

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership



2021

Annual Review

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

connecting communities with places and opportunities





Foreword

By Tim Barkley (SCRIP board chair) and Bob Lanzer (Stakeholder Advisory Board chair)

Welcome to our look back at 2021, another challenging and interesting year in the life of the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership. Covid remained an issue throughout the year, particularly impacting on the

railway industry's ability to run services at the start of the year with a further lockdown and again towards the end with the Omicron variant.

But thanks to the commitment of our staff, volunteers and partners we were able to continue supporting our local communities. And despite Covid, we've had another eventful and productive year, as you'll see in this review. We've had virtual meetings, hybrid meetings and even some occasional face-to-face meetings when we've been able to, to ensure that we have still been able to achieve so much.

And we've continued to expand. After adding the 1066 line in 2020, we were very pleased to add the Windsor to Reading line last year, formally launching it in November. We are very grateful for the help of South Western Railway with this initiative.



← Bee Friendly Trust volunteers with converted beehive at Newhaven Harbour

Tremendous Support

Our stakeholder advisory board has continued to meet every six months to consider and discuss our work. We enjoy tremendous support from our many partners across the South East, and we thank all the organisations and individuals who give so freely of their time and expertise.

The 'Go Learn' and 'Go Train' projects continue to go from strength to strength, and we have been really pleased with the results – do read more in this review.

We were pleased to welcome two new line chairs during the year, Cllr Kevin Boram for Sussex Coast, and Cllr Tony Page for our new Windsor to Reading line.

We warmly welcome line officers Paul Bromley, to take on the newly renamed Sussex Downs line (as the

Seaford to Brighton route is now known), and Teena Lashmore, for the Windsor to Reading line, also Cath Reed, who joins our education team.

Tim Sparrow retired as a director of the SCRIP and as a director of CRN (Community Rail Network, our national 'parent' organisation). Tim was a major driving force within the SCRIP, having been one of the original founders of the Sussex Community Rail Partnership. He has guided us throughout his time on the SCRIP board with key areas of work such as our Business Plan, expansion plans, building up a strong network of contacts and partners and just last November we celebrated his 60th Board meeting. We are very grateful indeed for the invaluable contribution Tim has made over very many years, and are delighted that he has promised to continue to actively support us.

“ The 'Go Learn' and 'Go Train' projects continue to go from strength to strength ”

“ Thanks to the commitment of our staff, volunteers and partners we were able to continue supporting our local communities ”

Invaluable Contribution

We said goodbye to our Marshlink line officer Harry Sieviewright, with Catherine Simmons moving to cover that line as well as the 1066 line.

A number of other prominent volunteers have also stood down

this year, and we thank them all very much for their invaluable contribution – we really wouldn't be anything without the support we get from our volunteers.

We are especially saddened to have to report that two of our volunteer directors have died in the last year too, Jon Freeman, chair of the Seaford to Brighton line, and more recently John Phillips, chair of the Tonbridge to Reigate line. Both were tremendous characters, full of passion for 'their' lines, and for the work of community rail. We will miss them both very much indeed.



← Chris Littledale
founder of Brighton
Toy and Model
museum



↑ Sussex Downs Line vice-chair Cllr Stephen Catlin at wreath-laying at Brighton station November 2021

We were fortunate enough to win a number of awards in 2021, as you will read in detail in the review. Please allow us a moment of indulgence if we draw particular attention to the fact that at a national awards ceremony at the O2 Guildhall in Southampton we won an overall award for our 'outstanding contribution to community rail.' This was a tremendous achievement, particularly given the really difficult times caused by Covid, and is testament to the fantastic work done by our fellow directors, our management team and line officers, and, of course, our supportive stakeholders and incredible volunteers.



↑ Members of AMAZE Sussex on a Train trip at Brighton

Heart of communities

The major challenge we face in 2022 is getting passengers back to using public transport. We will work hard with the five train operating companies in our area, and our stakeholders, to do all we can to ensure that our railways remain at the heart of our communities.

We would like to thank all our community groups, volunteers, partners and stakeholders for their continued support. This is vital in helping us to continue to deliver the many projects and activities to the communities we serve – the 'C' in our name has never been more important.

Winning streak

Although awards aren't everything, it is nice to be recognised sometimes. Community partners and SCRP did particularly well in the 2021 Community Rail Network national awards, with no fewer than six podium places.

Reg's Garden at Farnborough North, with our community partner the Farnborough Street Residents' Association, came third in the 'station friends and adopters at the heart of communities' category.

