

North Notts & Lincs Community Rail Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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NORTH NOTTS & Lincs CRP CIC | RETFORD STATION, STATION ROAD, RETFORD, DN22 7DE

Introduction

The North Notts and Lincs Community Rail Partnership (NNLCRP) is dedicated to enhancing stations and services across the region. We work closely with station adoption groups to maintain stations and improve accessibility, collaborate with health and social care teams to provide support spaces, and partner with local artists and organisations to beautify stations through artwork. We also support community action days, volunteer initiatives, and provide support to aid both new and ongoing projects.

Our work focuses on:

- Social inclusion
- Promoting public transport
- Community engagement
- Volunteering
- Sustainability

We address these priorities through projects at stations across North Notts and Lincolnshire, in partnership with:

- Train operators: Northern, EMR, LNER, and TPE
- Bus companies: Stagecoach and Marshalls Coaches
- Local schools (for rail safety awareness and transport access)
- Volunteer and community groups
- Local businesses, benefiting commuters and transport networks alike
- Local councils.

NNLCRP was re-accredited in April 2024, and further information about our work can be found at www.nnlcrp.com.



NNLCRP Team

NNLCRP consists of a board of directors and an officer team, who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the CRP. The CRP benefits from a board of directors who are hands-on in their approach, and catch-up meetings are held most weeks between officers and one or more of the board members. The CRP was delighted to invite Lynne Harris to the board in 2024.

Board of Directors

- David Harby (Chair)
- Jim Anderson (Bassetlaw Area Chair)
- Alan Gouldthorpe
- Lynne Harris
- David Pidwell

Officers

- Rick Craig (full time)
- Helen Tamblyn-Saville (part time)

2024 Projects

Cleethorpes X90 Bus Service

Building on 2023's success, the summer Saturday X90 Bus Service from Gainsborough to Cleethorpes returned for 2024, organised by NNLCRP and provided by Stagecoach. This service filled the gap left by the lack of weekend train services to Cleethorpes, a popular family destination. Offering return travel for £6.40, usage increased, with the final weekends running at full capacity. Advertising was more targeted in 2024, with ads placed exclusively in Gainsborough Life, alongside repeated advertising the following month, compared to the previous year's blanket ad across Retford Life, Gainsborough Life, and Worksop Life.

Outcome: The return of the X90 Bus Service from Gainsborough to Cleethorpes in 2024 successfully addressed key pillars of community rail, including social inclusion, community engagement, and sustainability. By filling the gap left by the lack of weekend train services, the bus service provided an affordable and accessible travel option for families, promoting public transport as a convenient choice for leisure travel. The targeted advertising approach helped raise awareness within the local community, increasing service usage and ensuring that the service met the needs of the community.

VISIT CLEETHORPES
SUMMER X90 BUS SERVICE

X90 Gainsborough to Cleethorpes
Limited stop summer Saturday bus from June 29th until August 31st 2024 via Market Rasen.

X90 Bus	
Lea The Green	Dep 08:48
Gainsborough Lea Road Rail Station	Dep 08:50
Gainsborough Bus St 3	Dep 08:58
Gainsborough Miller Road	Dep 09:03
Hemswell Cliff PO	Dep 09:13
The Crown Inn	Dep 09:15
Middle Rasen Post Office	Dep 09:25
Market Rasen Market Place	Dep 09:28
Guaranteed connection here. Passengers may stay on the vehicle.	
Market Rasen Market Place	Dep 09:33
Salutation Inn	Dep 09:43
Cabourne Post Box	Dep 09:48
Nuns Corner	Dep 10:03
Cleethorpes St Peters Avenue	Dep 10:13
Sea Road	Arr 10:18

X90 Bus Return	
Cleethorpes Pier	Dep 14:45
Cleethorpes High St	Dep 14:47
Nuns Corner Laceby Road	Dep 15:00
Cabourne Post Box	Dep 15:10
Salutation Inn	Dep 15:15
Market Rasen Market Place	Arr 15:25
Guaranteed connection here. Passengers may stay on the vehicle.	
Market Rasen Market Place	Dep 15:30
Middle Rasen Post Office	Dep 15:35
The Crown Inn	Dep 15:45
Hemswell Cliff PO	Dep 15:50
Gainsborough Miller Road	Dep 16:00
Gainsborough Bus St 3	Dep 16:05
Gainsborough Rail Station	Dep 16:10
Lea The Green	Dep 16:13
Gainsborough Lea Road Rail Station	Arr 16:20

