



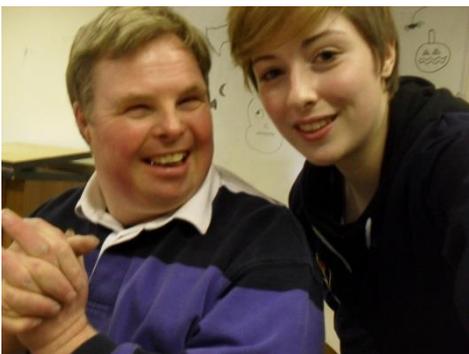
Funded thanks to:

- Abellio Challenge fund
- BwDBC Local Transport Plan 3
- Connecting East Lancashire Project (*Local Sustainable Transport Funding*)
- Designated Line Community Rail Development Fund



ALL TOGETHER NOW – an award winning and innovative Community Rail Lancashire project that engaged with college students, primary school children and disadvantaged adults to rejuvenate a rural village station

- All Together Now is a community based project focusing on enhancing the waiting environment at Pleasington station, a small rural station on the East Lancashire line 3 miles west of Blackburn town centre.
- Located on the Blackpool South to Colne line, and a request only stop, the station is served Monday to Saturdays by an hourly diesel service (two hourly on Sundays) serving Preston and Blackpool South to the West and Blackburn, Burnley Central and Colne to the East.
- Pleasington station was in need of some TLC to help restore local pride and create a more suitable gateway to the area. It had a rather underwhelming station environment with old and dirty barrel roofed shelters on each platform, overgrown vegetation, broken fencing and limited seating.
- Having secured £2000 from the Abellio Best Practice Challenge in 2015 to support diversity and equality outcomes within a community project, Community Rail Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and local artist Alastair Nicholson set about eliciting support from a variety of groups and organisations with a mix of ages and abilities to form a strong partnership between the railway and the local community that would transform the station environment.



- Inspired by the rural setting of the station and the potential to encourage more local wildlife habitats the project developed a 'promoting nature' theme. Moreover, as a gateway to Blackburn's impressive Witton Country Park and within close proximity to the planned Weavers Wheel cycle and walking network which links to the Leeds & Liverpool Canal towpath the promotion of 'sustainable and active travel' was also a feature of this project.



- Thanks to the engagement with a number of local groups and the clear link to local transport and community priorities, an additional £30k of funding was secured (a mix of capital, revenue and volunteer contributions):
 - £12k capital funding from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council’s Local Transport Plan for improvement to station waiting facilities.
 - £5k revenue funding from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund project ‘Connecting East Lancashire’ to support community engagement.
 - £1k revenue funding from Feniscowles Primary School to cover additional time from Alastair to support art and craft classroom based activity linked to the stations wildlife.
 - £12k of volunteer hours
- With the support from over 160 hours of project management assistance also allocated by CRL and BwDBC the station has now been transformed.



- Colourful station signs, wildlife recognition posters, artwork and new branded information boards now brighten up both platforms complimenting extensive vegetation clearance and landscaping works. Bird feeders, nest boxes and bug hotels have also been created and installed to assist wildlife habitats.



- A Pirate themed cycle and walking route map and story taking people from the station through Witton Country Park and beyond to the Leeds & Liverpool canal towpath at Cherry Tree has also been designed to promote connectivity links to local walking and cycling networks such as the Weavers Wheel.



- New planters made of recycled plastic have also been installed on the station platforms and stocked with a variety of bulbs thanks to eager volunteers. A deep clean of shelters and the repainting and repair of station fencing has also been undertaken.



Partners:

- The project has deliberately involved a number of different organisations in order to enable participation from groups and individuals within a broad spectrum of learning and physical ability.
- **Young Weavers** – a local club offering walking, cycling and artistic opportunities for families and adults. The group, in partnership with local artist Alastair Nicholson, have produced an imaginative cycle map that shows the route between Pleasington station, Witton Country Park and the Leeds & Liverpool canal towpath at Cherry Tree. This work has also inspired a colourful *pirate treasure map* as an alternative ride/walk from the station and in partnership with the **Canal & Rivers Trust** a section of the canal towpath has now been adopted by the group with bulbs having been planted and litter picks organised.
- **Stanley Grange** - a residential organisation where people with various levels of learning difficulties reside as a community, have been keen to explore opportunities to develop projects alongside local colleges and schools. For this particular project they have assisted students from **Myerscough Agricultural College** to install and plant up planters on the platforms. They have also assisted with vegetation clearance of the site. In order to help young people appreciate the work involved with supporting people with complex learning needs presentations have been made to Myerscough students by Stanley Grange care staff.
- **Stansfield Centre** – a day care centre in Blackburn working with people with learning difficulties have helped the project to produce bird boxes and bug hotels as well as develop art work for display at the station.

- **Night Safe's Witton Project** – based near to Witton Park this is a charity offering medium stay supported housing for young females between the age of 16 and 18 who are in need of support to gain skills and confidence to move onto independent living. This group has assisted the project through the production of art work for use at the station.
- **Feniscowles Primary School** have produced artwork for the station signs and the bird shapes that adorn the shelters.
- **THOMAS** (which stands for – 'Those On the Margins of Society') - works with people from prisons and/or hospital requiring detox and residential rehabilitation to guide them into community based provision. Individuals from this project again assisted us with the production of art work.
- **Network Rail** – as owner and infrastructure manager of most of the railway network in England, Scotland and Wales are a big supporter of community rail projects and volunteers from their organisation helped clear a large area of the site of rubbish and vegetation.



Important Lessons Learned:

- When working with colleges and universities you are governed by term times, which don't always coincide with the length of the project.
- Staff changes can affect the commitment and supply of students.
- The train operating company has to show commitment to the project and ensure they meet the deadlines.
- When working with voluntary groups, membership is often very fluid and participants can change frequently.
- An initial project fund can attract additional funding from a variety of sources thus enhancing the project and getting political buy in and support from local authorities.

