

# 2022

Chilternrailways

## ANNUAL COMMUNITY RAIL REPORT



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# Introduction

Welcome to the 2022 edition of Chiltern Railways Community Rail Report.

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This report sets out some of our community achievements and highlights from 2022.

Connecting and integrating stations in the local communities we serve is at the heart of what we do. We place a great deal of emphasis on supporting the four key pillars of the Department for Transport's Community Rail strategy.

- 1) **Providing a voice for the community,**
- 2) **Promoting sustainable, healthy, and accessible travel**
- 3) **Bringing communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion**
- 4) **Supporting social and economic development**

Community Rail brings together local groups and partners of the railways. It allows us to work collaboratively on delivering a variety of community initiatives and activities across our network to transform our stations and the communities we serve.

Our Community Rail volunteers, and our Community Rail Partnership (CRP) - Heart of England, helps us to promote the importance of local railways by encouraging sustainable travel. They also stimulate community cohesion as well as the promotion of social development and the beautification of our stations. Our long-lasting relationships with our station adopters, known as Friends of Stations, and our CRP has been key to our overall success.

Despite a number of challenges faced by the industry and our communities in the last couple of years, the level of focus and determination displayed by our community partners is stronger than ever. In October this year, we celebrated the achievements of our community partnerships at our Community Rail Conference where a number of station adoption groups gathered alongside representatives of the railway including Network Rail and Community Rail Network.

**As we look forward to continuing our relationships with our partners, we hope you enjoy reading this report and seeing the fantastic results that have been achieved.**

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# Stakeholder Executive

## The role of the Stakeholder Executive

The role of our Stakeholder Executive is to manage relationships with our community partners and oversee projects undertaken by the Friends of Station Groups, The Community Rail Network, The Heart of England Community Rail Partnership, Primary Engineer and wider charitable initiatives.

We support our partners to add social, economic and environment value to the local community. This includes improving understanding of the railways and encouraging people to travel by train, promoting sustainable travel and contributing towards the social and economic development of local communities. This includes attending community events, supporting station volunteers, and bringing together communities – both adults and children.

This role ensures that communities are educated about the railways and are involved through engaging projects. Getting together with Community partners and working together on how we can increase community engagement has been vital part of rail recovery post-pandemic. The best part of this role is being able to meet different people across the industry who have the same goal of making the railways a fun place and making train travel accessible to everyone.



# Station Adoption

**Station adoption groups are valued stakeholders of Chiltern Railways.**

Station adoption groups are valued stakeholders of Chiltern Railways. Friends of stations dedicate their time and put in an immense amount of effort in the beautification of adopted stations. As of 2022, we have eight station adoption groups across our network with an army of volunteers.

- **Friends of Aylesbury Station**
- **Friends of Bicester North Station**
- **Friends of Dorridge Station**
- **Friends of Hatton station**
- **Friends of Lapworth Station**
- **Friends of Leamington Station**
- **Friends of Solihull Station**
- **Friends of Warwick Station**

We will support station adoption groups throughout 2023 and strengthen our relationships with our partners to ensure we continue to deliver safe and successful community initiatives.

Every year Chiltern Railways provides station adoption groups with an Annual Community Grant of £250. Each group has an allocated treasurer and a dedicated bank account. These funds support Friends of Stations with purchasing equipment such as gardening gear and resources.

This section of the report will celebrate the achievements of our station adoption groups. A lot of time, creativity and effort is dedicated each and every year. In 2022 our Friends of stations along the network celebrated the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Commonwealth Games which took place in Birmingham and the West Midlands, and look forward to celebrating the coronation of His Majesty, King Charles III in May 2023.





# Friends of Bicester North

**Friends of Bicester North (FOBNS) are an offshoot of Bicester Green Gym with around 16 volunteers.**

Friends of Bicester North Station have focused their efforts maintaining the long flower bed on platform 2 with continued weeding, additional planting - either new plants or replacing dead ones, watering in the summer and trimming back invasive species. The challenge of a hot summer was combatted by the installation of three water butts in order to keep the plants looking healthy and happy.

Additionally, passengers traveling to the Jubilee celebrations in London from Bicester North were greeted by vibrant of flowers planted by the friends. The station was decked out with flags, bunting, and a gallery of the station throughout the years celebrating its heritage - even the queen made an appearance! FOBNS has displayed great pride in celebrating the life of Queen Elizabeth II.

