



# Community Rail Partnership



## Annual Report 2022 - 2023





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## The East Suffolk Lines

The East Suffolk Lines are comprised of two routes and fifteen stations that stretch from Lowestoft in the north of the county, south to Ipswich, and east to Felixstowe. The lines serve some of Suffolk's largest towns, many market towns, and some of its smallest villages.

The Community Rail Partnership works with train operator Greater Anglia and stakeholders to help deliver the Community Rail Strategy.

- Provide a voice for the community
- Promote sustainable, healthy and accessible travel
- Bring communities together to support diversity & inclusion
- Promote social & economic development

## Funding

The Partnership is funded annually by Greater Anglia, Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council and Ipswich Borough Council. Suffolk County Council also provides administrative services in-kind.

As a member of Community Rail Network, the CRP has access to match funding to help deliver projects and initiatives.

## Greater Anglia

Greater Anglia is the region's train operating company and provides a mix of rural/regional, commuter, and Intercity services.

Greater Anglia works with the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership and Station Adopters, helping to develop initiatives that are of real benefit, not just to passengers but the wider community through which the railway runs.

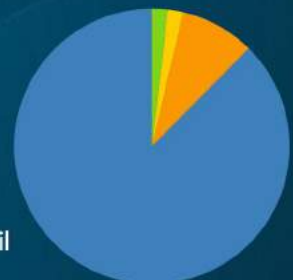
[greateranglia.co.uk](https://greateranglia.co.uk)

## Network Rail Anglia

Network Rail owns, operates and maintains the infrastructure on the East Suffolk Lines apart from the stations which are leased to Greater Anglia.

## Income 2022 – 2023

- Greater Anglia
- Suffolk County Council
- East Suffolk Council
- Ipswich Borough Council







## Educational Initiatives: Student Artwork

The East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership engaged with schools and colleges throughout the year. The initiatives included artwork installations created by the students which were incorporated into their curriculum.

### Suffolk New College Ipswich Station Artwork

Thirty-six students for the UAL extended Diploma in Art & Design at Suffolk New College undertook a large scale project as part of their industry placement. The level 3 programme for 16 – 18 year olds is equivalent to three A levels.

The students created a series of panels for Ipswich station footbridge on the theme '*A sense of place – Suffolk.*' This involved 315 hours of work: on site, photography, planning, research and design, liaising with stakeholders, project management and promoting the project locally and nationally.

The group achieved a 100% pass rate for their main qualification demonstrating how the project enriched the student experience and kept them motivated. It has also raised aspirations; many are progressing to higher education.

The college also received interest from large organisations requesting copies of the work to be displayed across Ipswich.

The project was funded by the CRP; the panels were installed by Greater Anglia.







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### Brampton Station Mural and Twinning

Pupils at Brampton C of E primary school helped twin Brampton station Suffolk with Brampton station in Cumbria through an artwork project.

The initiative included a walk around the village as part of their curriculum. During the walk the students took photographs of several landmarks. They then created a mural by painting images based on the photos.

School enrolment at the time was 80 pupils with 50 taking part. Multiple students worked collaboratively on each section of the mural.

The CRP funded the project and the mural was installed by Greater Anglia.

In 2021 Tyne Valley CRP embarked on a similar project. Students from Lanercost primary school created a mural at their Brampton station in Cumbria.

Pupils from both schools sent postcards depicting the mural at their Brampton station to each other to officially twin the two stations in 2023.







## Educational Initiatives: Journeys by Train

The aim was to introduce rail travel to students who had never been on a train whilst providing fun and educational activities as part of the journey.

### Brownies Bucket and Spade Train to Celebrate the 125th Birthday of Felixstowe Station

Working in partnership with Felixstowe Travel Watch, the Felixstowe Society, and the Orwell Hotel, the CRP and Greater Anglia helped to mark the 125th birthday of Felixstowe station with a series of events.

The CRP ran a Seaside Bucket and Spade train for a group of Brownies who were greeted at Felixstowe by the Mayor and their Member of Parliament.

Their day included touring the public exhibition about the history of the station before heading to the beach for a scavenger hunt and sandcastle competition.







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### Rosehill Primary Student Rail Journey 'Where will my feet take me today?'

