

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

E-NEWSLETTER
November 2012



Three Rivers



Community Rail Partnership

Welcome to the latest Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter, which is full of reports about our activities; what is happening at our stations and information about some forthcoming interesting projects.

We're getting the word around via Facebook and Twitter

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** has added a further method of distributing its news and information.

In addition to the long established website (www.threeriversrail.com), leaflets, maps, guides and e-mails, we have created Facebook and Twitter pages. www.facebook.com/threeriversrail and www.twitter.com/threeriversrail have quickly become easy and effective ways of highlighting activities to a wider audience and we hope you will enjoy browsing through the information contained on them.

In addition, our 'Twitter public list' feed allows you to see the latest Twitter updates from South West Trains, First Great Western and Southern Trains to keep up to date with how your train is running.



The provision of these pages, as well as the soon to be revamped and relaunched website, was achieved courtesy of funding from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships.

AC:RP

Now all you have to do is "Like" us and tell your friends!

Our website

Train information, maps and useful links are featured on our website. Why not explore www.threeriversrail.com and see what you can find out?

Three Rivers



Community Rail Partnership

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership e-newsletter



Mottisfont & Dunbridge station.

Wish granted for flowers at Mottisfont & Dunbridge

Train operating company First Great Western very kindly gave the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** a grant for the provision of flowers at Romsey, **Mottisfont & Dunbridge** and Dean stations this year, and we think you'll agree that we've made good use of it.



Anyone using the station or passing through on the trains will have spotted a new and novel attractive flower display on Platform 2 at **Mottisfont & Dunbridge**. Local **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteer Gordon Wood has donated a former Royal Mail delivery bike and used its front and rear carrier racks as planters. They have been filled with soil and stocked with a wide variety of flowers to add a touch of colour at this smart little country station.



Above: The postal bike that is now delivering a stunning flower display on Platform 2 at Mottisfont & Dunbridge.

Any other innovative ideas to brighten up local stations would be appreciated!



Left to right: From pansies in May and begonias in July, to dahlias in September - the flower tubs at the station have been beautifully maintained throughout the year by volunteers Gordon and Cathy Wood.

As well as First Great Western, thanks must go to the Romsey and District Society who also contributed to the hanging baskets at Romsey, which have been provided by Choice Plants of Timsbury.

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Community interaction

There was an opportunity for local people to find out more about the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** when we had a stand at the Mottisfont Village fete on Sunday 19 August. The fete was held at Mottisfont Village Hall on one of the few hot summer days of this year and attracted a great deal of interest.

Other fetes, events and shows attended this year included: the University of Southampton *Environment Day* in April, *Chandler's Ford Fryern Funtasia* in May, *West Dean Fete* in June, and *Romsey Abbey Community Event* in June.



We provide up-to-date leaflets, timetables, fares and ticketing information, as well as background explanation about travel by train (and even buses!). This approach has really helped people make an informed choice about switching from car to train usage and seems to be very valuable. It also provides us with valuable feedback which we raise with the train companies or local authorities. Reaching out to communities is a vital part of what we do and we enjoy it!

If you have a community event at which you would like to have us promote rail information, we would be more than happy to hear from you.

Swaythling Nature Walks

Local **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteer and wildlife expert Bob Painton is the driving force behind the regular series of nature walks from **Swaythling** station.

This year Bob has again conducted weekend walks in April, August and October. The leisurely strolls from the station via historic St. Marys Church and The Grange, along the Monks Brook up to the proposed village green at Monks Brook meadow, take around two hours to complete. Bob provides interesting commentary; his keen nature-loving eye spots what others sometimes miss: deer, foxes, kestrels, buzzards and kingfishers have all been spotted along the route. The walks are free to join, and are an enjoyable way to learn about the flora and fauna and history of the area.



Fox image © Bob Painton

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Chandler's Ford station.

Second-hand book stalls established at Chandler's Ford, Swaythling, St. Denys and Woolston stations

A train journey, whether it is long or short, is a great chance to catch up on some reading. The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** is promoting this further by setting up second hand book exchanges at **Chandler's Ford** (right), **Swaythling**, **St. Denys** and **Woolston** stations.

