North Notts & Lincs Community Rail Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Prepared by Rick Craig and Helen Tamblyn-Saville
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 enhance stations through artwork and other station enhancements. 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 August 2025, and further information about our work can be found at www.nnlcrp.com.

Community Rail
Accredited Partnership
2025-26

NNLCRP
INTEGRATING TRANSPORT

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. NNLCRP was delighted to welcome Rachel Reeves to the board in December 2025, bringing with her a wealth of public sector and accounting experience.

Board of Directors

David Harby (Chair)

Jim Anderson (Bassetlaw Area Chair)

Alan Gouldthorpe

Lynne Harris

David Pidwell

Rachel Reeves

Officers

Rick Craig (full time)

Helen Tamblyn-Saville (part time)

From 1st September 2025, the officer team formally introduced a revised structure, allocating each Train Operating Company (TOC) a lead officer to act as a primary point of contact. The change was implemented to improve efficiency in managing meetings and partnership activity, simplify communication for TOCs, and better reflect the geographical locations and working patterns of the CRP officers. Officers continue to hold regular internal catch-ups to ensure continuity of work during periods of leave and to maintain collaborative delivery of larger cross-network projects.

Under the revised arrangements, Rick Craig acts as lead officer for EMR and TPE services and also supports Northern stations in Lincolnshire, while Helen Tamblyn-Saville acts as lead officer for LNER and Hull Trains services and also supports Northern stations in Bassetlaw.

2025 Projects

Throughout the year, NNCLRP worked on a series of projects and initiatives, aligning with the pillars of Community Rail. Highlights from the year include the following projects:

Aspirational Assemblies

Throughout 2025, NNCLRP has been working with Lincolnshire County Council to deliver Aspirational Assemblies to primary schools across Gainsborough and North Lincolnshire. These sessions focused on:

- Promotion of Community Rail
- Try the Train
- Railway safety
- Careers in rail

Projects have also been completed with graduate students from Lincoln University. Moving forward, our focus will be on local secondary schools and colleges to continue our work in promoting travel by rail, and careers in fail. These will include:

- TGA
- QEHS
- North Notts College

Outcome: Through these assemblies, approximately 3000 children throughout Lincolnshire have been reached, hearing about opportunities to work in the rail industry, as well as the benefits of travelling by rail.

Cleethorpes X90 Bus Service

Building on the success of 2023 and 2024, the summer Saturday X90 Bus Service from Gainsborough to Cleethorpes returned for 2025, 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. Return travel was offered at £8 for adults, or £5 for children. Advertising was targeted in 2025, with adverts placed exclusively in Gainsborough Life, followed by a repeat advert the next month.

This service ran for seven weeks.

Outcome: The return of the X90 Bus Service from Gainsborough to Cleethorpes via Market Rasen in 2025 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.



Example of X90 advert

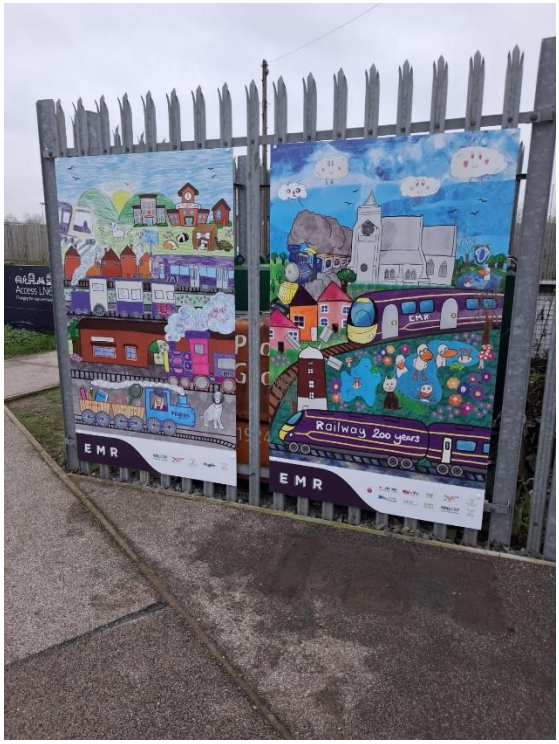
Hykeham Station Artwork

The Hykeham community artwork project brought together students from The Pilgrim School and members of North Hykeham Youth Club to co-create vibrant artwork for display at Hykeham Train Station. Working alongside professional artists, NNLCRP representatives, and EMR, young people were supported to design and produce pieces that reflect local heritage, nature, travel, and pride in their town. The project was inclusive, focusing on accessibility, creativity, and confidence-building, ensuring that every participant could contribute.

