

3 Chelmsford Station planting

5 Essex rail stations host 100 stories

11 RHS Talk on Drought Resistant plants



Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership

# Annual Update 2023



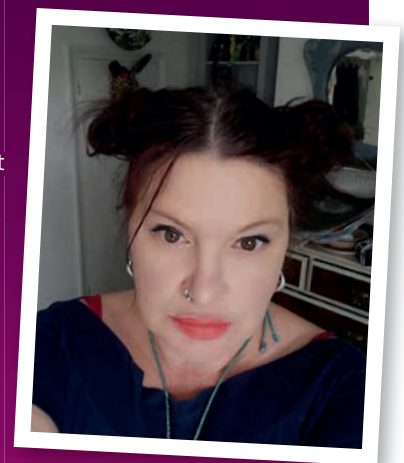
## NEW COMMUNITY RAIL OFFICER

# Saying goodbye to Terri and welcoming Jane

Terri Ryland, our Community Rail Officer for over ten years, left the team in September. With her partner Diane they have bought a pub in Harwich, an exciting opportunity. Terri who looked after the Sunshine Coast Line and The Mayflower Line, has worked on initiatives such as introducing the refugee event trains, making large sleeper planters and taking an 18ft replica of the Mayflower Ship to Liverpool Street.

She ran the Bucket and Spade, Cockney Singalong and Sea Shanty trains, we will miss her.

But change brings new opportunities and Jane Stewart is the new Community Rail Officer taking on the Sunshine Coast Line and the Mayflower Line. Hitting the ground running, she has already produced a new leaflet "Sunni on the Sunshine Coast Line" and is working on another new leaflet for the Mayflower Line, both aimed at children travelling on the line.



Jane's previous life includes being an active artist and we are using her knowledge and skills to our advantage within the team. Jane has also started a seed swapping initiative which has already been really popular with station adopters. We welcome Jane into the team – she has already settled in and is making her mark.





# Wrabness Wildlife Garden



The Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership worked with local residents, station adopter volunteers, the Essex Path to Prosperity Project, Community Rail Network, the Bee Friendly Trust and Greater Anglia to create a new wildlife area next to the station.



Approximately a quarter of an acre of overgrown scrub land where the station master's house once stood has been transformed into a wildlife and visitor-friendly garden.

It was officially opened by Cllr Ivan Henderson, Essex County Councillor for Harwich, on 25 March, the focus of the garden is to support and encourage wildlife and includes bug hotels, bird boxes (including two special robin boxes), a pond for frogs and a hibernaculum built for newts, lizards and toads.

Two large planters full of bee-friendly foliage greet visitors at the front of the garden with a path leading to seats constructed from railway sleepers and the stumps of ancient trees.

A third planter displays artwork with a collage of ceramic tiles created by residents of Acorn Village, a residential home for adults with learning disabilities, and there are specially commissioned artworks around the garden including metal sculptures, wooden carvings of bees, wooden sculptures and a large bird bath on a decorated pedestal.

There is a herb bed by the entrance to the garden from which visitors, rail travellers and the community are encouraged to help themselves.

The entire area has been sown with native wildflower seeds which have been establishing themselves through the summer.



In addition, the Bee Friendly Trust involved 6-8 year olds at Wix & Wrabness Primary School in the project, delivering 'pollination workshops' and facilitating the pupils to paint posters which will be displayed around the garden. One of the posters has been chosen by the children to be on a T shirt produced to celebrate the project.

Luke Dixon, of The Bee Friendly Trust, said, "It has been exciting to work on this project with so many collaborators and create something very special from a neglected piece of wasteland."

The creation of the garden was supported with funding from the Essex Path to Prosperity project which promotes sustainable travel to the Essex coast, the Community Rail Network and the Bee Friendly Trust, with the Essex & South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership providing in kind support.

Harwich and Manningtree Standard

## New community wildlife garden opens at station

WRABNESS rail station is set to become a haven for local wildlife thanks to a community rail project.

The Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail partnership have worked with local residents, station adopter volunteers, the Essex Path to Prosperity Project, Community Rail Network, the Bee Friendly Trust and Greater Anglia to create a new wildlife area next to the station.