Books are displayed on bookcases in the station ticket halls. People (whether rail users or locals) can take a book by leaving a voluntary contribution of their choosing with the booking clerk (Contributions go to the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** funds), read the book and then return it for someone else to read.

We aim to:

- 1) Encourage the reading of books.
- 2) Reuse books, rather than throw them away.
- 3) Encourage more visitors to the station.
- 4) Raise funds for the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership.
- 5) Utilise station buildings more.



We are hopeful that additional stalls can be established at some of our other stations in the future, and are looking at Romsey as the next outlet. *If you have any spare books you wish to donate, please contact us.*

Bike Doctor holds surgery at Chandler's Ford

Organised by the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership**, 'Bike Doctor' Guy Partleton of Bicycle Recycling (right) was at **Chandler's Ford** station on 15 July to check over and fix bikes. His expertise was much appreciated by visiting cyclists and this event was repeated over several weekends in early summer. The aim is to encourage more people to cycle in the area, and intrinsically link cycling to the station as a concept to support our previous work in developing Station Travel Plans.



© Stuart Allen

We hope to repeat this sort of event at Chandler's Ford and other stations next year.

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Woolston station.

Volunteers get to work at Sholing and Woolston stations

New volunteer groups have been formed at **Sholing** and **Woolston** stations, thanks to increased funding support from Southampton City Council. The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** now represents all stations within the Southampton city area, having also recently added Bitterne to its remit.



Thanks to all the volunteers who have been turning up regularly to improve the stations. Platforms have been cleared of litter, while new wildflower gardens have been planted at both Woolston and Sholing. Hanging baskets (*inset*) have also reappeared at Woolston after a long absence. Planting may not look much at the moment, but roses, daffodils, ice plants, Heuchera, Cineraria, viola, montbretia, hardy geraniums, evening primroses, wild poppies and much more will hopefully provide a great show from next spring

Helpful timetable posters

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** has produced station-specific timetable posters for **Sholing** and **Woolston**. These show summary timetables, highlighting services calling at the station, so that passengers can see the times of their trains at a glance. The posters also give helpful contact information for rail enquiries and promote the Partnership.



Above: Newly planted platform border at Sholing station.



Above: Volunteers Bridget O'Donnell and Lucy Tope doing a stalwart job planting at Woolston station.

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Chandler's Ford station.

Timber and water butts donated to Chandler's Ford

Local **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers have been working hard clearing, digging and planting to continue to improve **Chandler's Ford** station's old platform. Following a big clear up session, great progress has been made in creating more new raised flower beds using scaffolding planks donated by Elliott Brothers of Chandler's Ford (right).



Thanks to Elliott Brothers and Southern Water, the station now also has water butts to gather rainfall for watering the plants.

It is hoped the station will look so good next year it can be a part of the *Chandler's Ford in Bloom* competition!

We would particularly welcome new helpers and any donations of spare plants, flowers, seeds or bulbs which can be used for future displays. Contact Mark Miller on 07900 103296.

Fancy a cuppa, or serving one?

Chandler's Ford station now enjoys a coffee bar facility, open from 0645 - 1015 Monday to Fridays, run by local **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers Ruth (right), Franco, Mark, Andrew, Ben, John and Nick. It provides a friendly and popular service for passengers and station visitors at extremely reasonable prices. All proceeds go to the Partnership's funds.

We are looking for more volunteers to join the rota on a regular or occasional basis. If you have a couple of hours to spare, we would welcome additional help between 0830 and 1030 any day of the week. Likewise, we would welcome your feedback on what we have to offer at the Coffee Bar, but we know bacon butties are slightly beyond us at the moment! Interested? Contact Mark Miller on 07900 103296.



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Eastleigh station.

ATOC National Cycle-Rail Awards



ASSOCIATION OF TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Improvements to both the access and facilities available for those using bicycles to reach local railway stations in and around Eastleigh has resulted in the local council, and train operator South West Trains winning an award last year for their efforts. Eastleigh Borough Council and South West Trains were voted *Best Local Government Scheme and Cycle Champion/operator of the year* in the 2011 ATOC Rail Cycle awards.



Above: The new secure cycle compound at Eastleigh station.



The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** was recognised for its help and involvement through work such as Station Travel Plans and the promotion of sustainable access to the stations. Phil Dominey, Stakeholder Manager at South West Trains, was also joint winner of the Cycling Champion award for his contribution to various cycle schemes and projects over recent years. Well done to all!

