



West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street with a local poetry group and station adopters at Stechford station

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Railway station volunteers praised by West Midlands Mayor

Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, has been praising the work of railway station volunteers across the region.

He recently met with a group of local station adopters at Stechford, to learn about their work and encourage more groups to get involved in their local area.

Volunteers at Stechford, like many groups across the region, make a real

difference to the station, by undertaking activities such as giving the buildings a lick of paint, installing art works, landscaping the grounds and bringing community presence onto station platforms.

Over the past year, there have been over 20 new adopters join the West Midlands Railway scheme, bringing the current total to over 100 across the region. The train operator would like to see some form of community activity every one of their 114 stations, and is encouraging anyone with ideas for their local station to come forward.

The Mayor said: "I was delighted to be able to thank in person the volunteers who have transformed Stechford Railway Station. I am sure their excellent efforts are also appreciated by the many rail passengers who use the station daily.

"A number of stations, from Coseley to Olton, have been improved by groups. There are many ways in which volunteers can help, from creating brilliant artwork to organising local pop ups and hosting coffee mornings."

Fay Easton, head of community and stakeholder at West Midlands Railway, said: "As well as benefitting commuters and passengers, station adoption schemes also help the volunteers themselves. Joining such a group can help locals meet new people, tackling loneliness and bringing a community together."

Community engagement is being backed by the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE), which is responsible for leading the transformation of rail in the region.

Cllr Roger Lawrence, WMRE chair and leader of the City of Wolverhampton Council, said: "We are working with West Midlands Railway to involve local communities in activities at our railway stations. Not only does this benefit the community and rail travellers, but the volunteers gain lots out of it too. We are also creating opportunities for community participation in planning, designing and delivering the new stations in our West Midlands Rail Programme"

The call comes as the train operator and West Midlands Rail Executive have recently launched their Cross City Heroes campaign, to recognise community

achievements along the region's busiest commuter route through Birmingham.

Commuters at Stechford also got a surprise when they were serenaded by a Black Country Poet during the Mayoral visit.

The renowned Black Country Poets known as 'Poets, Prattlers and Pandemonialists' composed 'Pride of Place' to celebrate the work of volunteers like the Stechford Station group.

The poem highlights how the work of station adoption groups can impact on passengers by 'putting a spring in your step and pep in your paces'.

For more information about station adoption and community activities at railway stations across the West Midlands, visit www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk/adopt-station

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For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

About Poets, Prattlers and Pandemonialists

Poets, Prattlers and Pandemonialists are a three piece poetry group, based in the Black Country, who regularly perform at venues across the West Midlands. The group was commissioned to write the 'Pride of Place' poem to celebrate the work of station volunteers across the region. More information on the group can be found at pandemonialists.co.uk

About Cross City Heroes

West Midlands Railway and West Midlands Rail Executive are looking for deserving community groups near to stations along the Cross City Line. The route runs from Bromsgrove / Redditch in the south, through Birmingham New Street to Lichfield Trent Valley at its north end.

The campaign is part of celebrations to mark the 40 year anniversary of the line, which is currently the most used commuter route outside London. These Cross City Heroes could be local charities, young people's clubs, sports teams or other community groups who make a difference to people's lives in the area. The campaign can be followed on social media at #crosscityheroes.

For more information and to make a nomination go to westmidlandsrailway.co.uk/crosscityheroes

About West Midlands Trains

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit www.abellio.com

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