



ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23

Working with and for our communities

**Helping everyone Explore the North
sustainably by train**

View from the Chair

As you will see in this report, 2022-23 saw our engagement in a diverse workstream. Resuming face-to-face work with so many groups, and encouraging people to get back to rail travel, it seemed life was returning to normal.

Sadly, the derailment of a freight train in October impacted on services for seven weeks and disruption due to industrial action and staff shortages have been long term. We continue to call for improvements to services along the Tyne Valley Railway, to meet the needs of passengers and support our local communities, particularly for those stations which have a limited service.

Looking forward, we are exploring the option of moving the Company to charitable status and have ambitious plans for the Water Tower at Haltwhistle to create a welcoming café, gallery, and gift shop.

I am grateful to the support from our rail industry partners, the Directors, CRP officer Fiona, and all the volunteers, without whom the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership would not be the success it is today.

Dr Malcolm Chainey

Finance and Governance

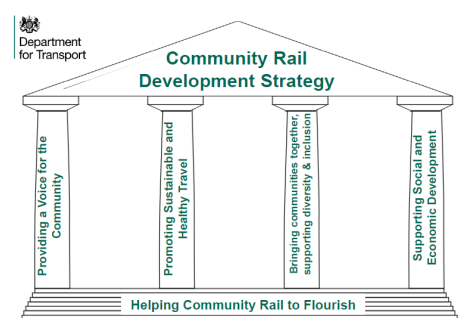
Peter Sloan, Finance Director, reports "it is pleasing to report that the Company is in a strong financial position, allowing it to resume projects delayed as a result of the pandemic and to make investments in projects which will enhance Company resilience and benefit passengers and the community".

The company's accounts have been prepared by accountants, The Books Accountants Ltd, and following approval by the Board and Members will be submitted to Companies House. A copy of the accounts is available on the website tvcrp.org.uk.

The Director responsible for Company Governance, Colin Moore, confirms that "governance and Health & Safety are strictly monitored. A new Director's Handbook was published during 2022-23 ensuring that Directors are fully aware of their responsibilities and Company policies and procedures".

Gareth Evans re-joined the Board in February, resuming his role as Interfaces Director. We are pleased to welcome Peter Myers as a Director. His many years experience of working in the rail industry will be an asset to the Partnership.

Following scrutiny in April of our work, procedures and future Action Plans against the DfT Strategy, it was pleasing to receive confirmation of our re-accreditation by the Department for Transport. The structural level of organisation and achievements were complimented.



Freight Derailment near Carlisle – Seven Weeks of Disruption for Passengers

A freight train loaded with cement derailed at Petteril Bridge, just outside Carlisle, on the evening of 19 October resulted in disruption to both Tyne Valley and Settle-Carlisle services. Some of the wagons came to rest in the river, creating an environmental risk and a more complex recovery as the cement had to be trans-shipped prior to wagon recovery. The bridge was damaged and there were further complications with difficult access to the incident location for the heavy lifting equipment.



On receiving notification of the derailment, our first social media posts warning of disruption being posted within hours of the incident. Liaison with Northern and Network Rail enabled us to create updates on the website and social media to keep passengers and local residents up to date.

Rail Replacement Bus Stops

In the event of disruption to rail services, rail replacement buses are provided by Northern to provide alternative travel for passengers. At some stations, the buses are unable to access a parking area beside the station. Temporary rail replacement bus stop signs will hopefully be in place to assist.

Carlisle

Buses depart from the area adjacent to the main entrance to the railway station
<https://what3words.com/yard.butter.united>

Wetheral

The rail replacement buses stop close to the junction near the Post Office, not at the station. See Fig 1.
<https://what3words.com/blog.ripods.opened>

Some buses taking passengers to Brampton, Haltwhistle and for onward travel towards Newcastle, may arrive on the opposite side of the road (near Fantails) Fig 2 and 3.
<https://what3words.com/forget.password.kings>



Brampton

Rail replacement buses stop at the junction of the A689 and Station Road, not at the station.
<https://what3words.com/forget.password.kings>

We provided feedback to Northern on a range of issues during subsequent weeks. To ensure passengers knew about where to get on rail replacement buses, we publicised information on our website and social media and, to assist Northern, we visited stations and villages and displayed the rail replacement bus stop signs. We provided regular updates to assist local communities and passengers, and when we discovered that a local radio station was publicising incorrect travel information, we highlighted this with both Northern and the radio station.

