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Virgin Trains Stakeholder Newsletter Issue 3 2019 North . 30 September 2019



## A final message from Phil



*Welcome to this final edition of our quarterly newsletter, which provides a snapshot of the fantastic work we at Virgin Trains have worked so hard to deliver for our customers for the past 22 years. We look back with immense pride, having led the industry in delivering faster journeys to more destinations, harnessing new technology and always putting the customer first.*

*Our record is one of challenging the status quo. We introduced industry- first innovations like the tilting Pendolino trains and the onboard entertainment service, BEAM, and in July we became the first train operator to offer 100% of its ticket types digitally.*

*As you will be aware, First Trenitalia has been announced as the successful bidder to run the West Coast Partnership and will operate services on the West Coast Main Line from December 2019.*

*Looking ahead to the remaining months, our focus is to continue to deliver the best possible experience for our passengers and the communities that we serve across the country. We will be working closely with First Trenitalia to ensure a seamless handover for our customers, who are being reassured that they should book and travel as normal.*

*Up until the moment of handover, our charitable and community activities are continuing at full speed, from upcycled Virgin Trains uniforms for homeless charities, to working with the Community Rail Partnerships along the route. I hope you enjoy reading about some of our fantastic initiatives in this edition.*

*Phil Whittingham, Managing Director of Virgin Trains*

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## Our destinations

### Liverpool City Region Upgrade Work



*On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, Network Rail is carrying out vital upgrade work at Edge Hill, as part of their Great North Rail Project. The work to recontrol signalling at Edge Hill will make journeys more reliable and minimise delays.*

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Over the weekend, Virgin Trains services will be unable to serve Liverpool Lime Street and Runcorn – with services starting and terminating at Warrington Bank Quay. Rail replacement services will be in place between Liverpool Lime Street and Warrington Bank Quay to connect into our services to and from London Euston, extending journey times. More information about Virgin Trains' services can be found here:

<https://www.virgintrains.co.uk/spanner>

We recommend planning your journey in advance and checking the National Rail Enquiries and Virgin Trains websites before travelling. For more information about Network Rail's work in the Liverpool City Region, visit:

[www.networkrail.co.uk/LCR](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/LCR)

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## Business news

### Virgin Trains offers 100% digital tickets

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Virgin Trains has become the first train operator to offer 100 percent of its ticket types digitally. The new addition of monthly and annual season tickets in this format means that Virgin Trains now offers a digital version of every fare. Customers can purchase their season ticket online and it will be delivered straight to a mobile device in seconds - cutting out the need to queue at stations, and the worry of losing or damaging a paper ticket. London Euston, Crewe, Preston and Manchester Piccadilly have introduced the wireless and cable charging points to give customers a ready boost of battery power, removing any anxiety about arriving at the stations with digital tickets on an uncharged phone.

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## Virgin Trains uniforms put to good use for the homeless



*Virgin Trains will donate blankets, scarves and dog coats which have been made from old staff uniforms to homeless charities. The upcycled clothes - many of which are in Virgin Train's signature colour of red - were transformed by prisoners at HMP Northumberland at their onsite textile factory.*

Virgin Trains will donate blankets, scarves and dog coats which have been made from old staff uniforms to homeless charities. The upcycled clothes - many of which are in Virgin Train's signature colour of red - were transformed by prisoners at HMP Northumberland at their onsite textile factory. Items will either be distributed by Virgin staff at London Euston, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly, Liverpool

Lime Street and Glasgow Central or will go to local charities to give to the homeless.

Other items of clothing which could not be made into blankets have been used to make unbranded dog coats which will also be given out to those homeless people with four legged friends. Some branded dog coats with the Virgin Trains logo will be given to staff in return for a donation - with the profits going to charity. The remainder of the clothes - which are more than six years old - will be donated to charity or later recycled.

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## Virgin Trains upgrades Voyager services with Free WIFI & BEAM for all



*Virgin Trains is pleased to announce that free WIFI for all passengers is now available on all of our Voyager services, in addition to our Pendolino trains.*

Virgin Trains is pleased to announce that free WIFI for all passengers is now available on all of our Voyager services, in addition to our Pendolino trains. This upgrade provides all passengers access to the full BEAM entertainment service on their personal devices whilst on board, which has hundreds of fresh-off-the-box-office movies and cult classics, as well as a whole host of boredom-banishing games. The change, which took effect on Thursday 12 September, will apply to all 20 of our Voyager trains. All passengers need to do is connect to 'virgintrainsfreewifi' in your settings and we'll do the rest.

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## Virgin Trains supports MyTime project

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In June, Virgin Trains was delighted to support the MyTime Project, a small community-based project based in Merseyside that provides support groups for children who have a parent in prison. Virgin trains provided complimentary travel for a group of children, parents and staff travelling from Merseyside to London, to speak in Westminster to parliamentarians, policy makers and MPs to tell their stories and ask





for help.