Books have been added to the waiting room in an attempt to invite passengers to use the space and make it feel like an enjoyable experience. And with the festive season in full swing, we joined the Friends in adding some sparkle to the station. A Christmas tree was placed in the booking office and another in the waiting room, whilst the shelters on the platforms were dressed with tinsel.



# Friends of Solihull Station

**Friends of Solihull Station, known as FOSS, was formed 5 years ago and currently have around 20 members.**

FOSS has been involved in several projects from planting to painting over the years they have been active. They have also been involved in the design proposals for the redevelopment of the station where they have attending meetings and had an input into the 4 different designs for the station - particularly in relation to the transport flows to and from the station, drop off points and disabled access.

Over 2022, FOSS have made the station feel and look welcoming in a number of ways. Waiting rooms are designed to feel more than just waiting rooms, FOSS work in creative ways to ensure that they make waiting rooms feel like an experience. Posters across the station promote nearby destinations and see what else is accessible from Solihull station (e.g. Warwick Castle and Birmingham City Centre). Bookshelves in the waiting room also offer keen readers the chance to grab a book!

In celebration of the Platinum Jubilee, the gardening enthusiasts planted hundreds of plants with a red, white and blue theme on the platform, at the entrance and in the 25-metre border going up to the car park. This carried through to the Commonwealth Games when thousands of passengers travel through Solihull Station.

Though maintaining the plants was a major effort especially in the very dry summer, it was very worthwhile as Friends of Solihull were showered with some amazing compliments!

As of December 2022, the friends of group have collected large amounts of litter around the station and have exceeded their target amount of 200 bags with a total of 207 bags of litter collected.

**Moving forwards, Friends of Solihull have attracted a group of Hong Kong nationals who have shown a keen interest in station adoption and Community Rail, emphasising their values of inclusion and diversity.**





# Friends of Dorridge Station

With a total of 21 volunteers, Friends of Dorridge Station (FODS) have continued to work their magic maintaining various planters dotted across the station and on the forecourt. With new signs placed on the 'Incredible Edible Fruit & Veg Planters', FODS intend to provide passing customers with better details as to what is growing in these planters and when they will be harvested. Passengers are welcome to pick fruit and vegetables!

Waiting rooms at Dorridge station have been revamped to create a pleasant experience that emphasises and celebrates the station's heritage. A mock fireplace was added to one of the waiting rooms to give it a cosy and homely feel.

FODS have encouraged customers to travel to a number of hidden gems on the route showcased by the artwork on the walls

**Friends of Dorridge Station have shown a lot of interest in encouraging customers to access these destinations via train.**





# Friends of Lapworth Station

15 local residents form the Friends of Lapworth Station (FOLS) and have been working their magic to improve the station appearance. They have transformed a number of redundant spaces and made the station more welcoming for our customers..

For the friends, Autumn 2021 involved a lot of cleaning, leaf-gathering, and planning. 2022 has seen some of those plans come to the fruition, with a number left for 2023. FOLS has purchased and installed nine large planters on the platforms funded by local companies, residents and Lapworth Parish Council. They have been maintaining and watering the planters throughout the year including through the very hot and dry summer.

The new planters have been complemented by the much needed painting work that was carried out by Chiltern Railways on the waiting rooms and overhead lights.

**In addition, a local artist has worked with children at Lapworth School to produce five beautiful and colourful pieces of artwork about the station, Lapworth and volunteering. These should go up in early 2023.**

Hoping to create an attractive environment for birds and other wildlife, FOLS think that the overgrown extra lines can attract and be a home to species. Our Friends of Station really do think outside of the box and make use of all available space!

**Our Friends of Station really do think outside of the box and make use of all available space!**



# Friends of Hatton Station

**Station adoption groups are valued stakeholders of Chiltern Railways.**

Going strong for 15 years now, Friends of Hatton Station (FOHS) work collaboratively with volunteers in the local community in the beautification of Hatton Station. Hatton is a small and quiet station where passengers are greeted to planters along the platform which add life and colour to the station throughout the year. The group has 15 volunteers who visit the station between 2-3 times a week during the summer months to water and weed the plants. Several of the volunteers from FOHS invested their time in making some further changes to the wooden planters and working towards replacing them.

Our community rail partnership continues to support the Friends of Station. A volunteer from the Friends of Hatton is grateful for their support.

“The Community Rail Partnership working with Chiltern Railways provides vital funding and advice which Friends of Hatton Station have greatly benefitted from. Their continued support has enabled us to renew our aging planters to help improve the general ambiance of our station.”



