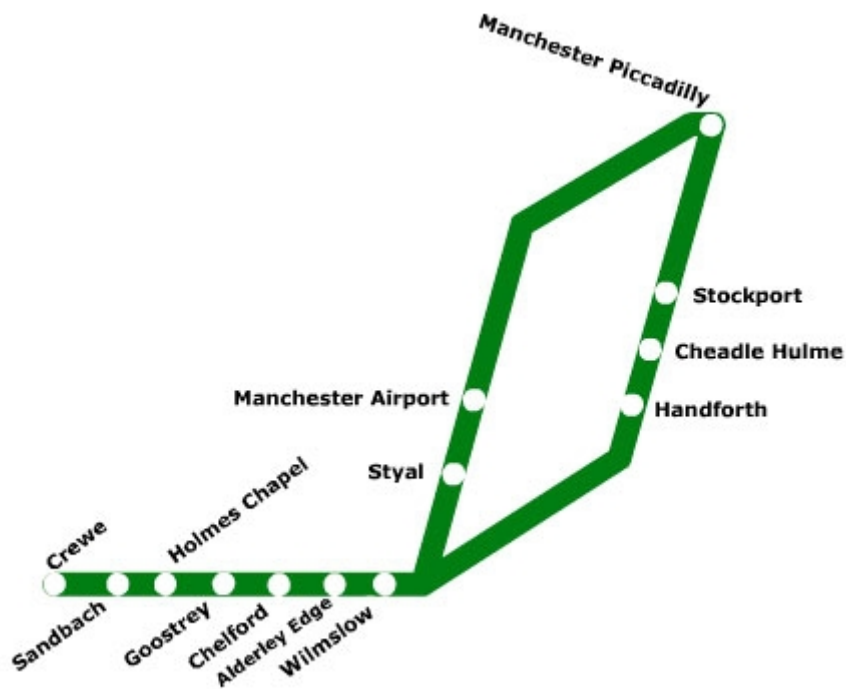




**CREWE-MANCHESTER  
COMMUNITY RAIL  
PARTNERSHIP  
PROGRESS REPORT  
2007/2008**

**April 2008**



## **BACKGROUND TO CREWE-MANCHESTER COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP**

The Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership was established in January 2007 in response to some unique circumstances. As a result of essential works to upgrade the West Coast Main Line, the Crewe-Manchester via Stockport, and Crewe-Manchester via Airport lines had been subjected to severe disruption over a period of four years, with services suffering periods of closure and extensive weekend disruption works, right up until 2007.

The net effect of upgrading these lines by extended closure has been the substantial loss of patronage on these routes, with passenger levels far below those of 2000. At a time of substantial growth generally on the rail network, passenger levels were well below those of other lines in the area as a result of the closures. With the exception of Cheadle Hulme, which had seen its regular passenger levels maintained, all of the stations along the route had seen a sharp decline in use since 2000, with Wilmslow particularly affected.

Although the Crewe-Manchester lines are different to those covered by most other Community Rail Partnerships in that they are fast modern lines used by express services in addition to local services, it was decided nevertheless that a Community Rail Partnership approach could help regenerate the lines. Community Rail Partnerships bring together local authorities, communities, train operators and other transport providers to deliver increased passenger usage and greater involvement of the local community. A Community Rail Officer, employed by Stockport Council, was employed, and steering and working groups were established.

The Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership is financially supported by Cheshire County Council, Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE), Manchester Airport, Northern Rail and Stockport Council. In-kind contributions have been provided by Passenger Focus, East Cheshire Rail Users, Virgin Trains, Halcrow Group and Royal London Insurance. The Partnership, which is a member of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACORP), has a constitution, and consists of a steering group, representing key stakeholders and a working group, representing local communities served by the rail services.

# **AIMS OF CREWE-MANCHESTER COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP**

The Partnership has the following aims:

- To increase usage of stopping and semi fast services on the Crewe – Manchester routes.
- To increase awareness of services and travel opportunities accessible by the line.
- To highlight the role of the services in a local and regional transport context
- To promote and enhance community and stakeholder involvement with stations between Stockport, Manchester Airport, Crewe and the areas surrounding them.
- To work with stakeholders and the community to improve the passenger environment and journey experience.
- To improve accessibility to stations along the route.
- To work with local authorities, major employers and other organisations to develop green travel plans and promote the use of rail services for employment, education and recreational purposes.
- To work with stakeholders and other relevant bodies to promote integrated transport links to the railway, including bus, taxi, community transport, cycling, walking, and park and ride.
- To work with stakeholders and the community to reduce anti social behaviour in the area of the railway.
- To support the use of rail in travel and tourism in the area.
- To enhance communication between passengers, train operators, Network Rail and local authorities.
- To work in close consultation and cooperation with the existing Mid Cheshire Rail Partnership with possible sharing of resources and co-ordinated working.
- To support the work of the East Cheshire Lines Rail User Group, and Friends of Station Groups along the route.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

In the first year of operation of the Partnership, the priorities have been to raise the profile of the line, establish links with businesses and community groups, improve the station environment and identify priorities for future station and service improvements. Through working together with a number of stakeholders, the Partnership has already achieved several successes.

