

Poacher Line



Annual Report 2025



Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership

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CRP OFFICER STATEMENT

2025 what a year! The Poacher Line has grown so much from awards, anniversaries, Railway 200, and station projects all culminating into a positive and productive year for all of our stations.



Gin Fidlin
Community Rail Officer

This report will highlight what an excellent year we have had with our collaborative projects, group gatherings and how our volunteers have helped us to deliver the four pillars set out by the Department for Transport. Particular highlights were our second annual Poacher Line Awards to celebrate all of our amazing station adopters and their groups, working in partnership with the Rail Safe Friendly programme to deliver Rail safety awareness across 20 schools along the line, teaming up with Platforms for Change programme at Bottesford station with a young group of Scouts and our flagship project at Wainfleet to celebrate Railway 200. We have worked hard together this year to keep our stations a fantastic pinpoint along our line.

I would like to extend my thanks for the dedication, support, and passion from our station adopters at each and every station. The many hours of work, love, and effort they put in each week is beyond sensational. This year all the stations who entered the awards were recognised along with the changes made within their communities, I would personally like to say to all of our dedicated adopters from Nottingham through to Skegness a massive heartfelt thank you for everything you do to maintain, improve and love our stations. Without you these achievements and projects wouldn't be possible.

CHAIRMAN STATEMENT

The Poacher Line is fortunate in having support not only from the rail industry and local authorities but from members of the partnership board and our adopter groups too who contribute so much in a personal capacity. My thanks to all our supporters and volunteers and to Gin our partnership officer who has worked tirelessly throughout the year to deliver many worthwhile projects and initiatives. By all working together supportively much has been achieved during the year in review and in which we can all take great pride. I am sure that another successful year will follow!



Peter Roberts
Chairman

INTRODUCTION

Poacher Line

The Poacher Line is a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) which runs from the bustling city of Nottingham to the traditional seaside resort of Skegness. It is an accredited line supported by the DfT working with East Midlands Railway (EMR) as the main train operating company and other partners, including CrossCountry (XC), London North Eastern Railway (LNER), North Kesteven District Council (NKDC), Network Rail, Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) being the partnership's host and Community Rail Network (CRN). 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 and inclusion
4. Promote social and economic development

East Midlands Railway

East Midlands Railway (EMR), owned by Transport UK Group as of 2023, is the main train operating company in our region. EMR is committed to working closely with Community Rail lines across their network; with eleven CRPs. As part of their committed obligation to the DfT there are several funding options for CRPs and station adoption groups to bid into, to supporting projects along their lines. This is to support the delivery of the Secretary of State's Community Rail Development Strategy.

Engaging with Young People

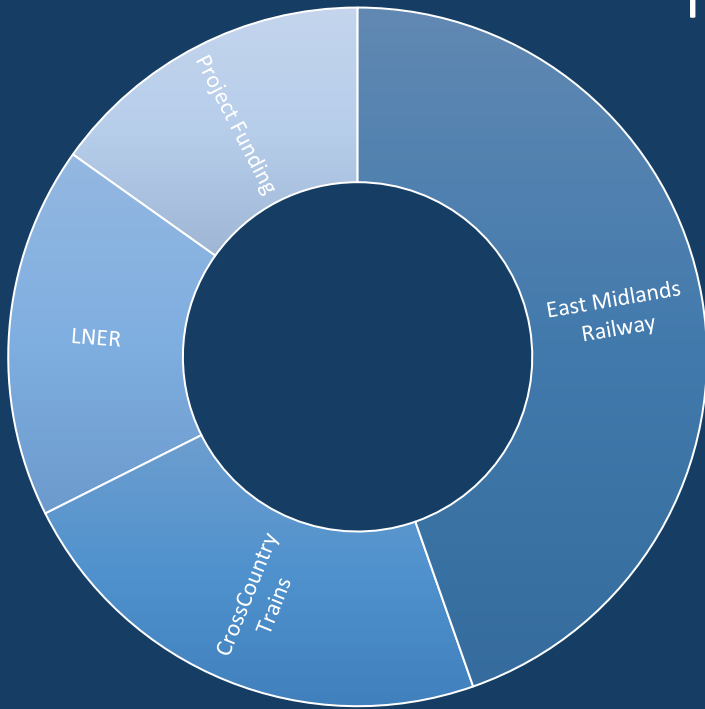
It has been wonderful to engage with the younger members in our communities and work with them to complete some super projects, educating them with some important Rail Safety presentations and programmes to expand their awareness of the Railway.

