

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

## CONWY VALLEY AND NORTH WALES COAST COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PARTNERSHIP

1

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

2 - 3

COMMUNITY RAIL OFFICER

4

HOST

5

PROJECTS 2023-24

6 - 12

COMING UP...

13



# THE PARTNERSHIP

## WHO WE ARE AND OUR AIMS

**Welcome to the Conwy Valley and North Wales Coast Community Rail Partnership.**

We are an accredited Community Rail Partnership, awarded by the Community Rail Network (CRN), Department for Transport and Welsh Government. Mr Philip Evans, Chair and Haf Jones, Vice Chair welcome you to this report which highlights the work we do in connecting communities to their railways.

Our partnership members include Transport for Wales (TfW), Avanti West Coast (AWC), Network Rail (NR), British Transport Police (BTP), Station Adoption representatives, Community Rail Network, Boots on the Ground and Groundwork North Wales as the host.

The business activity plan is delivered by all members, led by the Community Rail Officer. Our plan aims to:

- 1. Provide a voice for the community**
- 2. Promote sustainable, healthy, and accessible travel**
- 3. Bring communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion**
- 4. Support social and economic development**

Conwy Valley and North Wales Coast Community Rail Partnership covers the line from Blaenau Ffestiniog through to Llandudno and Holyhead to Shotton.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



**MR PHILIP EVANS**

During the past year, in addition to the activities outlined in the Report, we have seen several changes and developments. We said farewell to Claire Williams, Community Rail Officer, who left us to embark on a business opportunity locally; we are grateful to her for the projects she undertook and initiatives she began during her time with the Partnership.

Following Claire's departure, we were fortunate to welcome back Karen Williams, her predecessor. Karen's previous experience in the role has enabled her to settle in well and "hit the ground running".

At the same time a change was made to the hosting arrangements for the Partnership. Our relationship with Creating Enterprise ended by mutual agreement and, following a process, Groundwork North Wales, a Wrexham-based social enterprise was duly appointed. The new partner already has experience as host for the 3 Counties Connected Community Rail Partnership (CRP) which covers neighbouring lines serving Chester, Wrexham, Crewe, and Shrewsbury. It is pleasing to record that the new arrangements are working well, and I am particularly grateful to Hanna Clarke, Head of Marketing for Groundwork North Wales, and Melanie Lawton of TfW, for the ease with which the transfer took place. The positive approach provides scope for us to work closely on joint projects with our colleagues at 3 Counties Connected CRP.

In addition to these changes, the Partnership's area has again been extended to include the section of line between Colwyn Bay and Shotton. We are currently working to increase our presence in the new area and the operation of the Community Resilience Fund has enabled us to make contact with several community groups and charities active to the East.

In this connection we try to encourage station adopters who play such a valuable part in keeping their local stations attractive and cared for; to this end we were able to co-sponsor a Christmas lunch for these volunteers as a “thank you” for all they do to support the railway.

The work of the Partnership has again been recognised nationally with two of our projects – a mural at Conwy station and a video to encourage less confident travellers – were shortlisted for awards at the Community Rail Network’s annual awards ceremony.

The railway community was much saddened to learn of the unexpected passing of Larry Davies in March. Following his retirement as a Divisional Commander with North Wales Police, Larry spent over a decade as an enthusiastic and productive Community Rail Officer for the Conwy Valley line. Well respected for his work in the role, Larry laid the foundations for much of what we do today. He enjoyed a well-deserved reputation nationally as a railway photographer and historian being regularly consulted by the authors of a variety of railway publications. The large attendance at his funeral was testament to his popularity throughout the area.

Looking forward, we have several new projects underway including engagement with young people to encourage rail use, working with partners to promote rail safety and an exciting innovation to have a Window Seater App for the Conwy Valley route which tells travellers the story of the line and its history, and culture. We continue to see more of Transport for Wales’s new Class 197 diesel units along our routes and look forward to the introduction of Avanti West Coast’s new Class 805 electro-diesel trains along the coast.

In conclusion I would express my appreciation to my Vice-Chair, Haf Jones and the other members of the Partnership for their continued support; to Melanie Lawton, TfW’s Community Rail Strategy Lead whose ready advice, experience and knowledge of our patch is invaluable; to Claire and Karen successive Rail Officers for all they have done over the past year. We are grateful for the constant support and co-operation so readily given by our two Train Operators, TfW and AWC.

