

# Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership



**The Bentham Line  
Annual Report 2014**



Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe  
Community Rail Partnership  
Bentham Station Building  
Station Road  
Bentham  
Lancaster  
LA2 7LF



*Above:*

The 'lesser spotted' Class 158 pauses at Skipton with the 10.34 Morecambe to Leeds service on 5th November 2014.

*Cover Photograph:*

Northern Rail Class 142 DMU calls at Long Preston, with the 13.17 Heysham Port to Leeds service.

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# The Bentham Line



## The CRP's Aims

**The Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership aims are to:**

**Promote and develop** the Bentham Line for the benefit of local residents, visitors and businesses.

**Involve** a wide range of local partners to ensure the railway plays a full part in the social and economic regeneration of the area it serves.

**Work** with the local Rail User Groups (Aire Valley, Lancaster and Skipton, Lancaster, Morecambe and District), Friends Groups (Bentham), neighbouring line CRPs and RUGs, and the Train Operating Company (Northern Rail) to improve the quality and suitability of services on the line for the benefit of existing passengers and to increase passenger numbers.

**Develop and promote** integrated transport links at stations along the route (including bus, taxi, ship, cycling and walking) and good connections to adjoining local services (Settle-Carlisle Line, Furness Line and Metro Lines) and the main lines at Leeds and Lancaster.

**Encourage and support** station adoption groups along the line to help enhance station facilities, improve station environments and bring local community members together.

**Encourage** regeneration, sustainable development, accessibility and social inclusion along the corridor served by the Bentham Line.

# Chairman's Report 2014

In **2014** the Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership moved up a gear, or even two, in its approach, as working relationships with the rail industry partners developed further and increasing emphasis was placed on community rail initiatives by the Department for Transport.

The numbers of organisations and volunteers with an interest in the Bentham Line have grown steadily and enabled new initiatives to develop.

We have successfully completed our extensive cohesion project for all of our designated stations and have embarked on new ideas. The Friends of Bentham Station have again had their hard work formally recognised at annual ACoRP National Community Rail Awards.

Having been a secondary school teacher for 30 years, I was delighted that FOBS and CRP colleagues have begun to develop and trial a railway-based education programme for primary school children in the villages along the line.

After three years at the helm of the of the LLMCRP Richard Rollins decided to stand down as chairman at the June AGM. I was elected as his replacement to take on the many and varied challenges the Bentham Line has to offer. Richard was warmly thanked for all his work as chairman and has remained as the LASRUG representative on the management group.

## Consultations and Responses

Being one of the six community rail partnerships linked to the East Coast Main Line gave us a good opportunity to put many ideas forward, to the bidders for the franchise. These included undertaking joint promotions for journeys to and from the local line, the sharing of expertise and personnel and supporting, (along with the local train operating company), more extensive projects like passenger information systems or CCTV.



During June and July we prepared a full response to the joint Department for Transport/Rail North consultation on the next Northern and TransPennine Express franchises. This, along with a detailed presentation, has provided a good basis for discussions with the the shortlisted bidders for these new franchises, which are currently taking place.

The CRP warmly welcomes the increased emphasis on Community Rail within these new franchises and is keen to tackle the new challenges arising. Having been set up as a limited company I believe we are in a good position to develop Community Rail Business Unit ideas which were initially raised in 2004 in the Strategic Rail Authority's original community rail documentation.

## The MD's Visit

It was a pleasure, and a highlight of the year, to accompany Alex Hynes, the Managing Director of Northern Rail, on his visit to the Bentham Line in August.

During a stopover in Bentham he was able to meet members of the CRP, LASRUG and FOBS to discuss the line and view the vast amount of volunteer work put in at the station.



Alex, who was immediately recognised by his staff throughout the visit, made a particular point of speaking with all of them and listening carefully to their suggestions and concerns. This was something which impressed us all along with his knowledge and questioning about the line.