Some of the children's calls to action included more child-friendly prison visits and more sensitivity from the police and the media. These children suffer separation anxiety, worry about their parents' well-being, social isolation, unwanted attention from the media, misplaced self-blame, difficult prison visits, and bullying to name just a few. For more information about The MyTime Project visit [www.themytimeproject.com](http://www.themytimeproject.com).

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## CRP Corner

### Community Rail Lancashire

Virgin Trains and CrossCountry by Arriva help Community Rail Lancashire to support local LGBT+ youth charity work



*CrossCountry and Virgin Trains have enabled several young members of the Proud Trust to access a vitally important residential through their provision of travel for the group.*

*The Proud Trust is a life-saving and life enhancing organisation that helps young LGBT+ people empower themselves to make a positive change for themselves and their communities. They have been working collaboratively with the COLOURS network with lead worker Chloe Cousins, which brings together LGBT+ young people and youth workers of colour to share and learn together. Read more here: <https://www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/news/train-companies-support-lgbt->*

[youth-charity-work/](#)

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### North Cheshire Community Rail Partnership (CRP)

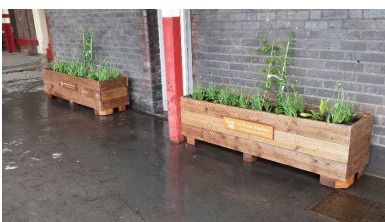
*North Cheshire CRP are proud and delighted to be part of the fast growing community rail movement. Each project gives a creative opportunity for everyone involved. Over the past few months we successfully held our first rail safety session at Elton Primary school and recruited new volunteers who help us to make a difference at the local stations. Together with our partners we launched an art project in Castle Park in Frodsham and celebrated re-opening of the Halton Curve, a short section of the railway track that connects North Wales and Chester to Liverpool airport and city centre. For more information follow us on [Twitter](#).*



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## North Staffordshire CRP

### New Planters at Stoke Station



*Two new planters were installed on Platform 1 at Stoke-on-Trent Station in June. Funded by Virgin Trains and by the North Staffordshire CRP, these provide some welcome colour to the station. The planters were made by construction students Luke and Jake from Stoke-on-Trent College. In addition, a very tired existing planter on the same platform was replanted with herbs, available for picking by passers-by. A volunteer station adopter from Longton Station, Ruth Shaw, led on the plantings and is dead heading, weeding and watering as required.*

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## North Staffordshire CRP



Keele University MA Creative Writing student, Dean Brindley, has had his poem "Circus Train" displayed in the Platform 2 Waiting Room at Stoke-on-Trent Station. He reimagines the atmospheric arrival of the Barnum and Bailey's Circus Train at the station as the animals arrive in their hundreds to take up their winter quarters in the city. The poster was installed by Claire Sandys, Community Rail Officer for the North Staffordshire CRP.

Mark Taylor, Virgin Trains Station Manager at Stoke-on-Trent, said: "We have been proud to serve Stoke-on-Trent for over 22 years. It's a great city I thought I knew well but I was amazed to discover this part of our railway heritage, which is brought to life in Dean's poem, Circus Train. We work hard to champion the cities, towns

and local communities we serve, and we're delighted to present this piece of work which reveals an usual part of Stoke-on-Trent's history to the thousands of people who travel through the station every week."

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## Women in Community Rail



Achievements so far in 2019 has seen WiCR's Code of Conduct adopted by the Department for Transport (DfT), Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) and many Community Rail Partnerships. It sets out standards of behaviour for anyone involved in Community Rail both paid staff and volunteers.

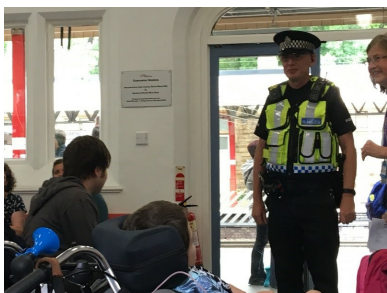
A film showing 'Opportunities in Community Rail' was launched on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June at Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) offices to an invited audience. It was aired across the concourse at Manchester Piccadilly. Since then it has been shown at the West Midlands Trains conference in Liverpool where it was well received. The film commissioned by WiCR was funded by Network Rail, Northern Rail and

highlights **careers** and **volunteering** opportunities in community rail.

A branch of WiCR in the South of England is being launched on 27th September in GTR, Monument Place, 24 Monument Street, London, EC3R 8AJ. If you live in the area please feel free to attend. For any further information on any of the above items please contact [margebirch@icloud.com](mailto:margebirch@icloud.com).

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## Community Rail Cumbria



Staff and students from Sandgate School in Kendal were delighted to enjoy a trip from Oxenholme on the West Coast Main Line courtesy of Virgin Trains. The train was busy, so it was an experience for the students to see that they could manage very well on such a busy and well used line. Sandgate School is a strategic special needs school and the sixth form students all live with severe physical, mental and emotional challenges. The trip was a celebration of a year working hard to encourage confidence using the train and independent travel skills amongst these amazing young people. Virgin Trains staff at Oxenholme gave a brief presentation to pupils in the Oxenholme waiting room and shared helpful books and goodies for their trip out.