Our main interaction was our Rail safety project with Robert Miles Junior School, interacting with over 400 children. A competition was run to create Rail safety posters for the station of which four children were successful, and their artwork was displayed at the station. This gave the children within the school very valuable knowledge of staying safe in and around the railway. Engaging with young people is imperative to ensuring the future generations have the knowledge and awareness of the dangers of the Railway. Educating children and young people allows not only our partnership but entire communities to support every individual in finding out the opportunities, promoting safe behaviour and responsible decision making around our stations and the railway.



Financial Statement 2025/26

INCOME

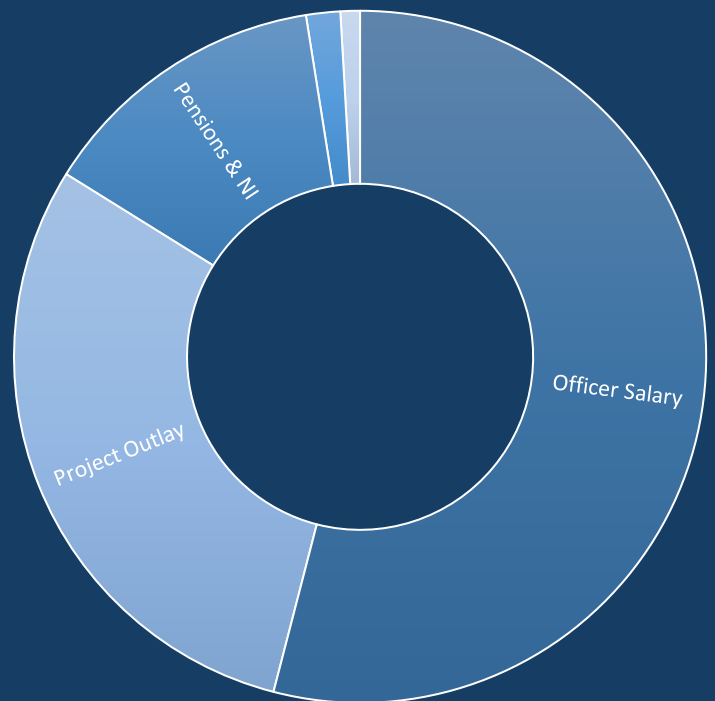


Carry forward 24/25	£110,571.64
East Midlands Railway	£27,290
CrossCountry	£14,043.78
LNER	£10,540
Project Funding	£15,936.21
Total	£178,381.63

■ East Midlands Railway
 ■ CrossCountry Trains
 ■ LNER
 ■ Project Funding

EXPENDITURE

Officer Salary	£32,597
Pensions and NI	£10,835.02
Project Outlay	£18,430.54
Staff/Adopter Travel	£961.91
Grants	£800
Promotions	£3761.29
Misc.	£631.47
Total	£68,017.23
Carry Forward 25/26	£110,364.40



■ Officer Salary
 ■ Pensions & NI
 ■ Staff/Adopters Travel
 ■ Project Outlay
 ■ Grants

Marketing



This year, our marketing focused on promoting the line and stations while strengthening connections with the communities we serve. Through the distribution of complimentary promotional items and information packs, we increased awareness of rail travel opportunities and local destinations.

