

# Sussex Community Rail Partnership



## Annual Review 2019

### Working in partnership

Connecting communities with  
places and opportunities



# Chairman's introduction

## Welcome to our Review of 2019



2019 has seen significant community activity by SCRP across the South East. Following on from the new DfT Community Rail Strategy we were in the first batch of CRPs to achieve "Accredited" status. Not only does this acknowledge our strong performance and excellent management and operational record but also opens a grant funding source, which will be very valuable to support our community-based projects.

At the same time the management company converted to Community Interest Company (CIC) status, so reinforcing the not for profit community based ethic of our work. Our company Chairman, Tim Barkley, reports on this on page 20.

We have extended our line groups. A new one, the Sussex Coast, extends

from Brighton to Littlehampton and the North Downs Line extended its coverage on to Reading. Across our lines a very full programme of activities has continued apace and are reported in our regular newsletter and on the website, so I will just touch on some of the highlights.

On the Seaford Line (page 6), greatly helped by station partners, Burleys at Newhaven cleared and landscaped the surrounds to the station. Try a Train events have been well received. There has been the start of a major station enhancement scheme at the listed Bishopstone station strongly supported by Friends of Bishopstone Station.

On the North Downs Line (page 12) work has continued in association with Network Rail and GWR to achieve the promised third train per hour. Dorking Deepdene has been spruced up and the station partners have introduced a "pickable patch" planter for people to take home a few herbs. Hot cross buns at Easter and mince pies at Christmas have sent many travellers happily on their way. Much improved signage and maps have linked stations with the North Downs Way. On the Uckfield/East Grinstead Line (page 18) a very prominent visual map/diagram on the platform at Oxted highlights the path of the North Downs Way right across our area.



As regards the Tonbridge to Reigate Line (page 16), a visit was arranged for members of the County Care charity to Gatwick, which was very enjoyable. They were taken behind the scenes and shown how this major airport operates, including an exciting demonstration by the airport police cars. At Redhill the importance of bus operators in making door to door journeys easier was underlined by a bus surgery.

On the new Sussex Coast Line (page 8) the major partner, Shoreham Port, hosted the launch of this line and later in the summer provided tours by boat to show how the port operated.

Down the Arun Valley Line (page 10) an automated model rail display has been erected in the waiting room at Ford on Platform 1; while at Amberley, in association with partners Aldingbourne Trust, the circular seat has been refurbished, providing a very welcome spot to rest.

On the Marshlink Line (page 4) a display by Rye Museum in the station was extended to involve the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. A magical mystery tour, visiting the smaller stations between Rye and Hastings, took place with

Amber Rudd (former MP) lending her strong support. Across our area we have continued the very successful Go Learn, Try a Train and Active Access programmes (page 8) introducing young people to train travel, which from small beginnings some years ago has now grown to include well over 8,000 students EACH year.

Making all this happen is down to the strong support of our partners who are shown on page 27 of this report. Our volunteer line chairs, some who also act as company directors, are a crucial part of the success of SCRP and in this report we are highlighting their very valuable input. Finally, it is due to our strong and dedicated team of line and support officers that the line groups, station partners and our education work produce such a positive array of community activity across our area. This year our manager Kirsten Firth moved on to exciting opportunities to further her sustainable and environmental credentials and we welcomed Fiona Morton who has settled in very rapidly. They are the fundamental reason why SCRP is both highly successful and nationally so well respected. I am very grateful for all the hard work that they collectively contributed.

*Patrick Warner, Chairman of the Stakeholder SCRP Strategic Advisory Board*





## Working with local schools and community groups

We have a wide range of volunteers and are engaging with school children, students, and many local community groups to improve the appearance of stations and make travelling by train more enjoyable. This is a true community partnership.

During the year the former MP for the area, Amber Rudd, at the time a cabinet member, gave us great support at our line meetings, at the Hastings rail summits and at our events. She congratulated students from Baird Academy School in Ore for their station artwork and joined with volunteers at Winchelsea station in June. We have made use of the space at Rye station for

an exhibition of local rail history and worked on developing Appledore station and links with the Rye Harbour nature reserve and Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Our major partners, Hastings Borough Council and 1066 Country Marketing, both see the economic and sustainability benefits of promoting train travel. Roads are congested, the environment is fragile, and an increase in train travel can have a real positive impact on the local economy and the community.