He had a real 'Class 142 experience' on his return journey and took away many thoughts and ideas from all the people, who passionately care about a secure future for the line, that he met.

### The Three Big Challenges

The main areas for the CRP to seek improvements in remain the line's timetable, the fare structure and the rolling stock used. These are all items which were commented on at length in our consultation responses and in our discussions with the bidders for the new franchises, in addition to our on-going discussions with Northern Rail. All three areas have been identified as causes preventing further growth in passenger numbers.

The present limited 5 trains-each-way Monday to Saturday service continues to restrict journeys. There clearly needs to be an early morning arrival into Leeds and a later evening departure from Leeds. Services need to be introduced to and from Lancaster to permit business, work and education commuting in a westerly direction. The number of services in each direction should be substantially increased and more evenly spread over a longer period of the day, to enable more opportunities for leisure journeys on and beyond the line.

There are no attractive fares on offer to all prospective passengers. The day fares on the route are the higher 'anytime' fares. The introduction of 'duo' and 'advance' fares, particularly for longer journeys, would encourage more travel. A form of 'line rover' ticket would also aid the promotion of outdoor activities.

The welcome exception and attractive offer is the Dales Railcard which is widely used on the line for local journeys.

The occasional visits of a Class 158 units to the line are very warmly received. These units should be the minimum standard for all services on the route, rather than the Class 150, 142 and 144 units which are the basis of the the present service. The rolling stock used needs to be suitable for this scenic 75-mile trans-pennine route and its blend of passengers.



### Designated Line Meeting

Following on from the line's service designation in October 2012, the CRP met with representatives from ACoRP and the Community Rail division of the DfT, in September, to discuss progress made since the designation was announced, to review the present action plan and to look at future developments. This will now be an annual event.

### New Community Rail Officer

Simon Clarke's support, (and expert knowledge of the rail industry), as Community Rail Officer for the Bentham Line, (and other lines in Lancashire), has proved invaluable, since the formation of the CRP in 2006. I trust that he will continue his work with us for many years to come. However, his office is away from the line, in Accrington, and the time he is able to offer us on a weekly basis is limited.

For some time now, the CRP has looked to find funds in order to employ an 'on-the-line' Community Rail Officer. I am pleased that the funding to make this a reality is to be made available through the new community rail responsibilities included in the recently let East Coast Main Line franchise. The funds will be available in March 2015.

A sub-group of the management committee has already met to draw up a suitable job description and advertisement, and is now working on the necessary policies for us to be able to start this 20 hours-per-week post as soon as possible after the funds are made available.

### Passenger Numbers

During the period April 2013 to March 2014 passenger numbers on the line have continued to grow steadily at above 2%pa, as in previous years, despite the challenging economic situation. Of particular note were the 21.5 % increase in numbers at Bare Lane and a 14.65% increase at Wennington. The latter case reverses the loss in the previous year. Gargrave had a 10.5% increase and Heysham 9.1% gain. The remainder of the stations saw a smaller single figure increase or maintained their number of passengers close to the previous year's figure.

## New Headquarters for the CRP

The year was rounded off by the long-awaited and very welcome news that completion of the tripartite lease for Bentham station building, between the CRP, Northern Rail and Network Rail, had taken place and that the CRP had new headquarters to move into at the start of 2015.

The building will not only provide office and meeting space for the CRP, but will act as an educational area. It will provide a base for local minibus operations and, naturally, it will continue to be home to FOBS. Local community groups will also be to use the premises.

My sincere thanks goes to all the directors, management group members and the many volunteers from numerous related organisations who have given their time and effort in helping the LLMCRP develop the community ethos of Bentham Line and prepare the line for the future.

The LLMCRP moves into 2015 on a high note, with a number of important initiatives completed and further positive developments in the pipeline.

