

Poacher Line Annual Report



2020



Foreword

As the incoming officer for the Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership (CRP), I would firstly like to thank Kaye Robinson for all her hard work over the previous three years and wish her well in her new role with East Midlands Railway (EMR).

I am pleased to share with you our annual report for 2020. Despite the challenging times we have adapted to find new ways of working and managed to achieve some great projects this year. Highlights for me were starting the allotment at Sleaford station (see page 6) and the unveiling of our 27 metre mural at Boston station (see page 7)

With all of our events and school engagement put on hold our focus shifted to helping our communities; assisting with local food banks and supporting our amazing station adoption teams (see page 8). We welcomed 30 new adopters this year, 25 during the pandemic, taking my team to 73 and I would like to send a heartfelt thank you each and every one; they work incredibly hard and make a real difference at their stations. Bottesford, Radcliffe and Heckington stations were also recognised with awards this year – well done!

I have taken the nine months I have been in post to reflect on what is truly important to the CRP. I intend to deliver some exciting projects in 2021 which will continue to see us hit the four pillars of the Community Rail Strategy. I would also like to thank Peter, my CRP Chair, and the EMR Community Rail team for their continued support of my role.

I hope you enjoy reading this annual report and that you stay updated with all our news via our improved website.



Jo Andrews
Community Rail Officer

A successful year for the Partnership in which we welcomed our new community rail officer Jo, whilst not losing touch with predecessor Kaye who continues to support us in her rail industry role. As you will read in this report much has been achieved over the year despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.

There is so much enthusiasm along the Poacher Line from all involved - volunteers, stakeholders, rail industry, funders - that I can truthfully say that this has rarely been surpassed in my long years of working in community rail. So many successes in 2020, so much planned for 2021.

I am looking forward to the coming year and new projects and thank everyone for their unstinting support.



Peter Roberts MBE
Chair, Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership
Chair Emeritus, Community Rail Network

The Poacher Line

The Poacher Line is a Community Rail Partnership which runs from the bustling city of Nottingham to the traditional seaside resort of Skegness. It is an accredited line supported by the Department for Transport (DfT) working with East Midlands Railway (EMR) as the main train operating company and other partners. The CRP follows the Community Rail Development Strategy working on the four pillars as follows:

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

The partnership is supported by Lincolnshire County Council as the host partner, DfT, EMR, CrossCountry Trains & London North Eastern Railway.

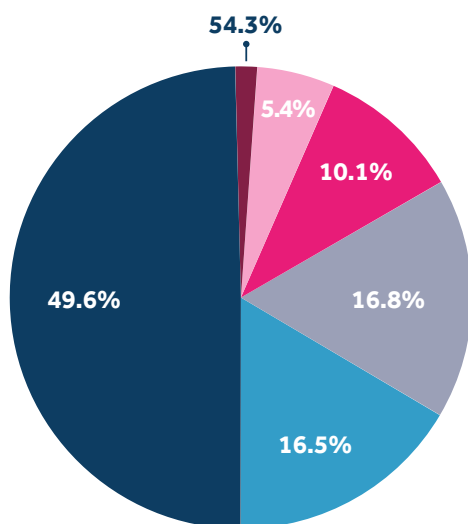
East Midlands Railway

East Midlands Railway (EMR), owned by Abellio, is the main train operating company in our region. EMR is committed to working closely with Community Rail lines across their network; with 9 CRPs currently they are looking to expand this over the course of the 8-year franchise. As part of their committed obligation to the Department for Transport there are several funding options for CRPs and station adoption groups to bid in to, to support projects along their lines.

eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk

Financial statement 2019-20

INCOME

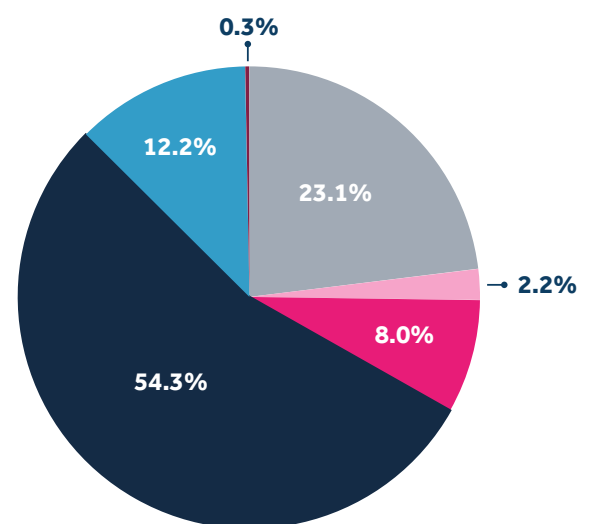


Brought forward from 2018/19 £26,745.26

 Funding Grants £49,111.50	 LNER £10,000
 East Midlands Trains £16,349	 CrossCountry Trains £5,384.61
 East Midlands Railway £16,657	 Music Train £1,500

Total £125,747.37

EXPENDITURE



Carried forward to 2020/21 £31,746.01

 Major Projects £51,000	 Marketing Cost £7,500
 Officer Salary £21,675.48	 Officer Travel £2,034.47
 Minor Projects £11,512.12	 Misc. £279.29

Sub total £94,001.36

Engaging with young people

2020 has been a difficult year for schools and community groups and the partnership had limited opportunities to engage with these groups due to COVID-19. The CRP managed a couple of projects prior to lockdown and the subsequent restrictions. Plans have been made for projects to start in the New Year with St. Georges Academy, Sleaford, Boston Youth Group and the art department at Boston College.

Mosaic & Artwork unveil

We unveiled two pieces of artwork created by students along our line this year. Alongside the existing mosaic, Radcliffe station now proudly displays artwork created by the Fine Art students of the South Nottinghamshire Academy. This amazing artwork was shortlisted in the Community Rail Awards in the Community Art Schemes category.

The children of Archbishop Cranmer CofE Primary School had previously completed a 6-week scheme of works to design and produce an amazing mosaic for Aslockton station. A cold February day saw the unveiling of the mosaic at the station and it really enhances the station.



Aslockton station planting

The children of Archbishop Cranmer Primary School returned to Aslockton station in the warmer month of July to plant up a selection of herbs for passengers to take a snipping. Great fun was had by them all and it adds another level of interest at the station – well done to all!



The Home Nursery, Boston

We started a planned scheme of works with the nursery exploring the colours and shapes of the railway, which would culminate in a herb planter at the station decorated with mini mosaics which the children will have made. Unfortunately we only managed the first lesson before lockdown forced its postponement; it is our intention to pick this up in 2021!

Events

We managed to sneak one event in before lockdown and the children had a great time. We hope to resume our full programme of events next year!

Paddington Bear Storytelling Train

On a cold February day the partnership took 24 children from Sleaford charity Rainbow Stars, and their carers, on a train trip to Boston Library. All the children received an activity pack on the train to keep them entertained and enjoyed activities at the library which included; making a bookmark and luggage label and of course how to make a marmalade sandwich! They also listened to two stories read by the partnership officer and each child received a Paddington Bear book and cookie to enjoy on the trip home. Rainbow Stars reported the children had a wonderful time and this has led to further partnership working with the charity.



Keep up-to-date with all of our events by signing up to our newsletter at poacherline.org.uk and follow us on Twitter and Facebook [@poacherline](https://www.facebook.com/poacherline)

Poacher Line in Numbers:

 **£49,111.50**
Amount of funding secured

 **14** Number of stations adopted

 **73** Number of station adopters (up from 43)

 **2** Awards won

 **632** Twitter followers

Poacher Line Website

With the help of a grant from the Community Rail Development Fund, we took the time afforded to us during lockdown to update the Poacher Line website. This involved a lot of research of other CRP's websites and we took advice from the team at Community Rail Network on what to include. We are pleased with the result and can't wait to share another platform to showcase the CRP and encourage engagement with our communities. Check out our improved and interactive site at poacherline.org.uk



News in brief



- The partnership was proud to announce in January it had been officially recognised by the Department for Transport in its accreditation scheme.
- In January the CRP attended Skegness station for the naming of the ELR50 events train. (pictured below)
- In March the partnership made a successful bid to the East Midlands Railway Community Development Fund for £500 to assist in the COVID-19 relief at Boston food bank. (pictured left)



My Little Allotment Platform 1 Sleaford station

One of our flagship projects this year was the creation of an allotment at Sleaford station. Although COVID-19 delayed the start, we have made real progress.

