

Cam Valley
Community Rail
Partnership



2025-26 Annual Report



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council



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Introduction by the Chair

Susan van de Ven

We are pleased to share an overview of our evolving Community Rail Partnership, now the Cam Valley CRP. It has grown from three village stations to a network of five – Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton, Shelford and Whittlesford Parkway – plus the new Cambridge South Station, opening in June. Cambridge South will offer new connections to education, employment and public services.

This report highlights our core purpose in action: building community, supporting social responsibility and looking ahead to future opportunities.

Our core activities continued throughout the year, including rail safety education with Foxton Primary School and the Sawston Beavers. The Meldreth Link path has been a focus for volunteers of all ages, creating wonderful displays of wildflowers and bulbs to complement the work of our station gardeners. We're grateful to everyone who contributed.

We also support improvements to local infrastructure, including efforts to improve level crossing operation where they meet busy roads.

Across Whittlesford, Shelford and Cambridge South, we've formed new partnerships with train operators, parish councils, gardening and scout groups, local businesses and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. We also welcomed a new director to our Community Interest Company, bringing fresh insight and local connections.

This is a period of change for rail services, with nationalisation, Great British Rail reforms and local government reorganisation ahead. We aim to adapt while staying rooted in, and guided by, our communities.



Community Interest Company Directors Peter Sutton, Brian Clarkstone and Richard Williams with Project Officer Sarah Grove and Chair Susan van de Ven

Cam Valley CRP

About us

Our Community Rail Partnership is committed to community development, working closely with schools, groups and businesses associated with our local rail services, and improving sustainable transport links for the benefit of the wider area.

The partnership is accredited by the Department for Transport. Accreditation is formal recognition by the DfT that a Community Rail Partnership operates to a high standard and that its objectives and activities are supported by Government.

The partnership would like to thank all our station volunteers, members of the Stakeholder Group and Sarah Hatcher for recording the minutes of meetings.

Our partners



Parish Councils of Melbourn,
Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton,
Great Shelford and Whittlesford

Melbourn Village College
Melbourn Timebank
Melbourn Practical Solutions Group

Foxton Gardens Association
Meldreth Veg Club
Philimore Garden Centre



Providing a Voice for the Community

Championing local concerns and ensuring community perspectives are heard in major rail and infrastructure discussions

We worked closely with local residents and parish councils on the planned upgrade of the Meldreth Road Level Crossing. We also arranged visits to the Foxton Signal Box and Cambridge Power Box so councillors could better understand how our three local crossings operate individually and within the wider network.



We represented community interests throughout the planning and preparation for the opening of Cambridge South, focusing on onward travel and links to the Biomedical Campus. At the same time, we continued our conversations with East West Rail, calling for clear communication, early engagement, strong local protections, and high-quality facilities for rail users.

Across all these areas, the CRP has ensured that the voices of South Cambridgeshire's communities remain central to decisions shaping their rail services and the places they live.



Promoting Sustainable and Healthy Travel

Encouraging environmentally responsible and confident travel through education, creativity, and community outreach.



Working with Foxton Primary School, we delivered curriculum led rail trips, helping pupils build the skills they need to use public transport independently and safely. We have supported the Sawston Beavers working towards their Platforms for Change badge with rail-safety sessions and a trip on a train to Cambridge. These sessions supported both sustainable travel habits and wider life skills, ensuring that young people see the railway as a safe, accessible, and positive option for everyday journeys.

We also brought sustainable travel to life through hands-on, place-based projects. At Shepreth station, in partnership with Sustainable Shepreth, the CRP hosted the Travelling Garden, offering an interactive way for passengers and local families to explore themes of biodiversity, wellbeing, and greener journeys. Meanwhile, our promotion of the Cam Valley on the Railway 200 Inspiration Train, supported by resources funded by the CRDF helped spotlight rail-accessible days out and active travel links across the region.



Through these initiatives, we encouraged residents and visitors alike to choose rail for leisure, connect with local landscapes, and experience the health and environmental benefits of sustainable travel.

Bringing Communities Together

Supporting diversity and inclusion

Our achievements this year were made possible by the incredible dedication and community spirit of our volunteers.



We are so proud of our work on the Meldreth Link Path this year. Our activities began in April (1) when the Melbourn Guides and volunteers from Meldreth and Melbourn helped to prepare the ground and sow wildflower seeds, funded by a Community Chest grant from South Cambridgeshire District Council. The wildflowers produced a beautiful display shortly after (2). In July, we celebrated the official opening of the path with the Greater Cambridge Partnership and our colleagues from GTR (3).