Gerald Townson  
Chairman

December 2014



# Account Summary

## Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership Company Limited

### Trading and Profit and Loss Account for the Year Ended 30th April 2014

	£	£
<b>Turnover</b>		
Grants and subsidies	9130	
Contribution to projects	<u>2799</u>	11,929
<b>Cost of Sales</b>		
Projects		11,929
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>		-
<b>Other Income</b>		
Bank interest receivable		<u>29</u>
		29

	£	£
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Administration support costs	2,000	
Travel and subsistence	105	
Hire of hall	229	
Trade subscriptions	695	
Sundry expenses	374	
Accountancy	<u>411</u>	
		<u>3,814</u>
<b>NET PROFIT</b>		<u><b>-3,785*</b></u>

\* Covered from the company's reserves.

# Engaging Communities

## Councils

Following on from the successful conference at Settle in July 2013 which brought together delegates from local councils in Craven with members of the CRP and representatives of the rail bodies associated with the line, the CRP held a similar event at Morecambe in June this year for the councils and other interested parties at the western end of the Bentham line.



The first half of the evening event was given over to a briefing about the CRP and its aims, and encouraged the delegates to think about their individual communities and the rail services they would like to see. The second half focussed on Friends Groups and Station Adoption.

It proved possible to establish a link between local traders and the conservationists developing the gardens at Bare Lane station, that evening. The CRP was invited back by members of Morecambe Town Council to help look further at how Morecambe station could be developed and at the formation of a 'Friends of Morecambe Station' group.



Over the coming years it will be important for the CRP to work alongside Morecambe Town Council as they seek to rejuvenate the town and holiday resort. The Bentham Line has played an important role in linking the residents in West Yorkshire towns and cities to the seaside in the past and could do so again.

## Schools

With the invaluable support and expertise of Brian Haworth and Marjorie Birch of Community Rail Lancashire, combined with the very genuine interest of Linda Brockbank from the CRP and Margaret Cowling of FOBS, the CRP has, this year, embarked on an education programme to involve local primary schools.

Two visits were made to Accrington Eco Station, along with officers from Craven District Council, to view the excellent material produced by primary schoolchildren in East Lancashire.



As a result, the CRP drew up several railway-orientated lesson plans based on the present National Curriculum, and made initial contact with Bentham Primary with a view to inviting a class of Year 4 pupils to Bentham Station for a test run.

The visits went ahead successfully in June when 28 pupils joined us over two afternoons to focus on mathematics and art activities (above), by creating their own timetables and views of the countryside from the train.



The pupils have since return to design and carry out their spring planting in their newly established school area adjacent to the station entrance (left).

Craven District Council and the CRP would like to establish a teaching base at Bentham station which other schools in Craven can visit, having experienced a journey on the line.

# Volunteers and Station Adoption

## Volunteer Activities

Whilst a mystery volunteer continues to add fresh colour to the tub displays on both platforms at Gargrave, others from the local community have been tackling the cutting back of hedges to make way for a new pavement.



The 50-metre pavement has now been created to link the new car park, developed last year by the parish council, to the westbound platform entrance at the station. The search is now on to find funding to add a tarmac surface to the pavement and install two lamp posts with LED lighting.

Meanwhile, at Bare Lane a group, drawn from the Lancaster and District Conservation Volunteers and led by



two LASRUG members, has been busy working to re-establish the well-used station as an attractive centre for the village.

They started in the autumn of 2013 and introduced a cycle of bulb and shrub planting, concentrating on the tubs and gardens already in existence at the station. The shady bed adjacent to the slope to Platform 1 has been completely replanted. Ideas are in hand for the development of other areas.



Volunteers at Hellifield and Skipton have added further colourful floral displays to the station during the year.

## The Friends of Bentham Station (FOBS)



The ever resourceful volunteers of FOBS continue to go from strength to strength, giving generously of time and effort. They have developed and enhanced the station and its surroundings to a high standard with generous support from local businesses, organisations and individuals.