Only £6.40
Gainsborough to Cleethorpes return fare

NNLCRP INTEGRATING TRANSPORT **Stagecoach**

Example of X90 advert

Jo Cox Great Get Together

In July, NNLCRP hosted an informal drop-in coffee morning as part of the Jo Cox Great Get Together; an annual weekend to unite communities in the belief that there is “more in common.” This drop-in coffee morning was held in Retford Town Hall and advertised to local groups and on social media. People were welcome to drop by for a coffee and chat, either to socialise, or to find out about the benefits of volunteering with our station groups as a way of uniting communities and tackling isolation.

Outcome: NNLCRP's informal drop-in coffee morning, held as part of the Jo Cox Great Get Together in July, successfully fostered community engagement and social inclusion. The event, hosted at Retford Town Hall and promoted through local groups and social media, provided an opportunity for local residents to come together, socialise, and learn about volunteering with station groups. Attendees expressed interest in supporting community initiatives, aligning with the volunteering pillar of community rail. Additionally, the coffee morning led to a potential collaboration with a local ukulele group, with plans to work together on future projects like a ukulele train, further promoting community cohesion and connection in line with the core values of community rail. We plan to expand on this event in 2025 with a bigger lead time and perhaps an additional venue across the network.

Market Rasen Station Hub and Community Café

NNLCRP have worked closely with the adult day care centre at Market Rasen Station to transform the buildings into a social hub and community café, supported by EMR and Community Rail Network. Although the café is not yet open, it is nearing completion, with an expected opening to the public in 2025.

The café will be serving homemade and homegrown food, whilst also training the service users to prepare them for work and volunteering opportunities. This will include the running of the café, with the assistance of lead workers.

Outcome: Thanks to the efforts of Market Rasen Station Adopters, the station is a destination. Once the café is open to the public, it will help to encourage more footfall to the station, encouraging people to explore the area by rail and on foot. NNLCRP's collaboration with the adult day care centre at Market Rasen Station to transform the building into a social hub and community café directly supports the pillars of community engagement, social inclusion, and volunteering. The project creates a welcoming space, preserving station heritage while offering a place for social interaction and support. The café will not only provide homemade and homegrown food, but it will also empower service users by training them in café operations, preparing them for future work and volunteering opportunities.

Supported by EMR and the Community Rail Network, this initiative enhances sustainability by promoting local food production and fostering skills development, with the café expected to open in 2025. Going forward, NNLCRP plans to produce travel information that can be kept at the café.

Market Rasen Station Community Café has been shortlisted in the 2025 Community Rail Awards under the category “Empowering Diverse Groups.”

Platforms for Change

Platforms for Change is an “open” badge for Scouts groups, supported by Community Rail. It is flexible in approach, meaning that Scout groups and CRPs can work in collaboration to develop sessions and experiences tailored to each individual Scout group. It aims to engage groups in rail activities for the benefit of the local community. For example, the Explorers at Bailgate in Lincoln, supported by NNLCRP have developed a station garden at Lincoln Central Station. It also provides the CRP with an opportunity to promote rail safety.

Outcome: The Platforms for Change initiative, supported by NNLCRP, successfully engaged the Explorers in creating a station garden at Lincoln Central Station. This project aligns with the community engagement, volunteering, and sustainability pillars of community rail. By providing a flexible framework for Scout groups to collaborate with CRPs, the initiative fosters local involvement and promotes the benefits of rail activities to the wider community. Contact has been made with other groups throughout the network and NNLCRP plans to deliver more sessions throughout the year.