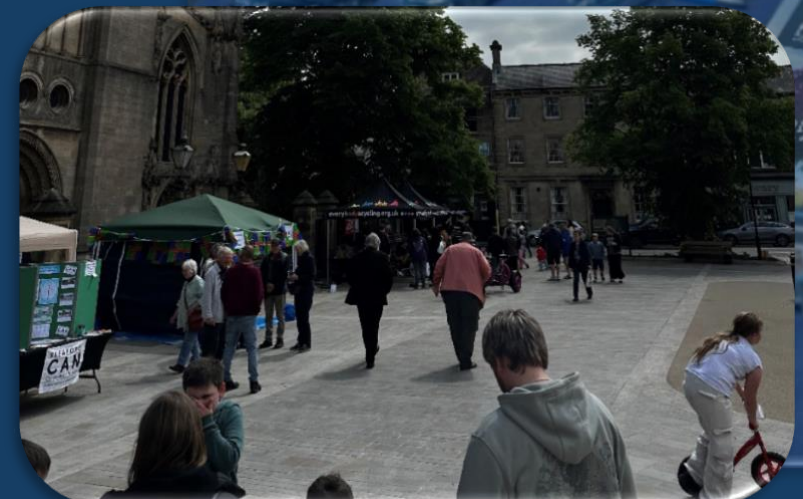
Over 400 goody bags were distributed, and our presence at tourism and promotional events at stations enabled us to engage directly face to face with more than 250 individuals, providing travel information, encouraging rail use and promoting sustainable travel.



We also extended our reach beyond the station environment by supplying promotional materials to schools, community groups and small businesses. This helped foster local partnerships, support community initiatives and further raise the profile of the railway as an accessible and environmentally friendly travel option.


We joined Sleaford Climate Action to bring the message of greener travel to the local community, a day packed with promoting the Line, destinations to travel to, health and wellbeing through walking and cycling and collaborations with other local organisations to show the opportunities open to everyone by using local transport.

Activities for the children to get involved in were the highlight of the day with a multiple seated round cycle to show how working as a team can not only promote exercise but team work.



Passenger Journeys on the Poacher Line

Station	2024/25 passenger usage	2023/24 passenger usage	% change
Nottingham	8,112,724	7,144,540	+13.6%
Netherfield	10,000	7,780	+28.3%
Radcliffe	13,844	12,980	+6.7%
Bingham	72,680	61,816	+17.6%
Aslockton	23,218	23,194	-0.1%
Elton & Orston	68	212	-67.9%
Bottesford	56,560	52,460	+7.8%
Grantham	1,484,114	1,278,244	+16.1%
Ancaster	5,532	5,484	+0.9%
Rauceby	5,004	6,108	-18.1%
Sleaford	295,790	257,300	+15.0%
Heckington	40,268	39,340	+2.4%
Swineshead	1,232	894	+37.8%
Hubberts Bridge	764	806	-5.2%
Boston	267,184	225,228	+18.6%
Thorpe Culvert	788	364	+116.5%
Wainfleet	47,824	40,460	+18.2%
Havenhouse	902	698	+29.2%
Skegness	397,520	358,304	+10.9%

 13.9% increase in passengers using Poacher Line stations from 2023/24 to 2024/25



Passenger figures on the Poacher Line have increased on the previous year, working alongside our partners and the work we carry out with adopters and projects have had a positive impact on increase of footfall



Station Projects

Radcliffe

A piece of local Railway heritage has returned to Radcliffe!

Radcliffe adopters were donated an original bridge plate that was affixed to the footbridge linking the two platforms. The adopters endeavoured to work with Radcliffe Repair Café to restore the plate back to its original beauty and with the generous support of funding from EMR this now has a permanent home back at the station in all its glory. The plaque is due to be erected spring 2026.

Our large, dedicated group at Radcliffe work tirelessly to ensure they continue to support an eco-friendly approach to the station. Recent improvement include protecting the area with newly installed posts generously funded by EMR, CRN and CrossCountry, this not only allows the area to be preserved but encourages a natural habitat for wildlife, enhancing the bio-diversity of the area and promotes the pollinators. With this project the adopters were the worthy winners of the *Giving back to Nature* category at the 2nd Poacher Line Awards in November, always promoting their wild garden, supporting and protecting nature.



