



Station adopters newsletter

Summer 2021



BARTON - CLEETHORPES



Hello and welcome to the Summer edition of the EMR Station adopters newsletter

I signed off my last message in December with the news that a Covid-19 vaccine might be available very soon - how swiftly time and the news have moved on! I know that many of you, along with majority of the UK population, have now received at least one jab and the hope of a final easing of lockdown into a near return to normality in June is just around the corner.

The last six months have not been easy for any of us and here at EMR my colleagues have worked tirelessly to keep our staff and passengers safe at our stations and on our trains, keeping key workers on the move, and continue the introduction of our class 170, 180 and 360 trains as well as make great strides with our project partners Hitachi and Rock Rail on our brand new Aurora fleet (you can read more about this on pages 11 and 13).

By far the biggest piece of work we have delivered so far this year is the May 2021 timetable change; providing more seats, quicker journeys, and a simpler and more resilient timetable. This includes a completely new timetable for our services to and from London St Pancras International, the introduction of EMR Connect electric services between London and Corby, welcoming the Barton-on-Humber route into the EMR family and improvements to EMR Regional services too, with new journey opportunities. At this point it would be remiss of me not to mention the farewell to the iconic HST, the workhorse of the Midland Main Line, which has served EMR and its franchise predecessors and British Rail so faithfully for over 40 years.

However, I know we are not the only ones who have been busy. A couple of weeks ago I had the privilege of meeting some of the EMR station adopter groups and hearing first hand about the great work you are doing. Sustainability, not just in a financial sense but environmentally and socially as well, will be a key pillar of the post-Covid recovery. Station adopters are an integral part of the railway community alongside Network Rail and Train Operating Companies such as EMR and Community Rail is very much in the line of sight for our business. The work of station adopters will be central to the recovery of the railways. Customer confidence is key and what you are doing – making our stations look welcoming and safe – is essential. You are making a real difference at all our stations.

On behalf of everyone here at EMR, thank you to you all for your hard work and commitment to Community Rail.