The completed artworks have been installed at the station, helping to create a more welcoming and visually engaging environment for passengers. The public display of the work showcases the creativity of the young people, and strengthens connections between local organisations, reinforcing the station as a shared community space.

Outcome: The project has enhanced the station environment while giving young people a strong sense of ownership and pride in a public place. By amplifying young voices and

celebrating local identity, the artwork supports the Community Rail pillars of community engagement, social value, and inclusion, leaving a lasting legacy for residents, visitors, and rail users.

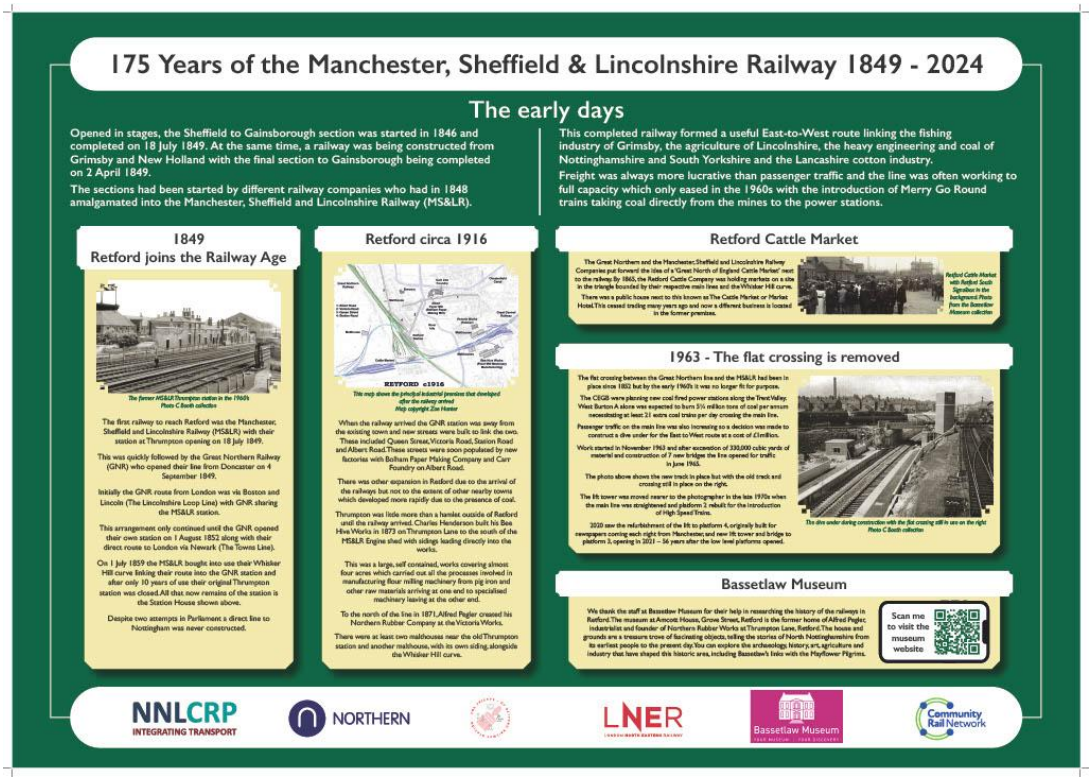


North Hykeham Station Artwork

MSLR175

The MSLR175 project began in 2024, and was a history project celebrating 175 years of the opening of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway. Research was undertaken to produce history boards to be installed at stations between Sheffield and Gainsborough. This project was completed in 2025 with the installation of information boards at Retford, Kiveton Park, Kiveton Bridge, Woodhouse and Darnall stations. These boards highlighted the transformation of the local areas following the opening of the railway. Retford Station was the last to have the history boards installed; these were installed in the waiting rooms on the lower station platforms.