**Philip C Evans JP FIoL**  
**Chair of the Conwy Valley and North**  
**Wales Coast Community Rail Partnership**

# COMMUNITY RAIL OFFICER

**KAREN WILLIAMS**



I was appointed Community Rail Officer for the Conwy Valley and North Wales Coast Community Rail Partnership in November 2023, having previously worked in post between 2020 and 2022. It was an honour to step back into a role I love doing.

I have lived and worked in Conwy County all of my life and thrive on building new relationships with local organisations, as well as rekindling old working relationships and building new, stronger and more resilient ones.

I have enjoyed getting back into the swing of things and I'm excited to make new connections, planning new and exciting projects within the local communities that bring social and economic benefit, and connecting our communities with the railway.



# HOST

## GROUNDWORK NORTH WALES

In November 2023, the CRP moved host from Creating Enterprise to Groundwork North Wales. Groundwork North Wales already host 3 Counties Connected CRP which covers Chester, Wrexham, Shrewsbury, and Crewe railway lines.

Here at Groundwork North Wales, we are delighted to have been selected as the new host organisation for the Conwy Valley and North Wales Coast Community Rail Partnership (CRP). The partnership plays a vital role in supporting the communities it serves along the rail lines, creating positive impacts for local people.

Karen Williams has recently taken on the role of Community Rail Officer for the partnership. Her enthusiasm and hard work have already made a significant difference in rejuvenating the partnerships after a period of inactivity without a dedicated officer in place.

We are extremely optimistic about the future work of the CRP and are confident the partnership will continue to make a positive difference within the communities it serves along the Conwy Valley and North Wales Coast rail lines.

Groundwork North Wales is proud to provide a home for this important Community Rail Partnership. We look forward to supporting Karen and the CRP in delivering initiatives that benefit local residents, rail users, tourists and all those with connections to this scenic part of North Wales.

# PROJECTS 2023-24

## STATION ART PROJECTS

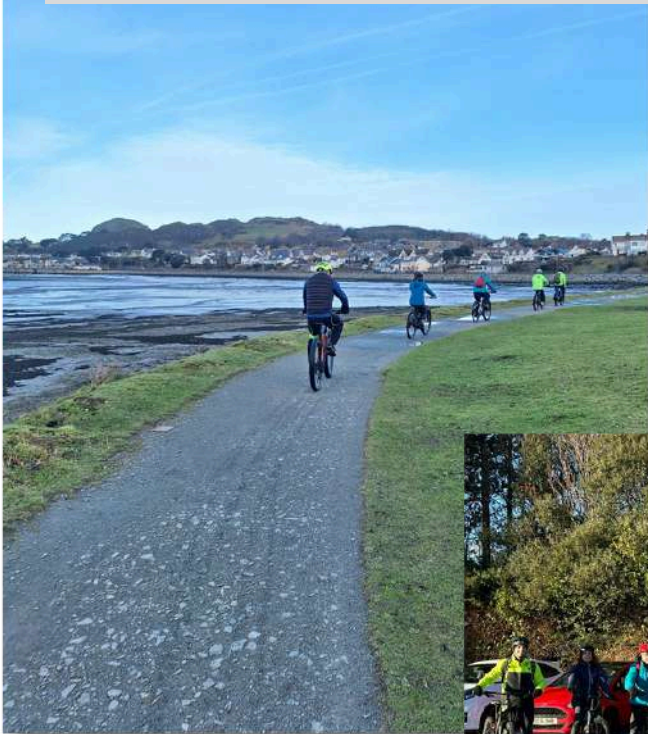


In December 2023 and January 2024, the Rail Partnership worked closely with British Transport Police PCSO's Matthew Cassidy and Suzanne Hall, both based at Rhyl. Together with funding from the CRP and TfW, we worked with Christ the Word Catholic school in Rhyl, and Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy where pupils designed and created artwork based on rail safety and tourism. With the help of local graffiti artist Dime One Graffiti and Art, their designs were sprayed onto shelters and boards which were then displayed at North Llanrwst and Rhyl railway stations. In total more than 50 pupils benefitted from learning painting and design skills.



# PROJECTS 2023-24

## E-BIKING FOR WELLBEING



During February, we launched an e-bike project funded by Avanti West Coast, encouraging people to explore their local area and improve physical and mental health and wellbeing. We worked closely with Conwy County Council's Ffit team offering free 2-hour e-bike sessions. There was a lot of interest from novices, and experienced riders alike. Referrals also came from local authority Pupil Referral Units. In total, more than 60 people benefitted from an e-bike ride along some of the prettiest locations including Sychnant Pass, Rowen and Henryd. Following the success of the sessions, friendship groups have formed and members of the group continue to meet regularly. There has also been a lot of interest in purchasing bikes and equipment to continue.