Lincoln Scouts with their new garden at Lincoln Station

Retford Station Mosaics

The Friends of Retford Station unveiled a mosaic of Alan Pegler at the station, commemorating his contributions to the railway. The event was timed to coincide with Retford Heritage Day, with the formal unveiling carried out by Town Mayor, Councillor David Naylor. Additional mosaics installed this year include “The Flying Scotsman” on platform one, and “Sir Nigel Gresley” on platform two. The unveiling event was covered by the Worksop Guardian, and we were delighted that Alan’s relatives were able to attend the event.

Outcome: The unveiling of the Alan Pegler mosaic, along with the installation of The Flying Scotsman and Sir Nigel Gresley mosaics, successfully engaged the local community and enhanced the cultural significance of Retford Station. This project aligns with the community engagement and social inclusion pillars of community rail, celebrating local heritage and railway history. The event, held during Retford Heritage Day, fostered a sense of pride and connection among residents and visitors. Covered by the Worksop Guardian, it also raised awareness of the station’s community-driven initiatives.



Family members and local society members on Retford Heritage Day posing with the Alan Pegler mosaic in the ticket hall at Retford Station.

Romans to Railways

A legacy project, NNLCRP worked with local artist, Melanie Langton, to produce artworks in collaboration with local organisations and businesses to enhance the platform wall at Lincoln Station. These artworks celebrated the history and community of Lincoln. The project ended in 2024, with the final artworks installed, and formally unveiled at a ribbon cutting ceremony in March 2024, attended by local dignitaries. This project was supported by EMR and Station Adopters.

Outcome: This project successfully enhanced Lincoln Station's platform wall through artworks that celebrate the history of the area. The project aligns with the community engagement and social inclusion pillars of community rail, fostering a sense of local pride and connection. By involving local organisations and businesses, the project created a platform for collaboration and showcased the region's heritage. This project also promotes sustainability by creating a lasting, meaningful improvement to the station, which will benefit commuters and visitors for years to come.



Romans to Railways artwork at Lincoln Station.

Shireoaks Station Mural

A legacy project, NNLCRP has worked with Artworks, a not-for-profit creative arts organisation in Sheffield who work with adults with learning disabilities. The mural has been designed to showcase the local area, and is to be installed in the southbound waiting shelter. The project has been a community effort with NNLCRP, Shireoaks Station Adopters, and Northern painting the shelter to refresh it ready for the art installation. The design is completed, and local company Elite Signs are producing the boards. The mural was installed in early 2025.

Outcome: This project aligns with the community engagement, social inclusion, and volunteering pillars of community rail. By collaborating with Artworks, the project promotes inclusivity and offers a platform for local talent. The collective efforts of NNLCRP, Shireoaks Station Adopters, and Northern in painting the shelter reflect the power of community collaboration. The mural installation, expected in early 2025, will enhance the station's environment, strengthening the connection between the community and the rail network while promoting sustainability through creative, lasting improvements.

