

# Station Adoption Booklet



**South Western**  
 **Railway**

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## Welcome to the South Western Railway (SWR) guide to adopting your local station

Thank you for your interest in becoming one of our station partners.

This booklet will provide you with everything you need to know about our Station Adoption programme and reveal how you can make a difference through our local Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs).

Our station partners are a group of volunteers who come together to work with us on improving our stations and changing how they serve our local areas. Since their introduction station partners have played a vital role in supporting social and economic development, creating a sense of community and inclusion, and enhancing the passenger experience across the SWR network.

By partnering with now more than 70 station adopters including community groups, charities, and businesses, we've helped bring about real change. Over the past few years, we have seen our team of volunteers get involved a wide range of activities, from delivering meals to the most vulnerable in what has been a challenging year for many, to installing art displays in waiting rooms and helping brighten up our stations.

SWR is committed to providing easy and convenient mobility, whilst improving quality of life by connecting people and communities. Station adoption is one of the best ways you can help us achieve this. It's an excellent opportunity to get the community involved in our rail stations and work together to improve the station, and travelling experience, for everyone. We would encourage anyone who is interested to think about getting involved – you could be an established volunteer/community group, charity, local authority, business, or you might want to setup a new group specifically to adopt your station.

Adoptions could be through adding planters or an art display, introducing a book swap scheme, tending a green area of land (where available), helping to keep the station litter free or even working with us to create a community hub. Be assured that whatever your ideas we are happy to talk them through, and even offer funding to support this work. Not everything will be possible within the operational constraints of the railway, however we are always keen to explore different possibilities.

This booklet will provide you with everything you need to know about station adoption, including the benefits, steps to work through with us, key considerations, as well as the support we offer. To find out more about station adoption or get involved please contact our dedicated Community Rail Manager, Paula Aldridge, at [paula.aldridge@swrailway.com](mailto:paula.aldridge@swrailway.com)

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Claire Mann, Managing Director, SWR



### **Community Rail Network is proud to support SWR with its station adoption work**

Community Rail Network is dedicated to supporting community-based groups and partnerships that connect their community with their railway and deliver social benefit. This includes the Community Rail Partnerships supported by SWR and the ever-growing number of station adopters on its network.

I'm delighted we're working with SWR to encourage more groups to adopt their local station. This work is so valuable, not only in making stations more welcoming for passengers, but in bringing local volunteers together to make a difference to their area, and helping communities to get the most from their stations. We are also pleased to be able to administer the SWR Station Adoption Fund on behalf of the company, whilst supporting their plans for returning redundant building space into community use. More information about station adoption and community rail is available on Community Rail Network's website: [www.communityrail.org.uk](http://www.communityrail.org.uk)

Whatever way you adopt your station I would like to thank you for becoming part of a flourishing national movement. I would also encourage you to ensure that you become Community Rail Network members. This will enable you to access support from our team of experts, access the SWR Station Adoption Fund, as well as the Small Grants funds provided by us nationally.

Jools Townsend, Chief Executive, Community Rail Network

## **What are the benefits of station adoption?**

At SWR, we are determined to make our railways a big part of the communities we serve. We want to have local groups helping us to ensure that each location reflects the area it serves.

There are many benefits to station adoption for a variety of groups, including:

### Passengers

Adding beautiful flowers or stunning art displays helps to brighten up the station, improving the travelling experience for commuters and leisure travellers alike. We know that some of our passengers even arrive earlier at our stations to admire the efforts of adopters.

Attractive and inviting stations, that involve the local community, also help to discourage anti-social behaviour. In some cases, our station adoption efforts can even encourage people to use the train over other less-sustainable methods.

### Group benefits

Station adoption provides an opportunity for individuals to volunteer to make a difference to their local areas. This could be through an established group taking on a new role, or like-minded locals coming together to do something specifically to improve the station with us.

Volunteering as part of a station adoption can give many personal benefits, ranging from improving health and wellbeing, developing skills and confidence, meeting and connecting with other people, as well as a real sense of personal accomplishment. Your efforts will help to develop new friendships, as well as supporting others to get involved in positive activities, whilst helping to make the railway more appealing to others.

### SWR

From our perspective having the local community involved in our station ensures that each location better reflects the uniqueness of the area. Each one of our stations is different, and so is the community it serves. Through our efforts with adoption groups we can help the two to complement each other.

At the same time, by having local people involved in their local station, there is more pride in the building and the railway as a whole, reducing anti-social behaviour for our passengers and people, whilst enhancing the travelling experience for all.

