

Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership Annual Report 2015-2016



Improving local stations and train services

Read about:

- Station Awards for Belper, Ambergate and Cromford
- More children's artwork installed at Matlock Bath
- Dedicated volunteers enhance stations



'Launch of Belper Station Mosaic' Ashley Franklin's award winning photograph. See pages 3 and 4 inside.



Station Adopters planting at Ambergate.



Planters at Cromford Station



Children's artwork at Matlock Bath Station.

Message from the Chair

I am delighted to once again introduce this report highlighting the achievements of the Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership, during the last 12 months. It has been another successful year for the line with continued passenger growth, enhancements to stations and more awards recognising the great partnership working taking place.

Key to much of this success are the efforts of the Station Adopters and it is pleasing that more local people continue to contribute their time and skills to take pride in their local station. In June, a wonderful launch event was held at Belper with local children and stakeholders, to celebrate the completion of the station mosaic which later in the year achieved national recognition by winning two Community Rail Awards. The impressive mosaic and numerous colourful pictures displayed around the station are a great testimony to everyone involved in the project.

The welcome at Matlock Bath Station continues to be enhanced through additional artwork and the efforts of Matlock Bath Parish Council who, as well as looking after the station planters, have taken on improving an area of District Council land adjacent to the station.

It is pleasing that the improvements at Ambergate during the previous year have been recognised by the Most Improved Station Award and improvements are continuing with the installation of an extensive landscaping project led by staff from East Midlands Trains.

In a similar vein, I was also delighted that the improvements at Cromford won the East Midlands Trains Environment Award. These improvements are hopefully just the start, especially now that a felling licence has been agreed, providing permission for the first tree management at the station for many decades.

I am also excited to see the great progress on the design for the Derwent Valley Line Promotional Panel for display at Derby Station. It's great that the idea from one of the Partnership members has been able to be taken forward with the expertise of those within the Partnership. I look forward to the completed design being appreciated by travellers at Derby Station.

These and many other successes show how the Partnership is delivering real benefits to transform the passengers' experience on the Derwent Valley Line. The Partnership work co-ordinated by Alastair, our part-time officer continues to demonstrate great value for money. The continued funding from the Local Authorities, the National Park and East Midlands Trains are essential components to this success now, and in the future.



Councillor Irene Ratcliffe with the Cromford Station award plaque.

Councillor Irene Ratcliffe



News on the Line

Passenger Growth Continues on the Derwent Valley Line

Passenger journeys on the Derwent Valley Line, increased by 6% to 681,313 during 2015/16. The most notable passenger increases were at Belper and Matlock Bath. The changes in passenger journeys for each station are shown below:

Station	Passenger Journeys 2015/16	Passenger Journeys 2014/15	% Change in Passenger Journeys 2014/15 to 2015/16
Ambergate	41,609	38,762	6%
Belper	225,662	210,670	8%
Cromford	42,803	40,870	5%
Duffield	61,644*	58,668*	6%
Matlock	214,790	208,410	3%
Matlock Bath	70,667	63,665	12%
Whatstandwell	24,137	24,544	-1%
Total at all local stations	681,313	645,595	6%

*Total includes through tickets to Wirksworth via Duffield

Service Extended to Newark

In May 2015, improvements to the train service between Nottingham and Newark led to the majority of weekday Derwent Valley Line trains continuing east of Nottingham, through to Newark Castle Station. This through service now offers the opportunity for days out in the Derwent Valley from communities along the route to Newark.

School and College Groups get on Board

Our promotional group travel leaflet 'get on track for great school and college trips along the Derwent Valley Line' helped to generate a 30% increase in group bookings. During the year a total of 43 groups travelled on the Derwent Valley Line, comprising 368 adults and 733 children.

Trains Keep to Time

Over nine out of ten Derwent Valley Line trains ran on time during the year with punctuality and reliability slightly up on the previous year at 92%.