**The group invest a great deal of creativity in the upkeep of this station. They invest their time and work with local friends groups at other stations. Their work promotes the use of train services to the local community by making the customer experience as pleasant as possible.**

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# Friends of Aylesbury

Having recently joined our Station Adoption Programme, Friends of Aylesbury station (FOAS) are quite a young group formed under the Community Transform CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation).

Involved in a series of projects at the station, FOAS have installed planters across the station utilising redundant space on the platform. Planters are watered weekly, and new plants are added frequently. This is an herb-bed for passengers to pick on their way home!

**With the support of local artists, murals showing four schemes depicting aspects of Aylesbury were also added at the station.**

These initiatives add a touch of colour and life to the station making it look and feel welcoming. This all helps to boost the customer experience delivered collaboratively and making best use of the local knowledge and wealth of interest from our community group.





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# Friends of Warwick

**Planters across the platform at Warwick add a touch of colour to the station making best use of the space available.**

Warwick is a town known for its heritage and attracts a lot of tourists to visit sites like Warwick Castle. Chiltern Railways works with Friends of Warwick Station (FOWS) to make it as welcoming as possible. In partnership with Warwick District Council an art installation called The Warwick Colour Palette was put in place. This new piece of public art by

Stacey Barnfield is made up of several large colour swatches; each colour represents something that people who live, work, or visit the town suggested was synonymous with Warwick. Chiltern Railways will continue to work with FOWS to improve the station in 2023.



# Friends of Leamington Station

**Friends of Leamington Station (FOLS) were formed in 2004 with the intention make the station a better place for those starting and finishing their railway journey there. The restoration of the original gardens was and remains an important part of this aim.**

With around 20 volunteers, the platform garden is lawned with flower beds and multiple planters across platforms. Awarded with compliments and recognition several times, FOLS live up to their standards and always go above and beyond in making sure the stations flower beds are kept looking glorious – no matter the season!

**Leamington gardens were recently awarded ‘Outstanding’ for ‘Its Your Neighbourhood’ with a record score of 93% from a Royal Horticultural Society judge - and there is no surprise as to why. The level of creativity and time invested is evident.**

The Friends of Leamington are thoroughly enjoying this community initiative. A volunteer has said the following about her experience with station adoption.

“Station adoption has brought all of us “Friends” many benefits - the feeling of doing something both good and important, the satisfaction of seeing the garden develop, the appreciation of the travelling public, the friendship of the Chiltern staff. We are a very social group and this is particularly important for those who live alone”

And it doesn't stop there, FOLS continue to look to work on other parts of the station and ensure the station continues to carry that welcoming and inviting look and feel. Recently, a bookshelf was added to the waiting room on platform 2 and, with generous donations from Oxfam, the bookshelf is never left empty.





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# Friends of Leamington Station

Repainting and restoring benches and working with partners to get some of their remarkable station photos displayed along the subway, FOLS have truly made use of redundant spaces and capitalize on any opportunity to transform the station.

FOLS participated in the planning and delivery of the annual Remembrance Service working closely with the Chiltern area manager and other stakeholders. The group are joined by the local community and Chiltern employees to mark the anniversary of the Armistice. Wreaths were laid by guests including the Chairman of Warwick District Council and British Legion.

Our staff continuously support the work of the friends, and appreciative of what a fantastic job they do. Here is what our staff has to say about the work of the friends.

“We are so lucky at Leamington Spa Station to have such an active and engaged Friends Group. They keep our wonderful garden and planters looking beautiful all year round and ensure that our customers have books to read by stocking the book swap shelves we have in both waiting rooms. The Friends donated a beautiful Christmas tree to the station and also paid for the Christmas lights that we enjoy every year outside the station”





# Friends of the Shakespeare Line

## Birmingham Moor Street Transformation

Alongside Mitie, Friend of the Shakespeare Line (FOSL) spent the day supporting the transformation of Birmingham Moor Street. Friends of The Shakespeare Line are a group of enthusiastic volunteers formed during lockdown, involving the communities near the railways between Birmingham and Stratford-Upon-Avon. During the Commonwealth Games, Birmingham Moor Street was a key station for those visiting the Games. Whilst the station was shut for engineering works between the 20th-25th June, FOSL were up bright and early adding life and colour to the station. Huge planters and compost were delivered, and FOSL were quickly at work with their green fingers!