Increased passenger numbers at our stations

There have been really great levels of growth at all but one of our stations. The figures published by the Office of Rail Regulation (*below*) make fascinating reading, and show a solid recovery after the lower usage figures of 2009/10.

	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	% increase in past year
Chandler's Ford	0	93,462	155,477	180,281	198,588	212,987	236,221	218,640	225,622	3.2%
Dean	8,810	10,180	12,087	12,697	12,103	11,487	16,690	22,713	26,710	17.6%
Eastleigh	1,010,324	1,119,305	1,163,309	1,169,084	1,248,089	1,364,488	1,446,829	1,435,640	1,504,090	4.8%
Millbrook, Hants	11,007	20,937	20,975	21,122	21,992	29,265	27,446	29,936	33,418	11.6%
Mottisfont & Dunbridge	10,640	9,758	10,611	13,261	14,028	12,941	17,344	21,616	26,950	24.7
Redbridge, Hants	12,163	18,059	21,343	17,953	16,155	20,238	27,318	24,992	25,568	2.3%
Romsey	305,054	292,395	339,174	348,858	371,186	398,418	415,716	413,132	428,430	3.7%
Salisbury	1,436,654	?	1,560,337	1,603,255	1,620,677	1,681,413	1,757,216	1,758,400	1,824,320	3.7%
Southampton Airport	990,880	1,115,963	1,190,497	1,421,305	1,322,387	1,403,733	1,445,823	1,411,294	1,408,684	-0.2%
Southampton Central	4,376,749	4,542,479	4,655,895	4,844,998	5,084,065	5,486,701	5,751,523	5,596,448	5,799,996	3.6%
St. Denys	164,685	189,878	190,919	195,289	202,254	207,128	218,933	213,904	235,356	10.0%
Swaythling	69,168	78,788	73,682	77,802	85,292	88,684	90,105	83,600	89,816	7.4%

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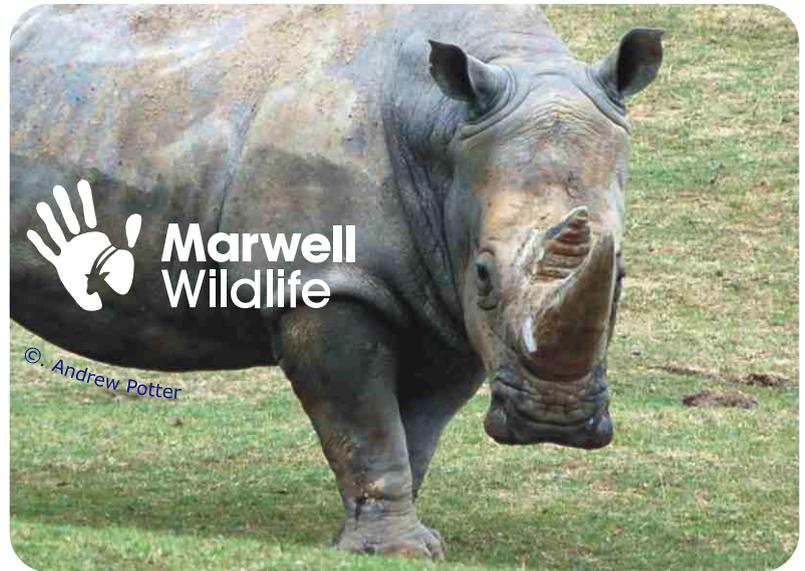
Go wild at the weekend

Velvet 'M' service outside Eastleigh station.

Successful season for Marwell Shuttle Bus

Whilst the summer of 2012 will be remembered mainly for heavy rain and cloudy skies, the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** once again supported the well-established 'Route M' Rail-Link bus service to Marwell Wildlife from **Eastleigh** station.

The Marwell Wildlife link now runs on Saturdays in addition to Sundays and Bank Holidays, operating from April until early September. It is a fully registered bus service on which normal fares are payable, and is run by Velvet Buses.



© Andrew Potter

Right: Marwell Wildlife's main campaign for 2012 (marwell.org.uk/donate/rhinoappeal) was to raise money to protect endangered rhinos, so we used that image on our timetable leaflets. Velvet used the popular image of meerkats on their timetable information at bus stops.