Award Winning Local Stations

In recognition of great projects at our local stations, three of the seven Derwent Valley Line stations received the following awards during 2015/16:

Ambergate

- Winner Most Improved Station – East Midlands Trains Best Station Awards 2015

Belper

- Winner Community Art Schemes - Community Rail Awards 2015 for Transition Belper 'Belper Station Mosaic and Art Gallery'
- Winner Photographic Competition - Community Rail Awards 2015 for Ashley Franklin's 'Launch of Belper Station Mosaic'
- Runner Up Community Partnership Award – East Midlands Trains Best Station Awards 2015

Cromford

- Winner Environment Award – East Midlands Trains Best Station Awards 2015

Improving Local Stations

Our numerous station volunteers along the line continue to take great pride in their local station, making each station an attractive and welcoming entrance to their community. During the year, six new volunteers have joined our existing groups at Belper, Cromford and Matlock Bath. The work of the Station Adopters continues to be supported by Alastair from the Rail Partnership and Matty Maternaghan and Paul Mobbs from East Midlands Trains.

Significant enhancements have taken place at several stations with the completion of the Belper Station Mosaic, environmental improvements at Cromford and work to improve the entrance at Matlock Bath Station which will see artwork installed along with new planting. The passenger experience has been further enhanced at every Derwent Valley Line station following the installation by East Midlands Trains of Ticket Vending Machines and new Help Points at stations along the line.

Duffield

The small team of Station Adopters continue to ensure colourful floral displays in the flower baskets along the entrance path and in the larger platform planters. The volunteers, who are members of Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, also maintain the planting areas on the adjacent heritage railway station.



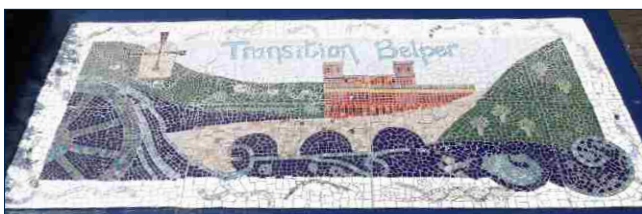
A colourful display at Duffield Station

Belper

Summer 2015 saw the installation and successful launch of the Belper Station Mosaic and Art Gallery. The station art project was co-ordinated by local artist Christine Gray on behalf of Transition Belper. The project had involved children from Herbert Strutt Primary School, Leaps and Bounds Nursery, St. Johns C of E Primary School and Turnditch C of E Primary School. A number of children from the schools involved attended the launch event. Members of the public had also contributed to the production of the mosaic at the Belper Goes Green ECO Festival. The Station Mosaic and Children's Art Gallery was funded by Belper Town Council, Designated Community Rail Development Fund and East Midlands Trains.



Later in the year the Station Mosaic and Art Gallery was a double winner at the Community Rail Awards 2015 where the project won first prize in the Community Art Schemes category whilst local photographer Ashley Franklin's photograph of the 'Launch of Belper Station Mosaic' won the photographic category by capturing the 'Essence of Community Rail'. The array of enhancements at the station was also recognised by a Runners-Up accolade in the Community Partnership category at the East Midlands Trains Best Station Awards.



This year, the Transition Belper volunteers have created a new wildflower meadow behind the new wall on platform 2. The area has been seeded with a mixture of native grasses and wildflowers to attract a variety of bees, butterflies and other insects. This area is now being managed as part of the volunteers weekly gardening sessions to ensure the station is blooming throughout the seasons.

Above: The launch of the new mosaic at Belper Station.
Below: The newly installed mosaic.

Improving Local Stations

Ambergate

Substantial environmental improvement work has begun to enhance the banking areas next to the new steps and improved footway on the Station Approach road. The smaller section of banking has been planted by Station Adopters with a mixture of shrubs and Daffodil bulbs, donated by one of the local residents. A major challenge to improve the larger area of banking has also begun, led by Station Service Team member Matty Maternaghan and his colleague Kevin Knight. The steep overgrown banking is to be transformed into an impressive terraced sleeper bed using old railway sleepers provided by Network Rail. The Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership has received a grant of £1,000 from ACoRP's Small Grants Fund to support the project.

The three Station Adopters continue to look after the colourful floral displays in their eight planting barrels and eleven baskets around the platform, car park and station entrance. Their efforts continue to receive much praise from passengers and local residents.

The access improvements and work of the Station Adopters led to Ambergate winning the Most Improved Station Award 2015 at East Midlands Trains Best Station Awards.



Before and after: Small section of banking improved by Station Adopters



East Midlands Trains staff creating terraced planting area on large banking next to steps



Whatstandwell

The Whatstandwell volunteers continue to maintain an attractive station environment with the management of the gardens around the station, seasonal bedding plants in numerous tubs and baskets along the platform and around the station car park.

