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**Working in partnership** to deliver a railway with strong community involvement

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**Annual Report**

**2014**

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## Introduction

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I am pleased to be able to introduce our 2014 Annual Report.

Once again the report covers the very wide range of activities which the Sussex Community Rail Partnership (SCRCP) undertakes on behalf of its partners and by working with local community groups.

These projects demonstrate the very broad base of community work undertaken or supported by the SCRCP. They are an excellent means of highlighting the very strong partnership involvement the SCRCP is able to draw on.

This year has been a busy one for the SCRCP – celebrating 10 years since we were first formed, the introduction of a quarterly newsletter; a refreshed and updated web site, revised and updated line guides, continued growth in the station partnership scheme, work to improve access to stations and the provision of services that the various communities need. We have also been able to provide more resources to support our work on the Marshlink Line by the appointment of a part time officer based at Rye. We look forward to continued excellent relations with our major partner, Southern, until July 2015 and with their parent company, Govia, and the management team as they take over the much enlarged franchise from September 2014

My thanks go to all our partners who have maintained strong support for our work despite the difficult economic background we have all experienced during the last year.

I hope you will find the annual report informative and if you have an idea for future action or events please contact [sam@sussexcrp.org](mailto:sam@sussexcrp.org)

*Roger Lantham*

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## Economic Development

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### **Seaford to Brighton Community Rail Partnership**

SCRCP is working closely with Southern, ESCC, Brighton and Hove City Council, the Universities, Amex Stadium local businesses and the community activity along this new SCRCP line started in December 2012. The line group aims to focus on the benefits and opportunities which can be brought to the local community by the railway.

Engaging with local business is important and is already occurring through local station sponsorship and joint working, encouraging employees to travel by train and creating a buzz around local tourism. The production and distribution of the new line guide which promotes the destinations along the line to the local community and to prospective visitors owes much to the collaborative input of local businesses

The large student population travelling to the Universities and colleges all along the route form a very important part of the work of the line group, encouraging them to use the train and also getting their involvement in projects associated to the sustainability objective of the Partnership.



## Sustainability

### Guided Walks and Cycle Rides

A series of guided walks and cycle rides have been arranged over the last 18 months, from railway stations in the South Downs National Park. The project was part of the SDNPA's LSTF\* work and included Community Rail along both the Arun Valley Line and the Seaford to Brighton line. These have been focused on getting people who wouldn't normally walk or cycle for leisure in the Park to do so. There have been events just for young girls, a known under active demographic, families, those with an interest in local history and health walkers. Events have been timed where possible to link in with other local events to support these, giving the maximum impact for the project and other local community events.



One of the guided walks took place from Amberley station, and went into the Park, taking in the beautiful views and astounding wildlife in that area. This walk was 2 hours long and was aiming to encourage people who would not normally walk to explore the South Downs National Park. Also these walks are designed to encourage people to leave their cars behind and use public transport, hence they leave from railway stations. Another of the walks left from Pulborough station and also lasted about 2 hours. This had less hills but was equally as stunning as the Amberley walk, taking in the views, nature and very importantly the fresh air.



A guided cycle ride left from Chichester station and joined the Centurion Way, a lovely ride with no hills and ideal for families and people who do not cycle very often. Apart from a short journey to get to Centurion way, the ride is off road with fields on either side and therefore ideal for young children to take part in and we had several families attend. It was a wonderful leisurely but active way to spend a Sunday morning. The ride takes you to the start of the South Downs National Park and lasts for about 2 hours.

\*LSTF Local Sustainable Transport Fund, DfT grant aided projects to encourage use of sustainable forms of travel

## Involving the Community

### Edenbridge



Edenbridge is the epicentre of two community rail lines. With two stations the residents are lucky enough to be able to travel in four different directions at any time. A town, big enough to have its own Waitrose and yet small enough to have real community spirit, a little town with a big heart. A lot of the SCRP work centres around Edenbridge Town Station.

With the support of Southern Rail one corner of the ticket hall has been turned into an information hub for walkers with walk leaflets and maps available. Edenbridge Town Council and a Southern Rail grant has paid for a large freestanding pin-board which is used by community groups on a monthly rota system. Children from Edenbridge Primary School have provided art-work for the ticket hall. The after-school eco club looks after the platform planter, regularly re-planting with seasonal flowers and shrubs.

