

# Annual Report 2025/2026



## A Message from the Hereward CRP Chairman

Welcome to this second Hereward CRP Annual report covering April 2025 to March 2026. Hereward CRP has had another excellent year supporting local travel and inspiring the community to get involved and take the train. This report and our highlights poster (see appendix 1) demonstrate the breath of the CRP work and its community impact.

October 2025 was 200 years since the birth of the modern railway. Railway 200 presented lots of opportunities for the CRP to promote arts and culture. The first of its kind poetry train evening encouraged writers from places across the Hereward Line to pen new poems, revisit old work and share more established works from other writers. All themed around trains and the Hereward Line of course! Partnership working with local schools and 20Twenty productions included collaboration with three schools and included assemblies, a lesson from a professional artist and some fabulous drawings of railways past and present. The result being the delivery of amazing art boards for Manea, March and Whittlesea stations. The making memories project with The Friends of March Railway Station and 20Twenty Productions conducted a series of video interviews with people who had previously worked on the railways. These videos have been turned into a full-length film, preserving their memories and creating a fabulous historical record for present and future generations to learn from.

Our marketing and tourism strategy work has generated new trail leaflets for Peterborough city centre, days out by rail fliers focusing on all our communities with stations and the Ely walking and Cycling map. Peterborough was the Management Board focus for the 2025 tourism day, and actions from that day have produced articles and promotion for audiences across the UK.

The CRP programme is also not without its challenge and 2025 included the withdrawal of substantial in-kind support funding, and this is likely to mean a reduced programme for 2026/2027. We are fully committed to securing alternative funding and seeking commercial/other opportunities. In the short term we will do everything possible to mitigate the effects of this situation.

Thanks, as always go to the Hereward CRP Management Board members and railway industry colleagues for their continued support over the last 12 months. I hope you enjoy learning about everything we have achieved in this annual report.



Cllr Chris Seaton  
Chairman of the Hereward CRP

## 2. Key achievements during the last 12 months - A year in numbers

For further details, photos and a splash of color please see our annual highlights poster which can be found in appendix one of this report. The poster is made available on websites, social media, community notice boards and other places along the line to raise awareness of the CRP and our work.

1 Peterborough Tourism Day and 3-year action plan. Continued delivery of Ely Action Plan

5 Try a Train visits to Ely or Peterborough - 110 people . 35 had not been on a train before. 78 people attended the Santa special.

1 guided walk to promote the mini map between Peterborough and Whittlesea for 15 people

CRP Website - 4,438 views an increase of 91.4% on the previous year. These views made up 5,674 sessions on the website an increase of 86.8% compared to the previous year. Most popular content - walk and cycle maps and things to do across the line.

social media - over 171,000 views and 200 items posted. Over 2,000 content reactions such as likes, comments and shares. Content reactions up 54.7% against previous year. Popular content are events and walking and cycling info.

2 national Community Rail Award short listings - FACET Sunflower & Friends of March Station

6 railway history and safety talks at stations. 185 young people involved

Railway 200 Line specific celebrations - Special train - 38 people on a poetry train and 180 children across 3 schools produced 18 art boards for 3 stations. School assemblies were delivered. One school tried the train.

7 other events including school coffee morning fundraising day, Friends of March memories project and Trefoil Guild visit - 200 people involved.

7 Meet the Manager/Community rail days and promotion events at railway stations. Around 700 members of the public viewed the stall and spoke with us across the events

Rail safety week June 2025 - met 200 people in 1 morning & 1 station visit with 28 Beavers.

For all the events, Meet the Managers and promotions activities held in the year. The totals of promotional items we gave out are:

2 grants given to Station adopters/groups. Total value £1,896.13

Line guides - 4,500	Maps - 1400
Tourism brochures - 300	Pens - 1,200
Pencils - 1,500	Bags - 900
Water bottles - 250	Lens cleaning clothes - 800