*Kevin Boorman*



# Seaford to Brighton Line



## A touch of colour

With its grade 2 listed status the work to revive Bishopstone station by the community and the line group is a major project. The Bishopstone History Day event in August, with over 150 people enjoying historical tours and displays created by the Friends of Bishopstone, was just a foretaste of the potential that this project holds. At the start of the line the Seaford Martello Rotary Club has been creating platform planters to enhance the station while at Falmer the unveiling of the Bee Friendly Trust mural on the Amex Stadium footbridge has brought a touch of colour that will be seen by thousands on their way to or from matches or the universities.

The other station partnerships along the line have been active with the support of Catherine, our line officer. The exceptional garden work, especially at London Road and Lewes, continues to make the stations welcoming and relaxing.

By supporting community groups we have been able to increase community spirit and decrease loneliness and anti-social behaviour. Our work to encourage travellers to use our stations to visit the sea and countryside, as well as the local towns, has helped promote local attractions and businesses.

*Jon Freeman*



# Sussex Coast Line



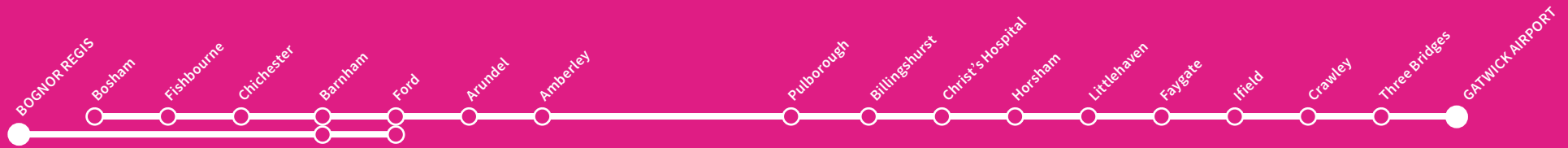
## Try a train days

Although the line group is still “young”, it is already proving to be an asset to the community along the line. This year the Shoreham art work has been a particular success. Working with multiple partners and ending with an artwork show at the station, I also joined in the fun part of painting some art and attending the launch. The other major success has been the Try a Train days. I only know too well from my bus work what these days take to organise and also the benefits it brings to so many. It is particularly gratifying to see us fulfilling our diversity and inclusion objectives by holding these events.

One small but important challenge has been trying to secure water facilities are available for the volunteer gardeners at our many partner stations. When this can be done the end results have been extraordinary. Arriving at a beautiful, accessible and community based station can only help to make the journey more appealing; encourage our communities to use the railway for accessing work, education, training, leisure, the sea and countryside thereby opening up so many more doors. This could not be achieved without the dedicated work by the line officers, Rowena and Catherine, and the support of Southern staff along the line.

Victoria Garcia





## Planning for the future

We have again been well-supported by our line group partners. This has been illustrated by the wide range of venues that have hosted our meetings, including Chichester’s Novium Museum, the Crawley Museum and the renovated Barnham Signal Box, with Routemaster bus transport provided by Brighton & Hove Buses. Another of our partners, the Aldingbourne Trust, has revived the circular seat at Amberley, continuing its extensive work across the area, which is so valuable to helping us and others achieve our inclusion objectives.

In the coming year the preparation of the new line guide will be a valuable exercise and one which requires careful engagement and planning to determine what to include and at what level of detail. We will continue to add new

station partners and provide tangible evidence of the benefits through station enhancements. A number of stations along the line already enjoy these, thanks to the hard work of Rowena, our line officer and our local volunteers; the model railway display at Ford is a good example.

The line group brings together a wide range of organisations and partners with a shared interest in promoting the enhancement and increased use of the railway. Our agenda complements those aims, becoming ever more prominent at an international level – encouraging sustainable transport, a healthy life style, protecting the environment and leaving the car at home.

*Cllr Bob Lanzer*



## Food for thought

Food has figured high on our activities. The community at Farnborough has provided seasonal fare, hot cross buns at Easter and mince pies at Christmas, much to the delight of travellers at that station. Meanwhile at Dorking Deepdene the passengers on their way home can pick some herbs from the “pickable patch” planters to enhance their evening meal. This somewhat exposed station has had a welcome facelift and tidy up, enhanced by artwork by local students.