The Bus is operated by Velvet with funding provided by the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership, Marwell Wildlife, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships and Hampshire County Council.



The Partnership makes a stand!



Earlier in the year, the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** was at the 'Environmental Rock' (www.environmental-rock.org.uk) event at The Hobbit pub in Southampton.

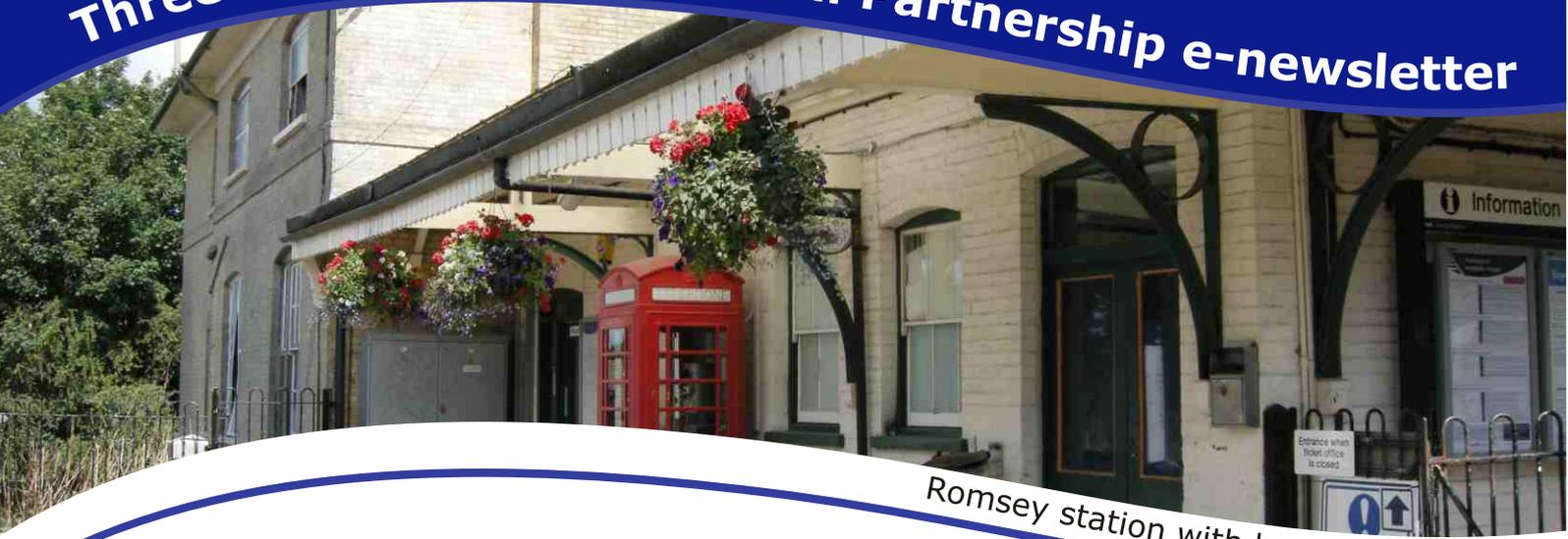
We weren't singing, but just shared a stall there with Marwell Wildlife! There was plenty of great live music though, numerous stalls, and many visitors interested in finding out about rail travel options and the summer bus service from Eastleigh to Marwell.

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Romsey station with hanging baskets.

Romsey FREE BUS Rail-Link bus service

This year the Summer Sunday FREEBUS Rail-Link bus service from **Romsey** station to Stockbridge, part-funded by the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership**, was able to call at the John 'O Gaunt Inn at Horsebridge. After a period of closure, the pub reopened during 2012 as a community-run local pub, serving real ales and home cooked food. Sir Harold Hillier's famous gardens and arboretum remained a very popular calling point on this service, and we are grateful for the continued financial support from this world renowned establishment towards the costs of running the service. Mottisfont Abbey still enjoyed a good proportion of bus visitors, as did Stockbridge, a beautiful village which otherwise has no public transport on a Sunday.

Figures show that the service achieved a total of 703 single passenger trips; a growth of 6% over last year. This is excellent and we look forward to the return of the bus in 2013.