We were in second place for three awards: in the 'best communications' category (for our work with other community rail partnerships on Thameslink routes for the Countryside, Capital & Coast online Thameslink guide); the 'influencing positive change and sustainability' section (with partners GTR/Southern for our work on the Passenger Benefit Fund and pandemic lockdown recovery); and in the photo competition for some stunning images of the Glynde station metalwork with the Friends of Glynde station.



SCRP sat on the steering group of a Community Rail Education Network national initiative called Backtrack, aimed at reducing trespassing by young people, and this won first prize for 'involving children and young people'.

Finally, as you may have read in the foreword, we were particularly proud to have been jointly awarded first prize for 'outstanding contribution to community rail', which is the equivalent of 'best in show'. We were obviously absolutely delighted to win that!

Our chair Tim Barkley said: "This was a fantastic result for us, in what has been a very challenging year for everybody. I'd like to thank our



staff and directors, and particularly our very many volunteers, for all they did in 2021. They have done a truly amazing job. They really do put the 'community' in SCRP, and I am delighted that everyone's hard work has been recognised by us receiving these six awards.

"Winning the national award for the outstanding contribution to community rail is amazing, the real icing on the cake, and makes me very proud indeed for what the whole team, including volunteers, has achieved."





'1066' Line (Tonbridge to Hastings)

Catherine Simmons, Line Officer

One of the first ideas to encourage passengers onto the newly formed 1066 Line was to create an integrated travel map showing rail and bus routes as well as foot and cycle paths passing close to the beautiful Hastings to Tonbridge route.

More than 50 community partners, county councils, tourist attractions, stakeholders and staff were consulted with the aim of creating a bespoke interactive map to be placed on our website.

"The walking (and cycling) sector really is one that we feel we can help to target with access by train, it's good custom for the 1066 Line"

- Yolanda Laybourne, Vice-Chair of the 1066 Line

There has been support and enthusiasm from residents as well as Southeastern Railway staff who have volunteered their time to create a welcome at stations along the line. They have contributed to community projects ranging from wildlife gardening at Battle to community maps at Crowhurst.



← Matt Fraser, Community Relations Manager for Southeastern Railway, at the Community Rail Network Awards 2021



↑ Beautiful floral displays at Robertsbridge created by volunteers and staff



↑ Wild About Battle volunteers clear and sow at Battle Station



↑ Community map design team at Crowhurst station



Arun Valley Line

Rowena Tyler, Line Officer

Community Rail partners along the Arun Valley Line resumed activities after the lockdowns and I joined them at their stations.

It was heart-warming to get out onto the line, meet volunteers, stakeholders, partners and station staff. The highlights included pupils from Dorset House School dressed as evacuees for a World

War II lesson at Pulborough station and Horsham Town Community Partnership taking responsibility for the bus noticeboard outside Horsham station.

Gatwick Airport and GTR staff provided a behind-the-scenes tour of the station improvement works which are designed to ensure a smooth passenger journey “from train to plane” and “from plane to train”.



↑ A tour of Gatwick airport South Terminal and railway station for SCRCP staff and directors led by (left) Michelle Stanton from Gatwick Airport Ltd and (right) David Stronell of Govia Thameslink Railway.



↑ Horsham Town Community Partnership members with (left) Line Chair Cllr Bob Lanzer, West Sussex County Council cabinet member, and (second right) Lewis Jackson from Metrobus at the bus noticeboard outside Horsham station



← Pupils from Dorset House School, dressed as evacuees, wait to board a train at Pulborough as part of their Second World War history lesson



Uckfield & East Grinstead Lines

Sharon Gray, Line Officer

Nearly every station along these two lines gained from GTR's Passenger Benefit Fund improvements, none more so than Eridge.

The beautifully renovated platform waiting room is now the star of the show: warm and comfortable, historically sensitive and yet fully accessible. Hard to now imagine it was derelict and neglected for many, many years.

We held a party to recognise all those who supported the long list of improvements at this lovely

station: Network Rail and their project manager Hodan, the Railway Heritage Trust, Spa Valley Railway, Rotherfield Parish Council, local residents, Southern staff and various contractors. It was just what was needed to greet old friends and thank new ones. The event ended with a trip on the Spa Valley Railway.

East Grinstead station received an upgrade to its gardens. Professional gardener, Andrew Morris, an old friend of Community Rail, was commissioned by GTR's Passenger Benefit Fund to improve and upgrade the planting at the front of the station.

