

PRESENT: Donna Adams (DA), Ian Clark (IC), Vicky Cropper-Clarke (VC), Dave Dowbenko (DD); Emma McIntosh (EM), Rowley Osborn (RO), Mark Osborne (MO), Claire Sandys (CS), Alexa Stott (AS), Paul Webster (PW), Michael Willmot (MW) (Chair)

1.	Apologies for absence 7 Welcome	Action
2.	<p>Peter Cousins (PC), Brian Edwards (BE), Clare Horton (CH), Chris Hegarty (CH), Marika Latham (ML), Austin Hannaby (AH), Neil Roberts (NR)</p> <p>Mark Osborne, Regional Growth Manager, Avanti West Coast was welcomed to the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting (09/07/20)</p> <p>Accepted. No matters arising</p>	
4.	<p>Community Rail Network (CRN) items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 9th December CRN Awards event – will be on-line this year • Kulvinder Bassi, Community Rail Team Leader at DfT who has been very supportive during his time in this post, has been promoted. Successor appointment yet to be announced. • Small Grants and Community Rail Development Funds are still available for CRPs to bid to. • Training bursaries also available. • NSCRP re-accreditation meeting now arranged for Friday 23rd October. <p>East Midlands Railway</p> <p>AS reported on fleet upgrades and strengthening. Some 153s (not DDA compliant for single use) may be attached to other services to increase capacity and help with on-board social distancing</p> <p>EMR is now running 97% of services (100% on Crewe-Derby line). Punctuality across the EMR area has been above the national average.</p> <p>Community Development and Station Improvement Funds are still open but all expenditure has to be approved by DfT. Some delay in getting their responses</p> <p>No draft May 2021 timetable available yet as EMR waiting for responses from consultation. So not certain yet if service extension to Nottingham will be included.</p> <p>Nine new manned stations promised during the franchise including Uttoxeter which will be in the first phase (2021) Modular building which will include ticket office/staff space, waiting room and public toilet.</p> <p>Abellio will be seeking a contractor to staff the building and possibly to include retail (but not sell tickets; this would be by machine. Hope was expressed that local traders would have the opportunity to bid.</p> <p>An external water tap has been requested.</p> <p>ERMA (Emergency Recovery Measures Agreement) will be extended for 18 months.</p> <p>Cab & Go service will be introduced from all EMR stations enabling taxi to meet arriving trains if booked at least 2 hours in advance.</p>	
5.	<p>Update on Alsager service restoration Despite repeated attempts DA has not been able to get any information back from the EMR timetabling team.</p>	

6.	<p>London Northwestern Railway</p> <p>Similar ERMA arrangements as for EMR, but for 12 months.</p> <p>VC is looking into Jon Heal's comments about insufficient information for passengers about the rail replacement buses at Stone and Alsager during recent engineering works.</p> <p>DfT will approve Customer and Communities Improvement Fund applications (postponed from 1 April 2019). This includes the application received from the Chasewater Aqua Rural Enterprise (CARE) at Penkridge, to support adults with learning disabilities and mental health issues.</p> <p>Friday 13th Nov. Annual Community Rail Conference 2020. Will be on-line. Contribution by Peter Wilkinson (Director of Passenger Services at the DfT)</p> <p>MW said he was pleased to see the new whiskey barrel planter and verge plantings at Penkridge Station.</p>	VC
7.	<p>CrossCountry -</p>	
8.	<p>Avanti West Coast</p> <p>MO reported that AWC services were running at around 30% capacity and appropriate Customer & Communities Fund remains open but grants are subject to DfT approval.</p> <p>IC asked if consideration could be given to all AWC Glasgow route trains could call at Crewe – it being a rail hub for the North Midlands, Welsh Marches and Wales. Currently the one train/hour call can result in long connection times.</p> <p>RO said he would be happy to discuss projects at Stafford Station. Advises MO should look at station master plan held by Stafford Borough Council.</p>	
9,	<p>Network Rail -</p>	
10.	<p>Report from CRPO</p> <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five new volunteers recruited by EMR, one each at Longport, Peartree, Kidsgrove, Tutbury & Hatton and Blythe Bridge • Rails to Trails station walks booklet. Will seek an external company to complete the design stage due to ongoing and long-term delays with the City Council designer. The Engagement phase has finished. Jayne Clamp has produced 4 preview films – Kidsgrove, Tutbury, Penkridge and Longton. She has produced Walk Leader guides and risk assessments for led walks from Kidsgrove, Penkridge, Stone, Alsager, Blythe Bridge and Tutbury, to be delivered next year assuming social distancing guidelines relaxed by then. Project jointly funded by CRP and LNR. • Anti-trespass article written in collaboration with the Churnet Valley Railway, Network Rail and BTP. Published in Sentinel on 11 August as <i>Big Issue</i> • Meir Station Reopening Project: Several meetings attended, including one with EMR. Meir has passed initial sifting of submissions and has received some funding for a consultant to put together a strategic outline business case by end December. Agreed that NSCRP would contribute £500. • EMR Community Development Fund: The EMR Charities Committee has approved donations of £150 to: Sanctus refugee centre, Uttoxeter Heath Community Centre and Stoke-on-Trent Food Bank. • <i>On Track</i> NSCRP Annual Progress Report completed and distributed. • An on-line children's art competition on the theme of 'The Railway in Autumn' has been launched, with a closing date of 31st October 2020. 	