Special thanks must go to Test Valley Community Transport Services who operated the service so well with volunteer drivers and helped devise the efficient bus timetable.



The Romsey to Mottisfont FREE BUS is funded by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Hampshire County Council, Kimbridge Restaurant and Farm Shop, Stockbridge Parish Council, Test Valley Borough Council and the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership.



Above: New and regular passengers at Romsey station look forward to taking in the beautiful scenery in the Test Valley from the FREE BUS.

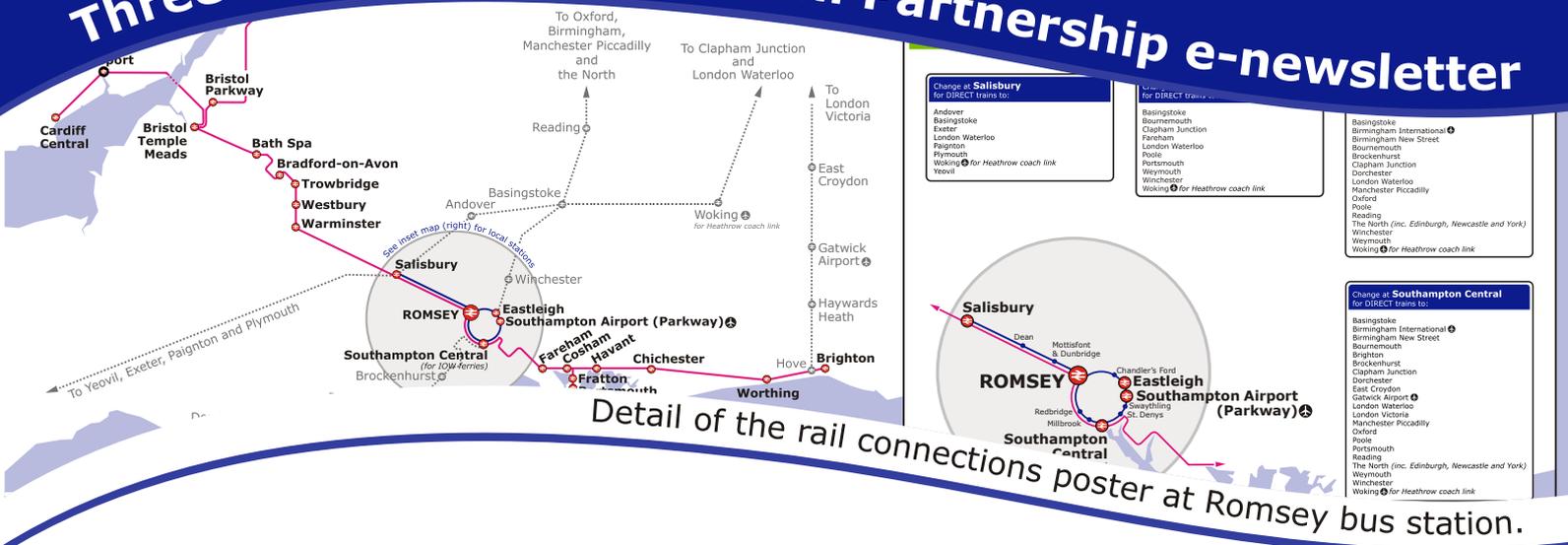
Left to right: The John O'Gaunt Inn, Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, and the River Test at Kimbridge are all on the FREE BUS route.

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New train connections poster at Romsey bus station

Public transport and onward journey information from **Romsey** rail station has been improved thanks to funding from Cllr. Mark Cooper's Devolved Grant, Romsey & District Society, and the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership**.

At Romsey bus station, which is a busy central location, outdated information has been removed and a large new rail connections map has been fitted providing clear information of the destinations easily reached by train from the town railway station.

Right: The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership poster promoting rail travel to bus passengers at Romsey bus station in the centre of Romsey. Above: Detail.



Also, thanks again to funding from Cllr. Mark Cooper's Devolved Grant, bright new posters giving details of local taxi firms serving **Romsey** station have been updated and displayed to help passengers arriving at Romsey by rail to reach destinations in and around the town quickly and safely.

Both of the above initiatives support the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership's work in developing the Romsey Rail Station Travel Plan.