↓ Celebrating Eridge station's 157th birthday



↑ Original artwork by David Peacock depicting history of the local lines commissioned by Rotherfield Parish Council



← Professional gardener Andrew Morris improves the planting at the front of East Grinstead station



Marshlink Line

Catherine Simmons, Line Officer

Community partners along the Marshlink Line have continued to care for their stations. They have worked hard to create floral and artistic displays at Ore, Appledore and Winchelsea for local and visiting passengers. We welcomed two new green fingered station partners at Hastings and Rye, where the Captain Pugwash Memorial bench has been restored.

There was an amazing win at the National Railway Heritage Awards

for the Network Rail commercial restoration of Appledore Station building: a project spearheaded by Terry Blaney and the Friends of Appledore Station. We look forward to seeing how the community could continue to be involved in its use.

A joint event was enjoyed on the Kent & East Sussex Railway heritage line for both the Marshlink and 1066 Line volunteers to thank them for their hard work over a difficult period.



← Marshlink volunteers alight from the heritage bus at the Kent & East Sussex Railway



↑ Station partner Trevor Davies and the Groundworks team leader replanting at Ore Station



↑ Groundworks volunteer working at Ore Station



↑ New artwork for Winchelsea station from St Thomas' primary school



↑ Marshlink volunteers at the Kent & East Sussex Railway



North Downs Line

David Daniels, Line Officer

Reg's Garden at Farnborough North was formally opened in September 2021 by Network Rail chair Sir Peter Hendy and GWR's managing director Mark Hopwood. It was a great occasion which brought many members of the railway family together with the local community to celebrate an amazing transformation as the garden went from English country jungle to food farm, play area and apiary.

A major feature of the garden is the tables, planters and benches made from recycled pallets, kindly donated by local builders' merchants, Gibbs and Dandy. Network Rail volunteers put the finishing touches to some of the furniture.

Four 'Rail to Ramble' routes were launched from Surrey Hills stations, taking walkers through beautiful countryside to the next station on the North Downs Line. For example, Chilworth station to Gomshall via the villages of Blackheath and Shere is not to be missed!



↑ Network Rail volunteers working on some of the wooden items for the garden

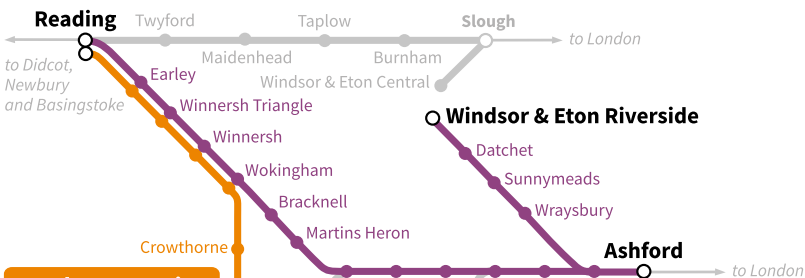


→ Before: brambles covering the area at Farnborough North station



← After: Reg's Garden formally opened

Windsor to Reading Line



North Downs Line



southeastcrp.org





Seaford to Brighton Line

Paul Bromley, Line Officer

I joined the team last August and picked up several projects which were already in train (if you forgive the pun).

One of these was Audioways – a series of QR codes in and around Lewes as well as at the railway stations along the line to Seaford. The codes are accessed from a smartphone and tell interesting and quirky stories about the people and places in the district.



The formal launch took place at Lewes station in October with many of the contributors and supporters present. Southern's director of customer services attended and tried out the codes.

Since starting as the Line Officer, I have been impressed with the wide range of activities which take place at and around the stations from the colourful planters to the informative history boards. The work is a great example of community engagement and collaborative working.



↑ Audioways launch with producers and partners at Lewes station

Rowena Tyler



Sussex Coast Line

Rowena Tyler, Line Officer

The line group welcomed a new Chair, Cllr Kevin Boram (West Sussex County, Adur District and Lancing Parish), who took up the role in October after Victoria Garcia stood down – she has agreed to continue to represent Brighton & Hove buses and Metrobus on the line group.

I took Kevin on a 'Line Safari' to meet some of the station staff and volunteers. We enjoyed seeing their work and chatting about how to best support Community Rail initiatives along the line.

We did manage to fit in a refreshment stop at the marvellous West Worthing station café, run by Elaine, who praised the volunteers at her station and all along the line for the great work they do.



← The raised bed and eco-garden at Angmering station, presided over by 'Gladys' which was originally installed as part of Remembrance and Women's Suffrage Centenary year in 2018

→ Alex David and Deirdre Carolin from the Friends of Angmering station show Kevin the artwork in the booking hall, created by school pupils and a local art group

↓ Line Chair Kevin Boram visits West Worthing where Barbara Hine shows him the garden, including recycled planters, donated by the Aldingbourne Trust



↑ Line Officer Rowena Tyler and Lancing station volunteer Keith Stainer celebrating the installation of a water butt



↑ Line Chair Kevin Boram chats to 'Keep Lancing Lovely' volunteers while admiring the wildflower garden at Lancing station



Tonbridge, Redhill & Reigate Line

Sharon Gray, Line Officer

A project that started during lockdown in partnership with East Surrey College snowballed into far more than was first envisaged. Reigate station was the beneficiary of the local community coming together and putting this station firmly on the Community Rail map.

