

Community Schemes Update: Autumn 2011

Long-term schemes in place: 54 Registered volunteers: 414
 One-off scheme days completed: 16 Volunteers: 194

Whittlesea 'National Clean-Up Week'

One-Off



On 7th and 8th July, as part of Network Rail's national 'Clean-Up' week, Whittlesea station, serving the village of Whittlesey near Peterborough, benefitted from the efforts of a joint team from Network Rail's Ely depot, Fenland District's 'Street Pride' volunteers, station staff from National Express and workers from Cambridgeshire's Community Payback. The workforce cleared undergrowth and rubbish from around the station approaches and a former loading dock, filling a skip with soil and rubble in the process. Next stage for the scheme is to get safety fencing in place so that Whittlesey Street Pride can put in planters and improve the area as a Long-term scheme.

Croston

Long-term



The Friends of Croston Station, on the Preston-Ormskirk line, having hugely improved the station's single platform, recently turned their attention to the other platform, disused with no track alongside and covered with several decades' growth of vegetation. An access gate and safety fencing were arranged by Alan Bibby, from Preston Maintenance Delivery Unit and early in the year the group began the back-breaking task of clearing the undergrowth and saplings, helped by waste management company, Veolia, who dispose of the vegetation they cut down. Kath Almond, who coordinates the group jointly with Cath Sears, admits "Sometimes we think the weeds and brambles are beating us, but we will not be defeated," and they are already looking at entering the stations category in Village in Bloom next year.

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Newton St Cyres 'National Clean-Up Week'

One-Off



As part of 'Clean-Up Week' elsewhere in Britain, Lola Konstantopoulos, from Network Rail's Plymouth Maintenance Unit, organised a clear-up of the disused platform and former station yard opposite Newton St Cyres station in Devon, clearing litter and cutting back trees and undergrowth. Network Rail staff were helped by volunteers from the Friends of Newton St Cyres, well-known for the impressive gardens they have created on the station's public platform. Arrangements are now in place for the Friends of Newton St Cyres to keep the old platform tidy under Network Rail supervision twice a year, building on the good work during Clean-up Week.

Frome Fun Day

Long-term



There has been a community scheme looking after the disused platform at Frome for several years now, but the small group of volunteers led by John Leach has struggled to keep on top of the challenge of weeds coming through the long platform and pigeons under the station's unusual overall roof. So, on 22nd August a dozen people from the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership, representing stations as far afield as Filton and Weymouth, pitched in to help. They were joined by the Off-Track and depot teams from Network Rail's Westbury, who cleared weeds and litter from the trackbed, while the volunteers cleared the platform. In a few hours platform and former track bed were cleared of weeds and litter, generating two truckloads of rubbish which were transferred to Network Rail Westbury for disposal.

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Cleethorpes

Long-term



Cleethorpes station, serving the East Coast seaside resort, is unusual in having a disused platform on the side facing the beach, and those concerned with promoting the resort feel this lets it down. So, Cleethorpes in Bloom are going to remedy that: They have taken on a community licence to keep the platform clear of weeds and have secured funding for local artist Rachel McWilliam to construct combined 'sculptures' and planters along the fence line, celebrating events in the history of the railway in the town. Before the group could get onto the platform, Station operator First TransPennine refurbished the access gate and Network Rail's Barnetby depot installed a safety barrier at the far end. Pictured are some of the group with Station Manager Dean Lancaster, and Rachel with similar artwork she has completed on the Lincolnshire coast nearby.

Llandrindod Wells

Long-term



Along the 'Heart of Wales' (Craven Arms-Llanelli) line, on the outskirts of Llandrindod Wells, is an area once occupied by a signal box, but unused for many years. Consequently it has become overgrown and attracted complaints. However, rather than just complain, Caroline and Simon Redfern, who live in the house next door, decided they would do something about it and took on a community licence to make a garden on the site. Network Rail provided a temporary fence while Simon, a carpenter by trade, built a post and rail fence along the side facing the track, using recycled wood. By mid-Summer they had cleared the brambles trimmed, pruned and planted to create a delightful garden. Their only problem is keeping the dog out!

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Penybont

Long-term



Continuing our journey up the Heart of Wales we reach Penybont (or 'Pen-y-bont' as the Railway atlas calls it). Here the small but effective station adoption group has cared for the shelter and gardens at the single-platform station for some years. Not satisfied with this achievement, they wanted to extend their activities to the disused platform. This was quite a challenge, as the access is blocked by a storage compound for track materials. However, a call to the neighbouring farmer solved the problem, as he was willing to allow the group to access the old platform across his land and through a dedicated gate provided by Network Rail. At the end of June, as soon as the gate was in place, the group, consisting of Sue and Jeff Cooke plus George Scarfe, met up with Network Rail for their safety briefings, 'high-vis' and safety gloves. Expect great things from this small station!

Barnstaple

Long-term



Barnstaple station, serving the modest North-Devon town of the same name, but can by no stretch of the imagination be called 'small', having once been a junction for four lines. As the above photo shows, its disused 'island' platform is nearly 300 metres long. But this was a minor challenge to the Tarka Rail Association and Mike Day, proprietor of the 'Station Masters Café', who took on the old platform as a community scheme two years ago and recently extended the scheme to the former bay line at the back. Mike has mobilised volunteers from the nearby B&Q and off-duty staff from Great Western to help the TRA. Between them they have cut back the decades of tree growth in the bay and restored the planters designed by local students in the 1980s.