The line parallels the North Downs Way and excellent sign posting from stations encourages walkers to use the train to access the footpaths. Similar signage for the Blackwater Valley rail and trail route has been set up with partners there. As on other lines we are involving local schools in train travel training to ensure better understanding of travel and safety issues.

To work on our diversity and inclusion objectives the Patchwork Gardening Project at Dorking Deepdene has the local community involved with more planters.

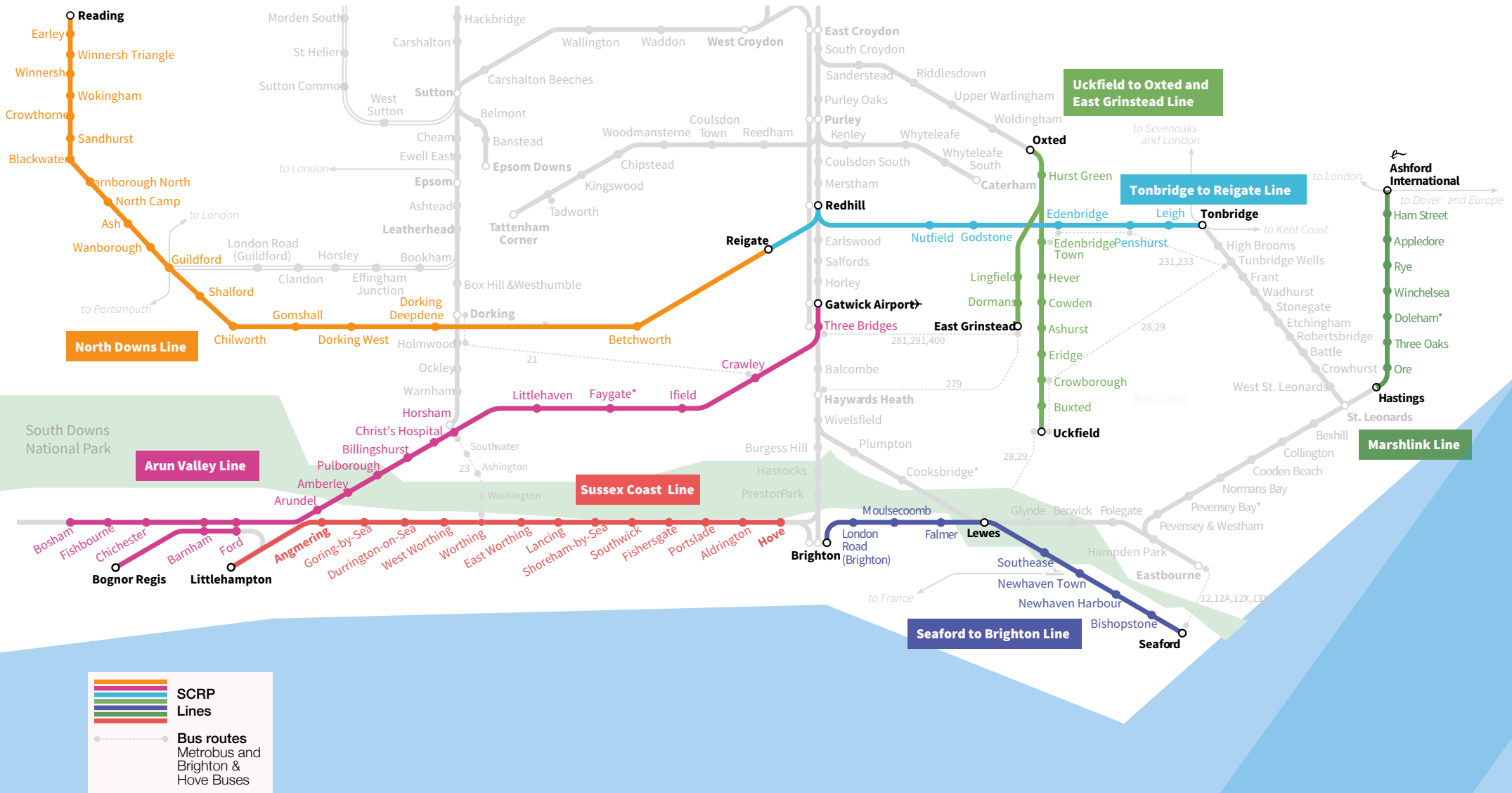
One serious issue remains, and that is the provision of a third train per hour. The line group worked with partners to get the necessary research carried out to mitigate the presence of crossings, preventing Network Rail allowing an additional train, but difficulties remain. Hopefully these will be resolved in 2020 with the involvement of the Office of the Rail Regulator.

