



Partners at the launch of the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership

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Community Rail Partnership launched for Worcestershire

Rail users in Worcestershire are being encouraged to get involved with their local railway through a new Community Rail Partnership (CRP) for the county.

The new partnership will encourage communities, businesses and tourist attractions to work with the rail industry and local councils to promote rail services across Worcestershire.

Community rail is a great way of inspiring residents of all ages and walks of life to get involved in making their local railway station a great and attractive place to be.

This can include activities such as gardening projects, art displays and using station buildings for a range of events.

Participation can help to combat issues such as loneliness, by promoting community cohesion and giving local communities a sense of pride and ownership in their local station.

The social and economic benefits to communities from the use of rail services are wide-ranging with improvements in the customer offer and appeal of stations, creating welcoming spaces that encourage rail travel and attract additional footfall, often reducing crime and anti-social behavior.

The new Worcestershire CRP includes the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE), West Midlands Railway, Worcestershire County Council, CrossCountry Trains, Great Western Railway and the Cotswold Line Promotion Group.

It covers a diverse and unique mix of eighteen stations including Great Malvern, Worcester Stations, Droitwich Spa, Kidderminster Hagley and Bromsgrove and Pershore, Evesham and Honeybourne on the North Cotswold Line. A brand new station, Worcestershire Parkway, is also soon to be welcomed into the rail family.

West Midlands Railway is already promoting community rail on these lines through its station adoption scheme, which gives local groups support for activities at their local stations. A number of stations within Worcestershire are already adopted, with active projects proving very successful.

A community rail officer will soon be appointed to focus a work programme solely on the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership.

Fay Easton, head of stakeholder and community for West Midlands Railway, said: "I am thrilled the Worcestershire CRP venture is now formally launched and I am certain its members will make a real impact to railway communities across the county.

"Through the work of CRPs we are focused on bringing community rail activities to many of our local stations, urban and rural, to help enhance platforms, promote economic development and tackle social issues such as loneliness.

"Our army of committed station adopters run many successful projects across our 114 stations in the West Midlands and I am excited that Worcestershire CRP will support and develop the fantastic schemes already happening on our network."

Emma Morris, community manager for Great Western Railway, said:

"Throughout the GWR network, community rail partnerships play a leading role, adding value to projects designed to improve services, and make stations safer, more welcoming and greener spaces.

"We welcome the commitment to this new partnership, and efforts to further improve transport links in support of the county's economy."

Sally Gillespie, head of corporate affairs for CrossCountry, said: "We are delighted to support the new Worcestershire CRP.

"We already work closely with CRPs across Britain, and with the historic city of Worcester joining the CrossCountry network very soon with the opening of the new Parkway station we look forward to helping them bring this community and the railway closer together".

Jools Townsend, chief executive of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, said: "Community rail partnerships are the backbone of the community rail movement, bringing together local groups and partners along railway lines to work with industry, and delivering a range of community engagement and promotional activities.

"Our 67 CRP members promote understanding of the importance of local railways, in terms of improving mobility and sustainable travel, community cohesion and well-being, and social and economic development.

"We are pleased to see the formation and launch of this new community rail partnership and look forward to working with the partnership and its members across Worcestershire".

Malcolm Holmes, executive director of WMRE, said: "WMRE is delighted to be supporting the Worcestershire CRP. The railways are all about people and we strongly believe that the needs of the community should shape what the railway offers.

"Community Rail Partnerships are an excellent way of integrating these community needs into the local rail network. Worcestershire is a great county to live, work and visit and the railway plays a hugely important role in accessing the towns and city for employment, education, leisure and tourism, including links through Kidderminster to the Severn Valley Railway and from Evesham to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway at Broadway and as an access point onto the wider UK rail network."

For more information on the Worcestershire CRP, email William Whiting, chair of the CRP at williamwvt@hotmail.co.uk or Andrew Leo at andrew.leo@wmre.org.uk.

About West Midlands Trains

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

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- **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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