### What does SWR offer?

We offer a range of support to our station adopters including:

- Guidance and input on your ideas,
- Safety training relevant to your local station,

- Payment of membership fee for Community Rail Network, enabling access to increased project funding, training opportunities, useful resources and being part of the national community rail movement,
- Support to promote your activities and recognise your efforts, especially for the Community Rail Awards (run by Community Rail Network),
- An opportunity to meet other like-minded groups at our annual Community Rail Conference.

#### Other support for your work

We are happy, and encourage, station adopters to get others involved in their work at the station. This could include collaborations with local groups, schools or others.

Please remember that if another set of individuals wants to join you in your activities at the station they will need to be given the safety briefing by the station manager as well.

We also welcome local groups providing funding to support the efforts of our station adopters. Any generosity can be acknowledged at the station, with a small sign (no larger than A4) that acknowledges this. This should be close to the item the money was provided for. Wording on the sign must focus on the support provided, for example “[company] is proud to sponsor this planter” or “[company] is working in partnership with [station adopter]”. We are unable to allow businesses to use this space for business advertising. Any company interested in advertising at a station should contact SWR’s Community Rail Manager, who can pass on their details to the appropriate people.



## How to adopt your station

At SWR we want to make adopting your station as easy and straightforward as possible. However, we do have to balance our support for adopters with ensuring that we keep everyone safe and maintain our focus on the operation of the railway. Alongside this we have to take account of our vegetation responsibilities, as well as long term station plans.

For these reasons, it is important that any group wishing to adopt their station follows all the steps below:

1. Group comes up with their ideas for what they would like to do with their adoption and meets with a member of SWR, your local Community Rail Partnership / Community Rail Network officer (if appropriate) to discuss this.
2. The group puts together a formal proposal, in writing, outlining exactly what they would like to undertake at the station and how they would manage this and work safely. If planting is part of the plan, then an overview of the size of planters, as well as types of flowers, must be included. This overview is to be submitted to SWR's Community Rail Manager.
3. The proposal will be shared with various groups within SWR for approval. If there are any questions / concerns with the information provided the Community Rail Manager will liaise with you on this.
4. Once the proposal is agreed, the group meets the Station Manager for a Safety Briefing and to complete the Station Adoption form (see pages 10-11). This confirms that you agree to the terms and conditions, as well as the code of conduct, in this booklet (see pages 8 and 9).

The form is returned to the Community Rail Manager to log the adoption.

5. The Community Rail Manager will pay for the group to become members of Community Rail Network. Established groups will need to provide a few documents to support this registration. For new groups, setup specifically to adopt the station, SWR and Community Rail Network can support you putting these documents together.

Membership gives groups access to SWR's dedicated station adoption funding, as well as access to Community Rail Network's support and additional grant funding.

**Note** – if you wish to change your activities at a station at any point you must go through steps 2 – 3. Depending on the change in activities we may also require you to receive a new Safety Briefing.

### **Key points to note when planning your adoption**

SWR has a number of key points to consider when groups apply to adopt their station. Please bear the following in mind when putting forward your proposals:

- No trees can be planted on our land, unless agreed.
- No chemicals can be used at our stations.
- No power tools can be used by adopters at our stations.
- Water butts are not allowed to be placed anywhere on SWR land or property
- No digging into the ground, unless prior permission has been agreed with SWR.
- No going on the railway track.
- All waste produced by adopters must be removed from site and responsibly disposed of.
- For artwork, while the ownership of work transfers to SWR upon completion of the project, the station adoption group is expected to be responsible for the repair, maintenance and upkeep of the work. This also applies to planting displays on the stations.



## **Community Rail Network's Good Practice for Station Adoption**

Station adoption brings real and significant benefits both to local communities and to the rail industry. Communities get a much-improved gateway to their town or village, often with enhanced facilities. The station becomes a part of the community; something in which local people can take pride. Across the country, train operators have seen a rise in the use of their stations, a reduction in vandalism and in many cases externally-funded improvements.

Before you start, set some modest targets that you know you can achieve. It could be a target of planting a few bedding plants in summer, or bulbs in autumn. Once you get started you will want to expand your activities, but it's often better to start small. That way, you can make an improvement to your station quickly and deliver something to feel proud of! And while you're doing that you can plan something more ambitious if you want.

As a station adopter you don't need lots of money, but you do need people, enthusiasm, creativity, and good will. You might need a bit of money, to get things like planters, signage, and newsletters. You'll find you can get a lot of help in kind.

Keeping in contact with your local Station Manager and SWR's Community Rail Manager is vital as you develop your station project plans. SWR and Community Rail Network are keen to promote new and innovative ideas where they reflect the needs and interests of the local community. Sometimes a balance needs to be struck between community desires and the operational requirements of the railway. On occasion there may be safety, technical, operational or environmental reasons why a particular project can't go ahead as planned, but SWR and Community Rail Network are happy to talk to you about alternatives or amendments when this happens.