Also in 2020 we will be working closely with GWR to produce an outstanding Community Rail Conference in June and welcome CRPs from as far away as Cornwall onto our line.

*Cllr Mike Goodman*



# Sussex Community Rail Partnership Lines





# Tonbridge to Reigate Line



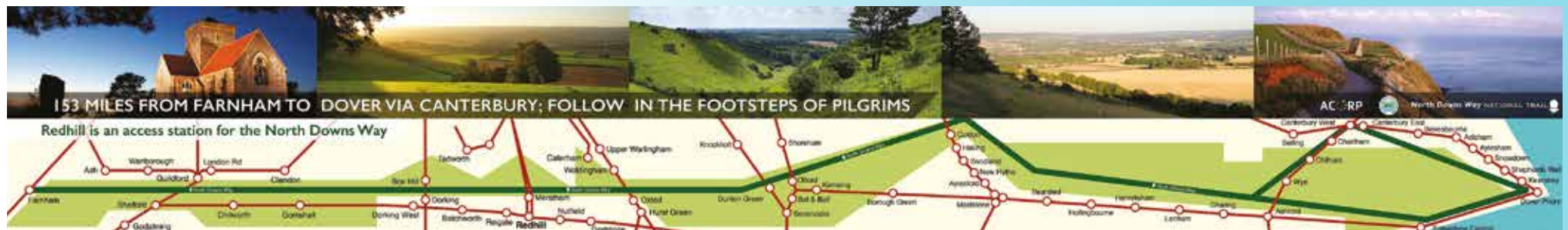
## For the health of the community

Linking with Southeastern and Kent CRP, a tourist information event was held at Tonbridge. This went very well and will be repeated. At Oxted station we have installed an excellent map of the North Downs Way and we have developed signage and events to link the line's stations with the North Downs Way, to encourage walkers to use the train to access this wonderful long distance path. This helps us to support our partners who have objectives touching on the general health of the community.

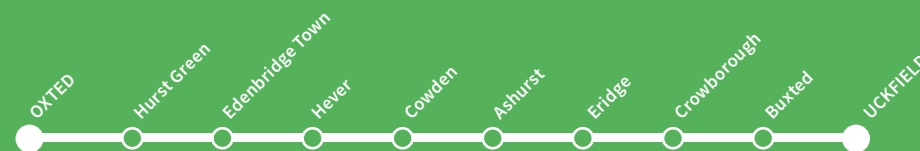
We have also held a bus surgery at Redhill with the support of local bus partners to encourage the use of public transport rather than cars in the area. We have been working with the Eden Valley Museum at Edenbridge to promote it as a rail linked tourist destination and installed new community artwork at Redhill.

Our line officer, Sharon Gray, has been considerably helped by the existing line partners in these endeavours and we are now working with them to update the line guide. We continue to seek new station partners to help develop community facilities at our stations.

*John Phillips*



# Uckfield & East Grinstead Line



## Accessible journeys

This year saw our Line Officer, Sharon, break new ground with a Bus Surgery held at East Grinstead station with support from Metrobus, Southdown Buses, the local Community Transport Group and Bus Users UK. This valuable initiative is important as it helps to make the journey from door to door more accessible if bus and rail companies can work together on timetable and ticket liaison. We have also been working with our environment partners to provide guidance about access to the countryside from stations.

In this respect the new permanent display promoting access to the North Downs Way at Oxted station is both informative and visually attractive.

These are examples of the Line Steering Group bringing together community groups, local councils, rail user groups and other organisations to support enhancements and provides opportunities for working closely with local station staff.

In 2020 we will be seeking new opportunities for more partnership work at and around the local stations as well as supporting corporate projects such as reaccreditation. Seeking additional station partners will be a priority, particularly for East Grinstead station.

