

Community Rail Partnership Officers Report

NSCR Management Group meeting – 21 January 2021

Covering mid October 2020 – mid January 2021 period

By Claire Sandys and Emma McIntosh

General

- Stoke-on-Trent City Council has won a £25 million Transforming Cities grant from DfT. Part of this will be spent on new lifts for Longton Station and a new rear access to Stoke Station.
- The CRP has been awarded DfT accreditation for 2020-21, with some action points to be completed during the year.
- Rails to Trails station walks booklet: Designer, Caroline Dadd of Origin Studios, Stoke-on-Trent has been doing an excellent job and the design is almost finished. We are asking station adopters and other community members to walk the routes to check them.
- The CRP has been awarded a Community Rail Network CRDF grant of £1725 for the purchase of 5 new community rail poster cases for community use: 3 at Peartree Station, 1 at Longport and 1 at Alsager.
- Installation of EMR station information boards – EMR has committed to producing and installing these boards later in the year.
- An on-line children's art competition on the theme of 'The Railway in Autumn' received a lot of online interest, particularly via Facebook. A poster displaying all the entries is displayed at Longport Station. All winners have been sent art supplies, travel tickets to Longport Station and a free entry letter to Middleport Pottery, all valid for 1 year.
- The CRP has supported the Hixon Memorial Project by submitting a funding application to Avanti for a contribution to a project to replace a damaged window in St Peter's Church, overlooking the memorial garden. The window will feature three stained glass memorial designs.

- Community Rail Network awards:
 - It's Your Station – GOLD for Longport, Alsager and Uttoxeter and SILVER for Kidsgrove
 - Mike Willmot won 2nd place in the Outstanding Volunteer Contribution category
- New volunteers have been recruited at Stone, Stoke and Longton Stations. Volunteering is on hold at LNR and Avanti stations during lockdown.

Alsager

- The Dementia Friendly signage project is on track to be completed by end February.
- The CRP continues to campaign for the reinstatement of the EMR service.

Kidsgrove

- The Platform 2/3 store room roof had not been repaired! Major leaks have caused flooding on the floor. It is now out of bounds to all users. The flat roof of the store room and adjoining waiting room is to be replaced by Network Rail in 2021.
- Access for All – Drilling has commenced. Completion date possibly October 2021.

Longport

- CCTV camera to monitor flytipping and bonfires: A meeting with an expert from UK CCTV Security Cameras reveals that a camera on the passenger bridge or on the old waiting room would be unlikely to capture enough detail. Various other options were discussed.
- County Councillor, John Cooper, and Newcastle Borough Councillor, Jennifer Cooper, have been contacted and are looking into the above problem

Longton

- The Stoke-bound platform has three new hayrack baskets.

Blythe Bridge

- New fencing has been installed by EMR to replace rotting sections

Tutbury and Hatton

- Signal Box Garden: Funding for two large bee friendly planters has been approved as part of a larger Derbyshire-wide project led by Alastair Morley of the Derwent Valley Line. These will be funded by Community Rail Network and the Bee Friendly Trust. The CRP has applied for additional funding from EMR and CRN for the installation of new fencing around the plot.

Peartree

- Benches need replacing – Costed project proposal submitted to EMR for approval, but no response yet.
- Railscape has quoted £13,195 for the removal of 5 ivy clad ash trees, a large pine and other work to make the station safer for passengers. No funding sources have yet been identified.
- We are trying to source stencils to paint platform directions onto the wall adjacent to the road, to guide passengers.

Penkridge

- Chase Aqua Rural Enterprise (CARE) mural ready for printing. Still awaiting permissions from WMT.
- Continued vandalism in the waiting shelters means that only one poster case remains intact. We have asked for the poster cases to be removed. The Phoenix Art Club work can be reprinted on dibond.

Stone

- The bid to LNR for planters underneath the information boards on Platform 2 was successful. These will be installed in the next few months.
- The Deputy Town Clerk at Stone Town Council has made contact to clarify some points about the proposal for fixed baskets on the railings on Platform 2.
- A bid to the Community Rail Development Fund and LNR, match funded by the Bee Friendly Trust, has been successful. The project will include the installation of a wildlife friendly raised bed garden, planters, dwarf trees, educational session and community poster board.
- We are awaiting feedback from Network Rail regarding permissions to create a wild flowered area on Station Approach with water harvesting from one of their buildings.
- Step free access to Platform 1: We have started collecting evidence of need for 2 lifts by writing to local authorities and community groups. We ask that people contact us regarding the current lack of step-free access to Platform 1 and how that affects them.
- The CRP have had a couple of articles published in the Stone Gazette. These include thanking the station volunteers for their work and Streetscene for their support in sweeping Station Approach as well as information to encourage new volunteers at the station and to request community views on station accessibility.

Stoke-on-Trent

- A proposal for six new planters for platforms 1 and 2 was submitted to Avanti Estates Team in November. If permission is granted a bid will be submitted to Avanti

Station Community Fund. It is hoped that some of the planters can be made by Avanti station staff out of recycled wood.

- Gravel garden on Platform 1: A planning application for the new fence on platform 1 has been submitted. Timescales for installation of the fence will be determined once planning permission is received and then the proposal for the gravel garden can be progressed.
- Supporting the new Community Champion, Anthony Stanley, to identify relevant contacts to engage with in relation to the benefits of rail travel and how stations work to improve travel confidence.

NSCRCP 2020 - 2021 Income and Expenditure Summary			
as at 31 December 2020			
INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Brought forward from 2019-20	39,000	CRPO and Active Travel Officer salaries (April 2020 - 31 March 2021)	46,200
Income from tocs (April 2020 to March 2021)	49,122	Plants, compost and gardening supplies	562
Income from local authorities (April 2020 - March 2021)	4,500	Design, printing, distribution costs	1,745
Community Rail Network small grant for refurbishment of Spotter Tea at Kidsgrove Station	469	Travel, parking, subsistence	148
West Midlands Trains grants for Rails to Trails project (Engagement phase and booklet design)	2,000	Donation to The Lyme Trust Foodbank	500
West Midlands Trains grant for new planters at Stone Station	555	Other	632
West Midlands Trains grant for Penkridge Station mural	- 440		
Total income	95,206	Total expenditure	49,787
		Total Income minus Total Expenditure	- 45,419
		Reserve requirement	46,200