About a quarter of an acre of overgrown scrub land where the station master's house once stood has been transformed into a wildlife and visitor-friendly garden.

It was officially opened by Julia Prigg, the station adopter, on Saturday, with residents and guests in attendance.

The focus of the garden is to support and encourage wildlife and include; bug hotels, bird boxes – including two special robin boxes,

a pond for frogs and a hibernaculum built for newts, lizards and toads.

Two large planters full of bee-friendly forage greet visitors at the front of the garden with a path leading to seats constructed from railway sleepers and on the stumps of ancient trees.

A third planter displays a collage of ceramic tiles created by residents of Acorn Village.

There is a herb bed by the entrance to the garden from which visitors, rail travellers and the community are encouraged to help themselves.

In addition, the Bee Friendly Trust involved pupils at Wix & Wrabness Primary School in the project, delivering pollination workshops.

Luke Dixon, of The Bee Friendly Trust, said, "It has been exciting to work on this project with so many collaborators and create something very special from a neglected piece of wasteland."





## Chelmsford Station planting

Back in January on a very cold Monday morning, Jayne and June met the Rotary Club at Chelmsford Station along with Alison and Louis from RHS Hyde Hall, to plant up eight tubs and install new art work along the fence.

It certainly made a real difference, Chelmsford station hasn't been adopted before and with the fantastic commitment from the Rotary Club the station is now looking much better and looked after.

## Ladybird Train

Working in partnership with Braintree Museum in the February half term we ran our first Ladybird Train!

Braintree District Council ran a Ladybird Book Exhibition, we managed to team up with them, running a train event from Witham to Braintree and then walking the group up to the museum to enjoy the exhibition and other activities the museum has to offer.



## Braintree Freeport Station



The early part of the year saw ESSCRP working in partnership with The Bee Friendly Trust, who turned up on a sunny Saturday morning with a van load of Rosemary plants.

The morning included clearing the embankment area and then planting up with the Rosemary plants, we can't wait to see the purple haze next year!





# Murder Mystery Train Event

Our first joint event with Essex Libraries took place on 22 April.

It started at Wickford Library. Attendees then walked to Wickford station and caught the train to Burnham-on-Crouch. Throughout the event characters role played scenes and chatted with attendees sharing clues. The murder mystery format was written specifically for the event by Essex Author in Residence, Syd Moore. 42 people attended the event and had a great time.



**CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS**

**CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS**

## New Blue Plaque at Southend Victoria Station

Jayne attended the launch of the blue plaque at Southend Victoria Station which Essex and South Suffolk CRP funded. The launch was attended by the Mayor of Southend and two poems were performed by two students from Southend School, to celebrate the story of Princess Dinubolu arriving in Southend 1908.



## Prittlewell Station Art Gallery

Southend High School for Boys has produced artwork for the station under the theme of "Transport". The art is part of their A level course work.



## Essex rail stations host 100 stories

Reproductions of 100 silk flags are on display at some of the branch line stations.

Working with Chelmsford Voluntary Service (CVS), we managed to reproduce these in dibond with funding from the Community Rail Network. We managed to install them at Althorne, South Woodham Ferrers, Burnham-on-Crouch, Southminster and Braintree Freeport.

Each poster displays a different flag telling stories of celebrations of local heritage, notable figures and landmarks, descriptions of areas of natural beauty, favourite walks, and environmental concerns, family histories, treasured memories, and personal journeys, hobbies and vocations, food, pets, and music. Things that keep us going and help us connect, charitable causes, social activism, key workers, and community projects, reflections on the diversity and complexity of our communities and creative writing and poetry.

## Music Train on the Gainsborough Line

Again the music train was a great success selling out well before the event. Lots of dancing and fun was had on the train, and there were requests for more trains like these from several people attending the event.





## Hockley Tea Party to celebrate the Coronation

Hockley Station Adopters held an afternoon tea party to celebrate the King's Coronation, a very nice afternoon with great support from Alan Whyld at Greater Anglia



The Dementia event train this year was from Witham to Braintree and provided a day out for people with dementia and their carers to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

35 people attended the event, which was fully supported by Greater Anglia who provided free train passes for the event.