*Tim Barkley*



## Community Interest Company

Late in 2018 the Department for Transport (DfT) published a new strategy for community rail. It is based on four pillars:

- Providing a Voice for the Community.
- Promoting Sustainable, Healthy and Accessible Travel, Bringing Communities together.
- Supporting Diversity and Inclusion.
- Supporting Social and Economic Development.

These now constitute the basis of our business plan. A key aspect of the new strategy is also to ensure that Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) are properly managed and to this end the DfT introduced a process of accreditation.

This is a tough examination of the management, finance and employment policies for the Partnership. We were one of the first to achieve the required standard and are therefore an Accredited CRP. During the year we have also updated our company format from a not for profit limited company to the more modern Community Interest Company. We continue to be managed by our Board of volunteer directors. Some of whom are also line chairs, featured in this annual report. The work of the Partnership is managed by Fiona Morton who joined us in the summer after Kirsten Firth moved to Brighton City Council to work on their environmental objectives. The team of line

officers is also supported by the education officer Maddy Mills and the finance officer Trevor Field.

Our income in 2018-19 came to a total of £181,926 and costs £180,032. The balance was carried forward to fund on-going projects in 2019-20. 84% of our income is derived from Train Operating Companies, reflecting our engagement with Great Western Railway as well as Govia Thameslink Railway this year. 6% came from Gatwick Airport and the balance from local authorities, businesses and other local organisations including Kent County Council and contracted projects from East Sussex County Council. 80% of our costs covered salaries and associated office, travel and line group costs with the balance covering communications and event costs, again reflecting our wider geographical area.

*Tim Barkley, Chairman, SCRPA CIC*



# Volunteers



## Crowborough station partner

The group was formed to try to rid the Jarvis Brook of litter and keep it looking a bit smarter. We started working on the area around the station, and got talking to Sharon who told us about the station partnership scheme. We now look after planting along the front of the car-park and the platform planters and litter removal. We do it to make the area we live in a more pleasant place to be. We are proud of the difference we make.

*David Collumbell, group leader, Brighter Crowborough*

## Marshlink line volunteers

The sort of projects the volunteers on the Marshlink line are involved with are, art exhibitions, planters, gardening and murals to name just a few. They are also Ambassadors for their community and feed back to the train operator any information they feel relevant to help with the smooth running of trains and stations. They have a desire to engage with both the public and the Community Rail Partnership. Some have been recognised for their efforts with certificates of achievement and appeared in the local press. Some are involved with the local schools/colleges. They are a very important part of the overall train and rail network.

*Kevin Barry, Line Officer, Marshlink*

# Volunteers



## Railfuture

Community rail has been likened to a linear community development project, as a necklace with stations as the beads. It's for people not content with just watching things happen, or waiting for things to happen, but who want to make things happen. Any and every contribution, no matter how great or apparently small, can add value, just as rail stations come in all shapes and sizes!

As Britain's leading independent campaign for a bigger and better railway, Railfuture has much in common with the Sussex CRP. We both value partnership with stakeholders, and the priceless contributions of our volunteer members be they individuals or affiliated rail user groups. We also know about the rewards for the persistence required for progress. Like cultivating flowers at a station, cultivating good working relationships takes an investment of time and patience to yield results!

*Roger Blake, Railfuture*

## Bognor volunteers

I believe that the adoption of Bognor railway station strengthens Southway Primary School's links with the community and also gives our children the opportunity of sharing their work and performances with a wider audience, giving them a sense of pride and achievement. We hope that our children's artwork is something that station users can enjoy while they are in the waiting room and that having children performing at the station provides enjoyment to the staff and passengers too, such as the toe-tapping numbers that Southern's ticket office staff joined in with at Christmas! We look forward to developing our partnership further in the coming months and years for the benefit of all concerned.

*Sarah Holland, Principal*

# Working in partnership

## Govia Thameslink Railway

By working together, Southern Rail and the Sussex Community Rail Partnership (SCRP) have been able to do more to place the railway at the heart of the communities we serve since 2003. This partnership has gone from strength to strength in recent years, and as one of longest continuous associations of its kind, sets a standard for others to follow. The national recognition that several SCRPs initiatives have received, is demonstrated through recently being shortlisted in the ACoRP awards, is a testament to our work.

The projects led by SCRPs have had a vast impact on how our train service delivers for our diverse customers and communities, with the Try a Train programme being a highlight to support people who may suffer from a lack of confidence when travelling by train. Additionally, the station partner programme highlights what real value can be added when local people are connected and invested in their train stations.