The year opened with the FOBS annual coffee morning in the Town Hall. Enjoyed by 100 visitors the event raised over £300 towards to the group's activities.

February saw FOBS volunteers looking forward to spring with the installation of six small bird boxes and a large tawny owl box high in the lime trees on the embankment, as part of the rejuvenation project.

In spring, two projects were undertaken and completed; the creation of a school area with refurbished poster cases for artwork and new planters, and the design and construction of signposts and a map case for the extension of the Bentham Heritage Trail to the station.



At the end of May, the station, FOBS members and their supporters played a leading part in the Bentham Carnival, by decorating the station, organising an exhibition of local railwayana and and creating a 'pop-up café on the platform.

The volunteer members of Bloomin' Bentham have also continued to play a vital role at the station, leading on all activities of a 'green-fingered' nature.

During July, FOBS held a platform party for those sponsoring the planting at the station. Over twenty businesses and groups contributed almost £500 this year.



FOBS were delighted to welcome, Alex Hynes, Managing Director of Northern Rail, to the station in August and received his sincere thanks for their sterling endeavours.

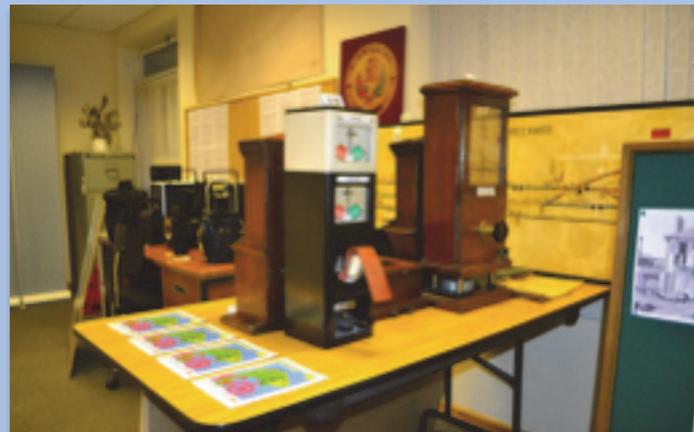
Their third anniversary celebrations took place in September, with the official opening of the extension of the Heritage Trail by Pete Myers, Northern Rail's Client and Stakeholder Manager, and local resident, Jim Munday, who supported the scheme. Brian Barnsley, ACoRP's Operations Manager, unveiled a plaque to mark the sixtieth birthday of the 'new' station building. A splendid buffet lunch, with a station-themed birthday cake rounded off the event.



This was soon to be followed in October by two further national successes for FOBS at the 2014 Community Rail Awards at The Spa in Scarborough.

The embankment received its annual tidy up at the beginning of December. FOBS were pleased to welcome a group of helpers from the Customer Relations Team at Network Rail LNW to the event.

They rounded off the year with their third AGM and now look forward to new challenges in 2015.



# Community Rail Awards

The volunteers of the Friends of Bentham Station, and those who help them, continue to develop ideas and have played an important part in securing a place for Bentham and the Bentham Line in the world of Community Rail in 2014 with their unceasing efforts. FOBS entered the national Community Rail competitions for the second time in 2014 and were again successful, gaining two further awards.

## Association of Community Rail Partnerships Awards, The Spa, Scarborough - 2nd October 2014

Around 350 representatives from community rail partnerships, friends groups and the railway industry saw volunteers from FOBS and Bloomin' Bentham collect the award for **first place** in the **'Small Projects - Under £500'** category at the celebrations.

They were nominated for the award by Pete Myers of Northern Rail for their 'Annual Planter Sponsorship Scheme' which is now in its second successful year of operation and has grown to involve over twenty local businesses and groups.



FOBS administers the promotion and funding of the planters scheme and the hard-working volunteers of Bloomin' Bentham, naturally, take charge of the two major planting sessions each year. All of this is possible thanks to the generosity of the members of We Are Bentham, the local business group who sponsor the planting and upkeep of the scheme. Their contributions are acknowledged on the planters and in one of the station windows.