Thirty pupils went on a rail journey from Derby Road to Felixstowe as part of their current topic 'Where will my feet take me today?'

The CRP-sponsored initiative was a learning experience for the group of 4 and 5 year olds, many of whom had not travelled by train before.

The students were provided with an activity book and goodie bags to help them learn about the environmental benefits of travelling by train, the green garden spaces being developed at stations in Suffolk, recycling, and maths through fun exercises.







## Diversity and Inclusion: Landscapes for All

Part of the CRP's remit is to bring communities together to support diversity & inclusion. In May the CRP worked in partnership with Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB to provide access to the Suffolk countryside to under-represented communities including refugees from Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea.

The initiative involved using the rail network to access the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty via the footpaths that connect it with East Suffolk Lines stations.

The CRP travelled with the group from Ipswich to Woodbridge by train and took part in a walk to Melton along the riverside. After a picnic lunch they stopped for an ice cream at a floating cafe docked along the river.

During the journey the group learned about the local flora and fauna before the day ended back in Woodbridge with a walking tour of the town.

Funding for the initiative was provided by Suffolk County Council's Green access team.

The CRP has plans to work with Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB on similar initiatives in the coming year.







## Healthy Travel: East Suffolk Lines Walks

For 15 years ramblers have been able to walk from one East Suffolk Lines station to the next and back by train (and vice-verse) thanks to a network of routes devised by Roger Wolfe and published and publicised by the ESLCRP.

The 160 mile network of 22 paths was waymarked by Roger and CRP members and is today maintained by a small group of volunteers.

Each year volunteers also lead monthly station-to-station guided walks to promote healthy travel and travel by train.

This year the monthly walks programme was impacted by several strikes as the walks usually take place on a Saturday. For those walks that did go ahead as planned, turn out was good, averaging about 20 people per walk.

As part of the Suffolk Walking Festival and Community Rail Week, the CRP led a walk from Saxmundham station to Darsham station. The walk was fully booked with 40 people and two dogs taking part. A reception was held at Darsham Country Centre who own the old station building. The charity offers hostel-style accommodation as part their association with the Woodcraft Folk. They are also the Greater Anglia station adopters.







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## Station Signage: Felixstowe, Trimley, Brampton

### Felixstowe Double Arrow

At Felixstowe, the station is set back from Hamilton Road making it difficult to locate for people unfamiliar with the area.

To help with direction finding, a Double Arrow logo was placed on the Co-op sign at Great Eastern Square, site of the former station building.



### Trimley Heritage Signs

The CRP funded a large running board and three totems, all in Eastern Region Blue. This complimented the work Greater Anglia undertook at Trimley to restore the historic footbridge.



### Brampton Direction of Travel Sign

The project at Brampton was inspired by the station adopters. It included a simple 'Direction of Travel' sign to help passengers get their bearings at the single track station.

The CRP designed the sign based on others dotted along the line.

It was kindly installed by Greater Anglia.







## Promoting Rail Travel: Folk East and First Light

The East Suffolk Lines CRP was keen to work with organisers of two national festivals that take place along with lines. The aim was to increase tourism, promote sustainable travel, reduce road congestion and limit carbon emissions.

### Folk East Free Shuttle Bus at Wickham Market

Since 2016 the CRP has co-sponsored a free shuttle bus from Wickham Market station to the Folk East festival a few miles away.

In 2022 the CRP worked with Greater Anglia to offer a special Folk East discounted rail ticket to further encourage travel by train.

The integrated transport option normally attracts hundreds of people but was unfortunately impacted by a rail strike.



### First Light Lowestoft Extra Train

The 24-hour First Light Festival is just four years old and this year attracted more than 40,000 people to Lowestoft.

The CRP again worked with Greater Anglia to provide an extra train home. The departure was timed so people could go by train, stay for the main gig and make connections at Ipswich.

Ninety-two people boarded the train. Passenger footfall at Lowestoft was up 108% compared to the prior weekend, a 44.2% increase from 2022.







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## Promoting the Railway: Our Offer

A robust campaign took place throughout the year to promote the East Suffolk Lines and its tourism offer. This included printed guides, timetables, and social media campaigns.

### Days Out by Rail

The CRP took part in Community Rail Network's multi-week campaign to promote travel by train and places of interest easily accessible by rail.