In October, to raise awareness of MIND, the GTR Corporate Charity, we led one of the Melbourn Timebank Well-being Walks to view the wildflowers (4) which continued to delight well into November (5). In December we held a Community Bulb Planting event, supported by local volunteers. We were very grateful for the bulbs donated by local residents (6) and the generous discount offered to us by Philimores Garden Centre to purchase even more.

We are pleased to have provided these volunteering opportunities and to continue supporting the improvement of this vital link between Melbourn and Meldreth Railway Station. Our amazing volunteers this year have also included our stalwart station gardeners and adopters at all our stations as well as our Duke of Edinburgh watering volunteers, with a special shout out to the staff of Corteva on the Melbourn Science Park who came for two days of litter picking and scrub clearing at Meldreth.

Supporting Social and Economic Development

Supporting local attractions and businesses through celebrating and promoting all the Cam Valley has to offer



The expansion of the CRP has enabled us to rebrand with a geographical focus on the Cam Valley and its distinctive features - chalk streams, thatched cottages, country pubs and easy cycling and walking routes. A grant from the Rural England Prosperity Fund has supported the development of an updated website showcasing the region, along with new walking and cycling route maps and welcome boards to be installed at all six stations. Promoting the region locally and nationally will encourage visitors to expand their horizons beyond Cambridge City, helping to support local attractions and businesses.

Our new activity booklet for children includes a range of fun puzzles and games to keep younger travellers engaged during rail journeys, while also featuring a rail safety checklist and information about our vital local chalk stream habitats. The children illustrated in the booklet are named after our local rivers and tributaries: Rhee, Mel, Shep and Cam.

Strengthening the Partnership

Deepening our connections across the region through shared events, national campaigns, and active involvement in the wider Community Rail movement

This year has seen us collaborating with our CRP colleagues across the Eastern Region and beyond. After attending the Railway 200 Inspiration Train in Lowestoft, we were delighted to be invited by Greater Anglia to join the train again in Cambridge in January, sharing the experience with our colleagues from Hereward and Ipswich to Cambridge CRPs. One highlight of the year was helping on the Hereward Santa train between Ely and Peterborough - an elf's work is never done!

Another highlight was working with our Thameslink colleagues on the Chorus for Change event, bringing together a flash mob of singers from across the network to London King's Cross to celebrate the positive impact of music on mental health.



We were delighted to attend a parliamentary reception hosted by the Community Rail Network (CRN) to raise the profile of the Community Rail movement. Our MP for South Cambridgeshire, Pippa Heylings, visited the event and was presented with our annual report and line guide.

We have taken an active part in CRN forums throughout the year, including Education, Tourism and Integrated Transport. We were pleased to discover last year's Safety of Women and Girls event had inspired other community rail colleagues to hold their own. We have also participated in CRN campaigns including Community Rail Week and Days out by Rail, and have updated our website with new pages to match the themes such as "Rails to Reels" showcasing TV and film locations accessible from our stations.

Community Rail Awards

We were delighted that our photographic entry “How do you like the new banner?” was shortlisted for the Community Rail Awards this year. Our thanks go to South Cambridgeshire District Council for supporting the design and production of the new banner, to Community Rail Norfolk for hosting us for the day in Lowestoft, and to Ben Walsh for being such a good sport and having his photo taken.



Financial Statement

The Cam Valley CRP is extremely grateful for the continued funding support from Govia Thameslink Railway and South Cambridgeshire District Council. Funding from Greater Anglia, Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge City Council has allowed the Partnership Officer to increase hours to cover new stations and new projects. We are also thankful for the continued support of our Parish Councils in Meldreth, Melbourn, Shepreth and Foxton, and to the directors of the Meldreth, Melbourn, Shepreth and Foxton Community Interest Company who provide financial governance.

Accounts for 2025-26

Income	
Core Funding	£19,423
Grants	£43,198
Brought forward from 2024-25	£13,304
Total Income	£75,925
Payments	
Partnership Officer	£22,644
Operational Expenses	£806
Projects	£22,375
Accounting and Administration	£676
Total Payments	£46,501
Balance at 31st March 2026	£29,424



CAM VALLEY
Community Rail Partnership

Contact Us



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