

# **FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**11 December 2020**

### **Hereward Community Rail Partnership shines at virtual rail awards**

A partnership which champions community rail across Fenland is celebrating after scooping two national rail awards.

The Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP) beat off strong nationwide competition to win the awards at the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Community Rail Awards on Wednesday (9 December).

The awards, organised by Community Rail Network, were delivered as an online gala evening for the first time, with 550 guests, including community rail volunteers, officers, rail industry leaders and government representatives.

The Hereward CRP, which empowers community rail initiatives on the Hereward Line between Ely and Peterborough and at its railway stations in Manea, March and Whittlesea, won the runner-up award in the marketing and communications category for its online consultations.

Judges said the partnership had “created a method of delivering simple and effective consultations online without alienating community members who were less confident with or had limited access to technology” and risen to the challenges created by the pandemic.

One such consultation last year allowed the public to choose their preferred waiting stations at Manea and Whittlesea stations, which have been subsequently installed. More recently, a consultation on the redesign of a community building at March station had to be swiftly changed due to Covid-19, but the partnership’s “expertise and timely response” has allowed the project to stay on track for completion in Spring 2021.

The Hereward CRP was also crowned winner in the same category along with Greater Anglia and other CRPs in East Anglia for the joint ‘Room with a View’ project.

The project saw promotional videos created for eight separate railway lines across the CRPs involved, with the aim of attracting more people to take days out on local branch lines. The videos showcase the many places and attractions within easy reach of the lines, and highlight that with the introduction of new trains across the network, passengers could sit back in comfort and enjoy the ever-changing scenery, like having a ‘room with a view’.

Cllr Chris Seaton is Portfolio Holder for Transport at Fenland District Council, which manages the Hereward CRP in partnership with train operators including Greater Anglia, Cross Country Trains and East Midlands Railway with support from the Community Rail Network and local organisations.

He said: “We’re absolutely thrilled that the Hereward CRP has been recognised for its partnership work across Fenland at these national awards. This wouldn’t have been possible if it wasn’t for the fantastic support we get from our members, volunteers, station

adopters and funders. The work of community rail partnerships is crucial and often unsung, but during these challenging times, their role is more important than ever.”

Paul Nelson, Chairman of the Hereward CRP, added: “It has been an extraordinary year for the CRP, as it has been for all of us, but I’m delighted that we have been able to rise to the challenge, ensuring that community engagement remained at the forefront of a redesign project at March station.”

“We were also delighted to be involved with the brilliant Room with a View project to showcase some of the wonderful journeys that can be enjoyed on our line.”

Jools Townsend, Chief Executive of the Community Rail Network, said: “Despite the trials and tribulations of 2020, our Community Rail Award winners this year are as inspiring as ever. The array of entries defied expectations, showing how community rail has adapted and responded, supporting communities through the pandemic, maintaining positivity, and continuing to help people get the most from their railways and stations.”

**ENDS**

**For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226**