Local passengers will hopefully soon be able to benefit from an improved footpath from the village to the station. A sum of £10,000 has been allocated from Derbyshire County Council's Local Transport Fund towards improvements including surfacing and the installation of low intensity lighting. The Community Rail Partnership is seeking additional funding to maximise this opportunity to enhance the path for passengers using the station. A full improvement scheme is expected to be delivered next year.

Improving Local Stations

Cromford

The station entrance is gradually being improved following the removal of invasive Laurel. The large areas which had been dominated by Laurel have been planted with various woodland species including 1,000 native Bluebell bulbs and sown with wildflower seeds. This work was carried out by the Cromford Station Volunteers assisted by the DerwentWISE team, who also funded the purchase of the woodland wildflowers with a grant of £495. The Bluebells have proved successful as have some of the wildflowers. Throughout the rest of the station the adopters have been removing brambles and weeds, whilst cutting back vegetation throughout the year and maintaining the seasonal bedding plants on the platform. The improvements at the station have prompted much local praise and the station won the Environment Award 2015 at East Midlands Trains Best Station Awards.



Ground clearance at station entrance

In March 2016, a Forestry Commission Felling Licence was granted to Network Rail granting permission to remove two Lawson Cypress trees (causing safety issues) much of the invasive Sycamore and to carry out other tree pruning work around the station. It is hoped that this can be carried out next winter once a funding package for the work is produced by the Community Rail Partnership and Network Rail. This will also enable the rebuilding of the dry stone wall at the entrance to the station, once the Sycamore growing next to the wall is removed.

Matlock Bath

Various improvements to the welcome for passengers have been taking place at Matlock Bath Station. 14 wildlife art images, produced by nursery children from Matlock Bath Holy Trinity Primary School, have been installed on the platform fence adjacent to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's environmental education centre.

The Station Adopters from Matlock Bath Parish Council have agreed to manage an area of land within the Derbyshire Dales District Council car park adjacent to the station entrance. This area was overgrown with trees and large shrubs. During the winter, the Station Adopters cut back vegetation and dug out the stumps of trees and shrubs. Located behind this area was an old signboard which now has a new frame built by Matty from East Midlands Trains and Alastair from the Rail Partnership. Some of the children's artwork located in the waiting room has been reprinted and will be installed on the framework behind the planting bed once this is replanted in the spring with a variety of small shrubs. This will complement the colourful floral displays maintained by volunteers along the platform and by the station entrance. The Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership received a grant of £800 from ACoRP's Small Grants Fund with match funding from East Midlands Trains towards the project.



The station entrance area before and after clearance by Station Adopters

In August, Network Rail organised a team building event to clear vegetation encroaching on the busy footpath linking Matlock Bath Station to the Heights of Abraham. A team of eight from Network Rail, East Midlands Trains and the Rail Partnership cleared both sides of the footpath of overhanging vegetation, brambles and nettles. Many appreciative comments were received during the day.

Matlock

Eight volunteers from the Station Adoption team assist in the weekly plant care and watering sessions which maintain the planters to such a high standard throughout the year. There are now over 20 planters and flower baskets all expertly cared for throughout the year and greatly appreciated by passengers using the station.



Caring for one of the planters at Matlock Station

Marketing the Derwent Valley Line

Marketing the Derwent Valley Line

The Community Rail Partnership continued to promote the Derwent Valley Line to both local residents and visitors. In addition to updates of the visitor guide, summer evening promotion and group travel leaflet the Partnership also held some promotional days at Derby and Nottingham. Considerable work also began on the design of a new Derwent Valley Line promotional panel for Derby Station.

Promotional Days

In October, volunteers from the Derwent Valley Line helped the Partnership promote the train service and the work of our station volunteers at Derby and Nottingham Stations. These promotional events were part of East Midlands Trains week focusing on Customer Service. The Partnership also took the opportunity to publicise our successes to Ministers and Department for Transport staff at a community rail roadshow in London.



Derwent Valley Line Visitor Leaflet

Two editions of the Derwent Valley Line promotional leaflet were produced in May and December 2015. The leaflet was distributed to numerous local outlets and to regional train stations and Tourist Information Centres.