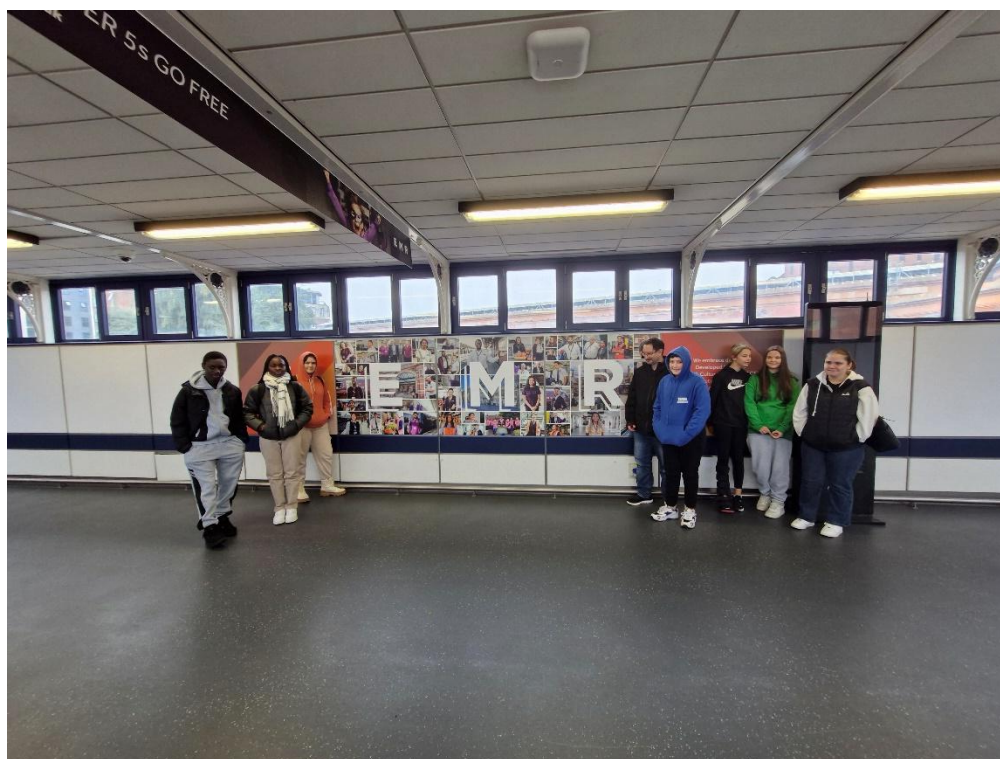


Shireoaks Station mural.

Try the Train

The partnership ran two Try the Train outings in 2024. The first outing was a trip to Cleethorpes from Market Rasen, for service users of the adult day care centre. The aim of this trip was to help build rail confidence; over half of the group had not traveled by train before. The second trip was held in October, and was a cultural day in Leicester for the young adults who attend the North Hykeham and Wragby Youth Clubs, along with participants from the Lincoln Based multi-faith group; the Centre for Reconciliation. The aim of this trip was to build rail confidence and to thank the group for their input into the Lincoln Central art project.

Outcome: These two "Try the Train" outings in 2024 successfully introduced new individuals to rail travel, fostering community connection and promoting sustainable transport. These trips engaged local groups, including an adult day care center and a youth group, while also supporting cultural exchange and well-being, aligning with multiple Community Rail Partnership pillars. Officers also benefited from the experience, taking away valuable feedback to make future trips even better.



Members of the North Hykeham and Wragby Youth Clubs at Leicester Train Station.

Worksop 175

In July, a new history board was unveiled at Worksop Station, marking the 175th anniversary of the station's. The board highlights key events and stories related to the station, including the history of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, enriching the local heritage. This project was researched and delivered by The Friends of Worksop Station, culminating in an official unveiling with Jo White MP, and East Midlands Mayor, Clare Ward, and other local dignitaries.

Outcome: The unveiling of the history board at Worksop Station, marking its 175th anniversary, successfully engaged the community in celebrating the station's rich heritage. By showcasing key events and stories, the history board fosters a sense of local pride and connection to the station's past. Further boards celebrating the history of the MSLR are underway across the network, including a plan for a second board at Worksop.

This project has been shortlisted in the 2025 Community Rail Awards under the category "Small Projects Award (under £500)."



Jo White MP and Mayor Clare Ward with members of NNLCRP at the Worksop Station history board unveiling.

World Book Day

To celebrate World Book Day in March 2024, NNLCRP officers visited Benjamin Adlard Primary to read railway-themed stories and distribute “Keep Safe With Thomas”, a railway safety storybook, to every child. Officers also visited Retford and Worksop stations to hand out over 100 books to children travelling on the network, promoting both reading and rail safety.

Outcome: The World Book Day initiative successfully promoted community engagement and social inclusion by providing over 100 children with books, fostering a love of reading while raising awareness of rail safety. By combining education with safety through books, the initiative also helps to build rail confidence in families.



Reading train themed books on World Book Day.

Conference Engagement and Learning

Both officers attended the EMR and Northern Railway Conferences in October, as well as the Community Rail Conference. These events provided valuable networking opportunities, allowing the officers to connect with neighbouring CRPs and establish a networking group for sharing ideas and advice.

The EMR Conference offered valuable insights, especially from a Funding and Grants Workshop led by Kaye Robinson. This session provided practical guidance for completing funding bids, which will help support future projects.