A group of around 20 volunteers joined Network Rail in transforming our platforms to create a welcoming and pleasant environment for passengers using this station. Whilst FOSL added magic touches and a pop of colour to the station, the wider team undertook a deep clean of the station.



**Enhancing the station with some greenery and a fresh lick of paint, these volunteer-led activities transform the way our stations look. These activities continue to promote inclusion, diversity and creativity and support the recovery of rail post pandemic.**

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# Adopt a Station

We are lucky to work with many dedicated community volunteers who are passionate about their community. Our station adopters have shown a profound interest in improving the station environment for customers and the local community through a series of initiatives.

**With our support and the support of Community Rail Partners, we welcome the opportunity for you to join our Station Adoption Programme where you, a group of volunteers, can adopt a station along our route and turn it into a welcoming environment where customers can feel and enjoy the experience of travelling by train.**

The benefits of station adoption are huge for the community, and if you are a group of people who want to make the railway attractive, bring communities together by promoting sustainable travel and contributing to the social and economic development through pride and cohesion, then please email [adoptastation@chilternrailways.co.uk](mailto:adoptastation@chilternrailways.co.uk) for more information.





# Heart of England Community Rail Partnership

Using creative ways to intergrate stations into local communités.



With the support of Network Rail and the Community Rail Network, our Heart of England Community Rail Partnership (CRP) works in creative ways in integrating stations into the local communities served by Chiltern and other train operators in and around the West Midlands and Warwickshire area.

**The CRP aims to deliver projects following the four pillars of the Community Rail Strategy (DfT). They deliver community engagement and promotional activities by working collaboratively with partners on projects including stations improvement initiatives and breaking down barriers that may prevent people from using the railways and exploring the great outdoors. Supporting our station adoption groups is another important part of the CRP activity.**

Throughout 2022, the HoE CRP officer has worked on a range of projects at stations across our network and has shown clear dedication through the involvement of local communities including local artists and schools. Below are examples of some of the projects the CRP has successfully delivered.

- Leamington Mural; As the rail industry recovers post pandemic, and with the Commonwealth Games hosted in the West Midlands, Leamington Spa Station saw an increase in passenger numbers. Working in creative ways and utilising space, the CRP collaborated with artist Emily Pettitt who produced a Mural for the station which showcases local attractions around Leamington Spa.
- This was an attempt to capture

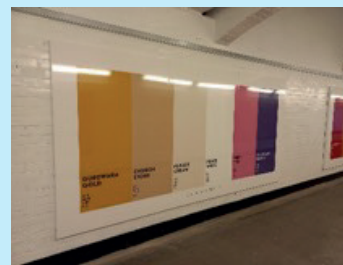
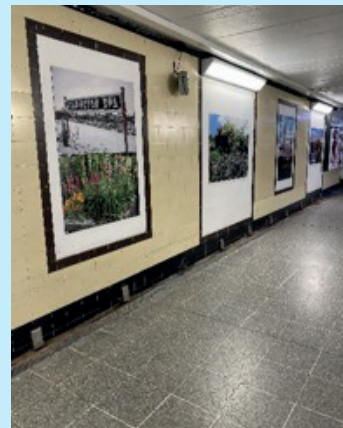
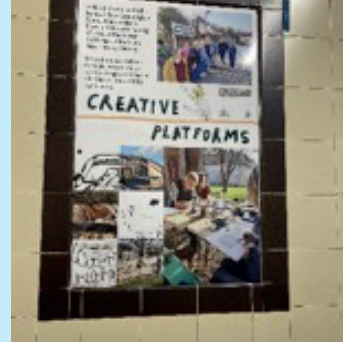


# Heart of England Community Rail Partnership

Using creative ways to intergrate stations into local communités.

attention and compliment the art dotted around the local town and station including the photo gallery along the subway where some images were captured by our Friends of Leamington.

- Creative Platforms; The CRP officer worked with Katie Jones and Emily Pettit on the 'Creative Platform' project which aims to tackle fears around train travel amongst young people. The CRP partnered up with Coventry and Warwickshire Minds and used the creative platforms as a tool that could help ease stressful and overwhelming situations. Posters created by the local artists were added along the stairs at Leamington Spa Station.
- Colour Palette School Engagement: Heart of England joined forces with The Colour Palette Company and artist Melissa Keskinilinc who worked with the CRP officer on a school engagement workshop where pupils had the chance to play around and explore the colours of Leamington Spa. These colours were then framed in the underpass which was just a discoloured blank canvas before being brightened up with the colour canvas. A similar project also took place at Warwick.
- Touch of greenery; The CRP supported the Friends of Hatton with adding additional planters along the platform and the Friends of Solihull were grateful for the CWG Small Stations Project Fund which the CRP gave which was used to buy colourful flowers to plant ahead of the Jubilee weekend.