### Community Rail Week

The week was punctuated by a social media campaign, a station walk, and highlighted by a stall at London Liverpool Street with other CRPs.



### East Suffolk Lines Guide with Timetable

In 2022 the CRP combined its Line Guide with Greater Anglia's timetable which GA kindly reformatted at no charge. A 30,000 print run between the Winter and Summer timetables was distributed across the region.

The 10-sided combined leaflet reduced costs and saved 120,000 printed sides compared to printing separate leaflets.







## Adopter Initiatives: Greener, Cleaner Stations

The Adopters at Westerfield have taken an active role in all aspects of the station, from turning it into an educational opportunity for young people to helping educate the public about the dangers of idling engines at level crossings.

### Westerfield Adopters Children's RHS Project

Two children ages 8 and 10 grew peas from seed at home and planted them at Westerfield station under the supervision of the Station Adoption team and the CRP. The pair built a wigwam with netting to protect the plants from pigeons. They also constructed a succulent planter for burrowing bees, providing a source of water and included pebbles at the base for insects.

The activities helped them to attain an RHS level 5 school gardening Award.



### Clean Air Day at Westerfield

An action day was held at Westerfield level crossing on Clean Air Day 15 June. Station adopters and volunteers spent a few hours handing out leaflets to drivers in a bid to reduce pollution at the crossing which is adjacent to the rail station.

The group are hoping their efforts will encourage car drivers to consider the houses and businesses next to the level crossing and switch off to reduce pollution and noise.







## Station Adopters: Two Decades Strong

Greater Anglia's station adoption programme celebrates 20 years in 2023. Over that time the East Suffolk Lines Station Adopter community has gone from strength to strength.

All the stations are adopted. In 2022 new adopters were welcomed at Oulton Broad South and the adopter teams at Saxmundham and Westerfield grew.

This year the adopters at Derby Road helped the insect population by building a bug hotel from recycled pallets. At Saxmundham the CRP helped part-fund a garden project for the station forecourt. Saxmundham and Westerfield received Wildlife Friendly accreditation from the Wildlife Trust whilst new flower tubs were provided for the adopters at Darsham, Wickham Market, Westerfield, and Felixstowe.







## Station Adopter Awards: And the Winners are...

Each year Greater Anglia holds a Station Adopter Awards event to showcase the flowers and gardens they tend to throughout the year and recognise them for their efforts.

Community Involvement  
**Winner:** Westerfield



Best Small Station  
**Winner:** Brampton



Most Improved Station  
**Highly Commended:**  
Trimley



Best Medium Station  
**Highly Commended:**  
Beccles







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## Community Rail Officer: Welcome Aboard

In March 2023 the Community Rail Partnership appointed Thalia Rushmore as its first-ever full-time officer with the aim to do even more to keep the two lines under its remit thriving.

In the short time since her appointment, Thalia has taken on several projects, developed new initiatives, and held meetings with the station adopters and various stakeholders.

The partnership is looking forward to an even better 2023 – 2024 and beyond.



## In Memoriam: Graham Newman

In December 2022 we lost one of our own. Graham Newman served on the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership board for many years. He was a true champion of the Community Rail movement.

Graham played a big role in the partnership's continuing development of the Felixstowe Line. He was an advocate for all things rail and involved with many of our projects, some of which are featured in this report.

Graham is missed, and we hope that if he were still with us today he would be proud of the projects we've completed that he had a hand in starting.







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The year ahead promises to be an exciting one. Projects include a station garden Rail Trail with St Elizabeth Hospice, Magic Memories train with Alzheimer's UK, station tours for children, minority groups and those with disabilities, an educational Crab Train to Woodbridge, 'Seeds for Bees' with area youth, more biodiverse station wildlife areas, interpretation boards, and waymarking walking routes to and from stations.

The CRP is helping to fund the Folk East connecting shuttle bus again this year and looking forward to another fruitful year with the First Light Festival in 2024.

Thank you to our partners, station adopters and stakeholders for making the year such a successful one.

At the heart of the Community Rail Partnership is YOU, so please do get in touch to let us know about aspirations for your station and your community rail lines.

Aaron Taffera  
Chair

[eastsuffolklines.co.uk](http://eastsuffolklines.co.uk)



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## Community Rail Partnership

greateranglia



Suffolk  
County Council