Braintree District Town Council went to town as always and provided a really lovely afternoon tea and an old fashioned singalong which many people could join in, with the help of a song sheet for everyone.

2023

# Walks

Several walks took place this year

Robert led the walk at Ingatestone, Jenny from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) led the walk from Manningtree to Mistley, June arranged the walk at Bures to see the Dragon which is always really popular and successful with over 10 people travelling by train.



## Rochford Heritage Walk

Catherine led on this event. People got the chance to visit some of the historic houses in Rochford, with Rochford town team dressing up in their regalia sharing fantastic stories about the town's history.



## Career Day at Southend Victoria

Catherine organised a careers day for Southend Adult Community College with Greater Anglia, getting some really useful advice and information.

## Terling Students produce poster artworks

The students produced some stunning artwork, which we turned into posters encouraging people to visit the beautiful Essex coast by train.



## manningtree earth festival



A great event and the team were able to use the very smart new gazebo. We had a lot of engagement with the attendees. This is our second year of attending and we will be sure to make it an annual commitment.

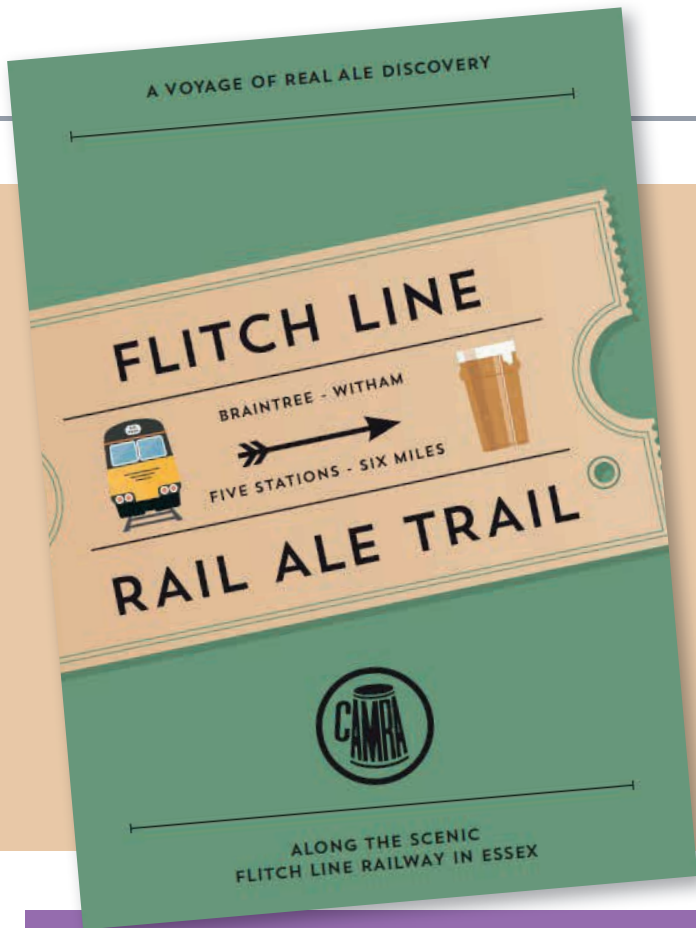


## Rochford Station – Rail Delivery Group working party

Volunteers spent a day transforming the overgrown areas at Rochford rail station. Catherine and June spent the day with the Rail Delivery Group volunteers digging, weeding and planting, using seed bombs to create a wildflower area that will support pollinators and other wildlife. A big thank you also to the Community Rail Network who funded the very colourful large bee hotel.







# Fitch Ale Booklet

We worked with Chelmsford and Mid Essex Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) to produce a Fitch Line ale trail, similar to one we have produced in the past along the Crouch Valley Line.

CAMRA recommended pubs which are good for real ale and within walking distance of a train station. It was warmly received by the pubs involved. We supported it with a social media campaign and a competition (the first completed "passport" received by us won a copy of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for 2024). CAMRA have also promoted it at their branch meetings and Summer Festival in July; and organised a social trip in September.

# Artwork at Branch Line Stations

We have been busy installing artwork at several stations, Bures, Chappel & Wakes Colne, Great Bentley, Alresford by working with local schools. They really brighten up these stations.