W. Rogers

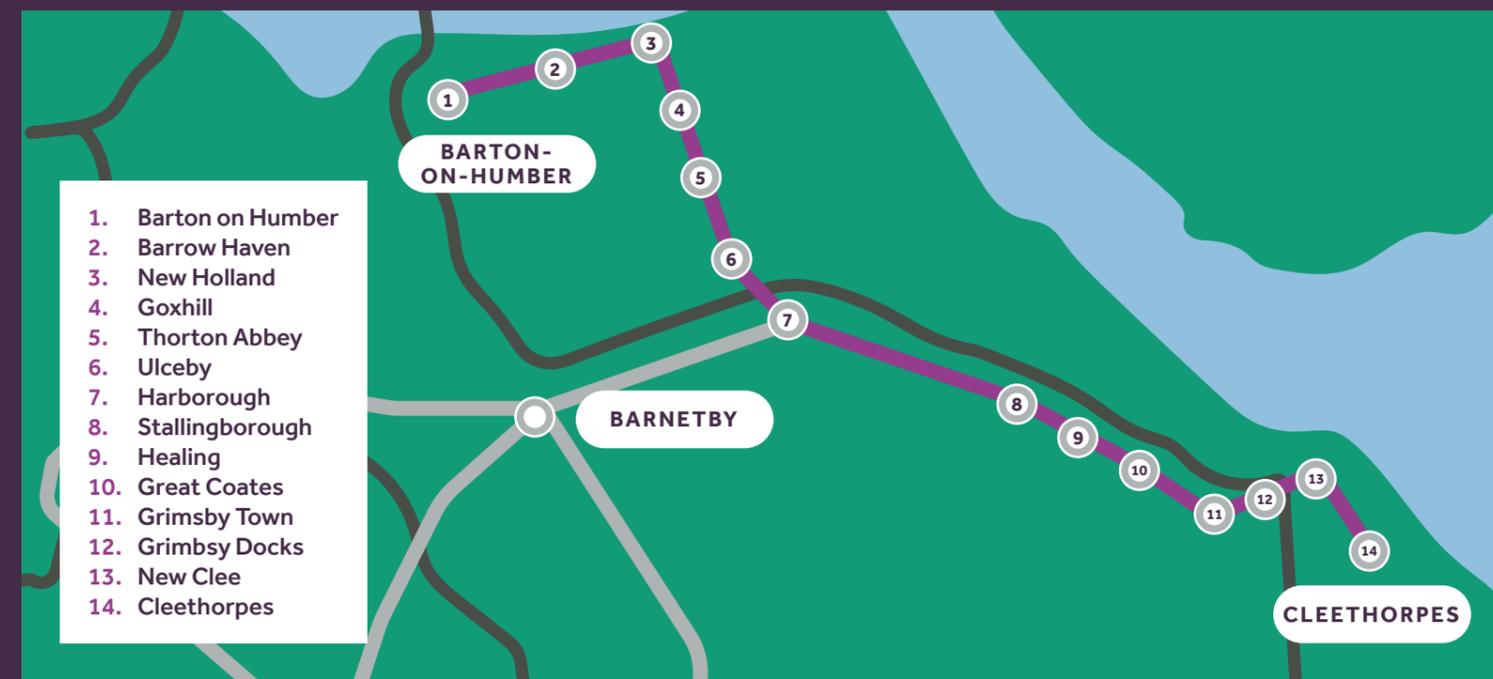
Will Rogers
Managing Director

On Monday 17th May we welcomed a brand-new route to the EMR network, the Barton-on-Humber Line, also known locally as the Humberline, which takes a 23-mile picturesque route through the North Lincolnshire countryside to Grimsby Town and Cleethorpes.

The route has 14 stations, 12 of which have transferred to us. Grimsby Town and Cleethorpes remain under TransPennine Express. The route has an estimated footfall of 150,000 people and is a crucial transport link for those that live along the route.

The line became a Community Rail Partnership in February 2007 as part of a pilot scheme supported by the Department for Transport. The CRP is supported by a group of volunteers called the Friends of the Barton Line and we have welcomed 13 new station adopters to the EMR railway family.

Each year the CRP supports Armed Forces Day in Cleethorpes, runs a Santa Train and advocates for accessible travel for all. Gill Simpson is the Community Rail Development Officer for the line, and we are looking forward to working with Gill and all the station adopters going forward. To find out more about the Barton Cleethorpes Community Rail Partnership, please visit their website bccrp.co.uk





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NEWS FROM THE EAST

The beginning of the year saw us plunged into another national lockdown but, with vaccines now being rolled out, the station adopters and CRPs have been making lots of preparations for what is proving to be a busy second half of the year

During lockdown I managed to deliver a couple of talks to local Rotary Groups, one to long term adopters of Lincoln and the other to a brand new group who now adopt Shirebrook. I also managed to virtually present a train talk to a group of 6-7-year-old school children in Bulwell with Clive, our On Train Development Manager. They had prepared lots of questions and were so enthusiastic, we will be working with the school again later in the year.

A few of our adoption groups have finally had success opening bank accounts after being pushed back due to Covid-19 every time they got an appointment. These groups are now working on becoming members of Community Rail Network and looking at funding streams to support their ideas to enhance their stations. Spalding station adopters took on the mammoth task of clearing the front of the station, which was suffering particularly badly with anti-social behaviour. They also planted up huge new flower beds that were recently restored after the installation of new lifts.

We managed to hold our first Community Action Day in May. The EMR Marketing & Revenue team

joined the adopters and SSTs to clear the weeds, sow some wildflowers and build a planter. We have further days planned for Gainsborough Lea Road in June and Spalding in August.

We've also welcomed some new faces to our to our region. Kate Myers is the new Officer for the North Notts & Lincs CRP and Gill Simpson for the Barton Cleethorpes CRP. We are also working on the Robin Hood Line becoming a new CRP and should have more information about that in the coming months.

Additionally, I have been working closely with Elisha Allen, the Community Safety Manager in our region for Network Rail. We have completed some rail safety in schools and have some trespass, vandalism and suicide awareness events coming up shortly. We are also working in partnership with British Transport Police to deliver a National Citizenship Service social action project in Mansfield in July with Notts County Football Club.

It is great to see projects moving again after what has been an incredibly different 18 months.

