in Nottingham where the focus again was on social value, funding for projects and how groups can best use social media platforms as a way of engaging their communities.

Hope Valley Art Trail By Rail

The second annual Art Trail by Rail along the Hope Valley line was hosted in September. It was a great success and here are some topline stats:

- Over 75% of the visitors travelled to the event by sustainable means (approx 50% by train, 30% walk and 6% walk and cycle).
- Over 450 total visitors (approx number and likely a lot more). A great increase on last year which saw approx 150 visitors.
- 40 artists took part, compared to 18 last year.
- 28 volunteers, including musicians supported the event, compared to 7 last year.
- 14 venues between 6 stations and numerous activities at each place.





Steel Cotton Rail Trail – A Fantastic First Year!

Since launching in September 2025, the Steel Cotton Rail Trail has proved a fantastic success, inspiring people to explore the Peak District and the communities along the Hope Valley line by train and on foot.

The 14-section, station-to-station walking route has attracted considerable interest, with some impressive results from its first year:

- Over **140,000 social media views**, introducing the trail to new audiences.
- More than **20,200 website page views** between January and August 2026.
- Over **33,000 route-map downloads**, with each section downloaded at least 1,500 times.
- **229 trail certificates downloaded**, celebrating walkers' achievements.

The most popular sections include Sheffield to Dore & Totley, Hope to Edale and Dore & Totley to Grindleford, each attracting over 3,000 map downloads.



Social media has played a huge part in raising awareness, particularly through collaborations with walking content creators. One Instagram video featuring the Edale to Chinley section attracted an incredible 124,000 views, introducing the trail to thousands of potential new visitors.

What has been particularly encouraging is seeing how people have embraced the trail in their own ways. From leisurely walks and wellbeing activities to fundraising challenges and even ultra-marathons, the route is inspiring a wide range of adventures. The flexibility of the 14 sections allows walkers to choose their own distances, using the railway to travel between starting and finishing points.



The trail is about much more than walking. It encourages sustainable travel, showcases local businesses and communities, and highlights our railway stations as gateways to the beautiful Peak District countryside.

We look forward to building on this success and seeing even more people enjoying the trail in the year ahead!

What's Coming Up

Key activities in the next quarter



Key Dates for Your Diary

CRP Partnership Meeting - 2nd December

UPDATES

- The Community Rail Network awards shortlist will be announced on Wednesday 9th December

EVENTS

- 11th November: Routes to Remembrance - Sheffield Station
- Pop-up pantos with Graves Youth Theatre:
  - Chesterfield Station - 22nd November
  - Sheffield Station - 28th November

PROJECTS

- Cotton Springs Rail Trail routes development
- Scenic Days Out - Winter campaign
- Hadfield to Glossop walk leaflet

As always, a huge thank you to all our funders, partners and Station Friends for making a huge difference to communities in High Peak and Hope Valley.


High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership


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