This plate was affixed to the former footbridge linking the two platforms at Radcliffe Station. The footbridge is shown in these pictures and was demolished in 1977.

The bridge plate was donated to Radcliffe Station Adopters Group who arranged for it to be restored by Radcliffe Repair Cafe in 2025.

EMR



200



Bingham

Bingham has been a pinpoint for activity this year celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the station opening with some very supportive local dignitaries to educating over 400 children in Rail safety to create Railway safety posters for the station.



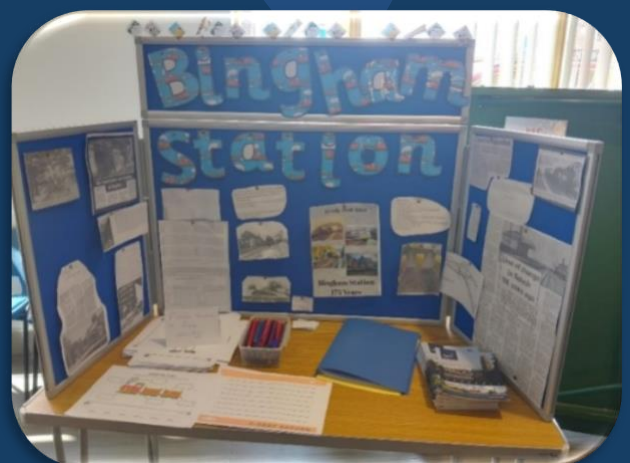
Natalie our Station Adopter has not only reached out to the local schools to be involved in talking and raising awareness of the station and Rail safety but has also orchestrated and been involved in local youth groups, playgroups and community events to promote not only the station but the entire Poacher Line. As part of Railway 200 Natalie took part in a George Stevenson themed art activity with the local playgroup handing out goody bags and bringing the railway to young people. Having created a close relationship with the SST at Bingham we now see a safer and more presentable station, bringing in interest and support from the local community in support of Natalie and her endeavours to make Bingham Station an inviting place to be.



Natalie has also engaged the local community by being involved in local history fayres, putting together history boards, handing out media and ensuring news and articles are including in the local free leaflet.

With support from Natalie, we also held our 2nd Poacher Line Awards and Station adopters thankyou at Bingham WI hut.

A very successful and heartwarming event that brought together our adopters and stakeholders for a networking opportunity. Natalie came 2nd in *Best Dressed Station* for her 175th anniversary celebrations.



Bottesford



The Bottesford Friendly Garden Station Adopters once again welcomed the Barrowby Scouts to the station garden as part of the Platforms for Change programme. The visit formed part of an ongoing partnership that encourages young people to engage directly with community spaces and develop practical skills through hands-on experience.

During the session, volunteers guided Scouts aged 11 to 14 through a series of structured horticultural activities designed to enhance both the garden’s appearance and its long-term sustainability. The group undertook the planting of seasonal bedding plants, contributed to the enrichment of the wildflower garden, and received instruction on effective cultivation and maintenance techniques to ensure healthy growth throughout the year. In addition, the Scouts assisted with re-barking key areas of the site, further supporting the upkeep of this valued community asset.

Their enthusiasm and willingness to contribute reflected the strength of the partnership and the positive influence of intergenerational collaboration.

In November, Bottesford was awarded second place in the *Making a Difference in the Community* category at the 2nd Poacher Line Awards. This recognition followed the development and installation of a series of history boards created by the adopters in collaboration with a local historian. The boards, the result of extensive research and careful curation, now provide visitors with a meaningful point of engagement, offering both educational value and a deeper understanding of the station’s heritage and its place within the wider community. Their introduction represents a significant contribution to the cultural identity of the station and stands as a testament to the group’s commitment to preserving and sharing local history.

Bottesford have also restored the benches at the friendly garden and donned them with EMR purple to give them a pop of colour.