Romsey Station Café update

The café on **Romsey** station is under new management, and is thriving thanks to owner Lou Viney (*right*) who previously ran a successful café in the centre of Romsey. She makes her own cakes, muffins (*inset*), sandwiches, sausage rolls, and even burgers on site. The fare is fresh, tasty and preservative free.

Lou is really enjoying running the café and providing passengers, train crew, station staff and the hardworking Romsey volunteers with a good selection of high standard food and drinks, at very reasonable prices.



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Dean station.

Dean is brightened up with light and flowers!

This year, all the station lighting at Dean has been replaced with lamp standards of a more economical and ecological design. The platforms are now better lit after dusk, and the light is thrown downwards rather than upwards - conserving energy and keeping starry skies unpolluted!



Courtesy of Southern Water and Elliott Brothers, **Dean** station now also has a water butt to gather rainfall. This will be invaluable for aiding our volunteers to water the flower displays there.



Above: Beautifully planted flower tubs on Dean's Platform 2 flank its smart new information sign.



With a little help from us, Dean is the best!

The Council for the Protection of Rural England (Wiltshire) branch voted the village of West Dean as its 2011 best kept small village in Wiltshire. The smart and clean condition of Dean station was one of the factors in winning the competition. Thanks to **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** volunteers Julie and John Neilson for keeping the station so neat and tidy!

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Swaythling station.

Flowers and volunteers at Swaythling are blooming marvellous

Volunteer gardening work continues at Swaythling station in association with local Cantell Secondary School. On several occasions over the past few months volunteers have turned up armed with gloves, walking boots or stout wellies and gardening tools, to help clear up the flower beds and gardens around the station.



This year Mansbridge Residents Association kindly gave Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership a grant for the purchase of plants, and recently Southampton Airport gave a grant towards the purchase of a garden chipper to clear away spare foliage more effectively!



New Network Rail Community Licence for Swaythling

In addition to the areas of the station already being managed by volunteers, the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** signed its third Community Licence with Network Rail to take over a redundant patch of ground next to Swaythling Station.



Over the years this land has become an eyesore, with plants growing out of control and rubbish visibly building up behind mesh fences. With the help of Mike Franklin, Network Rail Community Rail Executive, volunteers were able to gain access to this site with the provision of a new gate, to clear it and continue to manage it. Consequently, sightlines are now greatly improved which has helped the safety and appearance of the station. We even managed to put up some bird boxes to attract and welcome wildlife.

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Southampton Central station.

Enhancements to Southampton Central Station

Many of you would have noticed that major work has been completed during the summer at the south side entrance of **Southampton Central** station, resulting in improved access, enhanced passenger information and better ticket window facilities.

The south side entrance area is the one nearest the city centre, and is a busy location. The original 'art deco' style of the building has been maintained and modernised. Improved spacious paving keeps rail passengers a safe distance from the buses, taxis and private vehicles outside the entrance, and new access ramps make the station much more user friendly.

Plans are now afoot to redesign the north side forecourt using Local Sustainable Transport Fund monies and we look forward to Southampton Central being the extremely attractive and accessible station we have wanted for a long while.



Left to right: The new bus shelter, new access ramp from the disabled dropping off parking bay, and the new departure screens on the south side of Southampton Central station.

Bike Doctor at Southampton Central

If you travel to **Southampton Central** station by bike (or are even passing by), you can now make use of a Bike Doctor service which is available on the north side of the station every Wednesday morning between 0700 and 1100 between March and October.

Instead of waiting until you get home, or for a free weekend to take your bike to a shop, get a free check, or low cost repairs at the station with Urge Cycles.

For more details contact hello@urgecycles.co.uk Tel: 07740 280 359 or just visit the friendly team on a Wednesday morning!

It is hoped this facility will be reintroduced next Spring.