TVCRP Directors and station adoption volunteers opened the Old Booking Hall, Haltwhistle on a number of occasions. They facilitated a safe, warm space for passengers waiting for rail replacement buses and provided information about onward travel and the 685 bus service on days when Northern could not source rail replacement buses.

Daily updates on social media resulted in an increase in our followers and a huge spike in engagement with our posts.

All this with the expectation that we could help to mitigate some of the difficulties being experienced by people in the aftermath of the incident. Sadly, the disruption necessitated cancellation of some of the planned events, including re-arranging school trips and educational events at the Old Booking Hall.

Following resumption of services on 7 December, we compiled a report outlining some of the issues identified during the closure. This was circulated to Northern, local MPs, local authorities, and other bodies with responsibilities for public transport in the region.

Our “we can, we do” approach resulted in over 250 hours being committed in response to the derailment by TVCRP Directors, volunteers and staff. Northern showed appreciation of their efforts presenting floral arrangements following the resumption of services.



Working with and for our Communities

Volunteer Conference

A new initiative for the Partnership was our volunteer and station adoption conference, held in April in Newcastle. Attendees from stations along the route and guests from Community Rail Cumbria enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the work of other groups and the CRP. An interesting session led by Noel McGivern provided everyone with an insight into suicide awareness.

Feedback was very positive, and we hope to hold further conferences in the future, possibly as a joint event with Community Rail Cumbria and station groups from their area.



Supporting our Station Adoption Groups

The enthusiasm of the volunteer adoption groups leads to many positive projects for the stations and communities. We love to support their work and as you will see from the selection featured here, the groups certainly make a difference.

Together with the station adoption team at **Wetheral**, we enlisted support from Northern, VolkerRail, ISS and the Rail Academy to give the station building at Wetheral a make-over. Team spirit prevailed as everyone from these organisations, got involved in March repainting the waiting shelter and spring-cleaning the station.



With support of Visit Corbridge and Northern, the Friends of **Corbridge** Station have been instrumental in providing new signage and display boards on both platforms. These signs provide useful information for visitors as they feature information about Heritage Trails and Walks, Corbridge Roman Town and the World Heritage Site Hadrian's Wall.

New station hotels at **Haltwhistle** and the **MetroCentre** are environmentally friendly, free to use but just for bugs. A team effort created the Haltwhistle hotel, built by one of the station adopters and members of local charities Zig Zag and Journey Enterprises taking on painting and interior design. Students from the Rail Academy designed and built insect accommodation installed at the MetroCentre.

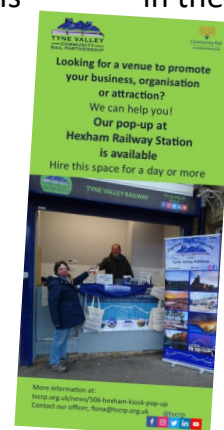


We have welcomed a new station adoption group, the Development Trust to **Haydon Bridge** and look forward to working with them. Whilst **Manors** is not a Tyne Valley Railway station, in the absence of a CRP north of Newcastle, we are now working with adopters, St Vincent de Paul.

Engaging with Communities

Our engagement with communities extends to the many businesses and attractions in the area. As members of the Hadrian's Wall Marketing & Transport Group, Carlisle Ambassadors and the North East England Chamber of Commerce, we regularly interface with other members of these organisations.