The partnership had previously cleared an area of land on Platform 1 at Sleaford station with the help of Sustrans, but over the years the weeds returned and had become an eyesore for the Grade II listed station. Looking at ways to create something lasting and sustainable we approached Kirsty Ward, a social media influencer and owner of Lincolnshire blog "My Little Allotment", to design and create an allotment to help combat mental health. Kirsty was an ideal partner as she had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after the difficult birth of her second daughter. Looking for ways to deal with her stress she turned to gardening as a therapeutic way to alleviate her symptoms; and she has never looked back. Kirsty herself said she was not sure where she would be now if not for gardening.

The partnership was keen to create a space which would be beneficial to the local community, in the process highlighting the benefits of gardening to those suffering from both physical and mental health issues.

Kirsty, along with her parents Russell and Adele, have now become station adopters at Sleaford station and have great plans for the future.

Funding was secured from Lincolnshire County Council with work due to start in March which was unfortunately delayed due to COVID-19. Work finally got underway in July which consisted of clearing years of overgrowth and rubbish; followed by an action day in August, whereby volunteers from East Midlands Railway and Network Rail helped build a shed and raised vegetable beds. They then got out their painting brushes and painted everything in sight!

We were fortunate enough to obtain donations of soil, courtesy of North



Kesteven District Council via the Lindum Group. Kirsty had bark donated from a local supplier who also provided extra soil at a heavily discounted rate. Kirsty, through her social media, also managed to secure donations of plants and bulbs for the allotment.

The intention was to invite a local charity called Rainbow Stars, which supports adults and children with disabilities, into the allotment to start planting. Unfortunately the second lockdown has again delayed things and this has had to be postponed until the New Year.

Kirsty did manage to get out and do some planting before the winter weather hit which included Onions, Garlic, Broad Beans, Figs, Rhubarb, Strawberries, Blueberries and a variety of herbs.

Over the next couple of months the finishing touches will be made to the allotment which includes seating, a bird bath, WonderWall fence planters and information boards detailing the allotment's journey from inception through to completion.

We are looking forward to welcoming our community groups into the allotment. The partnership are planning a competition to decide the name of the allotment, which will be revealed at the grand opening planned for the spring with the Mayor of Sleaford cutting the ribbon.



Continuity Connections Boston station

Another of our large projects this year was the commission of a 27 metre piece of art which would be installed on Platform 2 at Boston station. The artwork has attracted significant media attention and compliments from the local community.



We already knew that Boston station was in need of some attention and East Midlands Railway had already earmarked the station for a major redevelopment over the next couple of years to include a café, work and community spaces.

With the anniversary of the Mayflower 400 in 2020, we wanted to brighten and enhance the station to improve the experience for the expected increase of passengers arriving for the international celebrations. In 2019 we commissioned transit artist Alisha Miller to design and produce an impressive piece of work which would be impactful and showcase the diversity of the Poacher Line. Alisha had been picked as she was already a well-known figure in the transit and public art world and had previously worked with other CRPs.

A quote was obtained and funding was secured by the then Association of Community Rail Partnerships; now Community Rail Network, CrossCountry trains and Lincolnshire County Council.

Alisha spent several months traveling the length of the Poacher Line, engaging with passengers, rail staff and members of the local community; she even visited some of the attractions accessible by the line. Everyone she spoke to she asked the same question; "What is something surprising about travelling on the Poacher Line?" All of the answers helped Alisha build up a picture of our eclectic railway line and culminated in the final design. The artwork was named "Continuity Connections" as it showcases how the railway is playing a vital role in keeping communities connected.

The finished piece was finally installed in November on Platform 2 at Boston station. This had been delayed due to COVID-19 and passengers, rail staff and members of the Boston community have all commented on how much it enhances the station and has become a real talking point.

We have a further piece of artwork by local artist Jeni Cairns due to be installed at the front of the station early in the New Year.