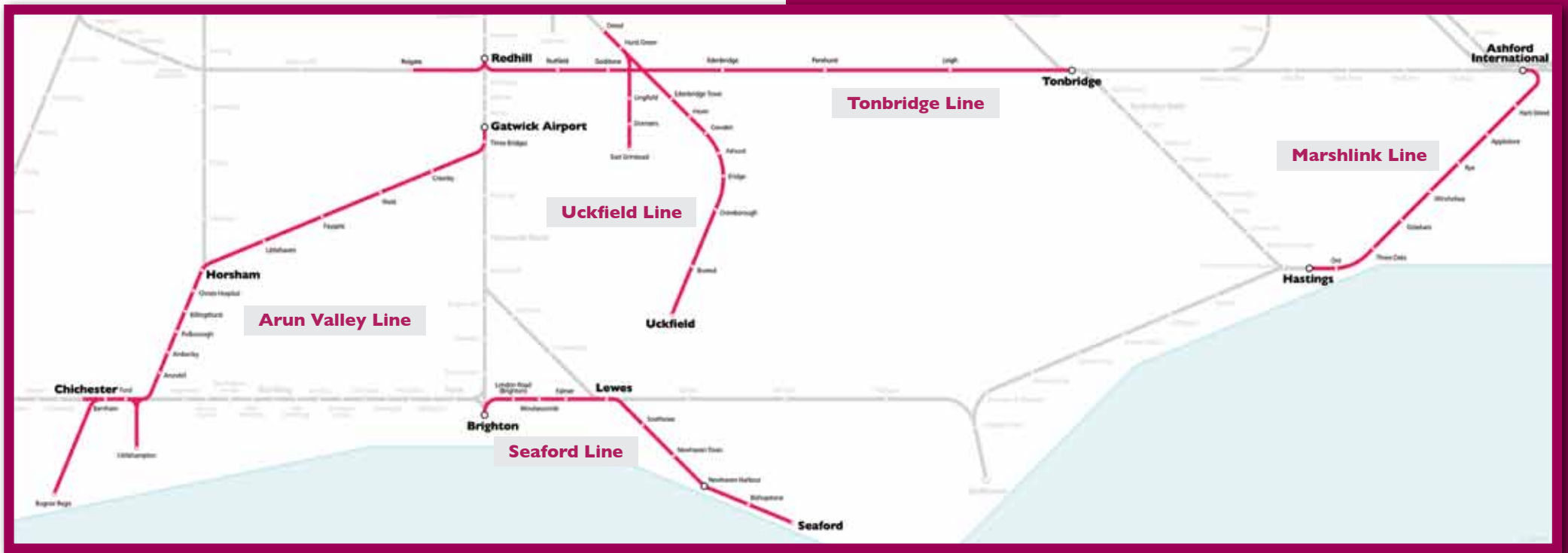
A local landscape gardener has voluntarily taken on the task of removing the mini forest from the two very large raised beds in the car-park and with some help from the primary school is restoring them to their former glory.

When the town celebrated its two week-long summer festival the ticket hall was adorned with hand-painted bunting courtesy of the School.

The Town also held a Sustainability Fair, a successful event attended by SCRP, Southern and many groups, organisations and local businesses all concerned with green issues, including using the train to help reduce carbon emissions.

SCRP is a regular attendee of two local groups; the Tourism Forum and the Town Partnership, both groups work towards promoting the town and improving lives of the local residents.





## Financing the work of the SCRP

The SCRP management and finances are looked after by the not for profit volunteer run company, SCRP Ltd. In 2013/14 income was approximately £120,000, costs were approximately £100,000 and the remaining money was carried over to cover ongoing projects in the coming year.

The main cost is staffing and managing the work of the line groups. Salaries, and the associated office, travel and line group meeting costs make up 80 % of our costs. Producing and distributing line guides and other communication activities cost 10 % and additional small grants and event costs make up the remaining 10 %.

The SCRP income is derived from across the Partnership with 45% from the train operating company, 45% from local authorities, and 10% from business and other organisations.

## Working with communities across the whole Southern franchise area in Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey and Brighton and Hove

The SCRP aims to link communities more strongly with their railway. It works in partnership with local communities alongside transport providers, county, district and town and parish councils along with major travel locations including Gatwick Airport and the South Downs National Park. It helps to deliver partners objectives that relate to economic growth and sustainable travel. Activities are concentrated along five lines with local line groups involved in achieving the local objectives. The SCRP also manages, with Southern, the station partnership scheme across the whole franchise area with over 40 local volunteer groups and businesses helping to improve their local station.



## Working with young people



Sussex Community Rail Partnership with West Sussex County Council are delivering a package of rail education designed to support young people accessing, understanding and feeling safe on the local railway network.

Led by Pene Mather, the project based in two towns on the Arun Valley Line; Chichester and Horsham, is now in its second year and has directly reached over 2500 young people; this has been done through a range of community events and in-school education. We anticipate that by the end of the project in March 2015 we will have reached

over 4000 pupils.

The project is aimed at transition age pupils at primary school and is free to schools within the two LSTF areas until March 2015. Potential to develop the programme further is being explored.

A supporting booklet and a pocket guide full of useful information and advice, as well as web links, are given to all young people involved with the project. These are available to download from SCRCP via the 'Your Travel Your Future' page.

To support education and understanding we have developed a Facebook page and have a dedicated area on our main website called 'Your Travel Your Future'. The page gives us the opportunity to give young people up to date access to links and information that can support sustainable travel.