A new initiative saw the creation a pop-up venue at Hexham Station to allow businesses, attractions and community groups to showcase their offer in the former kiosk area. Four local artisans used the pop-up but the ongoing industrial dispute made it difficult to effectively plan for further bookings.



We welcomed members of the **Transport Ticket Society** to Haltwhistle showing



the group the Station Buildings Project, and with the support of Network Rail, they were able to visit the old Signal Box. During the visit they unveiled an interpretation board about Thomas Edmondson, whose innovations revolutionised railway ticketing system as a result of his experiences whilst the station master at Milton (now Brampton).

During a visit to Haltwhistle Station, representatives of the European consortium **Green Passenger Transport in Rural Areas (G-PATRA)** learned about the work of the Partnership, how we are encouraging people to use sustainable and active travel and some of the challenges faced as we encourage people out of their cars. They were able to inspect the new solar-powered electric bike boxes, our project to provide opportunities for people to use sustainable transport.



During the second half of 2022, we created surveys to help us to assess how the CRP is perceived by stakeholders in the rail industry, partner organisations and local communities. This new initiative provided an opportunity to receive feedback about our work and will help us set Action Plans for the future.

In March we brought cinema to Haltwhistle providing the Old Booking Hall as one of the thirteen venues for the **Tyne Valley Film Festival**. Our featured film, the *Titfield Thunderbolt* was enjoyed by a full house.



Dog-owners from Haltwhistle and surrounding parishes certainly got involved in the first of a series of community-led **Haltwhistle is Something Special** exhibitions. One exhibit featured images of local dogs alongside others with information about breeds with strong local links.

Displayed in the waiting room, on Platform 1, the exhibition has been enjoyed by passengers and visitors to the station.



Education— engaging with children and young people locally & nationally

It has been positive to be able to welcome school groups back to the Old Booking Hall providing them with opportunities to experience rail travel, learn about rail safety, tickets, and the environment.



Arlo—helping to spread the rail safety message

The character Arlo created by train river, Bessie Matthews, has helped us and other CRPs to engage with younger children. We have handed out 3000 copies of her booklet at school visits to the Old Booking Hall, in schools and at events.

Our education advisor, Alison, has helped us engage with schools, particularly in North Cumbria, one of which has been **Great Corby**. During a visit to the school, Alison and Fiona, assisted by Arlo, engaged with all the year groups about rail safety. Our own Arlo, has been spotted at events too—here is Alison at an event in Walton on the Cyclo-Knitter. A huge thank you to Bessie for her creativity.



Newcastle College Rail Academy

Work with the Rail Academy continues. We facilitated sponsorship from CrossCountry to support the Student Awards event with each winning student also receiving one of our goody bags. During the Academy's Industry Week, we ran two well-received sessions on suicide awareness.

Looking forward we are working with the Academy to arrange speakers who will make presentations to students on a range of rail-related subjects.

William Howard School. Brampton

The school's Sustainability Fair was an opportunity for us to utilise our Cyclo-Knitter to engage with students about active and sustainable travel.



Daffnee

At a national level, we worked with CrossCountry, i-creation and Community Rail Lancashire to create resources for schools to highlight the railways' green credentials. The toolkit, designed for Key Stage 2, was launched at the National Railway Museum will help us to promote sustainability as we and other CRP's engage with schools throughout the country.



Backtrack Competition

We continue to encourage children and young people to participate in this annual national competition designed to encourage everyone to stay safe near railways. Joint winners of the 2022 competition were Rail Academy students, Yousef, Dominik, Cameron and Kai. It was also good to see pupils from Lanercost CoE Primary School featured in the Backtrack film. The award ceremony was hosted by the Rail Academy, who provided an amazing day for the winners.

We engaged with over 500 young people during the year, a figure which will hope will be surpassed in the future.

It Started with a Train Ride – The evacuation of children during World War 2

Back in 2019, we began work with Wallsend Local History Society on a project to record the memories of those who had been evacuated from Newcastle to the Haltwhistle area in 1940. Society stalwarts George and Phyll did an amazing job, locating former evacuees and then chronicle memories from over 30 evacuees.

