

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership



200
Years of Train Travel
Since 1825



2024-25 Annual Report



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Cover photo: Station staff on Meldreth & Melbourn Railway Station in the 1920s. From left to right: Mr Allen, Mr Hale, Mr William Vellum, Mr Scott (Station Master) and Leonard Dodkin (clerk). Photo from Melbourn Magazine Winter 2002

Introduction by the Chair

It has been a busy and adventurous year for MSFCRP. Long-term projects like the Meldreth Station Link have come to fruition, and collaborations with community groups like Sustainable Shepreth have strengthened. Horizons have expanded in a multitude of ways.



A notable change to our organisation was the decision to wind up the 'Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group,' and consolidate the work of championing local rail under the auspices of the CRP. The RUG was established in 2009 and was the pre-cursor to the CRP; the CRP was now felt to be in a strong position to champion daily rail services, along with its growing community development programme.

At the same time, the notion of expanding the reach of our CRP to other South Cambridgeshire stations, both to share good opportunities with our neighbours, and strengthen the profile of local sustainable transport, gained a foothold through the offer by Greater Anglia, which runs through Whittlesford Parkway and Shelford Stations – and soon the new Cambridge South Station – of formal support to an expanded CRP. We look forward to working further on a new collaboration with these stations in the coming year.

New horizons have also been explored by the much-enjoyed Rail and Ale Trail: why not look and give it a try?

The most important have been universal themes of encouraging rail travel, through continuing School Outreach and schemes like Platforms for Change and confidence to travel through the Safety of Women and Girls event. First-time travellers are always greeted by our station gardens, setting the tone for the joy of train travel and the new horizons that it exemplifies.

With enormous thanks to all our volunteers, partners and supporters who make the Community Rail Partnership exactly what it says on the tin.

Susan van de Ven

Chair, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership

Projects

In this section of the report, we highlight a number of projects carried out this year and identify those pillars of Community Rail with which they are aligned.

Melbourn Station Link

We are delighted that work to widen, resurface and light the path between Melbourn and Meldreth station took place this year – a scheme we have long championed. We look forward to celebrating the opening this summer.

We are still concerned with the lack of accessibility at Meldreth for the London platform, and we invited our MP to the station in February help consider avenues to achieving better accessibility at Meldreth.



- ✓ Providing a voice for the community
- ✓ Promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel
- ✓ Bringing communities together
- ✓ Supporting social and economic development
- ✓ Strengthening the partnership

Sustainable Shepreth Eco Fair

Once again, we enjoyed attending the Sustainable Shepreth Eco Fair in January with support from Shepreth Parish Councillor, Barbara Pankhurst. Our theme this year was Sustainable Transport, and we had resources to share covering walking, cycling, buses, rail and EV charging. Additionally, we conducted two surveys, one on the location of cycle racks required in Shepreth, where the Village Hall was top of the wish list, and one around uses for the station building at Shepreth - 90% of respondents told us they would like to see a café in the village, 67% wanted a meeting space and 62% a shop.

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Safety of Women and Girls Event

Our Community Rail Partnership has always championed the fact that local rail is there for anyone and everyone. In December we organised an information stall at Cambridge Railway Station, offering valuable resources and guidance to help women and girls stay safe at night and on public transport, especially during the festive season. Cambridge Station is an important gateway to the night-time economy for visitors from connected villages and towns.

The event was a joint initiative with South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the British Transport Police, Dardan Security, White Ribbon, Cambridge Businesses Against Crime (CAMBAC), Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre and Businesses Against Abuse. The event was hosted by Greater Anglia and supported by Stagecoach.



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Meldreth Road Level Crossing

We have continued to help facilitate conversations between Network Rail and local parish councils around the upgrade of the level crossing at Meldreth Road, Shepreth. Because of safety concerns at the crossing, and in the context of a possible increase in the number of trains facilitated by the digital signalling upgrade, Network Rail intend to proceed with an application for a Level Crossing Order to upgrade the crossing from Automated Half Barriers to Full Barriers. We will continue to ensure that the concerns of local residents are heard.