# PROJECTS 2023-24

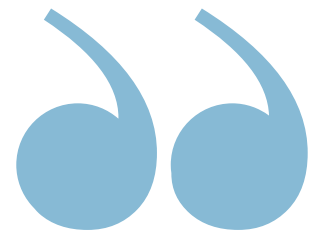
## E-BIKING FOR WELLBEING

### FEEDBACK



*“Pam, one of the riders said- ‘It’s so nice to meet young people and to be able to keep up with them on a bike. We have been riding and chatting.’”*

*Gethin, PRU tutor - “The outdoor e-bike sessions have had a beneficial effect on both the individual and class as whole. This is something we have noticed after the rides. There is less disruption within the class and concentration levels are improved.’*



*Ruth, another participant said - ‘I am developing as a rider. I feel more confident riding each time and I love catching up with the group after the session for a paned.’*

Quotes are written verbatim.

# PROJECTS 2023-24

## OFFICIAL OPENING OF PORTERS CAFÉ



Adferiad officially opened their new Porter's café at Llandudno Junction in March. Aberconwy MS Janet Finch-Saunders officially waved the flag and opened the recently refurbished café with Adferiad Chair Clive Woolfendale. The café is open 6 days a week and sells hot and cold drinks, snacks, sandwiches and other light bites to go.

# PROJECTS 2023-24



We were delighted to offer another round of our resilience grant fund this year. The CRP along with TfW, funded a pot of £25,000 available to all communities within the areas of Llandudno to Blaenau Ffestiniog and Holyhead to Shotton. There were more than 70 applications to the fund with 33 CIC's, charities and local community groups supported with projects. **Some of the successful applications came from:**

- The Kind Bay Initiative, Pride 2024
- Credu Conwy Young Carers
- Conwy Sight Loss Group
- Betws Y Coed Community Drama Group
- Vale of Clwyd Mind

## RESILIENCE GRANT 2024



We celebrated World Book Day in March at Chester station with 3 Counties Connected CRP, Avanti, TfW where we handed out Arlos's Adventure rail safety books to children and families, highlighting the dangers of the railway. Conwy Valley and North Wales Coast CRP have secured a £10,000 fund from AWC, which together with funding from TfW and GWR, have funded a new rail safety book for children called Rupees Travels which will be launched at Bangor station in May.

## WORLD BOOK DAY 2024

# PROJECTS 2023-24

## COMMUNITY RAIL AWARDS 2024



In March, the CRP joined other rail partnerships, Community Rail Network and other rail operators in Swansea for the annual Community Rail Awards. We were shortlisted in 2 categories: 'Involving Children and Young People' for the art project at Conwy station with pupils from Ysgol Aberconwy, and 'Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability' for the Confident to Travel project, in partnership with TfW and Tape Music and Film. We were delighted to be awarded 3rd place for the Conwy art project.

# PROJECTS 2023-24



## NEW WEBSITE

Our new and vibrant website has been launched, containing all the latest information as well as things to do and up-to-date progress report on all our activity. Links to local walks and walking websites such as 'Go Jauntly' are available for exploring the local area using the train can be found on the new website. Check out our new website by visiting [conwyvalleynorthwalescoast.com](http://conwyvalleynorthwalescoast.com)



## NEW MAP

In 2020, the CRP expanded it's area to cover the North West Wales coast from Llandudno Junction to Holyhead. We collaborated with Starfish Design Llandudno to adapt our then current Conwy Valley area map to reflect this. We have made this map public and are proud to display this at Llandudno railway station. Starfish spent many months researching places of interest and things to do along the line, and has created some beautiful illustrations. Also featured on the map is the Traws Cymru T2 and T10 routes, along with QR codes for the rest of the Traws services. Y Wyddfa Sherpa also has its own QR code for connecting services. Please take time to pop along to the station and admire our new map.