The pandemic resulted in a change our plans from a large commemoration in Newcastle. With support from North of Tyne Combined Authorities, our first crowdfunding campaign and from CrossCountry, we raised the funds to produce a 17-minute film. The research undertaken by the Society provided the basis to allow Haltwhistle Film Project, Film Able and Gareth Davies-Jones to produce the film and specially written music.

Young people from Haltwhistle also got involved in recreating scenes of the evacuees arriving at Haltwhistle Station waiting to be allocated a place to live.



Participants in the project and local residents were invited to the film premieres in Wallsend and Haltwhistle. Both events were well attended, and the film was well-received. The project was shortlisted in the 2022 national Community Rail Awards.

The film can be viewed on our website <https://tvcrp.org.uk/news/515-it-started-with-a-train-ride>. A DVD is also available and if you would like to order a copy (£5 including postage) please contact us by emailing marketing@tvcrp.org.uk.

B's memories "I lived in Wallsend with my mother and two sisters .. when the evacuation order was given, I was seven .. I was taken by train from Wallsend to Newcastle and onto Haltwhistle .. taken to a Hall where we were selected and taken to our billets .. my sister was sent to another village."

E's memories "I was 12 and with my brother (age 10) .. taken by train from Howden to Newcastle and then Haltwhistle .. selected by Mrs .. lived at Bardon Mill .. stayed for a short while as she really wanted a girl .. relocated to Haltwhistle "



Inclusivity—breaking down barriers to rail travel for everyone

Coinciding with the 1900th anniversary celebrations of the building of Hadrian's Wall, the **Lyric and Line** project was re-launched in early 2022 to illustrate to group organisers that it is possible to take a small group out to explore our Roman heritage by rail. We wanted to understand the barriers group organisers face when planning excursions by public transport, the aspects participants enjoy when travelling by train, exploring new places and heritage and to learn if there is a positive impact on wellbeing.

Days out for groups from St Vincent de Paul and Action Foundation were organised using rail and bus travel to the Roman sites at Corbridge and Chesters. Our singer songwriter,



The Hidden Colours of Roman Calligraphy

You couldn't get trains in Roman Days
They used horses, but we use rails
So we took the line, up the River Tyne
No metal detectors, 'cos that would be a crime

Oh, we took the bus, that ain't no fuss
Filled the 122, with all of us
We arrived at the fort, with our wheels on fire
To be inspired, at the borders of Empire

Gareth Davies-Jones, ran two songwriting workshops with the groups after each of the excursions focussing on the experiences on the journey and the visit to an attraction. Some of their lyrics are shown here.

In July the groups performed their songs to an audience at Newcastle City Library. Members of the Hadrian's Wall 1900 anniversary committee were impressed, supporting a professional recording of one of the songs and for the production of a video.



Importantly we now have a greater understanding of some of the barriers which need to be removed. These include a lack of knowledge within our community about public transport, understanding about how to visit a Hadrian's Wall site using trains and buses, and the planning needed by group leaders to arrange such a visit.

With the support of Northern, we arranged **Try the Train** days out to Haltwhistle for people with dementia, learning disabilities, refugees and vulnerable people. Members of groups Chrysalis Club and WECAN, as well as others who attend St Vincent's Centre and their Pie and Poetry group, travelled by train from Newcastle, Prudhoe or Hexham to enjoy some of the activities and refreshments we provided in the Old Booking Hall.



During a visit to Haltwhistle by a group of refugees and asylum seekers who had education and child care backgrounds, we explained about the work we do with schools.

Later in the year, we were pleased to welcome volunteers from this group who assisted when school groups visited the Old Booking Hall.

Stations Review

The Stations Review Group, comprising TVCRP and Northern representatives, undertook a review during the summer of 2022 looking at the station buildings, facilities and environment. Local feedback from the station adoption groups was important helping the Group make an assessment of current issues, as well as those resolved in the past twelve months.