And of course, we also strongly recommend you join Community Rail Network! SWR will cover your membership fees, and you will then be able to apply for grant funding from Community Rail Network to help you deliver your station adoption projects. Perhaps more importantly, you will be able to attend Community Rail Network's seminars and training events, meet other station adopters with similar interests and draw on advice from Community Rail Network if you need it. Community Rail is a big and friendly movement and we hope you'll join in with it.

Daniel Wright, Community Rail Support Officer

## Safety terms and conditions

SWR's number one priority is safety – for our staff, passengers and anyone else using the railway.

We expect all station adopters to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner. The following must all be considered against the key points shown on page 7.

The below contains important points and these must be followed at all times. By following the below, you will be covered under SWR's public liability insurance.

- No activity can be undertaken on SWR premises whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- No alcohol should be brought onto the station as part of the adoption project. No drugs should ever be brought onto the station.
- Always follow the points covered in your Safety Briefing, and if you see anything unsafe report it immediately to railway staff. Never put yourself in a situation that poses personal risk.
- **Safety Briefings can only be provided by a member of SWR staff** – if you have a new member joining your group you will need to arrange for them to have this briefing with the station team themselves. Please bear in mind that this may take some time to organise.
- Only work that has been agreed by SWR is to be carried out within the lease area of our land.
- No member of an adoption group is allowed to enter any areas marked as “private” or “no unauthorised access”, unless specifically agreed with the local station team.
- No member of the group is to go on the railway track.
- No activities are to be undertaken within 2.4 metres of the platform edge.
- At least 2.4 metres must be provided underneath any hanging basket.
- No group shall start any fire.
- No group shall disturb nesting birds, roosting bats, reptiles or amphibians.
- All members of the station adoption group must sign in and out at the station. If the station is unstaffed this must be done via the Help Point.
- All members of the group must wear a pink hi-vis at all times.
- Sensible clothing and shoes must be worn for the tasks being undertaken.
- Never leave equipment unattended or where it will block access to a station/train or form a trip hazard.
- No attempt shall be made to carry out any maintenance or repair work to station buildings or other infrastructure (unless this is work that is agreed in advance between us).
- Any accident must be reported to the station team and an entry made in the accident book. If the station is unmanned, the Station Manager must be notified immediately.

## **Code of Conduct for Station Adopters**

SWR expects a high standard of behaviour from its staff and wishes to see adopters act in a fair and respectful manner when undertaking activities on our stations.

As such we ask all groups to agree to the following points:

- Ensure that no member of the group acts in such a manner as to bring the station adopters, SWR, Community Rail Network or the rail industry into disrepute.
- No adopter shall act in a manner that could lead others to believe they are employees or contractors of SWR.
- Ensure that any issues regarding the station are raised with SWR staff directly, and not through the media or online channels.
- Ensure that the group is open to everyone regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexuality or any other personal difference.
- Keep the SWR Community Rail Manager informed of any third-party funding provided to the group to support the station adoption.
- Work with SWR to help promote the adoption.

SWR reserves the right to review and vary these terms and code of conduct.

If any point covered within this book are not followed, or there is any behaviour deemed as unacceptable by SWR, the adopters will be immediately removed from the location and permanently excluded from the station adoption programme.

## Station Adoption Form

To complete the process of adopting your station please fill in the below form immediately after your station Safety Briefing. By signing this form, you are confirming that you understand the information provided in that briefing and will comply with the terms and conditions, as well as the code of conduct, as outlined in this booklet.

Group name \_\_\_\_\_

is adopting \_\_\_\_\_ station

The aims of the group are

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These will be achieved by undertaking the following work:

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The person leading the group is \_\_\_\_\_

and they can be contacted in the following ways:

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

The person co-ordinating the finances is \_\_\_\_\_  
and they can be contacted by \_\_\_\_\_

The group's adoption is supported by the SWR Station Manager

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

and they can be contacted in the following ways:

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

They confirm that the safety briefing was given on \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement also confirms that the group will become a Community Rail Network member and that they accept the associated Community Rail Network terms and conditions (as provided by your local Community Rail Network officer).

It also acknowledges that SWR will pay the annual membership fees (at least £25 per year) for the duration of the current SWR franchise.

Tick here to confirm you wish to join Community Rail Network \_\_\_\_\_

The above includes Community Rail Network providing you with its newsletters and updates.

Tick here to confirm you wish to receive communications from Community Rail Network

\_\_\_\_\_

Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The group acknowledges that the information provided in this form will only be used by SWR and Community Rail Network so that we can keep in contact with you, including inviting you to our events. We will not pass on your details to others, without asking you first.

If the groups details change or need updating, please inform the station manager, SWR's Community Rail Manager and Community Rail Network.