Rauceby



The running-in board at Rauceby has long served as a defining visual and historical element of the station. The matter of deterioration was first raised when the station's Adopter informed us that the running-in board, an important heritage feature of the station, had begun to deteriorate and was encroaching upon the Station Master's garden. Recognising both the structural concerns and the historical significance of the board, we engaged in discussions with Network Rail, EMR, and the Railway Heritage Trust (RHT) to determine an appropriate course of action. These conversations resulted in a coordinated plan to reinforce and restore the board in line with its original heritage specification.

It's preservation in situ was considered essential. Network Rail and the RHT subsequently undertook the restoration work with a clear commitment to heritage standards. In addition to reinstating the board to its former condition, the project team identified an opportunity to further enhance the site by repairing and reinstating the original platform railings located behind it.

The completed works have delivered a significant improvement to the station environment. The restored board once again provides a strong heritage focal point, while the reinstated railings contribute to a more coherent and historically accurate setting.



Collectively, these efforts have strengthened the station's visual character and ensured that its heritage features continue to complement the Station Master's house and the wider station landscape. Being a small station having such a punchy focal point that continues to celebrate the heritage of the station is important to the local community in ensuring that the history of the station is maintained.

The resident of the Station Masters house has dedicated his time to restore the house with heritage features externally. This not only supports the aesthetics of the station itself but gives Rauceby back the character and carries on the stories it has held locally and historically.



Sleaford



Sleaford sees two adoption groups, Kim and Rolf look after the area towards the end of Platform one. They are currently working on gathering facts and stories about local history and previous station masters to create a history board for the station, Sleaford holds a lot of local history with the Station being at the heart of most of it. In Support of Rail safety, encouraging positive behaviour and information for the local school children and passengers who regularly use the station, we will be displaying the Rail Safety posters that St George’s Academy have created which will be displayed in the ticket office.



Through their innovative style and creativity, their seasonal displays saw them gain 1st place in *Best Creative Station* and 2nd place in *Giving back to Nature* at our 2nd Poacher Line Awards. Not only bringing colour to the station but giving passengers and the local community a personal touch to their station whether that is passing through or visiting.

Kim takes great care in ensuring that the flowers at the station are seasonal and always in bloom for the time of the year, which also promotes pollination for the bugs and bees and creates a mini eco habitat in what was once an overgrown area of the platform.



Sleaford has seen a new adopter to our small garden area, welcome Rolf. Rolf and Kim work together to make the garden area not only inviting but playful, themed displays for each season see colour and fun brought to the station.



Rainbow Stars

Rainbow stars are an inclusive and friendly community group providing support for parents, carers, siblings, and individuals with disabilities or those seeking a diagnosis. This year through their hard efforts they have grown plants from seed to plant in the raised beds and found an inventive way to get water to enable them to water at the station. Rainbow stars are indicative of an organisation who enable young people to succeed and learn quality life skills. Working together with Poacher Line, Rainbow stars are working on creating a wonderful new bench replacing the previous bench, to wrap around the tree at Poachers Patch with a nod to Railway 200 to bring back a community feature appreciated by all passengers

Regular visits to the station for the group allow a multitude of different experiences from learning social skills to learning about nature and Rail safety.

Rainbow stars, through dedication and hard effort, succeeded in obtaining 1st place in Making a difference in the community, 2nd place in *Innovative Adopter* and 2nd place in *Best Creative Station* at the 2nd Poacher Line Awards.



Wainfleet



Wainfleet is bursting with history from the local Batemans brewery to the Maddalen College museum. Our flagship project this year commemorated Railway 200 in support of the history of the local community and the station. Working alongside the dedicated volunteers of the Wainfleet adopters, we collaborated closely with a local engineer to create a meaningful tribute to both the past and present of our railway heritage. The idea stemmed from the adopters wanting to do a timeline with a difference.