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# Heart of England Community Rail Partnership

Using creative ways to intergrate stations into local communités.

- Working with the Ramblers, the Long Distance Walkers Association and the Millennium Way Group, the CRP created a range of self-guided walks along the railway. This project promotes sustainable travel and encourages people to visit sustainable destinations that are hidden away and accessible via train.
- Chiltern Railways funded travel for the 'A Day Like This' project. This was a project delivered by Highly Sprung for Heart of England where 24 Syrian children and adults had the opportunity to use the train and for many, this was their first time experiencing this. Workshops and activities were delivered to educate families about the railways and how to navigate them and stay safe. This goes to show that our CRP continues to involve a diverse community and give people the opportunity to experience and learn new things.
- And on the topic of safety on the railways, during the summer, Heart of England worked on an Anti-Trespass Campaign which highlighted the importance of staying safe. This was particularly aimed at young people. Items were distributed at stations including stickers, pencils, and booklets. Making the campaign fun and attracting to a younger audience was key in getting the message across and the public even had the opportunity to join a competition and had a chance to win some prizes!

These are some of the projects the CRP has created and been involved in. We contributed funds of £7,500 to support the CRP's delivery of these projects. The CRP looks to improve year-on-year and seeks advise from all train operators involved. Regular meetings are held between the partners of the CRP alongside other train operators, Network Rail and the Community Rail Network. The HoE CRP are very good at hearing our thoughts and ideas and are keen to help Chiltern Railways achieve these ambitions. Looking ahead, the CRP will continue to work with schools and communities on different projects including Cycle Stations and involving the wider community in improving social and economic development as well as promoting sustainable travel.

# Charity Partnerships

As we continue to support the local communities we serve, we have worked with our charity partners in order to enhance the social value delivered by our business.

## Primary Engineer's

Primary Engineer's create engineering curriculum for Ealy Years, Primary, Secondary and Further Education institutions. Through engagement, Primary Engineers encourage career development of children and young people. Chiltern Railways and CrossCountry support Primary Engineer's with funding and volunteer support.

During the academic year 2021/2022, 9 schools were recruited in and around Birmingham and 10 volunteers were involved from Chiltern and CrossCountry. Engineers went into schools and helped to deliver a 'shoobox train' learning experience giving the children the chance to make and test their designs. In May 2022, a Celebration event was held at University of Birmingham where two groups from KS1 and KS2 were crowned winners. Students participated in a train making project and were guided by engineers from both train companies as well as teachers who were enrolled onto the Primary Engineer's training programme.

This partnership enabled students to understand the rail industry better and gain some experience working alongside rail staff. The purpose of this was to break barriers and overcome any stereotypical views on careers within the industry.

Outcome:

- A total of 357 pupils took part - 50.8% boys and 49.2% girls
- For 32.9%, English was not their first language
- 94% of teachers reported their increased understanding of engineering as well as having a better understanding of diversity and challenges

We have partnered up with Primary Engineers and CrossCountry for the second year running and will be working with schools across the Oxford/Banbury area in the academic year 2022/23.





# Charity Partnerships

As we continue to support the local communities we serve, we have worked with a few charities and non-for-profit organisations whose aims are to improve lives of children and adults.



## National Literacy Trust

**National Literacy Trust is another charity partner who we have partnered up with again this year.**

Supporting parents, schools and guardians in helping babies and young children with language and speech development during early stages right through to secondary education, National Literacy Trust aims to work with pupils and parents in enhancing literacy skills.

With our support through funding and staff volunteering, NLT can work with schools and pupils and give them access to rail staff and have a chance to gain an insight into careers within the industry and see how literacy is vital and used in everyday life.

For the academic year 2022/23, NLT will be working at schools within the Leamington Spa area. Our funds will provide resources for tailored activities and station visits. Volunteers will also be recruited from across the company.



# Charity Partnerships

As we continue to support the local communities we serve, we have worked with a few charities and non-for-profit organisations whose aims are to improve lives of children and adults.



## The Bike Project

Since July 2022, we have been working with the bike project and have donated over 50 bikes.

