



**North Staffordshire
Community Rail
Partnership**

www.northstaffsrail.org.uk

**MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT
GROUP MEETING ON THURSDAY 17TH
OCTOBER 2024, 3-5PM AT STOKE
TOWN HALL AND ONLINE**

Present: David Dowbenko (Chair) [DD]; Sam Smith (CRPO) [SS]; Emma McIntosh (CRPO) [EM]; Yvonne Byatt (East Staffordshire Borough Council) [YB]; Ian Clark (Vice-Chair) [IC]; Paul Webster (Community Rail Network) [PW]; Luke Tinning (Station Adopter) [LT]; Rowley Osbourn (Staffordshire County Council) [RO]; Cara Higgs (West Midlands Trains/ London North Western) [CH]; Mark Osborne (Avanti West Coast) [MO].

	Action
The meeting opened with a brief introduction of current roles; specifically, DD has replaced MW as Chair, SS has replaced Claire Sandys as CRP Officer, EM remains in post as CRP Officer.	
Apologies for Absence: Rachel Shelby (Network Rail); Barbara Fradley (Station Adopter); Ruth Shaw (Station Adopter); Alison Cotterill (Network Rail); Jacqui Storer (Clerk to Hatton PC); Alexa Stott (EMR) [AS]; Jody Ball (XC) [JB]; Brian Edwards (City of Stoke-on-Trent CC); Michael Wilmot (former Chair) [MW]; Gill Westwood (Network Rail) [GW].	
Minutes of last Management Group Meeting (25th July 2024) The minutes were agreed. There were no matters arising.	
CRPO's Report (considered in addition to the Report to be delivered in the AGM, and relates to items not addressed in the annual report: https://www.northstaffsrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Annual-Report-NSCR-2024-FINAL-1.pdf) EM's Items; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stoke Road Pigeon deterrent - NR have advised that they have issued a 52 weeks remit to install, Bird Free, a humane pigeon deterrent product– ○ Application submitted to WMT CCIF for murals to be installed at Stone Station. Presented to DfT and awaiting outcome ○ Working with Avanti to explore the possibility of Stafford becoming a Bee friendly station. Meetings are taking place with artists prior to a funding application being submitted ○ Talks and tours took place at Crewe, Stafford and Penkridge stations with 109 people attending across the three locations. 	

<p>SS's Items;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summer Fun days at Foxfield were a success, our thanks to XC, ○ Vandal-damaged bottle kilns at Longton are currently being repaired by our friends at the Churnet Valley Railway. ○ Derby planters are to be further enhanced, employing Engineered Learning; with thanks to XC for funding and AS for assisting in developing the initiative. ○ Centenary and Railway 200 bringing trains together, working with our local heritage railways (Churnet Valley and Foxfield) and some local businesses; watch this space. ○ Skills Builder bid: thank you to EMR, XC and CRN. 	
<p>Community Rail Network Items (PW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The latest CRN report reveals that for every £1 invested in community rail, almost £18 of benefits result (https://communityrail.org.uk/reports-and-research/the-value-of-community-rail-2/) ○ Railway 200 – Preparations are underway; with a roving exhibit train, a 'whistle off' on January 1st 2025, amongst many other events being organised. Focus should be on both railway history and railway future. ○ Motability Project – to increase travel confidence among those with disabilities, grants will be available to emulate successful projects elsewhere. ○ 207 entries to CRN awards (including seven from NSCRP. ○ CRN are relaunching Scenic Britain (https://scenicrailbritain.com/), each CRP can have their own page (https://scenicrailbritain.com/lines/north-staffordshire-line/) - to update contact Paul or Alice at CRN. ○ NSCRP were reminded of the availability of Corporate Partners (https://communityrail.org.uk/member-services/how-our-corporate-partners-support-our-members/), <p>PLEASE ALSO SEE ATTACHED CRN UPDATE</p>	
<p>East Midlands Railway Items</p> <p>SS relayed apologies from AS, as she was unable to attend at short notice, due to an emergency situation.</p> <p>PLEASE ALSO SEE ATTACHED EMR UPDATE</p>	

<p>London Northwestern Railway items (CH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer and Communities Improvement Fund went well, awaiting confirmation from DfT. ○ Victoria Harris is leaving end of October, so no new projects until her role is filled in the new year, ○ Geoff Grant recently started as the new Stakeholder Manager at West Midlands Trains – he will engage with Rail User Groups and Local Authorities. He has met with Jon Heal of North Staffs Rail Promotion Group. ○ White Ribbon: thanks extended for NSCRP involvement, All five of Cara’s CRPs are involved. On the day, equipment will be supplied for use at Stone and a ‘Just Giving page’ will be created; social media resources will be posted and all partners are invited to share. ○ Annual adoption survey currently being drafted. These will be more personalised than previous waves, ○ WMT/LNR focus during Railway 200 is on the future of rail and stations. 	<p>SS</p> <p>SS/EM</p>
<p>CrossCountry items</p> <p>PW provided apologies for JB being unavailable. SS has contacted JB, they have no updates to circulate.</p>	
<p>Avanti West Coast items (MO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ North Wales Route currently challenged. ○ From December 2024 there will be more services across routes; including an hourly service from Stafford. ○ Pleased to report on the variety of community projects supported including Train Buddies at Crewe Station. MO to send EM further information <p>PLEASE ALSO SEE ATTACHED AWC UPDATE</p>	<p>MO</p>
<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IC raised the lack of EMR work party at Peartree station; SS briefly explained that EMR had concluded action days for this year but he was actively looking at alternatives. ○ IC queried the amount of litter at Uttoxeter on the track and asked if a safe method of working would be possible for station adopters. After consideration, those present agreed this wouldn’t be possible. ○ IC raised the issue of communication and suggested more was required to keep station adopters informed. Group discussed and conclusion was a 	<p>SS</p> <p>SS</p>

<p>monthly newsletter might be appropriate with calendar of events included. A discussion took place and it was suggested that quarterly might be more appropriate. PW suggested contacting Julia Singleton-Tasker to see if she would share a copy of their newsletter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RO raised uncertainty around Staffordshire County Council’s ongoing fiscal contribution to the Community Rail Partnership and advised that he will respond to EM’s emails as soon as he is able to. 	<p>DD/ SS/ EM RO</p>
<p>Date and Time of next Management Group Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16th January 2025 10am (online), - 10th April 2025 10am (in person), - 17th July 2025 10am (online), - 23rd October 3pm (in person – followed by AGM) <p>IC suggested that an earlier time be appropriate for the Management Group Meeting and AGM; discussion followed, and matter is under review.</p>	<p>ALL DD</p>