The judges felt that this initiative, 'is a simple yet innovative, self-financing scheme which has brought together new groups within Bentham. It has created a valuable resource which has enhanced the rail gateway to this small town and enriched the journeys for passengers on the Bentham Line'.

Gerald Townson's photograph, 'The Platform Entertainers' (below) was **placed second** in **'The Essence of Community Rail' Photographic Award** following a ballot of everyone attending. The photograph was taken at Bentham station on Carnival day this year.

Full details can be found at [www.acorp.uk.com](http://www.acorp.uk.com)



# Promotion and Publicity

## Posters and Leaflets

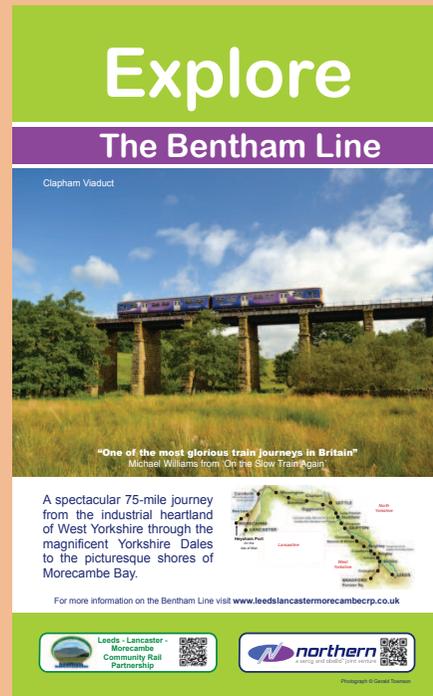
Poster and leaflet design, and production, is an on-going process for the CRP.

Fortunately, the CRP has the expertise to be able to design its own posters and with the introduction of the cohesion project poster cases is now able to display its promotional material more easily. New 'Explore' and fares posters were created in 2014 and updated versions are already prepared for 2015. Station history posters were introduced and a new poster for the 2015 'Ride and Stride' walks campaign is in preparation.

Almost 20,000 copies of the joint CRP/LASRUG 'Window-gazer Guide' for the line have been distributed across the north of England over the past three years. This leaflet has recently been revamped in readiness for a 2015 reprint. The preparation of the new 'Ride and Stride' Self-guided Walks leaflet the individual walk cards is well underway.

**Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe CRP Website,**  
[www.leedslancastermorecambecrp.co.uk](http://www.leedslancastermorecambecrp.co.uk)

Our well-visited website is part of the suite of websites developed by Simon Clarke for Community Rail Lancashire. All of these sites have recently been redesigned and relaunched to give a more up-to-date experience for the users. The work to populate and update the pages of the LLMCRP site remains a regular task for him.



## Marketing

Early in the year, the CRP met with the 'Welcome to Yorkshire' tourism group, regarding the promotion of the Bentham Line as a scenic route and as a means of reaching the many natural attractions of the southern Yorkshire Dales. As a result it became clear that the CRP will need to bring together appropriate parties at each of the appropriate stations on the route to fulfil the latter aspect.

Early discussions have taken place between Northern Rail and the CRP in relation to a marketing campaign for the Bentham Line in 2015. The proposal is to market the line for its scenic qualities, for walking and cycling activities from the rural stations and for visiting the attractions of Lancaster and Morecambe.

## Press Articles

There have been press releases with associated photographs throughout the year from us, generating in excess of thirty articles in the local and railway press. Articles relating to the CRP, FOBS and LASRUG have frequently appeared in the Craven Herald and Lancaster Guardian, as well as several community newsletters. There has been a host of reports in ACoRP's 'Train On Line', Northern Rail's and Network Rail's in-house publications, Community Rail Lancashire's 'Reading Between the Lines' and in the Railfuture and LASRUG newsletters. These have been complemented by numerous items on a wide variety of websites, including those of the organisations mentioned above. The vast majority of articles are done with a view to sharing ideas, promoting best practice and highlighting our activities and progress.

