



**The value of community rail partnerships  
& The value of community rail volunteering**

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Executive summary

**AC:::RP**



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## Executive summary

ACoRP

### Background

This study was commissioned by the National Community Rail Implementation Steering Committee, this includes: a partnership of central and local government, Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and the Association for Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP). The study re-assesses and updates evidence of the value of community rail partnerships and volunteering. Community rail involves local people and organisations working in partnership to improve their local railways.

*Community rail initiatives such as station enhancements and innovative promotional schemes can help get better value for money from the rail network. These initiatives range from major schemes to people helping to maintain station gardens or the refurbishment of small stations with artwork from local schools.*

The Government has a programme of support for Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) based on its 2004 and 2007 Community Rail Development Strategies. The current strategy aims are:

- Increasing ridership, freight use and revenue
- Managing costs down
- Greater involvement of the local community
- Enabling local rail to play a larger role in economic and social regeneration

The study uses face-to-face focus groups with Community Rail Partnerships, volunteer bodies, data including the Department for Transport's (DfT) transport appraisal guidance, WebTAG, and ATOC's national rail ticketing system, LENNON.

### Key Findings

#### 2.8% additional growth per annum on community rail routes

Passenger use of lines served by Community Rail Partnerships has shown greater percentage growth than the national rail network or regional services. CRP lines grew by 45%, compared with the regional sector overall, which only grew by 23%. The difference amounts to an additional 18% over six years (2006/7 to 2012/13), equivalent to a 2.8% year-on-year compound rate.

#### CRPs more than pay for themselves, adding economic, social and environmental value.

All the CRPs in the study achieved a cash surplus, in both lower and upper growth scenarios, indicating that CRPs create more income than they cost to run. Partnerships and productive relationships with the rail industry, local communities, local authorities and other stakeholders, are at the heart of Community Rail Partnership success. As a result, CRPs can add economic, social and environmental value to their lines by bringing together stakeholders in a co-operative environment.

**3,200 community rail volunteers give 250,000 hours per year in support, giving an annual financial value of £3.4m.**



West Runton station volunteers created a welcoming and safe place to be, which helped to reduce trespass and vandalism



Community rail representatives from across the UK gather to celebrate the opening of ACoRP's EU-funded water tower renovation

Volunteers are often motivated by reasons other than simply supporting the railway, including a desire to serve the community, constructive use of their time, seeking a sense of purpose and engaging in mental and physical exercise.

**Station adoption is an outstanding low-cost/high-benefit measure. This can be particularly so where security or other problems can be addressed without high capital expenditure.**

### Factors for Success and Challenges Facing Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)

The study identified a number of key factors for success of CRPs and challenges that face them including:

- CRP success relies on the provision of a CRP Officer resourced for at least three days per week
- Continuity of funding, particularly from non- train operator sources, remains a key challenge
- Opportunities for CRPs include engaging with Local Enterprise Partnerships to inform regional investment priorities and ongoing outreach to the 42% of people identified as not using rail
- Future growth on some lines may also be constrained by the shortage of appropriate rolling stock and infrastructure

### Community Rail Volunteers

The report also looked at the work and motivation of CRP volunteers and found there was scope for volunteers to be better supported.

#### Recommendations included:

- Continuity of funding for Community Rail Partnership officers who coordinate volunteers and station adoption schemes
- Raising the profile and public awareness of rail volunteering
- National Policy Statement and best practice guidance for train operators to follow
- A clearly defined and formalised definition of the volunteer role, with appropriate ongoing training, mentoring and guidance
- Established, formalised and clearly communicated safety procedures
- Low cost / high value measures of recognition designed to boost morale, for example, notices at stations to acknowledge the existence and work of volunteers

To find out more or read the whole report please go to [www.acorp.uk.com/values2015](http://www.acorp.uk.com/values2015)



Local students improve a station subway by designing and installing a mosaic artwork



Local schoolchildren learn about rail safety from a British transport Police officer at Burnley Manchester Road

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