Derbyshire Train Times

For the first time, two Derwent Valley Line promotional pages were included in the December 2015 edition of the Derbyshire Train Times.

Derwent Valley Line Promotional Panel

The design of an artistic panel promoting the Derwent Valley Line is near completion. It features an artistic map of images, photographs and information about places to explore and details the history of the Derwent Valley Line. When completed this large panel will be installed on the wall of the waiting room, on Platform 2 at Derby Station. The idea for the panel came from Stuart Smith representing Peak Rail at the Community Rail Partnership meetings. A small group of Partnership members, including Stuart, have co-ordinated the project. Grants of £1,350 from DerwentWISE and £1,000 from ACoRP Small Grants Fund provided the majority of the design and print costs of the project.

Matlock Bath Illuminations

Visitors arriving by train to the Matlock Bath Illuminations once again benefited from a 20% discount on entry to the Illuminations on production of their train ticket. More seats, with four carriages on some services, were provided to serve the popular fireworks' nights as part of the Matlock Bath Illuminations. Station posters helped promote train services to the event.

Derwent Valley Mills Discovery Days

A full page feature was included in the series of Discovery Days Festival leaflets to encourage visitors to travel by train to the numerous talks, walks and other events.

Local Transport Information

Local train timetable displays and transport maps in towns and villages were updated throughout the year. Similarly, the information in the Partnership's station display cases was updated throughout the year informing passengers of timetable changes, ticket information, visitor discounts and local events.

Other Partnership Activities

Other activities undertaken by the Partnership during the year have included:

- Co-ordinating Partnership responses to proposed timetable changes
- Representing the Partnership at a range of stakeholder meetings
- Working with partner organisations to promote the train service
- Regular attendance at Friends of the Derwent Valley Line meetings discussing issues with passengers
- Commenting on relevant rail industry consultations

Finance Report 2015/16

The Partnership has continued to maintain all of its funding from Amber Valley Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, East Midlands Trains and the Peak District National Park Authority. This funding enables the employment of a part-time officer and enables the delivery of numerous marketing initiatives and small-scale station enhancements.

Financial Statement 2015/16

Expenditure	(£)	Income	(£)
Salary Costs	18,502.66	Amber Valley Borough Council	2,000.00
Staff Travel	1,056.44	Derbyshire Dales District Council	2,000.00
Projects and Marketing Activities	6,722.81	Peak District National Park Authority	2,000.00
Miscellaneous Expenses (meetings, administration, IT & mobile phone)	344.66	Derbyshire County Council	2,000.00
Sub total for 2015/16	26,626.59	East Midlands Trains	16,600.00
To be carried forward to 2016/17	37,440.44	Grants from DerwentWISE	1,845.00
		DVLCRP Reserves from 2014/15	37,622.03
Total Expenditure	64,067.03	Total Income	64,067.03

The Partnership received grants totalling £1,845 from DerwentWISE for two projects in 2015/16:

1. £495 for Wildflowers at Cromford Station and
2. £1,350 for Derwent Valley Line Promotional Panel.

Additionally, the Partnership was awarded £1,800 from the ACoRP Small Grants Fund: £800 for Improving the Welcome at Matlock Bath Station and £1,000 for the Derwent Valley Line Promotional Panel. These grants will be claimed once the projects are completed in 2016/17.

The Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership is grateful to East Midlands Trains for providing additional funding in 2015/16. The Partnership is extremely pleased that Local Authority funding commitments are continuing for 2016/17. East Midlands Trains funding exists until July 2018 as part of their franchise.

Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership

The Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership works to develop and promote the Derwent Valley Line for the benefit of residents and visitors. The Derwent Valley Line is one of approximately 25 designated community rail routes with the Partnership's role in developing the line officially recognised by the Department for Transport.

The Partnership's Vision for the Derwent Valley Line is:

'The operation of a frequent and reliable 7 day a week railway service that will attract a growing market, meet the needs of residents and visitors and support the economy of the Derwent Valley'.

The Partnership is funded by Amber Valley Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, East Midlands Trains and Peak District National Park Authority. The Partnership is managed by Derbyshire County Council.

The Partnership would also like to thank all our station volunteers, members of the Partnership and Chris Darrall for meticulously recording the minutes of the meetings.



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