Looking to the future, we will support SCRPs in delivering several initiatives that will bring value to local communities. Over the coming year Southern will proactively contribute to developing an even stronger partnership through using our own channels and relationships to promote SCRPs work.

On behalf of everyone at Southern Rail I would like to thank the SCRPs team and volunteers for the unwavering commitment they bring to serving local communities and their railway services. This is a relationship that Southern Rail is deeply proud of and we look forward to continuing to work together to promote sustainable, accessible travel and deliver a railway service at the heart of all our communities.

*Angie Doll. M.D. Southern*



## Great Western Railway

Great Western Railway believes in the power of Community Rail Partnerships.

We believe that by working together in partnership with our customers and the communities we serve, we deliver a better, more responsive railway that supports economic development, that helps deliver a cleaner, greener environment, a railway that helps in the fight against social isolation and a railway that meets the needs of commuters, business and leisure travellers alike.

We were therefore delighted to be able to join with Sussex Community Rail Partnership (SCRPs) to bring the benefits of community rail to our North Downs line. This is a very important line, with growing passenger numbers and informed and active communities who want to see more from their rail services.

By working in partnership with SCRPs, building on your expertise and the incredible commitment of your volunteers, we are confident that we can make further improvements. You rightly have a great reputation for delivery, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to say thank you for all you have done, and for all we will be doing together in future, including the work you have been

doing with us to prepare for our annual Community Rail Conference which we plan to hold at Gatwick next year.

We very much value our relationship with you and consider you a key partner in the “GWR family”.

*Matthew Galton. M.D. GWR*



## TOTAL ADDED VALUE: £260,000



We offer a range of opportunities to get involved in Community Rail and help your local community. You can volunteer your time to help with a specific project, join our line steering groups, share your skills or persuade your company to spend a day volunteering with us. We would like to hear from you, so do please get in touch.

**Sussex Community Rail Partnership**  
 Lewes Station, Platform 5, Station Road,  
 Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2UP  
[www.sussexcrp.org](http://www.sussexcrp.org)  
 Twitter & Instagram: @sussexCRP

**SCRIP CIC**  
 The Old Rectory, Litlington, Polegate, East  
 Sussex BN26 9RB  
 Registered in England No. 6731176

**Development Manager: Fiona Morton**  
[fiona@sussexcrp.org](mailto:fiona@sussexcrp.org) 07891 556897  
**Arun Valley Line Officer: Rowena Tyler**  
[rowena@sussexcrp.org](mailto:rowena@sussexcrp.org) 07944 289269  
**Marshlink Line Officer: Kevin Barry**  
[kevin@sussexcrp.org](mailto:kevin@sussexcrp.org) 07949 314233  
**North Downs Line Officer: David Daniels**  
[david@sussexcrp.org](mailto:david@sussexcrp.org) 07939 036131

**Seaford-Brighton Line Officer: Catherine Simmons**  
[catherine@sussexcrp.org](mailto:catherine@sussexcrp.org) 07375 531987  
**Uckfield-East Grinstead and Tonbridge-Redhill-Reigate Line Officer: Sharon Gray**  
[sharon@sussexcrp.org](mailto:sharon@sussexcrp.org) 07944 628933

**Sussex Coast Line Officers: Catherine Simmons**  
[catherine@sussexcrp.org](mailto:catherine@sussexcrp.org) 07375 531987  
**Rowena Tyler**  
[rowena@sussexcrp.org](mailto:rowena@sussexcrp.org) 07944 289269

**Education Officer: Maddy Mills**  
[maddy@sussexcrp.org](mailto:maddy@sussexcrp.org) 07852 221274  
**Fundraising and Finance Officer: Trevor Field**  
[trevor@sussexcrp.org](mailto:trevor@sussexcrp.org) 07495 046462



Sussex Community Rail Partnership,  
Lewes Station, Platform 5, Station Road,  
Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2UP  
[www.sussexcrp.org](http://www.sussexcrp.org)  
Twitter @sussexCRP

Produced by SCRP CIC – March 2020 – Designed by [www.ollydesigns.co.uk](http://www.ollydesigns.co.uk)  
Photography by Martyn Gibbens (volunteer photographer)