Kaye Robinson, Community Rail Ambassador



DERWENT VALLEY LINE

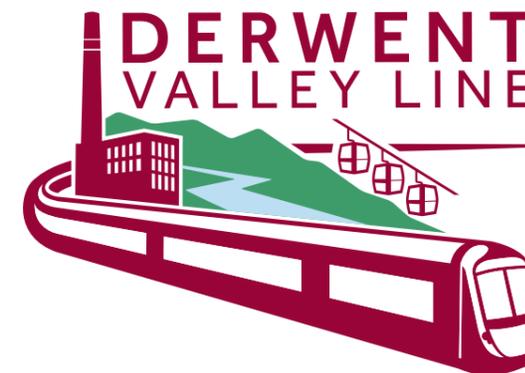
Over the winter, we have been reviewing our marketing, which has led to new branding and the development of a website. Our Derwent Valley Line logo has had a refresh thanks to work by EMR's design team. The main features remain; with the mill, cable car, hills and river having had a few design tweaks. Most notably our train has changed to reflect the newer class 170 trains that we are starting to see appear on our scenic line.

The new logo is a key element in the development of our website in terms of style and colours. The website will have a tourism and leisure focus to encourage people to return to train travel, featuring over 75 leisure and tourism listings, over 30 walks and information about towns and cities along the route. Each station will have its own web page, including the work of station adopters along the route.

We have continued to support the work of our station adopters, who have had some lovely spring planting displays at their stations, although extra watering was definitely needed over the dry Easter period to keep them blooming. The CRP is also investing, along with EMR and other organisations, in a number of projects including CCTV, access improvements and digital travel and tourism displays that will benefit many of our stations and their immediate vicinity.

We look forward to our new website encouraging people back to explore the line this summer and for them to benefit from the station improvements along the route.

Alastair Morley



NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & LINCOLNSHIRE



I would like to introduce myself as the new Community Rail Officer for the North Notts & Lincs CRP. I was appointed on 4th May and have just completed my induction week, where I was lucky enough to meet some of our lovely adopters and I look forward to meeting other members of our rail community over the coming weeks and months.

We are excited to be taking forward several projects for our four EMR stations, including our Gainsborough Lea Road Community Action Day and Mini Imp project. Particular initiatives we are looking forward to include improving our website, growing our adopter team and engaging with our community, particularly within schools and colleges to educate young people on all the railway has to offer.

There is also the Lincoln Station Community project, where we will be installing artwork on platform six and developing a garden at the entrance of the station.

We are thrilled to be working with Mel Langton, a local artist, along with Christ Hospital, The Priory Academy and Lincoln City Football Club. The six pieces of artwork will showcase a number of Lincoln's best attractions and the work we are due to complete here will make a hugely positive impact on the aesthetics of the station and hopefully make it an even more pleasant place for regular station users and visitors to the city.

I would like to thank all our wonderful adopters. Visiting our four EMR stations I have been amazed by all of the dedicated work that has been done, particularly during such a challenging year. It has been a pleasure to meet you all over my first two weeks in the role, I am really looking forward to meeting and spending time with more of you in the near future. I would also like to say thank you to those who helped cover this post prior to my arrival.

Kate Myers

POACHER LINE

It is hard to believe we are nearly half way through the year. We emerged from the third Covid-19 lockdown period with strong plans to aid the road to recovery and we even managed complete a few great projects.

The first weeks of the New Year were spent finalising details for the launch of our new website, which went live at the end of January; if you haven't taken a look yet please do so at poacherline.org.uk

At the end of last year the Friends of Radcliffe station were approached by a group who were looking for plots of land to grow vegetables for Rad Cooks, a charity who provide free, healthy meals to the elderly and vulnerable in Radcliffe. They identified some space on Platform 2 and once funding was secured and the "Stay at Home" message was lifted we, along with the Friends of Radcliffe and EMR spent two unseasonably warm days in March building, painting and filling two raised beds with six tons of soil! Potatoes have been planted in one and once the weather warms, the other will be planted using the Three Sisters method of beans, squashes and corn....yum! We look forward to following their progress.

Things are coming along nicely at My Little Allotment at Sleaford station. We held a naming competition which will be revealed at the Grand Opening on Thursday 3rd June, 11am-2pm. Everyone is welcome to attend – there will be Community Rail cake!