With funding support from CrossCountry Trains and EMR, we worked closely with the adopters to design seven steel silhouettes representing passengers through the ages, from the Victorian era to the present day. This collaborative project reflects the pride our volunteers take in the station and their commitment to preserving local history whilst supporting local family businesses. JB Engineering, a father and son engineering company based in Boston, helped us to create and install the silhouettes at the Station, paying close attention to detail and ensuring our vision was brought to life.

This striking installation not only enhances the station environment but also celebrates the rich history of this historic location, honouring the people who have travelled through our station over the years.

To further enhance this project the Adopters tirelessly worked to handmade planters made from recyclable materials and create a mini eco area to support and promote pollination at the station.

At Our second Poacher Line Awards held in November our Wainfleet adopters were successful in securing 1st place in *Best Dressed Station* for this project.

The Wainfleet adopters are also our Boston adopters, so splitting time between both stations and creating numerous projects are an award worthy effort from all volunteers.



Skegness



Skegness Station adopters have continued to play a key role in making the station a welcoming and vibrant space for passengers and the wider community, while also enhancing the stations ecological value. Working in partnership with a local woodworker the adopters helped create bespoke bird boxes, which have been installed on Platform 7 to provide safe habitats for local birds and wildlife. With Skegness being such a busy station it is important to not only protect but to encourage local birds and wildlife to set up nests in safe places where they can be sheltered from a very busy tourist resort.



A number of volunteer action days brought the community together to install handmade planters on platform 7, strengthening both the appearance of the station and its connection to local people. Thanks to valued funding from EMR and Community Rail Network (CRN), four large promenade planters were also purchased and installed on the concourse, improving the visual approach to the station. Planting schemes have focused on carefully chosen species that support pollinators, encourage biodiversity, and create an attractive, environmentally friendly setting for passengers and visitors.



This year we were delighted to welcome two new adopters to the Skegness group- Kath and Michael. The continued enthusiasm, dedication and teamwork of the adopter group ensure the station remains a place the community can take pride in.

Working hard all year round our adopters have continued to bring improvement to Skegness, interact with the large tourist groups that visit Skegness and make the station safe, clean and inviting.



Collaborative Projects

In Partnership with Network Rail and EMR, volunteers and executives came together with the Skegness adopters to enhance the approach of the station that is being renovated. We installed planters with carefully selected plants to create an attractive, eco-friendly space supporting local wildlife including pollinators. We were able to protect the currently unused platform for future use by maintaining the surface of the tarmac. Spending many hours scrapping clearing and de-mossing has allowed the platform to not only be more aesthetically pleasing on the approach to the station but has given a new area for displays and project to take place in the future.



Throughout the year, we have actively engaged with passengers to promote the line, local tourism and the wide range of destinations accessible by rail. We have also worked in partnership with other organisations to encourage sustainable travel, strengthen community engagement and develop collaborative initiatives with fellow Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs).

Handing out goody bags and information leaflets to passengers and students to not only promote but to educate individuals about the Line, greener travel and opportunities that rail can open up to all patrons.



This year we took part in a tourism promotion day at Lincoln Station, coming together with North Notts and Lincs CRP (NNLCRP) and Hereward Line (HL) supported by EMR we spoke to many of the locals, the Lincoln adopter made homemade Lincolnshire tea loaf to share with passengers and we shouted about all the great things you can do on our lines, destinations that are worth a visit and opportunities that are available by Rail

Rail Safe Friendly

We had the amazing opportunity to team up with the Rail Safe Friendly program for a 2nd year. Their primary aim is to raise awareness about the hazards associated with railways, particularly the issue of trespassing. Schools located near railway lines that had experienced a significant number of trespassing incidents were targeted, hoping to educate students about the potential dangers they faced in these areas.

To enable us to engage in this programme, CrossCountry Trains generously funded this project which has allowed us to sponsor 20 schools along the Poacher Line, delivering essential awareness of the dangers of the Railway and to promote safety within young people.