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Long-Term Schemes in Place, 1st October 2011

Hither Green Triangle (London)	triangle between running lines (nature reserve)
Frome (Somerset)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Burscough Junction (Lancashire)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Abernant (Carmarthenshire)	Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen Junction to Abernant (preparation for heritage railway)
Gwendraeth (Carmarthenshire)	Sections of the Coed Bach to Cwmmawr line (preparation for heritage railway)
Halesworth (Suffolk)	Areas behind former 'movable platforms' (heritage site)
Chandlers Ford (Hampshire)	Disused platform (enhancing station environment)
St Albans Abbey (Hertfordshire)	Unfenced area alongside station car park (enhanced green space)
West Rainton (County Durham)	Part of mothballed branch (litter clearance)
Chapel-en-le-Frith (Derbyshire)	Bank at rear of south side platform (station garden)
Treherbert (south Wales)	Track bed in former bay, behind station platform. (enhanced green space)
Patchway (Bristol)	Area behind northbound platform (enhanced green space)
Barnstaple (Devon)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Llanelli (Carmarthenshire)	Walled area and area behind platforms on south side (enhanced green space)
Chartham (Kent)	Former allotments (Youth and community garden)
Cantley (Norfolk)	Former lamp store on upside platform at Cantley station (refurbished building)
Homerton (London)	Embankments behind platforms + street-level area (wildflower garden)
Totnes Riverside (Devon)	Area at foot of embankment on main line Totnes station (nature area)
Brandon (Suffolk)	Fenced area alongside station car park (enhanced green space)
Hindley (Manchester)	Bank behind station platform (enhanced station environment)
Tisbury West (Wiltshire)	Former crossing-keeper's hut (refurbished building)
Wateringbury (Kent)	Bank behind northbound platform (garden)
Springbank Road, Hither Green (London)	Embankment between station and highway (enhanced green space)
Winchelsea (Sussex)	Area behind platform (enhanced green space)
Dronfield (Derbyshire)	Triangle at the north side entrance to the station (garden)
Sheringham (Norfolk)	Area behind platform (station garden)
Thornton (Lancashire)	Short section of disused line (railway heritage area and green space)

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Salt Hill Subway (Slough)	Pedestrian underpass (enhanced pedestrian route to public park)
Reddish South (Manchester)	Track bed in former bay behind station platform (garden)
Halling (Kent)	Area behind southbound platform (enhanced green space)
West Dulwich (London)	Embankments around station access paths (botanic garden)
Thornville St, Deptford (London)	Area above tunnel (wildlife garden)
Foord Road, Folkestone	Viaduct (graffiti removal)
Wisbech (Cambridgeshire)	Disused March-Wisbech line (preparation for heritage railway)
Uckfield (Sussex)	Area behind platform (enhanced station environment)
Battersby (Yorkshire)	Woodland area behind platform (garden/nature area)
Brithdir (South Wales)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Romsey (Hampshire)	Area around station entrance (enhanced station environment)
Dorchester (Dorset)	Former allotment (orchard and wildlife garden)
Manea (Cambridgeshire)	Area behind platform (enhanced station environment)
Fenny Stratford (Bedfordshire)	Embankment behind platform (station garden)
Winchelsea house (Sussex)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Settle (Yorkshire)	Open area under viaduct (garden and wildlife area)
Llandrindod (Powys)	Site of former signal box (garden)
Fox Park (Bristol)	Area under viaduct (garden)
Wylam (Northumberland)	Area behind station platform (garden)
Bucknell (Shropshire)	Disused platform (wildlife garden)
Croston (Lancashire)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Tywyn, (Gwynedd)	Area behind platform (garden)
Beccles (Suffolk)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Criccieth (Gwynedd)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Cleethorpes (Lincolnshire)	Disused platform facing promenade (enhanced station environment)
Pen-y-bont (Powys)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Llandovery (Powys)	Areas behind platforms (gardens)

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Amlych Branch (North Wales)	(preparation for heritage railway)
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One-Off Schemes to Date

Causeland (Cornwall)	Canal behind station platform (2 work days)
St Budeaux Victoria Road (Plymouth)	Disused platform
St Albans Abbey	Green area alongside station car park
March (Cambridgeshire)	Disused station buildings and platforms (6 work days)
Manea (Cambridgeshire)	Area behind platform
St Austell (Cornwall)	Disused signal box (weatherproofing)
Eynham Road (West London)	Gated area next to embankment
Whittlesea (Cambridgeshire)	Disused areas around and behind station platforms
Levenmouth (Fife)	Footbridge over disused branch (painting and graffiti removal)

Schemes under development

Sudbrook (South Wales)	Section of disused line (community garden)
Newton Aycliffe (County Durham)	Areas between station approach and platforms (enhanced station environment)
Fernbrook Rd Hither Green (London)	Embankment between station and highway (green space/wildlife area)
Hindley (Manchester)	Former line side area behind platform (enhanced station environment)
Crediton (Devon)	Former 'cattle dock' (garden and heritage area)
Burnside (Glasgow)	Embankment alongside public road (green space)
Lidlington (Bedfordshire)	Area behind station platform (garden)
Newton St Cyres (Devon)	Disused platform (enhanced station environment)
Darton (Yorkshire)	Embankment (wild flower garden)
Maiden Lane, Camden (London)	Open area adjoining embankment (compost storage for garden project)
Glossop (Derbyshire)	Embankment opposite station (garden/enhanced station environment)
Maidstone West (Kent)	Office in disused building (Rail Partnership office)
Heaton Grove (Newcastle)	Restoration of former railway house garden
Ascott-under-Wychwood (Glos)	Open area adjoining highway (shrub planting and maintenance)