Travel Buddies scheme receives further funding to build travel confidence in Fenland

A scheme helping Fenland residents build confidence using public transport is set to continue thanks to funding from Greater Anglia.

Fenland District Council's 'Travel Buddies' scheme has received further funding of £12,655 through the train operator's Customer and Community Improvement Fund.

The additional grant follows an initial award of £7,428 last year and will enable the scheme to continue helping people overcome barriers to using public transport, build confidence travelling independently and enjoy new experiences and social connections.

Originally launched in February 2025 with Care Together funding from Cambridgeshire County Council, the Travel Buddies scheme aims to promote independence, support active lifestyles and help build confidence in using public transport.

The scheme was initially aimed at residents aged 65 and over, but thanks to the additional funding, the scheme has now been expanded to residents aged 40 and over.

The success of the first year has demonstrated the value of the initiative in helping people feel more confident about getting out and about, while reducing social isolation and creating opportunities to meet others.

The additional funding from Greater Anglia will help build on this success, supporting the continuation of Travel Buddies and its role in making public transport more accessible to people who may otherwise lack the confidence to use it.

Cllr Gary Christy, Fenland District Council's Cabinet member for Transport, said:

"The success of Travel Buddies has shown just how valuable the scheme is in helping people build confidence, get out and about and connect with others.

"We're delighted that Greater Anglia has provided further funding to help us build on this success and continue supporting Fenland residents to feel more confident using public transport. For some people, taking a bus or train can feel daunting, but having the opportunity to try it in a supportive environment can make a real difference.

"We look forward to building on the positive experiences so far and helping even more people enjoy the benefits of travelling, exploring new places and making social connections."

Scott Dolling, Greater Anglia's Partnerships Manager, said:

"We're pleased to provide further funding for the Travel Buddies scheme following its successful first year. Projects like this can make a real difference by helping people overcome barriers to travel, build confidence and discover the opportunities public transport can offer.

"Our Customer and Community Improvement Fund supports locally led initiatives that deliver meaningful benefits for communities while encouraging more people to make use of the railway. We're proud to continue supporting Travel Buddies and its work to help Fenland residents travel with greater confidence."

Greater Anglia's Customer and Community Improvement Fund, which is designed to support local, community-focused rail improvements across its network, has so far seen 62 projects supported since its launch in 2024, with a further 33 projects being supported in 2026-27.

From small scale station enhancements to integrated transport projects, schemes to introduce new or disadvantaged groups to rail travel, education projects, biodiversity projects, arts or heritage schemes or new ways of promoting services amongst local communities, a wide range of ideas are eligible for funding. The key requirement is that ideas benefit both the community and the railway.

This year, £350,000 has been allocated to projects across the Greater Anglia network.

This scheme is aimed at supporting initiatives which deliver community benefits and enhance rail's positive role in society.

Greater Anglia is part of GBR Anglia, which brings c2c, Greater Anglia and Network Rail Anglia closer together under one unified leadership team as part of the wider journey towards Great British Railways, which has a key focus on delivering a consistently better experience for passengers.