# COMING UP...

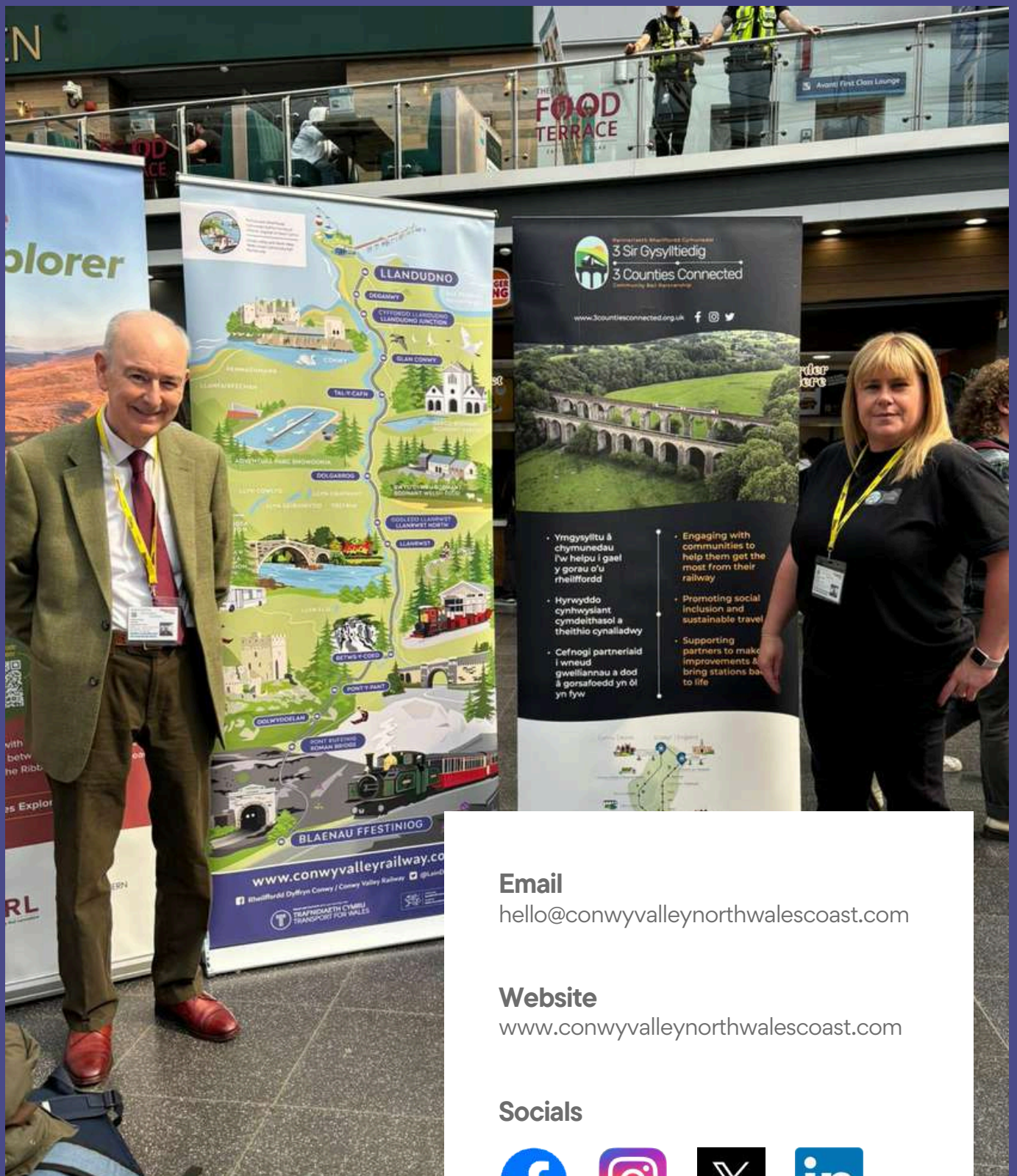
## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**

As the CRP has developed and emerged into new territory such as Gwynedd and Anglesey to the West, and Denbighshire and Flintshire to the East, we are seeking new members to join our steering group. We are holding 3 recruitment events in Bangor, Conwy, and Rhyl and are keen to invite members of community groups, charities, hospitality and tourism sector and other support organisations to join. Dates are in September and more information can be found on our website, or by contacting [hello@conwyvalleynorthwalescoast.com](mailto:hello@conwyvalleynorthwalescoast.com)

## **COMMUNITY RAIL IN THE CITY**

We will be heading to Manchester Piccadilly and Birmingham New Street in May to celebrate Community Rail in the City. The event is an opportunity to showcase the Conwy Valley and North Wales Coast CRP, and our extension to the CRP. The new and updated timetable leaflets highlighting attractions to visit whilst in the area will be available to all passing travellers.

# CONTACT US



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## Website

[www.conwyvalleynorthwalescoast.com](http://www.conwyvalleynorthwalescoast.com)

## Socials