A photographic project courtesy of local students adorns the underpass and a history of the station project compiled by a steering group member is displayed within the ticket hall alongside a display of railway artefacts sourced by station

staff. Even Flying Scotsman passing by didn't go unnoticed and forms part of the ticket hall display thanks to a keen local photographer. A celebration event was held to thank all those involved.

On a slightly smaller scale but equally impressive is the art installation within the waiting shelter at Penshurst station donated by a group of local artists based in the Edenbridge area.

A connective travel bus surgery event in was held in Redhill in partnership with Southdown Buses, Metrobus, Bus Users UK, and Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.

↓ Reigate deputy Mayor Rachel Turner (left) talks to East Surrey College art students.



↓ Penshurst platform gallery - original artwork donated by artists collective Jessops Farm Studios



↑ Flying Scotsman photograph on the wall with Reigate station GTR staff (left to right) Eduardo Abuyot, Dave Unwin, Estelle Webb



← Redhill bus surgery with Lewis Jackson from Metrobus (centre) and SCR chair Tim Barkley (right)



Windsor to Reading

Teena Lashmore, Line Officer

Windsor to Reading Community Rail Line was formally launched in November during the challenges of Covid-19. It has 21 stations operated by South Western Railway (SWR).

More than 30 people came to our first meeting at Reading Civic Offices courtesy of Line Chair Cllr Tony Page of Reading Council.

We have held a series of events including:

- Dr Bike at Wokingham in September
- Artwork depicting bluebells at Virginia Water station in October
- Warhorse Memorial placed a Christmas tree at Ascot Station with station manager Manoj Bhardwaj and SWR's station manager Dermot Crummy in December
- Secret Santa at Ascot supported by Warhorse Memorial
- Caring Listening and Supporting Partnership (CLASP) produced a guide to travelling on the train for people with disabilities



← Dr Bike surgery held at Wokingham station



↑ Artwork depicting bluebells by Jenna Fox at Virginia Water station



← Official launch of the Windsor to Reading Line at Reading Civic Offices



Go Learn – education service for GTR

Cath Reed, Education Officer

I began my role in August 2021 and since then have led workshops in schools along GTR lines from Hastings to Chichester covering planning a journey, safety and careers on the railway.

One of our most popular workshops has been on the theme of Sustainable and Healthy Travel supporting Big Green Week and Go Green by Train initiatives.

Children look at the benefits of using sustainable train travel compared with going by road. They enjoy lots of hands-on and active challenges.

We have been working with students from the University of Brighton media department who produced a short film about sustainable rail travel. This focuses on current operations and future exciting developments like the Riding Sunbeams solar-powered project.

↓ Education Officer Cath Reed leading a workshop at Georgian Gardens Primary School in Rustington



↓ Students at Georgian Gardens Primary School in Rustington take part in activities during a workshop on sustainable travel



↓ University of Brighton students set up to film an interview with Ollie Pendered, executive director at Riding Sunbeams

↑ University of Brighton media students at Lewes Station preparing to start filming. Left to right: Tia Crossley, Emily Burton, Sam Grant





Go Train – education service on the North Downs Line

Maddy Mills, Education Officer

The new Go Train education service on the North Downs Line started in 2021.

The launch of the Try a Train scheme has been very popular over the last year. Organisations taking part have booked multiple programmes. These include various projects in the region which help young people with learning and support needs.

Try a Train provides an ideal opportunity for those who lack confidence to visit a railway station and experience a train journey.

"I used to travel by train all by myself but after lockdown I stopped. Now I want to travel again"

- one participant after a Try a Train trip.

I have been working with Education Officer Cath Reed to deliver the new Sustainable and Healthy Travel workshops for Year 6 primary pupils. We are expecting an increase in bookings when the Government introduces its new Sustainability and Climate Change school curriculum in 2022.