Outcome: The MSLR175 project has strengthened awareness of the railway's historic role in shaping communities along the line, helping passengers and visitors better understand how local areas developed following the arrival of rail services. The installation of heritage boards provides a lasting public resource of the history of the areas.



MSLR175 board produced for Retford Station

Retford Scouts: "Good Passenger"

Working with 7th Retford Scouts, this project engaged children aged 10-13 in the world of rail travel, and combined safety education with a train trip. It also encouraged them to think about good behaviour when using the railway, and being mindful of other passengers. Finally, the Scouts took what they had learned and created postcards to educate others This project took three parts: a session on railway safety, a train trip to Lincoln, and production of postcards.

The project began with a tailored rail safety session for the Retford Scouts, a group of about 20 Scouts aged 10-13. They were introduced to the essentials of safe and responsible behaviour around the railway. The safety content was interactive, using real examples and discussions.

Following the safety session, the Scouts put their learning into practice on a train journey from Retford to Lincoln. For many of them, this was a new experience, and the trip helped

to build familiarity with finding platforms and navigating stations. The outing also created opportunities for the Scouts to observe what makes journeys enjoyable or challenging for different passengers.

Finally, the Scouts took what they had learned and produced artwork and tips highlighting how to be a “good passenger” and safety reminders. The messages focused on basic manners such as keeping bags off seats and using headphones, as well as the importance of telling someone if something doesn’t look right. The art and tips were then turned into postcards to be distributed at events, stations, and schools. This project also formed part of the Platforms for Change Scouts badge.

NNLCRP would like to thank Northern for enabling the group to travel by train.

Outcome: The project exceeded its aims by giving Retford Scouts both the knowledge and confidence to use the rail network safely and the opportunity to become ambassadors for positive passenger behaviour. After the safety session and train trip, the Scouts created postcards with artwork and tips for safe and considerate travel.

The impact was multi-layered. For the Scouts, it developed skills, independence, and confidence. For passengers, the postcards offered creative reminders about safety and respect on the railway. For rail partners, the project demonstrates the value of involving young people as co-creators of passenger-facing materials.

Success was measured through positive feedback from Scouts, leaders, parents, and community members. The Scouts felt more confident and were proud to see their work shared publicly, while parents reported that it encouraged conversations at home about safety and respect.

This project has been shortlisted in the Community Rail Awards 2026, under the category “Involving Young People.”

Retford Station Artwork: “Beautiful Bassetlaw”

A legacy project, NNLCRP worked with local artist, Jasmine Bowers, to create artworks titled “Beautiful Bassetlaw” to be installed at stations across the network. Jasmine created a mural, highlighting local attractions and places of interest in Retford, to be installed in the lower platform waiting rooms at Retford Station. An identical mural was installed in each of the lower platform waiting rooms in December 2025.

Outcome: The “Beautiful Bassetlaw” mural at Retford Station has enhanced the station environment by celebrating local identity and showcasing attractions within the area. The

artwork creates a more welcoming and engaging space for passengers, adding character to an otherwise dull waiting area, while promoting pride of place and encouraging exploration of the local area by rail. The mural reinforces Retford Station's role as a gateway to the community and supports the Community Rail pillars of social value, community engagement, and sustainable travel.



"Beautiful Bassetlaw" artwork installed at Retford Station

Shireoaks Mural

North Notts & Lincs Community Rail Partnership (NNLCRP) partnered with ArtWorks South Yorkshire, a creative arts organisation supporting adults with learning disabilities, to create a mural at Shireoaks station.

For participants, many of whom face barriers to inclusion, the project offered a platform to showcase their creativity. For passengers, the mural aimed to create a colourful and welcoming space that reflected both the history of Shireoaks and the natural environment (the canal), reinforcing how community rail can connect railways with communities.

Outcome: ArtWorks delivered workshops, where participants explored themes of rail, Shireoaks' history, and the surrounding nature. Sketches and paintings were developed which were combined into the final design.