We completed another project at Sleaford station in April working with the Voluntary Centre Services who tackled an overgrown piece of land and in one community action day managed to clear the area, build new planters, paint and plant! The transformation is astounding and we hope to hold further days and replicate this success.

April also saw the awakening of the Bottesford Friendly Garden from its winter sleep with a couple of action days. This garden, thanks to the wonderful adopters, just keeps getting better and better – thank you! New plans for a pergola are in the works which will enhance this garden further.

In April we installed the stunning art work panels created by Jeni Cairns in the planter outside Boston station, which depicts the history of the area, and in the next couple of weeks we will start to tackle an overgrown garden area on Platform 1 into something beautiful.

We are looking forward to the future with lots of things planned including a promotional video of the Poacher Line and supporting EMR with their Poppy Express later in the year!

Joanne Andrews

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE



Rails to Trails is a new book of station walks which start and finish at our North Staffs CRP stations. There are ten walks, mostly circular, 1-6 miles in length. We hope to encourage people to explore more by train and on foot for environmental and health reasons and to discover hidden gems along the way. Our stations are important gateways to contrasting landscapes: farmland, picturesque villages, market towns, urban centres and industrial heritage. And there's even a castle to find at Tutbury!

Alsager station is now recognised as working to become Dementia Friendly (DF). The signage project, led by EMR in partnership with Alsager Partnership, has resulted in the installation of clear directional and informative signs throughout the station and toward the town centre. Alsager Partnership wants to

encourage people living with dementia and their carers to make day trips to the town by train and to visit its many DF cafés and shops. The Friends of Alsager Station were recently awarded a special Cheshire Best Kept Station Award in recognition of their work on this project as well as their ongoing maintenance of the beautiful and extensive station gardens.

The station adopters at Blythe Bridge and Peartree stations were given a massive boost recently by teams of EMR staff, who were allowed out of the office for a few hours. At Peartree the ever encroaching ivy was cut back and the long empty raised beds were repaired and replanted. At Blythe Bridge the overgrown shrubs were cut back, stones were painted and three trailer loads of wood chippings were barrowed and spread.

Claire Sandys





PERFECT PLANTERS

Across the network we have seen CRPs and station adoption groups spruce up their stations with blossoming blooms. Every year we help fund and coordinate the installation of planters, varying in sizes from small troughs on fences to large barrel planters on platforms, each one bringing a smile to faces that walk past them.

Amberol, based in Alfreton, Derbyshire, have been providing our stations with planters for many years. The first ones were installed on the Derwent Valley Line by CRP officer Alastair Morley and the station adopters at Duffield Station in 2005.

Amberol have perfected the self-watering aspect of planters, which when water is sparse at stations is an essential feature. They also do a huge array of sizes which enables every station to have their individual needs met. Whilst some stations have space for big barrel planters, others manage better with troughs on fences.

A couple of our station adoption groups have recently written case studies for Amberol which are available to read on the Amberol website amberol.co.uk

Additionally, we also see many planters made from sleepers – sadly not old railway ones as these are soaked in creosote so deemed unsafe. Large sleepers are available from most timber yards and are relatively simple to put together to provide a great bed for plants.

If this has inspired you to add some planters to your station then please get in touch with your local Community Ambassador, who can support you with the necessary permissions and funding guidance.

Stations, Social & Commercial Development Plan (SSCDP)

In November 2020 we opened our SSCDP funding pot which amounted to £325k of investment. This was available to all Community Rail Partnerships and station adopters on our network and the fund was aimed at improving our smaller and CRP line stations.



Mission of SSCDP:

'We will invest in better commercial and customer facilities. We will introduce well-resourced community programmes to stimulate use of buildings and facilities. Our investment will attract match funding and lead to the presence of a vibrant range of activities across our stations'



Vision of SSCDP:

'Places that act as a vibrant gateway between the communities they serve and the rail network. There will be commercial facilities on the stations to meet the expectations of our customers, with commercial agreements to support the viability of these facilities against the station demand. Where commercial facilities are unsustainable we will have active community connections to support the viability and presentation of our stations in other ways.'