Feedback from the schools that have taken part has been very positive, both pupils and staff have found the resources and education very useful.



**Leechpool School – Horsham** *"the booklet was great and easy to understand, the presentation and discussion was interesting with our pupils engaging especially with the railway safety around crossings and on the train".*

**Arunside Primary – Horsham** *"the children liked the booklets and enjoyed the talk, I have heard additional discussions within the year 6 classroom about how they are*

*travelling to school, they seem very taken with the practice planning a journey and we will explore this as a class more fully in the spring, a very educational experience with an excellent message for all."*

**Southbourne Junior School – Chichester** *"Excellent resource, we would welcome Pene back next year, our pupils and staff liked the booklets both big and little"*

**Duncton Junior School** *"Interesting, informative and able to be used to plan journeys by train next term, as a school we do use Pulborough station for some trips to London, we were pleased to have been included in this project"*

Follow up events have included station visits and surveys and many of the schools who have taken part have already requested a return visit for the 3rd year of the project.

Additionally our award winning "Bridge Art Gallery" at Horsham station continues to be popular with Horsham schools who have engaged with the project, with a regular supply of primary art is being displayed for short periods to compliment the permanent display from the secondary schools and local college.

Finally, Pene has been the active voice on the "Young Persons Travel Forum" representing rail travel. The Forum works with a range of both private and public transport providers to listen to and address young people's travel issues.

## Active Communities



The tradition of the station garden is alive and well. Indeed thanks to the ever growing number of station partnerships and the work of the Aldingbourne Trust many stations across the Southern franchise now have superb displays in hanging baskets, tubs and planters. This activity is in addition to the ground gardening activities bringing scrubby areas back into cultivation, not only to look good but to produce fruit and vegetables and support local wildlife.

Just along one line, for example, Uckfield station has planters on the forecourt. At Buxted station staff do the gardening and have created extensive floral displays. Crowborough has planters courtesy of the local garden centre and planted by the Oakleaf group who work with people with learning difficulties. Spa Valley Railway looks after planters on the platform at Eridge where the heritage railway meets the main line and at Hever a butterfly garden, provided by Hever Castle, has been planted by Hever Primary School. Edenbridge Primary School look after a delightful planter on the Town station and two big raised beds in front of the station have been adopted by a local landscape gardener. East Grinstead has a large project by East Grinstead in Bloom while at Lingfield, which has just been adopted by the local racecourse, work has started clearing the platforms before planting goes ahead.



Along all the other lines many similar stories can be told with the end result for all to see, making waiting for trains an enjoyable experience. There is an added advantage. Many stations, in rural areas are not staffed all day. Having volunteers pottering (sorry) around means that the station has people there which is a very powerful deterrent for those who might be thinking of some minor or indeed more serious acts of vandalism. Indeed London Road, just outside Brighton where the partnership has won innumerable local and national awards and attracted the attention of Mayors and M.P.s recently had a report from British Transport Police and Sussex Police that the occurrence of acts of vandalism and bad behaviour had drastically reduced since the Station Partnership had been working there.

The Aldingbourne Trust, based near Chichester in West Sussex, aims to support and offer real, valued, community work for adults with learning disabilities and works partnership with local organisations like Southern Rail. It is delivering and maintaining stunning floral displays in over 19 stations raising awareness & challenging pre-conceived ideas relating to people with learning disabilities.

Consequently, the Trust's success has developed from not only hanging baskets and floral tubs on the station platforms to being approached to transform planting areas, normally laid to wasteland, but which now feature colour and attractive garden designs which are pleasing to the eye.





## Community Celebration

### **Barnham, Bognor Regis and Seaford 150th Birthday Parties**

2014 is a busy year for the SCRP when it comes to community celebrations with both the Barnham & Bognor Regis and the Seaford line reaching 150 years old. To mark these amazing birthdays Sussex Community Rail Partnership and Southern hosted celebrations with local community members.

Working with a number of local groups, councils and volunteers SCRP created celebrations at 9 stations in June 2014.

All involved stalls, events for children, model railway layouts and a little rail history both in the forms of models and pictures. Vintage vehicles were on hand for people to view and even ride on in some cases. A special Southern train with all the local mayors arrived at Seaford station to be welcomed by a re enactment of the Victorian opening ceremony. These were truly local celebrations arranged with and by local people but due to the nature of the events they drew in people from all of the surrounding areas.

Whilst these are great events, they offer an opportunity to introduce new people to rail in a fun and informative way, supporting local groups and economies.



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## Keeping in Touch

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We would like to hear from you and we are also very happy to provide more information so do please get in touch.

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**SCRP working in partnership with** East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Kent County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council, Southern Railway, Network Rail, Gatwick Airport, South Downs National Park Authority and local councils, community groups, tourist bodies and rail passenger's support groups across South East England.

SCRP is very grateful to all those who have supplied photographs especially Southern Railway and the SCRП staff.