The finished mural was installed inside the waiting shelter on platform one, transforming it into a vibrant feature. It tells a story by celebrating Shireoaks past and highlighting flowers to spot along the canal towpath; a popular walking route in the area. Volunteers from Friends of Shireoaks came together prior to the installation of the artwork to paint the waiting shelter.

Delivery drew on NNLCRP's support, ArtWorks' creative leadership, and support from station partners. NNLCRP coordinated liaison with Northern, while ArtWorks provided expertise and support to enable participants to contribute. The mural was installed in March 2025, and the project has been shortlisted in the Community Rail Awards 2026, under the category "Empowering Diverse Groups".



Artists from ArtWorks with their mural at Shireoaks Station

White Ribbon Day

NNLCRP became a supporter organisation of White Ribbon Day in November 2025. As part of our awareness campaign to educate and challenge poor behaviour by men towards women, we worked with EMR and neighbouring CRPs on a special White Ribbon event. Led by EMR, Fun Choir were invited to pop-up at Sheffield, Nottingham, and Lincoln stations to sing songs of female empowerment, and raise awareness of the campaign. During the performances, Community Rail Officers, who are registered White Ribbon Ambassadors/Champions, moved around the crowd, engaging people in conversation and informing them about the campaign. Information cards and anti-spiking plugs for drinks

were also distributed. NNLCRP also created some information leaflets, designed to educate people about harassment, which have been distributed at train stations.

Outcome: Supporting White Ribbon Day strengthened NNLCRP's commitment to promoting safer, more inclusive public spaces across the rail network. The partnership event with EMR and neighbouring CRPs raised awareness of the White Ribbon Campaign, encouraging positive conversations with passengers.

Most importantly, conversations were also held with men, helping to create respectful dialogue around how behaviours sometimes dismissed as "banter" can have a harmful impact. The initiative helped to reinforce the role of Community Rail in supporting community wellbeing while fostering safer and more respectful environments for all rail users.

World Book Day

Working with EMR, NNLCRP celebrated World Book Day by visiting Benjamin Adlard Primary School in Gainsborough, for a train-themed storytime, reading EMR's book, *An Adventure Through Railway Past*, written to celebrate Railway 200. CRP officers read the book to children in Year 1, and then answered questions about trains and train travel.

Outcome: The World Book Day visit helped to introduce young children to rail travel and railway heritage in an engaging and accessible way, while promoting the benefits of shared storytime. Storytelling and discussion allowed pupils to ask questions.

Providing 45 children with their own copy of the book to keep also supported reading for pleasure beyond the classroom, while promoting the benefits and joy of traveling by train.



Storytelling at Benjamin Adlard School

Worksop Station Book Swap

Following the success of the book swap installation at Retford, NNLCRP has been keen to introduce further book swap points along the network. NNLCRP worked with Friends of Worksop Station to install a bookcase in the ticket office. Passengers and members of the local community are encouraged to donate their old books by simply leaving them on the bookcase, for other people to take or borrow.

Outcome: The Worksop Station Book Swap has enhanced the passenger experience and strengthened the station's role as a welcoming community space. By encouraging the reuse of books, the initiative supports and promotes environmentally sustainable behaviour. The book swap fosters a sense of shared ownership among passengers and the local community, which reinforces Worksop Station as a community asset as well as a transport hub.

Conference Engagement and Learning

Officers attended various Community Rail conferences organised by TOCs in Autumn, as well as the Community Rail Conference, splitting attendance to ensure NNLCRP was represented at all events. These events provided valuable networking opportunities, allowing the officers to connect with neighbouring CRPs.

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, TOCs, other CRPs, support organisations and the Community Rail Network, whilst also spreading the word about what Community Rail is all about. To that end, throughout the year we have attended various events in addition to the above conferences and these have included:

- Stakeholder meetings
- Education and Training Events
- Model Railway Exhibitions
- Community and Volunteer Days
- Visits to stations
- Attendance at the Community Rail Education Network meetings

Stakeholder Engagement

Strong stakeholder engagement is essential to ensuring community rail activity reflects local needs, builds effective partnerships, and delivers meaningful benefits for passengers and communities. Regular dialogue helps coordinate projects, share knowledge, and strengthen collaboration between rail partners, local authorities, and community organisations. To support this, Bassetlaw Area meetings are held three times a year, alongside two wider stakeholder meetings each year, providing consistent opportunities to review progress, scrutinise work, ask questions of TOCs, identify priorities, and develop joint initiatives across the network. Meetings are attended by TOCs, district and county council representatives, councillors, Community Rail Network, and representatives from other interested partners and bodies.