CRPs and stations adopters were able to submit their suggestions via an application form until 31st January 2021. All applications were then agreed by the Community Rail Funding Panel. Over 28 projects were selected from across the network, and these are now being project managed by EMR's Property Team. Some of the projects selected include: the refurbishment of the waiting room at Sleaford station, new benches at Beeston station, improved CCTV at several stations and new station adoption noticeboards across the entire network. All work will be completed by March 2022.

We are fully aware that our CRPs and station adopters have a great level of understanding of what their local community needs from its railway. Our Community Rail team will work very closely with CRPs and station adopters to harness and encourage these suggestions so that the vision of the SSCDP can be delivered.



A PROJECT WITH A BUZZ

When we talk about community rail projects, more often than not they involve one station and the efforts of a dedicated band of station adopters, possibly with the assistance of a Community Rail Partnership Officer and a third party specialist or two.

So – in the middle of a lockdown – let’s put together a project that involves five stations and their station adopters, two Community Rail Partnerships and their Officers, a national charity, numerous suppliers of plants, soil and timbers and no end of logistical solutions, not to mention not one but three EMR Station Service Technicians, and then throw a local MP and some EMR and Community Rail Network volunteers into the mix for good measure.

Welcome to the wonderful world of bees – and the Bee Friendly Trust. Honey bees can fly up to three miles from the hive when out foraging for pollen and nectar but in areas that are densely populated or over-farmed they sometimes struggle to find enough food. The Bee Friendly Trust is working with railway authorities, community rail partnerships, and local groups across the UK to install bee-friendly flowering planters, fruit tree orchards and micro wildlife gardens on railway station platforms. Thanks to the Trust’s guidance and the teamwork of a small army of volunteers, those five stations – Chesterfield, Cromford, Whatstandwell, Tutbury & Hatton and Ilkeston – now have the most amazing bee friendly habitats on their platforms.

After several false starts because of national lockdowns, the project finally took off in late March at Chesterfield where 19 planters were constructed, filled and planted with bee loving plants, much to the delight of passengers and staff at the station. The team then moved on to Cromford and Whatstandwell

where a further six planters were installed with the help of the station adopters who will be responsible for the ongoing care of the planters. After a short interval, Tutbury & Hatton received its two planters – in a brand new garden area which adopters and volunteers had spent several weeks clearing beforehand, with help from Network Rail. The final piece of the jigsaw was Ilkeston. By now, we had planter construction down to a tee so their installation was a walk in the park. The biggest job – and one we had not attempted before – was the clearing of two large weed infested areas in a car park in order to plant up with even more bee friendly plants. Thanks to the efforts of the largest work party we had been able to put together in lockdown, this too went without a hitch and the project ended on a real high.

I say ‘end’ but actually there is more to come, with the intention to get local schools involved, with talks from the Bee Friendly Trust about bees, the environment and sustainability, as well as potential art projects and the construction of bug hotels to encourage other pollinators and useful insects. Of course there is also the possibility of more specialist planter installations at other stations on the EMR network.

A big thank you goes to everyone who has helped make this project a reality – there really are too many to mention but you all know who you are!

Alexa Stott, Community Ambassador



Since the last update at Christmas, five class 170 and four class 180 units have entered service with EMR and performance on both fleets continues to improve with every passing month. A further seven class 170 units are in the process of cascading from West Midlands Trains, having been painted into EMR’s aubergine livery prior to entering service as part of the May 2021 timetable change. A further class 170 unit will join the fleet in the summer from Transport for Wales.

Our class 158 and 156 units will continue to support EMR’s regional services while further class 170s are cascaded into the fleet over the next year or so.

May 2021 also saw the entry into operational service of the class 360 EMR Connect Fleet, operating between London St Pancras International and Corby, taking advantage of the enhancements made as part of the Midland Mainline Electrification Programme.

The May 2021 timetable change also saw the retirement of our long-serving and for some much loved HST fleet. With the Covid restrictions currently in place, we have been unable to celebrate their retirement as publicly as we would like but we hope our painted power cars and social media posts brought a smile. Whilst we know the HSTs will be missed by many, the improvements to train performance, accessibility and environmental compliance offered by the newer fleets do bring significant benefits to our passengers and staff.

Gareth Race



A day in the life of...

RACHEL TURNER, HEAD OF NEW TRAINS

I am responsible for the introduction of the new Aurora fleet of Class 810 Bi-Mode trains into our operation. I have a small team to help me do this and we also depend on the experience of our colleagues in EMR to advise us and review decisions that will impact their functions and the operation of the fleet.