↓ Members of Berkshire Vision taking part in Try a Train



↓ 2 x Try a Train trip with members of the 'halow' project to support young people with learning disabilities at Guildford railway station



← Dan Pearce from GWR explains the new signs at Guildford station for members of the 'halow' project which nurtures young people with learning disabilities



← Young people from Surrey Choices take part in Try a Train at Redhill station

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

+£39k



£84k

Grants to
Station
Partners

+£2k



£19K

Donations to
Station
Partners

9

Community
Rail Lines

+1

+14

114

Stations

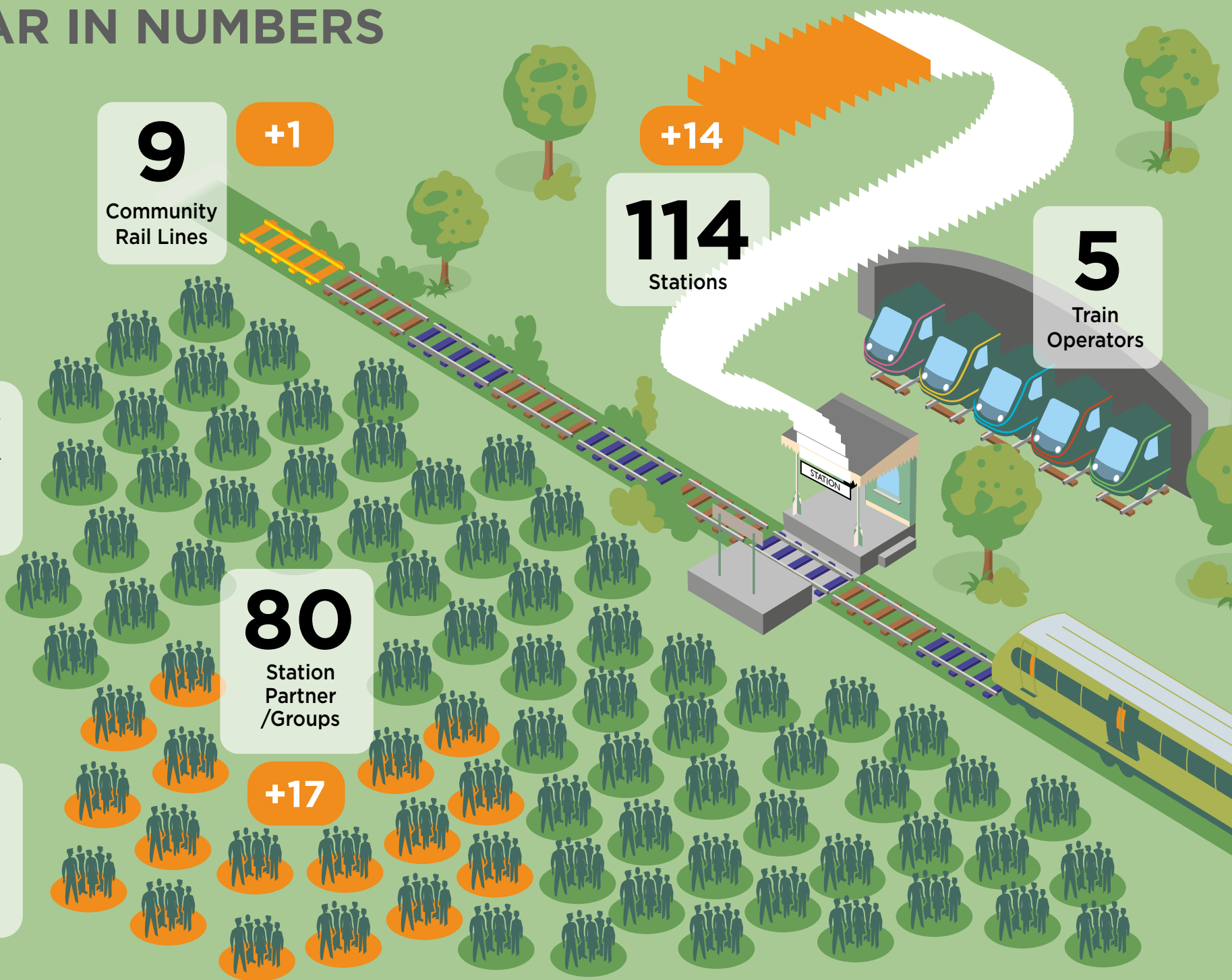
5

Train
Operators

80

Station
Partner
/Groups

+17



CONTACT DETAILS

For more information on how you, your company or your voluntary group can be involved contact us via any of the following SCRP staff.

We offer a range of opportunities to get involved with Community Rail. 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.

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Kent County Council

Surrey County Council

West Sussex County Council

East Sussex County Council

Brighton and Hove City Council

Hastings Borough Council

Crawley Borough Council

Brighton and Hove Buses and Metrobus

Railfuture

London Gatwick Airport




South Downs National Park

Surrey Hills AONB



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