- Community Rail Network awards:
 - It's Your Station – GOLD for Longport, Alsager and Uttoxeter and SILVER for Kidsgrove
 - Shortlisted for Most Enhanced Station – Uttoxeter Pergola and Arbour / Tool shed project
 - Shortlisted for Outstanding Volunteer Contribution - Mike Willmot

Alsager

- DfT has approved the Dementia Friendly signage project. Projected installation February 2021.
- Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College “connectivity” poster for Alsager Station.

Kidsgrove

- Platform 2/3 store room roof has been repaired and the room is usable.
- Access for All – Paul Atherton from NR and Galliford Try met with the Kidsgrove Station adopters in September to give them an update:
 - Undertrack pipe crossings to be installed soon.
 - underground mining remediation works starting in late Oct/Nov of this year.
 - NR has offered to help the volunteers with the moving of any plants from garden areas during the works. A temporary nursery is being established.
 - Paul to issue further updates when the main works are due to start with sufficient time to make necessary arrangements
- Strengthening work on the canal bridge on approach road has started.
- CRN has awarded a small grant of £469 to NSCRP for the installation of kitchen cabinets to replace current tables for Spotter Tea
- RO: CH is working with Dan Robson (EMR) on the Town Deal and bus interchange.

Longport

- The Waiting Room Gallery's community activities on hold until social distancing restrictions lifted. With permission from EMR and XC, they intend to spend some of the money on alternative local community activities.
- Incidents of petty vandalism at the station building continue. And a bonfire on Highways England land on the Newcastle side in July produced noxious fumes and left a pile of unburnt debris. Reported to Newcastle Borough Council, BTP and the Police. Staff member from the car dealership was photographed starting the fire. Claire has sourced a CCTV system that could be installed on the footbridge with NR permission.

Longton

- Installation of 3 new hayrack baskets to be completed by end October.

Blythe Bridge

- Progress made on clearing NR land by the car park now covered. Community Action Day planned for 25 March (to include EMR Comms Team).

Tutbury and Hatton

- The leaning platforms and fences are both in need of repair. The fencing on the Derby platform has been propped up as an interim measure. Alexa and Rob in discussion
- Claire has requested that the areas behind the platforms are fenced off at trackside ends in order to allow volunteers to safely litter pick.

- Adopters are keen to start work on the “new” area of land by the signal box. Alexa has requested from Rob that the electrical box be fenced off and that a padlocked gate be installed to allow access by volunteers.

Uttoxeter

- Uttoxeter U3A Urban Sketchers’ art work has been installed in the platform shelters. Article appeared in the Uttoxeter Times and Echo.
- A CRN small grant has been awarded to the Uttoxeter Adopters for the installation of a tiered house leek planter on the platform by the race course.
- Adopters have built an innovative rainwater harvesting system on top of the compost bins in the Heritage Garden which diverts water into a water butt alongside.
- Mural on the car park platform is in need of repair due to water damage. Claire talking to Richard Bagguley re. installation of coping stones to prevent further damage.