Most days in my calendar are full of meetings with Hitachi and Rock Rail, the owners of the new fleet. I have a role as 'Joint Project Manager' for the contract between our companies which means I am the legal single point of contact for decisions and communication between the businesses and I have to consider Rock Rail's needs as long term owner of the fleet alongside ours as the initial Operator.

Covid-19 has made my days look a little different than they would have done otherwise – there's a lot more 'Teams' meetings and less travelling to Hitachi sites in London, Newton Aycliffe and Pistoia. That said, we are starting to have more in-person meetings again now, with regular trips up to see the progress at Hitachi's manufacturing plant in Newton Aycliffe and other meetings now being held in person at our offices or Hitachi's. My team is also getting out on the network – Robin Davis, the Aurora Operations and Compatibility Lead is visiting all of the depots and stations that the fleet will operate to assess any special requirements for that location such as stop boards, wheelchair ramps and selective door opening restrictions.

As a team, we are heavily involved in the Safety assessment of the new fleet, working with Hitachi

on hazard identification and control measures that we will have to enact. For Sustainability, my Project Engineers, Richard Verity and Dave Shaw, are reviewing the train architecture in Stabling and Turnaround modes, making sure that we get as much train environment benefit as possible for the minimum number of engines running or power drawn from the overhead lines. We are now working on detailed design aspects: my team is currently working closely with Customer Information and Branding on the Passenger Information System screens. These designs need to be 'frozen' soon so that the manufacturer can produce the software ready for testing the first train at the start of 2022. We are also reviewing what labelling is required for the trains. We have a weekly 'Interiors Working Group' to keep on top of all of the decisions that are needed for the interiors finishes of the trains – last week I was looking at samples of glass for the saloon doors as Hitachi's supplier couldn't get the glass that was originally specified.

It is really important to me and my team that the new Aurora fleet is a positive change for our business and people. One of the key parts of the programme is developing suitable training strategies and programmes to ensure that everyone in the business is prepared for the new fleet. Recently, I have been found measuring up for space at our training facility to house the new driving simulator that is being delivered for the fleet and working with the project team for the office move to make sure the room and the simulator specification are compatible.

There's a lot of Project Governance that I am involved in – Business Cases, Change Forms, Project Summary Reports, Risk Registers, Purchase Orders, finance tracking and correspondence. My Assistant Project Manager, Roseanna Shread, takes care of a lot of this and keeps the team on our toes. It is vital that this is all done in a timely manner or it can get out of control very quickly.

One aspect of the project that is starting to pick up now Hitachi has started manufacture is our Acceptance and Assurance strand. My team visits Newton Aycliffe each week to meet with the production teams there to assess the progress being made and controls that Hitachi has in place for the work required. I get involved if something isn't happening as or when it should and I then speak with the Hitachi Project Manager and Programme Manager to understand what can be done to catch back up or put things right.

Getting Etches Park Depot ready for the new fleet is also in my remit – I have regular meetings with the Project Manager to discuss progress on the design of the changes we are making, and with those on site who will be affected. We have been really pleased to be able to arrange the upcoming removal of the spoil heap between North Shed and the main line to happen by rail rather than road – reducing

disruption for the site and also hugely reducing the number of lorries on the road too. It was also really helpful to spend a few hours with the depot drivers and operations teams to understand their views on the work we are proposing – some really useful suggestions will be taken into the plans as a result.

Something that is still out of my 'comfort zone' is the amount of stakeholder engagement I have to do for my role – I have recently done interviews with BBC News, presentations to various stakeholder groups and I am involved in the filming of the EMR video series about the Aurora project. I don't think I'll ever get used to being in front of the camera!

In my downtime, I like to spend time with my family and friends, walking in the Derbyshire countryside and calling in at a pub now they are open again. My two ex-racing greyhounds are getting on a bit now and prefer to go for a short walk only then spend the rest of the day sleeping it off. I have really missed going to concerts this last year – my tastes are on the rock music end of the spectrum - I have about six or so gigs lined up that I hope will take place from October onwards. So, listening to new music on Spotify and the occasional YouTube concert has had to fill the gap.





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