It was found the improvements had been made at many stations. These included:

- new seats at Riding Mill, Stocksfield and Haltwhistle
- re-lining of the car park at Dunston
- removal of the redundant cycle lockers at a number of stations
- Fences repainted at Wetheral and Wylam and fence replacement at Dunston
- At Bardon Mill, improvements to the waiting shelter, platform surface, new fencing and road surfacing on the station approach



The 2022 review highlighted a range of issues at stations requiring attention by Northern and Network Rail. Examples can be seen in these images.



Also part of the review, was consideration of how people get to and from stations, including issues such as signage and access routes, availability of electric vehicle charging points, and rail replacement bus information.

During the year, we maintained dialogue with Northern to ensure outstanding issues and any new faults receive attention.

You can read the 2022 Review report, together with the 2021 report, on our website at <https://tvcrp.org.uk/news/502-the-stations-of-the-tyne-valley-railway>

Projects

Haltwhistle Station Buildings

It is disappointing to report, the project to create offices and studios and improve waiting facilities for passengers is taking longer to finalise than we envisaged. Much of the work is complete with many of the finishing touches already in place such as the bespoke metal grilles on the windows and new window blinds featuring scenes from Haltwhistle in the past.

We continue to pursue early completion, full opening of the waiting rooms for passengers and seeing the studios and offices occupied.

We were able to report our experiences of the project to the Transport Minister, the Rt Hon Wendy Morton MP, when she visited Haltwhistle, accompanied with local MP, Guy Opperman.



During the visit, we provided an update about our projects and invited our guests to try out our **Cyclo Knitter**.

Who would have thought we could promote rail and active travel whilst they pedal and knit a scarf? It has been designed so that we can take it to venues on the train. We have taken the cyclo knitter to schools and events; it certainly has been popular putting a smile on peoples' faces.



Staying on the theme of cycles and the railway. Our **E-Bike** project will provide facilities for recharging cycles in lockers complete with solar panels and for e-bike hire at Haltwhistle.

We envisage that these new facilities will help people to explore the area, make Hadrian's Wall attractions more accessible and encourage sustainable, active travel.

Some of the projects put on hold as a result of the pandemic are yet to resume given the uncertainty of services as a result of short-notice cancellations and industrial action. We plan to review each of the outstanding projects to ensure they relate to current travel trends and to our Action Plans.

Promoting the Tyne Valley Railway and beyond

Encouraging people to travel by train to the Tyne Valley Railway area supports our local communities and economy.

During Community Rail Week in May, we held a event in The Lanes Shopping Centre, Carlisle, with colleagues from Community Rail Cumbria, Settle-Carlisle CRP and Northern. This provided us with an opportunity to engage with people who do not normally travel by train.



Many of you will realise that paper timetables are now extremely rare and we are pleased to support and feature in a multi-route Northern publication including timetables for all services serving Carlisle.

Our Explore the North leaflet has been popular and with the support of CAMRA, we updated the Whistle Stops leaflet featuring pubs and hotels offering a selection of real ales. You can download these leaflets from the brochures page at tvcrp.org.uk.

The Carlisle Ambassadors event held in Carlisle provided another opportunity to showcase rail travel, this time to businesses from North Cumbria, Southern Scotland and beyond.

Explore Carlisle and beyond by train



Give The Train A Try



During the year, we handed out about one thousand packets of wildflower seeds and other promotion items at events as we promoted the Tyne Valley Railway and sustainable travel by rail.



Thanks to Arlo's creator, Bessie, who created a new design for a greetings card helping us to promote travel by train to Hadrian's Wall country.





With thanks to
our partners for their support:
Northern, CrossCountry, LNER, Avanti West Coast,
TransPennine Express, Community Rail Network,
Network Rail and the Railway Heritage Trust
and to our officer, Fiona, and all the volunteers
who make the Tyne Valley Railway so special

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