Peartree

- Dave Savage from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has moved role. New contact is Lisa Witham.
- Benches need replacing – Claire to measure up, then purchase. Kevin to install?
- Tree maintenance by NR has been requested due to concerns about branches falling onto public areas and ivy growing up trees. Not done yet.

Penkrige

- Chase Aqua Rural Enterprise (CARE) mural ready. Awaiting permissions from WMT.
- Four volunteers from Penkrige Gardening Club have received LNR Safety Briefings
- Large new planter has been installed in the car park by Penkrige Gardening Club. They will maintain this, plus some new shrubs planted on the other side of the car park.
- Phoenix Art Group art work now in poster cases in platform waiting shelters.

Stone

- Planting ideas being progressed. Bid for planters underneath the information boards on Platform 2 submitted to LNR. Awaiting permission from Stone Town Council before submitting a bid for the fixed baskets on the railings on Platform 2.
- Partners have supported the planting arrangements and work of the volunteers at Stone Station with Councillor Hood securing an additional planter for the front of the Station Building and Streetscene helpfully sweeping Station Approach each month.
- Meeting arranged with Network Rail to look at the possibility of wild flowering a section of land on Station Approach with water harvesting from one of their buildings.
- In discussions with The Bee Friendly Trust re Platform 1 planting scheme on. Will be submitting a bid to Community Rail Network for matched funding.
- Step free access to Platform 1: In preparation for possible Access for All funding application for CP7 (2024 – 29) we met with Vicky and Simon Clifford from NR to discuss options. To gain access from the adjacent industrial estate might be a quick win (but would not qualify for A4A scheme). Lifts desirable option @ approx. £3.5m.

Stoke-on-Trent

- Following a meeting with Laura Harper and Ruth Shaw we discussed a range of station enhancement projects. Initially we will be submitting a funding application for four new planters on Platform 2.
- Gravel garden on Platform 1: Awaiting timescale for the installation of a permanent new

fence. Proposal for the gravel garden is being drafted to be submitted for consideration by Avanti and Network Rail to look at the feasibility of digging in the area.

- Contact has been made with a local park gardening volunteer group to see if they are interested in volunteering at the station.
- There is a new Community Champion at the station, Anthony Stanley.

Income and Expenditure summary

NSCRP 2020 - 2021 Income and Expenditure Summary			
as at 30 September 2020			
INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Brought forward from 2019-20	39,000	CRPO and Active Travel Officer salaries (April 2020 - 31 March 2021)	48,800
Income from tocs (April 2020 to March 2021)	49,122	Plants, compost and gardening supplies	167
Income from local authorities (April 2020 - March 2021)	1,000	Design, printing, distribution costs	610
Grant from West Midlands Trains for Rails to Trails Engagement project	1,000	Travel, parking, subsistence	93
		Donation to The Lyme Trust Foodbank	500
		Other	317
Total income	90,122	Total expenditure	50,487
		Total Income minus Total Expenditure	- 39,635
		Reserve requirement	46,200

Following a discussion about how large the reserve fund should be, PW stated that ideally it would be 12 months' salary costs, certainly no less than 9 months.

DA: Rails to Trails design costs could be funded by an EMR grant and she could fast track to DfT.

CS pointed out that a further £9,500 is expected in income from Cheshire East, Staffs CC and SoTCC.

	<p>PW: further XC funding will be announced soon.</p> <p>PW: The annual budget sheet would be useful and CS agreed to share this during the next meeting.</p>	
11.	<p>Review of the Terms of reference and Volunteers Policy</p> <p>Both policies were considered and after minor updating amendments were noted, both were approved, the Volunteers Policy with an additional note about Covid precautions.</p>	
12.	<p>Any Other Business -</p>	
13.	<p>Dates & Times of Next Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Thursday 21st January 2021 ➤ Thursday April 15th ➤ Thursday July 15th ➤ Thursday October 14th 	

MFW/CS
20/10/20