The Bike Project are a charity who relies on people and businesses like us to donate bikes to them which they can then donate to refugees. They have hubs in Birmingham, Leamington, and Oxford.

After a 4-week notice period, abandoned bicycles are removed from our stations and collected by the Bike Project.

A quarter of the bikes that have been donated to the charity have been donated by those aged 16 or under. All donations help rebuild lives and allow refugees to access opportunities like jobs and education.





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## Further Charity Support

As we continue to support the local communities we serve, we have worked with a few charities and non-for-profit organisations whose aims are to improve lives of children and adults.



### We offer further support to community and charity initiatives through our Community Fund Scheme.

Chiltern Railways staff are given the opportunity to apply for a small fund that can support charities and organisations, including schools, that are near to them or based along our route. These donations support organisations with building projects and purchasing new equipment. Make a Special Kid Smile, Bourne End Juniors and Lillington Juniors FC are a few examples of where donations have been made.

In addition to this, complimentary travel prizes are also gifted to help raise funds for community projects and school projects.

And throughout the year, you will see charity collectors and choirs across our network gathering funds for various causes. Some of the charities we had this year include Macmillan and London Air Ambulance.



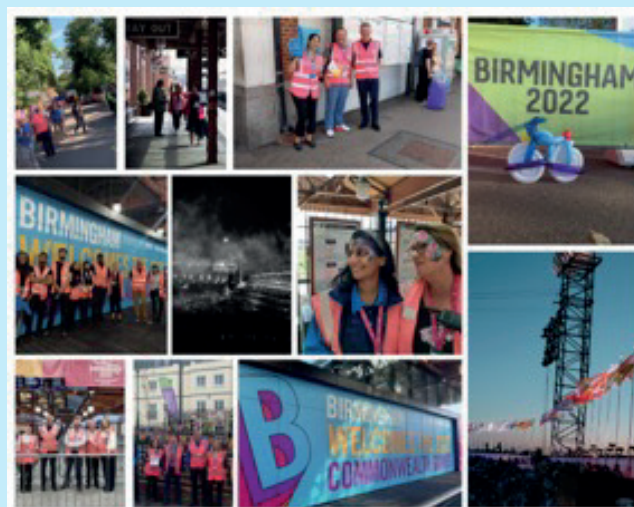
# The Summer of Sport

To top off the incredible work that has been happening across the network with the huge support from our partners, 2022 brought the Commonwealth Games to the West Midlands.

With our station, Birmingham Moor Street, being a key station in the heart of the Birmingham City, our staff worked incredibly hard with partners to deliver a successful and smooth customer experience. Other stations along our route near Birmingham were also a key part.

Passengers were kept entertained throughout the station with our hired professional entertainers. Magicians, Balloon Artists, and characters in fancy dress kept the spirits up.

Our back-office staff supported front-line staff throughout the two-week games period. Despite the record-breaking temperatures, staff thoroughly enjoyed meeting and greeting customers and giving a helping hand.



# Sustainable Travel

During Summer, we held a social media competition on Twitter with Visit Bucks, Wild Cycles and The Bel & The Dragon Inn (Wendover). One lucky winner had the chance win 2 x Chiltern Railways travel passes, a free cycle tour and a free one-night stay for two.

In October, Chiltern's Tourism Network set up a pop-up stand at our Marylebone Station to promote destinations along our route. They were joined by the members of local businesses such as Amersham Museum and a Bushcraft expert.

Rail Trails are promoted across our network, and we hope to continue to encourage passengers to travel by train and experience the wonderful outdoors - no matter the weather!

As we are supporters of sustainable travel, our website and leaflets at stations show a range of activities and destinations that you can plan to visit via train.









# Finance Report

This section of the report shows the total amount of funds allocated as part of Community Rail initiatives along our network. Chiltern Railways has discussed the funding of the Community Rail Partnership with Heart of England CRP as well as Community Rail Network

Community Rail Partnership	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Heart of England Community Rail Partnership	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£7,500	£7,500	£7,500	£7,500

Station Adoption Groups 2022	
Friends of Solihull Station	£250
Friends of Dorridge Station	£250
Friends of Lapworth	£250
Friends of Hatton station	£250
Friends of Warwick Station	£250
Friends of Leamington Station	£250
Friends of Bicester North Station	£250
Friends of Aylesbury Station	£250
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,000</b>

Charity Funds 2022	
Primary Engineers	£4,445
CRS Community Fund	£3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,445</b>