To date we have successfully reached **11** schools all working at a bronze level reaching 4864 students, we are continually in support of the programme and working towards reaching more young people within our community to ensure Rail Safety is a high priority across our schools. We are progressing with our other 9 schools and hopefully by June 2026 we will have successfully reached all 20 making a positive impact on thousands more young people. We are visiting one of our partner schools to deliver a Rail safety talk to the students which will enhance their participation in the project by getting them to a Gold level.

Promoting Rail safety is extremely important to the Poacher Line and being able to collaborate on a project to deliver safety lessons and to enhance knowledge of the dangers around the railway means we can protect and educate the next generation.



2nd Poacher Line Awards

In 2025, we were delighted to hold the 2nd Poacher Line Awards, a special occasion to celebrate the dedication, passion and achievements of our incredible volunteers. The event took place in November at the WI Hut near Bingham Station – a venue chosen not just for its charm but a community charity space in need of support.

We are truly grateful for the time, care and energy that all our station adopters give so generously. Your ongoing efforts help keep our stations welcoming, vibrant and a source of pride for the communities we serve.

On behalf of myself, Peter Roberts (Poacher Line Chairman), and all our stakeholders, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to every volunteer. Your commitment makes a real difference, and we are so lucky to have your unwavering support.

The results of the awards were as follows:

Best creative Station

1st – Kim and Rolf - Sleaford

2nd – Rainbow Stars

Innovative Adopter

1st – Boston Station Adopters

2nd – Rainbow Stars

Making a difference in the community

1st – Rainbow Stars

2nd – Bottesford Friendly Garden

Giving back to Nature

1st - Radcliffe

2nd – Kim and Rolf - Sleaford

Best Dressed Station

1st – Wainfleet Station Adopters

2nd – Bingham Station adopter

Poacher
Line 2025
Awards



Donations and Sponsorship

Supporting our communities remains at the centre of our work, and throughout the year we were proud to contribute to a variety of events and charitable initiatives that make a meaningful local difference.

We were delighted to sponsor the Boston Vibe Business Awards, an event that celebrates the dedication, resilience, and success of local independent and family-run businesses. By attending the awards, we were able to show our continued commitment to the local economy and the people who help it thrive. The evening was also attended by Mr Richard Tice MP for Boston and Skegness, highlighting the importance of recognising and supporting grassroots enterprise.

Working in partnership with other Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs), we also helped fund and install a Christmas tree in the Lincoln ticket office. This small but impactful addition created a warm and festive welcome for passengers during the holiday season, helping to make the station environment more inviting and enjoyable for the travelling public.

Our main charitable donation of the year was made to the WI hut in Bingham, which kindly hosted our 2nd Poacher Line Awards and Station Adopters Thank-you. This valued community venue is run entirely by volunteers and serves as an important hub for the local community. As the building requires essential maintenance, particularly to its flooring, we were pleased to provide a donation to support their repair works. This contribution not only helps preserve the facility itself but also ensures the continued availability of a vital space for community use.



Routes of Remembrance

Every year Poacher Line take part in remembering those who lost their lives during the war. Not only does the Officer and Chairman attend events but our adopters also attend local ceremonies to pay their respects.

We paid our respects at Lincoln Station this year, attending with other CRP's, EMR and local adopters. A service was held by the vicar on the platform and a poem was read. A way to bring together neighbouring CRP's, passengers and our Stakeholder EMR together to lay wreaths at a poignant station.

The adopters from both Boston and Skegness attended local services, laying a wreath and paying their respects.

Our Boston adopters took it upon themselves to orchestrate a project this year, tirelessly kitting poppies over many months and making them into wreaths for the station. A true celebration and honouring those who lost their lives in the line of duty.



Coming up in 2026

Railway 200 Projects

Action days

Wainfleet Station Artwork






Sleaford tree bench

Rail Safety in schools

Poacher Line Awards 2026

Want to get involved with the Poacher Line or learn more?

We'd love to hear from you...

-  Poacherline@lincolnshire.gov.uk
-  Poacherline.org.uk
-  Poacher Line Community Rail Partnership
-  @PoacherLine
-  @PoacherLine



Thank you for the continued support from our Partners!

E M R



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