

**Speaking Notes for Lord Peter Hendy of Richmond Hill CBE
Southeast Communities Rail Partnership, Stakeholder Advisory Board
Thursday 29 January 2026 @ 1400-1600**

Logistics

- **1400-1415 (Rail Minister attendance via Teams)**
- **Bob Lanzer, Chair of the Stakeholder Advisory Board (and County Councillor for West Sussex) will open the meeting and welcome colleagues before handing over to you.**

Suggested Speaking notes for Lord Peter Hendy of Richmond Hill CBE

- Thanks Bob. I am delighted to be with you at today's Stakeholder Advisory Board, and to recognise the difference that community rail makes across the South East.
- My thanks to you and the team, to the many volunteers, train operators, and local authorities for the commitment you bring to your communities every day.
- The partnership helps stations flourish as welcoming community assets. And, through fantastic education programmes, workshops, and initiatives like 'Try a Train trip,' you build confidence and inspire future passengers and younger generations to consider a career in rail.
- The Southeast Communities Rail Partnership has raised £182,000 in grants to improve and enhance stations and community spaces and volunteering alone generates £263,000 in added social value. Community Rail delivers tangible investment with real local benefits.

Celebrating Community Rail Champions

- And I'd now like to pay tribute to two key members who truly embody the spirit, dedication, and heritage of community rail.

- **Mike Lampport** has been an inspirational driving force in Railway 200, championing heritage, celebration, and community engagement.
- He played a central role in SCRP's "200 Blue Plaques" initiative, honouring the people who shaped Britain's railway story.
- Today's presentation of a personal Blue Plaque to Mike recognises his family's nearly 200-year contribution to the railway, beginning in 1846 – a legacy across generations.
- I am also delighted that **Tim Sparrow**, SCRP's long serving volunteer Director, has been awarded an MBE in The King's New Year Honours 2026 for his remarkable 22 years of service to community rail.
- His leadership has helped build SCRP into one of the most respected community rail partnerships in the country.
- I would also like to recognise the Friends of Bishopstone Station, winners of The King's Award for Voluntary Service, for their outstanding stewardship and commitment to their local station.

Linking this to the journey toward Great British Railways (GBR)

- The railway needs its communities, just as communities need a simpler, more accountable, and more responsive railway.
- As we shape Great British Railways, our ambition is to grow community rail and harness its energy to support:
 - Local economic growth,
 - Sustainable travel, and
 - More people choosing rail as a trusted, everyday mode of transport.

- Community partnerships like SCRP will be central to GBR's future, ensuring decisions are informed by local knowledge and genuine community insight.

Closing & handover

- Our railway has always been built on relationships, between people, places, and generations.
- Today, as we honour Mike, celebrate Tim's MBE, and congratulate the Friends of Bishopstone Station, we see the very best of what community rail brings to our network.
- Thank you for all you do to strengthen these partnerships and shape the future of our railway.
- **And now, it is my pleasure to hand over to Steve White to present Mike with his very well-deserved Blue Plaque.**
- Thank you.