## Dales Railcard

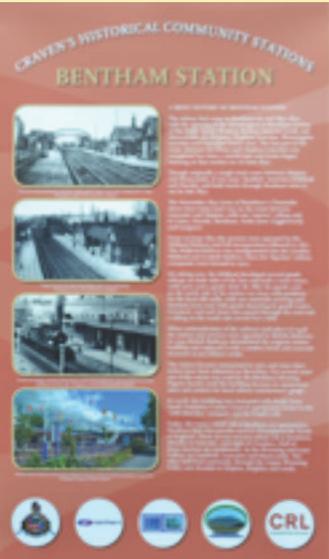
The CPP plays a positive role in the promotion of the Dales Railcard to local communities, to enable residents of all ages to have access to discounted travel. The associated winter flat fare promotion is also well publicised on the route.



# Bentham Line Projects

## Cohesion Project

Started in 2013, the project came to fruition in 2014. The installation of single, double or triple, branded, double royal poster cases either wall mounted or attached to supporting structures was completed in April 2014. The larger, arrangements were placed at Skipton, Hellifield, Bentham and Morecambe, whilst single cases have been used at Gargrave, Long Preston, Giggleswick, Clapham, Wennington, Bare Lane and Heysham (above).



Funding for the £9,440 project came from a successful bid to the Designated Community Rail Development Fund (DCRDF). The grant of £4,720 was matched by £4,420 from the CRP with the remaining balance of £300 being made up of volunteer time.

The cases on all stations now carry a poster giving details of the CRP and the appropriate RUG, along with a map of the line. QR codes have been included on all posters to give easy access to further information via the CRP's website, which has been redeveloped and updated. Additional 'home produced' posters cover the history of the stations (left), fares, local walks and nearby attractions.

Following requests from various organisations, and with financial support from Northern Rail and the Settle-Carlisle Railway Partnership, it has been possible to incorporate a number of refinements to the poster

case structures at Hellifield and Skipton, including additional headings for neighbouring lines and a heritage colour coating (right).

## Bentham Station CCTV Project

Early November saw a further grant award from the DCRDF for a joint bid by the CRP and FOBS for the purchase and installation of a 'stand alone' closed-circuit television system at Bentham station. The multi-camera system will be based on the station building and administered by the CRP, with access to recordings given to appropriate rail bodies and the Police.



For this £2,000 project the grant awarded was £1,250, with £350 being given in support by the CRP and FOBS contributing £250 received as a precept grant for this specific project from Bentham Town Council along with £150 of volunteer time.

The CRP and FOBS have already sought positioning advice for the cameras and quotations for the system and will proceed with the installation early in 2015.

It is hoped that the system will raise the perception of safety for passengers and visitors, provide security for the CRP and FOBS staff and volunteers who work at the station, help deter any further vandalism and detect any anti-social behaviour, as well as help the CRP build on the already fruitful community involvement at the station and on the route.

## Onward Travel Project

The CRP is currently working on an 'onward travel' project for the more rural stations on the line to provide clear yet detailed information about the travel possibilities by bus, minibus, bicycle and taxi.

# Walking and Cycling

The 'Way of the Roses' cycle route No69 from Morecambe to Bridlington passes close to a number of Bentham Line stations. Cyclists often use the line to help them complete the route in stages. Bentham has become one of the first 'Passing Places' on the route having developed a sculpture trail around the town to encourage visitors into the community. The trail, supported by FOBS, was launched in May with a cycle ride around the trail starting at the station.