### **Passenger Numbers**

Since April 2007, when full services resumed on the line, passenger numbers for journeys originating and finishing between Cheadle Hulme and Sandbach inclusive to and from all other stations, have increased by 14.4%, with season ticket journeys up by 12.2% over the same period.

### **Marketing**

A marketing campaign to boost off-peak travel through sales of 'Duo' tickets (provide 25% off price of 2 adult cheap day returns) was carried out by Northern Rail through doorstep leaflets in partnership with the Community Rail Officer. Duo ticket sales on the line have increased by 21.2% since April 2007.



Northern Rail 'Duo' leaflet

## Website

An attractive user-friendly website has been developed for the Crewe-Manchester line which provides comprehensive information for both commuters and off-peak recreational users of the line. Fare promotions, station facilities and ideas for days out are just some of the features on the site. Since its launch in November 2007 the site has had an average of over 1500 visits a month, and a number of successful reciprocal links with other websites have been established. The site, [www.crewe2manchesterrail.org.uk](http://www.crewe2manchesterrail.org.uk) was developed to a common design with that of the Mid-Cheshire line partnership, and is therefore a good example of joint working and sharing of resources with another Community Rail Partnership.



## Manchester Airport staff rail discount card

Manchester Airport launched an innovative staff rail discount card in August 2007, which provides 25% off rail fares from employees' home station to the airport, for season tickets and day fares. A number of discount cards have been sold for stations on the Crewe line, accounting for 11% of total sales. Passenger numbers as a whole to the Airport from stations on the Crewe line have increased by 16.5% since April 2007.

## **Station garden projects**

Garden projects are being developed at Chelford, Goostrey, Holmes Chapel, Sandbach and Wilmslow stations to improve the appearance of the stations and also promote tourist opportunities, in conjunction with Cheshire Year of Gardens 2008 and local volunteers and businesses. Chelford and Handforth stations both won awards in the 2007 Cheshire Best Kept Station awards in recognition of their work in transforming the station environment.



Wilmslow station garden project launched

## **Involvement with major employers**

Links have been forged with a number of employers along the Crewe-Manchester rail corridor, including Royal London, Astra Zeneca, Halcrow and Fujitsu, with a view to promoting rail as an option for staff travelling to work.

## **Market Research**

Research was carried out by the Community Rail Officer to establish the demand for improving Sunday rail services to Chelford and Goostrey to a two-hourly frequency, commencing in the December 2008 timetable. Postal questionnaires obtained a 26% response rate, with the findings passed on to Northern Rail and the local parish councils.

Passenger Focus will be undertaking web-based market research for the Crewe-Wilmslow-Manchester corridor during May 2008, which will include both rail and non rail-users, with a particular focus on those using the line for work and education related journeys.

### **Live music trains**

Monthly live music events on trains from Manchester to Goostrey, and then hosted in a local pub, have been established, with an average attendance of 35-40. The costs of these are now partially met by the pub involved.



Goostrey Folk Train

## **FUTURE PROJECTS**

The Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership is working to initiate a number of projects over the next two years.

### **Passenger information**

The Partnership will continue to press for the provision of real time passenger information screens at all stations on the line. In addition, options for train-running information hotlines (such as GMPTE's Rail Speech system) will be explored.

### **Station security**

The Partnership will work closely with British Transport Police, schools and the local community on tackling antisocial behaviour at stations on the line. Where necessary, the installation of CCTV will be sought.

### **Accessibility improvements**

The Partnership will work with Cheshire County Council to seek improvements to pedestrian and cycle access between Wilmslow Station, town centre and Wilmslow High School. At Handforth, opportunities to provide step-free access to the platforms will be pursued.

### **Cycle storage facilities**

Cycle stands will be installed at Wilmslow, Alderley Edge and Goostrey stations.

### **Car-parking facilities**

Options to improve car-parking capacity for stations along the line will be pursued.

### **Marketing activities**

Line-guides and self-guided walking leaflets will be developed. Marketing of the Duo tickets and Cheshire Day Ranger tickets will be maintained. A marketing campaign to promote the Crewe-Manchester Airport service will be developed. The Community Rail Partnership will participate in local community events to promote the Crewe-Manchester line, and opportunities to use the line will actively be promoted to schools.

### **Working with local authorities**

The Partnership will develop links with emerging local authorities arising from the local government reorganisation in Cheshire.

## **SUPPORTING THE CREWE - MANCHESTER COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP**

The Crewe-Manchester Community Rail Partnership welcomes funding from both public-sector and private-sector organisations. Funding can be provided directly to the Partnership or alternatively used to sponsor specific projects, with sponsorship providing good publicity for your organisation. If you are able to contribute funding to the Partnership, or sponsor specific projects, please get in touch with the Community Rail Officer on 0161 474 4346 or by e-mail: [robert.morton@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:robert.morton@stockport.gov.uk).

**Crewe - Manchester**

**Community  
Rail  
Partnership**