- ✓ Providing a voice for the community

Platforms for Change

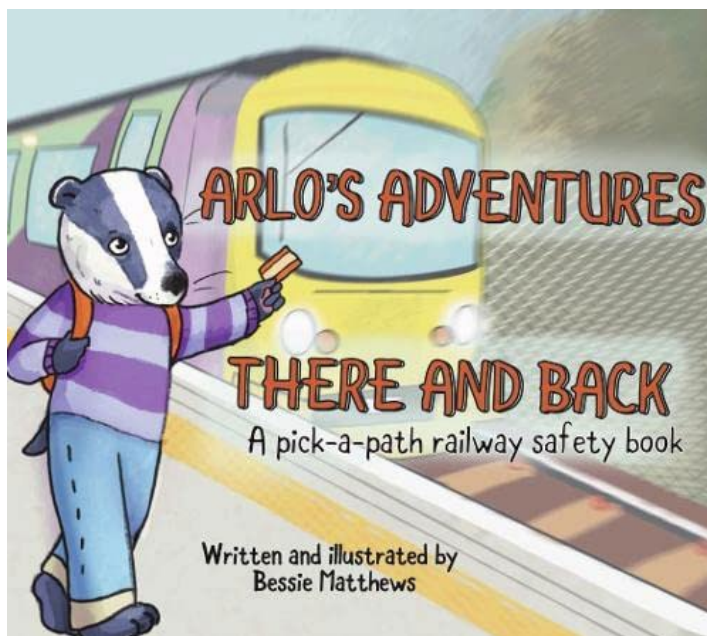
This year we worked with Letchworth Cubs to help them achieve their Platforms for Change badge. The programme involves several visits to the cubs and the station. We started with a rail safety talk at the cub meeting. This was followed by two further sessions at Letchworth Station of gardening/litter picking, followed by a cake sale when the cubs also had a “backstage tour” of the ticket office and station manager’s office. The final session was a train trip from Letchworth to Cambridge to visit the Botanic Gardens in September. We are very grateful for the help and assistance provided by our Govia Thameslink colleagues in facilitating these sessions, particularly to Karen Chudovszky, our Area Station Manager.



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School Outreach

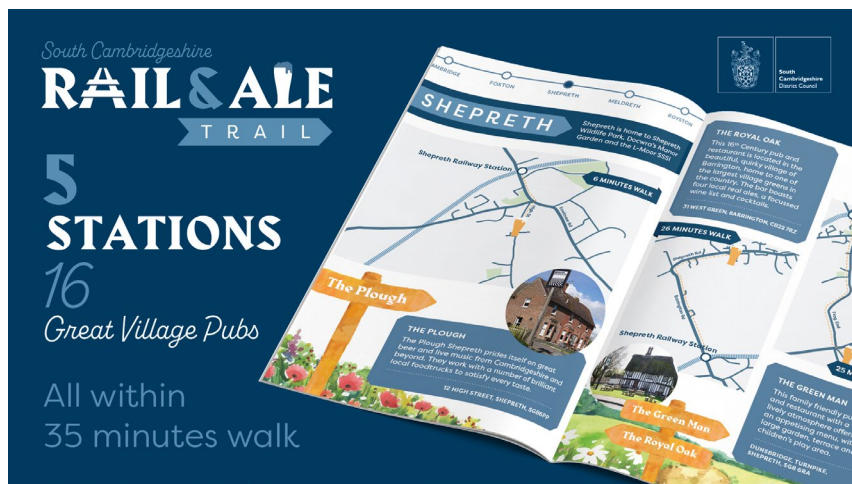
One example of our school outreach this year has been our work with Foxton School. We supported each of the four classes in the school to make sure that all pupils had received lessons in rail safety. Class Four had a lesson on safety and travel planning before a train trip to Cambridge for some comparative Geography. Class Three’s lesson focused on safety at level crossings, of which we have many local examples, followed by a visit to the signal box at Foxton station and a train trip to Royston to visit the town museum. Class Two had a rail safety lesson, followed by a visit to the signal box and a trip to Shepreth. We were very grateful for the support from Happy Bunnies Nursery School who allowed us to use their toilets to facilitate the trip. Class One had a lesson based on Arlo’s adventures including storytelling and games. Class One are saving their class trip for next year.



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Rail and Ale Trail

We worked with Visit South Cambs (VSC), to create the South Cambridgeshire Rail and Ale Trail aiming to support local pubs, promote the area to visitors and raise the profile of the VSC website. The booklet features 16 pubs all within half an hour's walk of five local railway stations and contains photographs of the pubs, plus maps detailing how to walk to them from the stations.



The trail was launched during Community Rail Week at the Tickell Arms Beer Festival. Hard copies were distributed to all the pubs featured in the booklet, plus local campsites and information hubs, and handed out at subsequent beer and music festivals. The trail was promoted by MSFCRP and VSC on their websites and social media. It also gained coverage in local newspapers and radio. A fruitful collaboration with the local CAMRA branch saw the trail highlighted in their email newsletter, website and magazine. The initiative has successfully encouraged visitors, including wheelchair users, to explore and enjoy the welcoming pubs along the route and reminded local people to use their local railway stations and rediscover the delightful views on their doorstep.

The trail has been shortlisted for a Tourism and Leisure Award at the Community Rail Awards 2025.