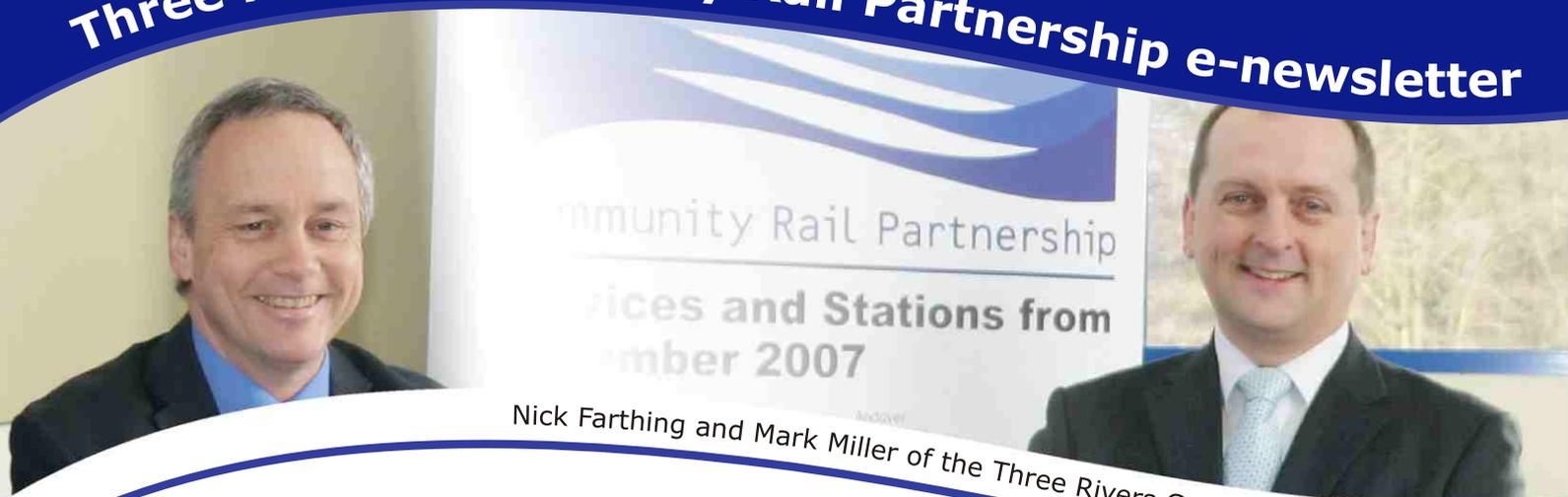
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Nick Farthing and Mark Miller of the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

New Action Plan created for next 5 years

At a meeting of the Steering Group of the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** earlier this year it was agreed that a new 5 year action plan be drawn up for the officers to work towards. This is available for stakeholders to view, but as an outline continues the great work of the last few years by:

- Conducting more passenger surveys
- Building more community cohesion by increasing volunteering work around stations
- Producing more station and/or themed specific publicity to encourage more travel by train in the area
- Helping to improve facilities at stations
- Developing and reviewing station travel plans including the integration of transport services
- Increasing the provision of art at stations
- Utilising unused station buildings
- Interacting with local communities effectively and a great deal more

The Partnership has established itself as an important stakeholder in the development of local rail and integrated travel in the region and it is anticipated that this new 5 year plan will significantly enhance the services, communities and facilities the **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** covers. If you have any ideas about how else the Partnership should develop please contact us.

Look out for a new walks guide from our local stations

As part of our publicity production remit, look out for a new walks from rail stations guide which we hope will be available in early 2013!

Contact us...

The **Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership** exists to promote the use of the rail service in your area. Involvement from local businesses and individuals is most welcome to help us in our aims.

We would like to thank all stakeholders for your continued interest and support for our work

If you are interested in sponsoring or advertising in this e-newsletter, on our website, or in any of our publications, we now offer excellent rates. Contact us for more details.

If you have any ideas or comments on the items covered in this e-newsletter, or on how we can fulfil our role, or if you wish to volunteer some of your time to help with other projects, please contact Mark Miller: markmiller10@tiscali.co.uk or Nick Farthing: nick.farthing@dial.pipex.com

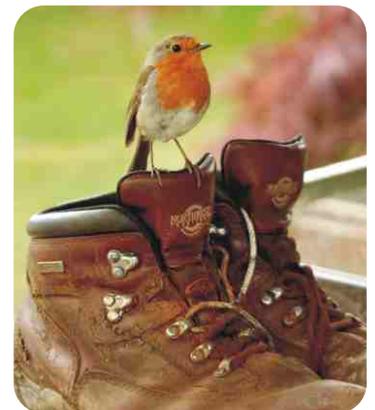


Image © .Bob Painton

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