The Community Rail Conference featured the Open Platform format, which encouraged valuable idea-sharing and networking. NNLCRP officers delivered a session on traditional media coverage, with one attendee stating, “This was the best session I attended, thank you.” Additionally, the Women’s Safety session was insightful, leading to plans for future collaboration between CRPs. However, the session was notably under-attended by men, highlighting a need for greater male engagement in these important conversations.

As Community Rail develops and grows it is important to continue to develop knowledge and skills, to help the partnership take things forward, through direct engagement with our communities in and around stations, train Operators, other CRPs, support organisations and the Community Rail Network, whilst also spreading the word about what Community Rail is all about. To that end, through the year we have attended various events in addition to the above conferences and these have included:

- Stakeholder meetings
- Education and Training Fayres
- Model Railway Exhibitions
- Community and Volunteer Days
- Visits to stations
- Attendance at the Community Rail Education Network meetings
- Attendance at training for new Community Rail Officers

2024 Challenges

2024 marked the first full year of the current officer team. While much has been achieved, there were some initial challenges, which we are now confident have been overcome, or are in the process of being dealt with. These include legacy projects and administrative issues, where there had been no handover period. The partnership also suffered from technical issues, with periods of email downtime for one or both officers, which led to communication issues. New laptops were purchased at the end of 2024, which has considerably helped the officers to work more effectively.

NNLCRP's new website at nnlcrp.com was launched in 2024; this was a legacy project to update the outdated website which was no longer fit for purpose. This has not been without teething issues; some search engines still point to nnlcrp.org.uk, and although the new website is attractive and informative, it is not easily updated. Officers plan in 2025 to look at bringing the website maintenance in house, allowing for ease of updating.

The officers have a good working relationship with each other and the board of directors. However, occasionally there may be scenarios where someone is not quite sure who is doing what on a project. These incidents are rare due to the officers regularly holding catch-up meetings with each other, but to reflect the growing work of the partnership, officers propose in 2025 that each take responsibility for individual TOCs. The split is proposed as follows:

Rick: East Midlands Railway, Northern, TPE

Helen: Hull Trains, LNER, Northern

This split is proposed based on the geographic location and working hours of the officer team. It is noted that Hull Trains do not currently fund the CRP, but as a mainline service at Doncaster and Retford, work is underway to develop relationships.

Officers will update each other on works related to TOCs, enabling the other to cover where is appropriate, for instance, during holidays, assisting with a large project/workload, or where work may overlap.

Moving Forward

2025 marks Railway 200, and much of the work of the CRP will be built around celebrating the 200th anniversary of the first passenger train in Britain. Plans for the year include, but are not limited to:

- Continued installation of bookcases at stations across the network. It was hoped that Worksop would be installed in 2024, but a date is yet to be fixed.
- Continuing to support the Market Rasen Social Hub Project through its stages of development.
- Further rollout of 'Platforms for Change' project, in partnership with the Community Rail Education Network, Cubs, Scouts and Beavers.
- Final artwork installation at Shireoaks Station.
- Projects based in and around Doncaster Train Station, including station artwork.
- Working towards exhibition projects across our Network stations in preparation for celebrating 200 years of the Railways (2025), including celebrating Women working in the Railway and 175-year celebration of Sheffield to Gainsborough Central Station Route.
- Continued engagement with Youth Clubs and schools in promoting Community Rail, new life and work skills projects, work around Rail Safety and Suicide Prevention, new artwork on stations and Try the Train trips.
- Launch of a Rail Ale Trail and Railway 200 themed beer.
- Reestablishment of the Lincolnshire Area Group.
- Establish relationships with Hull Trains to promote tourism and railway heritage.

Funding and Finances

Financial summary for the calendar year 2024:

Income

From core funders: £49,202

Project specific grants: £7,411

Total £56,613

Expenditure

Staff costs: £42,735

Project costs: £14,992

Publicity inc website: £267

Administration (office expenses, insurance, accountancy fees etc): £1,597

Volunteer expenses: £18

Replacement equipment: £850

Total £60,459

NNLCRP is extremely grateful to the following organisations for continuing to fund our work through the partnership:



NNLCRP is always keen to hear feedback, suggestions, and opportunities to work with stakeholders. Please visit our website at nnlcrp.com, or email contact@nnlcrp.org.uk.