CERTIFICATE OF SHORTLISTING



Your entry to the 2025 Community Rail Awards
has been shortlisted in the category of

Tourism and Leisure Award

Sponsored by



H C Lavery
Hazel Lavery
Events & Fundraising Manager

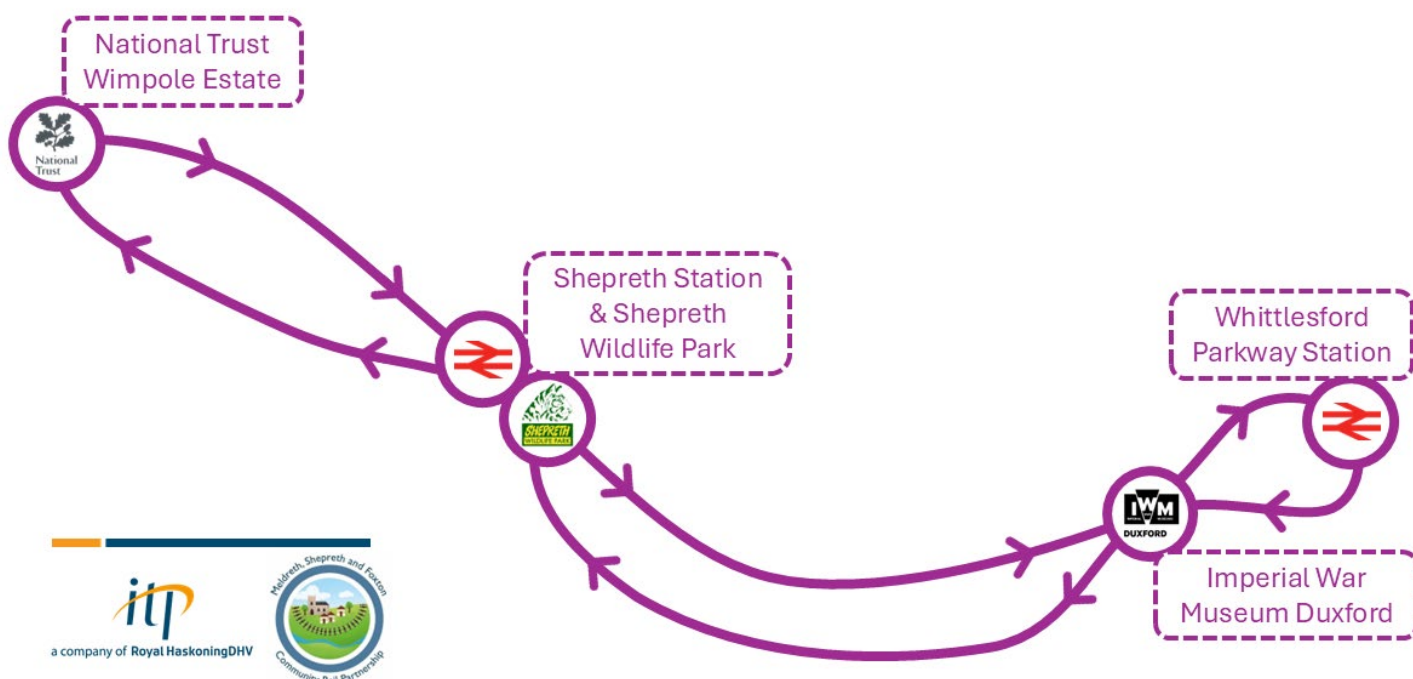


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Eco Tourism Bus Feasibility Study

MSFCRP commissioned transport consultants ITP to conduct a feasibility study to understand the opportunities and constraints of providing a bus service to connect three tourist destinations in South Cambridgeshire: NT Wimpole Estate, Shepreth Wildlife Park and IWM Duxford with the railway stations at Shepreth and Whittlesford Parkway. Engagement with tourist destinations, rail and bus operators, and public sector officers were key to understanding the local context, and how such a service might serve residents alongside visitors. The resulting report highlights challenges associated with delivering mode shift in a rural environment, as well as opportunities for partnership working.

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Financial Report and Funding

MSFCRP is extremely grateful for the continued funding support from Govia Thameslink Railway and South Cambridgeshire District Council. It is also thankful for continued funding from Melbourn, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Parish Councils.

Accounts for 2024-25

Income

Core Funding	£16,451
Grants	£4,400
Brought forward from 2024-25	£21,440
Total Income	£42,291

Payments

Partnership Officer	£17,844
Operational Expenses	£434
Eco Tourism Bus Feasibility Study	£9,827
Accounting	£882
Total Payments	£28,987

Balance at 31 March 2025	£13,304
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Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership

Our Partners



Melbourn Parish Council

Meldreth Parish Council

Shepreth Parish Council

Foxton Parish Council

Phillimore Garden Centre

Melbourn Village College

Melbourn Practical Solutions Group

Melbourn Timebank

Foxton Gardens Association

Meldreth Veg Club

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership

Our Community Rail Partnership aims to develop links with schools and local businesses associated with our local rail services, and to enhance sustainable transport links in the wider area. The partnership is hosted by South Cambridgeshire District Council and funded by Govia Thameslink Railway, the Parish Councils of Melbourn, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton, and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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 Hilary Marsh and Sarah Hatcher for recording the minutes of meetings.

Contact us

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