FUNDING STREAMS

Community Rail Network	£12,500
CrossCountry Trains	£7,500
Lincolnshire County Council	£4,460.40



Station Adoption

We are extremely fortunate on the Poacher Line to have such an amazing team of adopters who work tirelessly to improve our stations. This year was a particularly difficult time for them with the majority of the year confined to lockdown; but our adopters emerged enthusiastic as ever and we even managed to recruit a further 30, swelling our ranks to 73! Here are some of the things they got up to this year.



Station Adopters conference - Derby

In February, before the words “lockdown” and “social distancing” became part of our daily vocabulary, some of our adopters managed to attend the annual Station Adoption Conference, hosted by the EMR Community Rail team at the Derby Conference Centre. Here they enjoyed talks from EMR managers, Network Rail and the British Transport Police; there was even time for a quiz about “Now & Then – Guess the station!” Paul Webster talked about the work of ACoRP (now Community Rail Network) which was then followed by the main attraction of the day – Lunch! Afterwards everyone had the opportunity to network with other adoption groups and CRPs to share ideas. Everyone had a great time: thank you EMR Community Rail team for arranging!



Boston Station Adoption group

In October we delivered a targeted campaign on Facebook to recruit adopters for Boston station. We were overwhelmed by the response and it led to 17 adopters now looking after six stations from Swineshead to Skegness. The group have jumped right in and already have made a difference at the station. Both passengers and staff have commented on how litter-free the station is and we managed a planting day in November and four lovely large planters now sit proudly on Platform 1. Plans have been made to develop a garden area and install planters on Platform 2 in the New Year.



Bottesford Friendly Garden

Work continues on this amazing community garden and over the summer the adopters worked hard to bring back the garden which nature had reclaimed during the lockdown. We were lucky enough to have five new adopters sign up and the garden is continuing to improve. Bird and Bat boxes were made and donated by a local resident and are now up and hopefully will have tenants soon! We managed to arrange an action day in September with the Bee Friendly Trust who helped to create a wild flower garden. Earlier in the year the information boards detailing the garden’s journey and wild life facts were installed in the building.



Thorpe Culvert

One of our smallest stations but our adoption group has big ideas! A Small Grant Fund from the Community Rail Network enabled six bright fence planters to be installed in November and plans are being made to create a car park and garden area on a piece of Network Rail land adjacent to the station – 2021 will be a busy time for our little station!



There are lots more of our stations which need your love and attention. If you would like to become a station adopter please see eastmidlandsrailway.co.uk/stationadoption for further details

Education and Training

COVID-19 saw all of our training move online, with the exception of the Community Rail Conference which took place in Bristol in March. The partnership took advantage of the many resource tools Community Rail Network offered and attended webinars on:

Harnessing Social Media

Engaging Local Media

Sustainable Tourism

Renewal & Recovery

CrossCountry Community Rail Conference

LNER Community Rail Conference

We also attended many virtual coffee mornings with partners across our area to discuss ways of building back better.

In October we managed to meet up with our neighbouring CRPOs, arranged by the EMR Community Rail team and hosted by the Derwent Valley CRP, where we shared best practice and gained new ideas to implement along our lines.



Community Rail Awards

This year had a completely different feel with the awards night taking place virtually on December 9th. This didn't stop the partnership from celebrating their achievements.

Community Rail Network hosted a great night filled with workshops, networking and guest speakers, and all of our shortlisted projects received a goody bag kindly supplied by EMR Community Rail Team - thank you! We had been shortlisted in two categories and were thrilled to be placed:

- **Third in the Community Art Scheme – Renewable & Smaller projects for our work with South Nottinghamshire Academy and Radcliffe Care Home.**
- **First in the Photo Competition "Community Rail in Action" with "Age is just a number" taken by our very own Kaye at Skegness station last year.**

Three of our stations, Bottesford, Heckington & Radcliffe had also been placed in the Silver band of "It's Your Station" category. Well done to all of our shortlisted and winning entries.

Coming up in 2021

We are looking forward to a productive 2021 with some major projects in the pipeline; here is a sneak preview at what we have planned...

Redevelopment of Sleaford station building
New car park and garden area at Thorpe Culvert station
New Poacher Line Loyalty App

Get in Touch

Want to get involved with the Poacher Line or learn more?
We'd love to hear from you...

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Community Rail

Accredited Partnership
2019-20

Thank you to all of our partners for your continued support



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