

## New River Line Community Rail Partnership

### Progress Report June 2020

The New River Line (Hertford East to Broxbourne) Community Rail Partnership was established in 2019 and is comprised of the following organisations:

Abellio Greater Anglia, Hertfordshire County Council, Broxbourne Borough Council, East Herts District Council, Hertford Town Council, Ware Town Council, Volunteer Centre Broxbourne and East Herts, CDA Herts, Rye House Raceway, Lee Valley Park. The CRP is also a member of Community Rail Network, the umbrella organisation for CRPs across Britain.

Of the ten organisations listed above seven have committed to funding the CRP. Broxbourne Borough Council have not committed core funding but have given an undertaking to provide capital funding for any schemes within the borough the CRP might wish to deliver. The Train Operator has been able to increase their contribution to the CRP from £16K in 2019/20 to £20K in 2020/21 and core CRP funding has not been affected to the change in franchise management introduced at the beginning of Lockdown. The Department for Transport continue to be very supportive of CRPs.

A steering group comprising one representative of the 10 partner organisations has been established and meets quarterly. Terms of Reference have been agreed and Hertfordshire County Council have agreed to be the "Host" organisation which involves holding the funds and hosting any members of staff. Kate Belinis from CDA Herts has agreed to Chair the steering group.

Since it's establishment in the Autumn of 2019 the CRP has made progress on the following:

- Set up a working group to develop a Line Guide. This will take the form of a leaflet which will be made available throughout the area local to the line, at railway stations and on the wider CRP network regionally and nationally to promote the line and the area it serves. The work on the design and content is nearly complete and it is intended to have the leaflet available for when the railway network begins to open up to leisure travel post Covid. In addition, the line will soon feature on the Scenic Rail Britain website:  
<https://www.scenicrailbritain.com/regions/east>
- Mudlarks have been interested stakeholders since the lines' inception but rather than join as partners they have become Station Adopters at Hertford East Station. The CRP have agreed funding, including a grant from Community Rail Network, for a planting project at the station. This work has been delayed by Covid but can now move forward. It is hoped to have the planters in place and planted up before the end of the summer.
- A launch event for the local community and media was planned for the end of May but as with so many other events has had to be postponed. It is hoped that it will be possible to reschedule the event for later in the year.
- Work has begun on a project to design and install interpretation boards at stations along the line highlighting the heritage and leisure attractions.
- A new Station Adopter has volunteered at St Margaret's Station and the parish council have agreed to fund new planters to improve the station environment.
- A Facebook page has been set up as an initial way of communicating with the CRP community and a website will be developed in the near future.

There is now sufficient funding available to the CRP to support the recruitment of a part-time CRP officer which will enable project work to progress more effectively as at present the role is being

carried out by the HCC Principal Rail officer with support from the steering group members. The recruitment process started in February 2020 but had to be paused at the start of Lockdown. The process was able to restart in June and it hoped that an officer can be appointed and in post by the autumn.

A wider stakeholder engagement event was planned for the autumn of 2020 but this will now be postponed until the spring of 2021.