Community Rail Officers and Board Members also regularly engage with wider community events throughout the year, promoting the work of the CRP and establishing partnerships, including sitting on the Retford Town Centre Board. Over the past year, representatives from NNLCRP have also attended events and meetings organised by Robin Hood Line CRP,

Gainsborough Town Council, LCVYS, Notts Health Inequalities Forum, One East Midlands, and Connexions.

CRP Officers and Board Members also attended events organised by TOCs throughout the year, taking advantage of the opportunity to network, and put forward questions.

2025 Challenges

Plans for 2025 included establishing a Lincolnshire Area Group, similar to the Bassetlaw Area Group, with the intention of meeting three times a year to encourage discussion, scrutiny, and collaborative partnerships. However, this has not yet come to fruition. Despite this group not yet being formed, officers have established new connections throughout Lincolnshire, and a Lincolnshire Area Group will be a key priority for 2026.

NNLCRP has been keen to engage with the “Try the Train” scheme offered in partnership with Northern and Community Rail Education Network. However, despite promising leads, and even the beginning of programme delivery in some cases, it has proven challenging to find community groups willing to commit to the full scheme, despite it being fully funded. The scheme is aimed at ages 14+, and aims to build rail confidence to promote travel by rail, and involves three classroom sessions to include rail safety, and two train trips. Sessions are interactive and fully tailored to each group, depending on their needs. A leaflet to promote the scheme has now been produced and officers will continue to reach out to community groups in 2026.

There have also been some administrative challenges to overcome throughout 2025, including, but not limited to that of website maintenance, which the CRP recognises is still not yet fit for purpose, and does not regularly update people of the important work carried out. A website overhaul is planned for 2026, designed to be updated on a more regular basis.

Finally, it should be noted that like other CRPs, we are still uncertain as to exactly what the future holds for Community Rail under Great British Railways, however we look forward to being a key part of a cohesive railway, continuing to deliver social value to benefit local communities.

Moving Forward

A comprehensive forward plan has been put together for 2026, and officers recognise that more outreach work needs to be done to benefit different demographics; the last couple of

years have seen a heavy focus on working with young people. Efforts will be made in 2026 to reach out to different groups and organisations, to establish partnerships and ways of working together to benefit communities. Early conversations have been held with Men in Sheds, and will be working with them to progress projects such as a Bug Hut at Worksop Station, and a Book Swap at Shireoaks.

In 2026, NNLCRP will be working closely with SYMCA to progress the adoption of Doncaster Station. Initial talks with EPIC Doncaster have been positive, and the aim is for the station to be adopted by a group of youth adopters, working under EPIC.

NNLCRP also recognises that its current branding no longer fully reflects the organisation's role or clearly communicates what a Community Rail Partnership does. To address this, local graphic designer Charlie Harris has been commissioned to develop a refreshed brand identity, with a new logo due to launch in March 2026, helping to present a clearer, more professional public profile.

Alongside these developments, work will continue to strengthen engagement with local stakeholders and community partners to ensure projects remain locally relevant and collaborative. NNLCRP will also review and update its website to improve communications, making information about projects, events and opportunities to get involved more accessible to communities and partners across the network.

Funding and Finances

Financial summary for the calendar year 2025:

Income		
Core funding		47831
Project specific funding:		
From rail industry	3000	
From elsewhere	1000	
		4000
Other income		1151
Total income		**52982**
Expenditure		
Staff costs		40166
Project costs		9975
Publicity, website and promotional material		1226
Administration (Office expenses, insurance, accountancy fees etc)		2247
Volunteer expenses		16
Total expenditure		**53630**

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.