

PRESS RELEASE June 25th 2019

Britain's newest community rail partnership sets off!

A new body has been formed to strengthen links between the rail network and local communities across the Bolton metropolitan borough.

Bolton Area Community Rail Partnership was officially established last Friday, June 21st, at a well-attended meeting in Bolton Station's Community Room. The new community rail partnership focuses on Bolton Metropolitan Borough, but extends down to Manchester, westwards to Wigan and north to Chorley and Preston.

The community rail partnership has grown out of the highly successful Bolton Station Community Development Partnership, which will continue its work to revitalise the station and develop it as a community hub. The station partnership, along with several other partners in the rail industry, local government, university and voluntary sector, will be a member of the new community rail partnership.

Paul Salveson, chair of the station partnership, welcomed the establishment of the community rail partnership (CRP). "The CRP will have a much wider geographical brief and work to promote the local rail network across Bolton and beyond, on the basis of the Government's Community Rail Development Strategy." (see note to editors below) "We very much hope that the new CRP will get the strong and positive backing which the station partnership has had from Northern, TfGM and Network Rail".

The new community rail partnership will work with existing groups across and beyond Bolton and help establish new station adoption groups where they don't already exist. A priority will be to involve young people in a range of activities including art work. The CRP will participate in Bolton Station's 'Food and Drink Fringe Fest' on Saturday August 24th. The theme is Trains – Food – Music: connecting the World.

"The exciting work that the station partnership is developing with the University of Bolton can be extended to include some of the smaller stations around Bolton serving communities such as Farnworth, Westhoughton, Horwich and Blackrod," said Julie Levy. "There's a huge opportunity out there to develop innovative projects which benefit local people."

The new CRP will apply to join the national Association of Community Rail Partnerships and seek early accreditation as a full community rail partnership. The CRP will seek funding to employ staff and develop a range of projects. In some cases it will work with neighbouring sister bodies including Community Rail Lancashire. Richard Watts, chair of CRL, said "Community Rail Lancashire welcomes the formation of the new Bolton area CRP and looks forward to working closely with the new CRP in areas such as 'Educating the Passengers of the Future' and 'The Autism Friendly Line'. We also look forward to joint marketing ventures building on the successful guided walks already carried out by the new CRP."

The new CRP will become a community interest company and be based in the Community Room at Bolton Station.

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