Essex and South Suffolk Railway Walk

Essex and South Suffolk Railway Walks



# Another reprint of Walks booklets

The walks booklets still prove to be really popular. We offered them on our social media channels which was a great way to spread the word, and get more books distributed. This not only encourages people to take the train but also get out walking which is good for the environment and personal health.



Travel by Train  
Safer | Greener | Healthier



## History Boards and Talking Benches

This year we installed three history boards at Thorpe-Le-Soken, Weeley and Battlesbridge. We also managed to install three talking benches at Wivenhoe, Burnham-on-Crouch and The Hythe Stations.



## Wrabness Mural

The Mural was made up of pictures from the local school, Wix and Wrabness, which included pictures of local houses, the church and the Grayson Perry House, it now looks very striking up at the station.

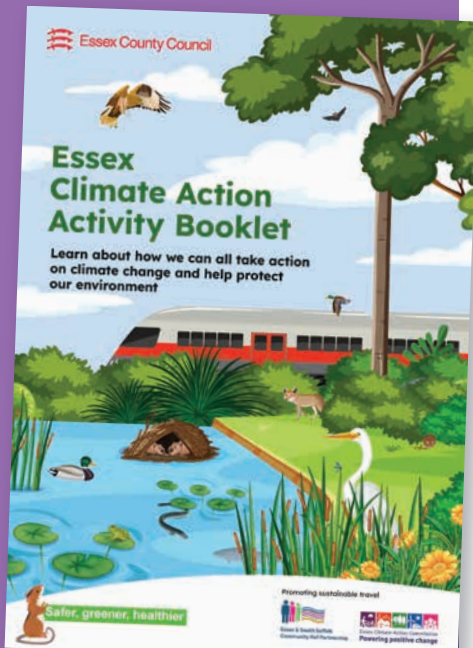


## Event trains

We have been busy with our event trains, which included the bucket and spade trains, the Sea Shanty train, Refugees trains and event trains with Barnardo's and Home Start. We also have a Christmas train this year from Southminster to Wickford, which sold out in September.

# Essex Action Activity Booklet

Catherine worked with the Essex Climate team to produce this really lovely activity booklet, which includes lots of activities around the climate and how we can help the planet.



# RHS Talk on Drought Resistant plants

Louis and Alison from RHS Hyde Hall came to Chelmsford to give us a talk on drought resistant plants, and planting up tubs with good pollinators. Over 30 station adopters attended and the feedback was excellent. We are now arranging a trip to Hyde Hall for all station adopters next spring.



# New welcome packs

One of our new initiatives for 2023 is a welcome pack for new station adopters joining us, which includes a watering can, garden gloves, hi vis vest, thermal drink cup and trowel along with some useful information.



# Sunni Leaflet

Jane has been working on the new Sunni leaflet, aimed at children travelling on the Sunshine Coast Line, they will be able to look out for a picture of Sunni at each station on that line!

# Financial Figures for 2022/23

## Income from April 2022 to March 2023

Stakeholders' income	£75,650.00
Community Rail Network income	£5,980.00
Other grants	£17,260.00
Carry over from 21/22	£69,171.27
Additional funding from GA	£23,707.14
Shelter funding returned	£21,000.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£212,768.41</b>
<b>Spend</b>	
Projects	£85,342.00
Publications	£21,597.99
Other	£3,207.50
Staff Cost	£38,000.00
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>£148,147.49</b>
<b>Outstanding to carry over into 2023/24</b>	<b>£64,620.92</b>

## A BIG THANK YOU

A big thank you to our stakeholders: Greater Anglia, Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council, Tendring District Council, Braintree District Council, and Suffolk County Council. These teams not only give us financial support, but support us when working within the community. We couldn't do it without you!

From the ESSCRP team Jayne, Jane, June and Catherine.



# Calling all volunteers

Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership are always looking for volunteers to help with the varied projects we undertake or assist on our event trains, please contact Jayne Sumner on **07735 216593** or email [jsumner@essex.gov.uk](mailto:jsumner@essex.gov.uk) or go to our website [www.esscrp.org.uk](http://www.esscrp.org.uk)