The CRP and LASRUG continue to positively support walking activities from the stations along the line. Both organisations, with the invaluable assistance of Stuart Ballard, a very keen local walker, have embarked this autumn on the production of a new suite of 14 leaflets and walk cards for self-guided walks between neighbouring stations from all the way from Heysham Port to Skipton. Under a 'Ride and Stride' banner we hope to encourage passengers to explore the diverse areas around the line and the communities along the route.

FOBS, thanks to a £450 grant from the Bentham Town Team and supporting funds from the CRP, were able to extend the Bentham Heritage Trail to the station. Signposts and a new map display, were designed, constructed and installed at the station entrances in May and have already been of benefit to numerous passengers/walkers.



# Rail User Groups

The three rail users groups associated with the line continue to have representatives on the LLMCRP's management group and remain fully supportive of the CRP's aims to develop the Bentham Line.

The groups have recently begun playing a positive and active role alongside the CRP in consultations with the short-listed bidders for the next Northern and TransPennine Express franchises, due to come into operation in March 2016. Earlier, in the summer, they wrote detailed responses to the joint Department for Transport and Rail North consultation on the franchises. At the start of the year they also played a part in the East Coast Main Line franchise process.

The Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group (LASRUG) has celebrated its 25th anniversary this year, having been formed in 1989 at a time when the line's future was in question. They held a celebration lunch in March with four of the original committee members as their special guests.

Throughout the year their excellent quarterly colour newsletter has featured articles reflecting on their challenges and achievements in those 25 years and their optimistic outlook on the next quarter of a century with continued exciting developments in Community Rail appearing with the new franchises.

Both the Aire Valley Rail User Group and LASRUG have well over 100 members.

## Lancaster, Morecambe and District Rail User Group

AVRUG



**LASRUG**

Lancaster and Skipton  
Rail User Group



# The LLMCRP Lineup

## Chairman with responsibility for Station Developments

Gerald Townson - Chairman, FOBS and Secretary, LASRUG  
gerald.townson@btinternet.com 015242 61885

## Vice Chairman with responsibility for Timetable Developments

Pete Myers - Client and Stakeholder Manager, Northern Rail  
drew.haley@northernrail.org 01904 568713

## Secretary/Treasurer with responsibility for Funding

David Alder - LASRUG Committee Member  
david.alder1@btinternet.com 015242 61650

## Development Officer

Simon Clarke - CRDO, Northern Rail. On secondment to  
Lancashire County Council  
simon.clarke@lancashire.gov.uk 01254 386579

## Press Officer

Rod Tickner - AVRUG Representative  
rod@tickneronline.co.uk 01535 671325

## Management Group Members with responsibility for Community Rail Development

Graham North - Rail Officer, North Yorkshire County Council  
graham.north@northyorks.gov.uk 07967 823306

Richard Watts - Rail Projects Manager, Lancashire County  
Council  
richard.watts@lancashire.gov.uk 01254 386579

together with Gerald Townson

## Management Group Member with responsibility for Marketing

Graham North - together with Gerald Townson and Drew  
Haley

## Management Group Member with responsibility for Communities and Schools

Linda Brockbank - Craven District Council Representative  
cllr.lbrockbank@cravencd.gov.uk 015242 61598

## Other Management Group Members

Richard Rollins - Joint Chairman LASRUG  
richard.rollins3@googlemail.com 01524 61090

Drew Haley - Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Co.  
drew@settle-carlisle.co.uk 01729 825888

Jim Trotman - Furness and Lakes Lines, Community Rail  
Officer  
dj-trotman@hotmail.co.uk 01524 842557

David Bousfield - LM&DRUG Representative

Roger Dennison - Lancaster City Council Representative  
rdennison@lancaster.gov.uk

Also invited to attend are representatives from the Network Rail's Community Rail Team, the Department for Transport's Community Rail Team, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority, and the Northern Rail Station Manager for the Bentham Line.





**Leeds-Lancaster-Morecambe  
Community Rail Partnership  
December 2014**

All photographs © Gerald Townson,  
Simon Clarke and Jon Brook