### 3. Progress against the Hereward CRP Objectives

No	Hereward CRP Objectives	Progress Update 1 - 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026																																			
1	More Railway Users	<p>There has been substantial growth in use at all the Hereward Line railway stations. 871,784 additional passenger journeys per annum compared with the previous 12 months.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="582 439 1219 658"> <thead> <tr> <th>Station</th> <th>2023/24</th> <th>2024/25</th> <th>Passenger increase</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ely</td> <td>2,052,282</td> <td>2,299,024</td> <td>246,742</td> <td>+11.34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manea</td> <td>24,904</td> <td>29,708</td> <td>4,804</td> <td>+17.59</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>340,364</td> <td>373,732</td> <td>33,368</td> <td>+9.35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Whittlesea</td> <td>43,364</td> <td>51,194</td> <td>7,830</td> <td>+18.06</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peterborough</td> <td>4,720,686</td> <td>5,299,726</td> <td>579,040</td> <td>+11.55</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTALS</b></td> <td><b>7,181,600</b></td> <td><b>8,052,682</b></td> <td><b>871,784</b></td> <td><b>+11.23%</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Station	2023/24	2024/25	Passenger increase	%	Ely	2,052,282	2,299,024	246,742	+11.34	Manea	24,904	29,708	4,804	+17.59	March	340,364	373,732	33,368	+9.35	Whittlesea	43,364	51,194	7,830	+18.06	Peterborough	4,720,686	5,299,726	579,040	+11.55	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7,181,600</b>	<b>8,052,682</b>	<b>871,784</b>	<b>+11.23%</b>
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2	Community Involvement & Ownership	<p>As set out in section two, key achievements, the CRP has undertaken are more community events and held more Meet the Manager and community rail days along with station visits than ever before. This has enabled us to engage with over 1,500 people in the community in person over the last 12 months. The CRP Newsletter and Annual Highlights report remain popular, which can be viewed in appendix 1.</p> <p>Our Facebook and Instagram pages continue to do well. Our individual posts typically have views of 3,000. We now have 357 followers. You can access our social media pages as follows: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/herewardline/">https://www.instagram.com/herewardline/</a> and <a href="https://www.facebook.com/HerewardCRP">https://www.facebook.com/HerewardCRP</a></p> <p>We are excited about the potential of new partnerships with local organisations that we have been able to establish including with 20Twenty Productions, U3A at Ely, Peterborough Positive, Peterborough Civic Society, Ely and District Cubs and Beavers, All Saints and Burrowmoor Schools at March and Park Lane school at Whittlesey. Along with existing partnerships with FACET, National Trust/Damons Dementia Group, Westwood School in March and Manea Primary School. These partnerships enabled school and community group visits to stations and Try a Train group</p> <p><u>Case Study - Travel Buddies Project</u>            Cambridgeshire County Council and Greater Anglia through their customer and community Fund have financed year two of this project. Four Travel Buddy Trips on the train were completed between July and December 2025. 84 people aged between 40 and 64 or aged 65 and over attended. The project enables people to continue living in their own homes, reduces isolation, facilitates new friendships and helps people to use local transport. A Transport Pack has been produced and provided for all participants, advising people on travel choices and signposting the transport available.</p> <p>Lessons learned include the time it takes to engage and recruit participants, encouraging the support and assistance of local partner organisations, which is also time-consuming, the importance of local knowledge and importance of trips to help people who have low confidence in travelling. For other people, the trips offered new social opportunities and activities showing that there are a variety of reasons as to why people find the support of the project beneficial.</p>																																			

No	Hereward CRP Objectives	Progress Update 1 - 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026
3	Stations cleaner & more inviting	<p>The Stations continue to look bright and colorful through all the hard work and gardening from our Station Adopters. More planters have been approved for Whittlesea Station and March Station. Also, in March improvements to the car park and wildlife areas have improved the space and attracted more species. New planters at Ely have replaced old style designs providing a refreshed new look.</p> <p>New artwork designed by local children is brightening up Manea, March and Whittlesea Stations. Adding color, interest and a sense of pride from local people.</p> <p>Please refer to the appendix one highlights poster which includes relevant images.</p>
4	Station Facilities & Services	<p>The CRP has worked in partnership with FDC, CPCA and Greater Anglia at Whittlesea Station. Public and business surveys were undertaken in late 2025 and an options consultation in early 2026. Over 625 responses were received. The results are being used to complete an outline business case and to agree scheme options and phasing.</p> <p>Ongoing discussions continue about additional stopping services at our stations. In May and December 2025 additional CrossCountry services started stopping at Whittlesea Station. This makes it easier for people to travel home from London and Cambridge for work. Also in December 2025, East Midlands Railway launched their new timetable offering improved journeys between Lincoln and Peterborough. We are promoting LNER services between Lincoln and Peterborough and especially on Sundays.</p>
5	Interchange - all modes of transport	<p>We have continued to promote our existing walking and cycling maps and mini maps. Larger numbers of people are taking printed copies and accessing these on our website. We now have a map for Ely to complete the set. There are 6 new trail maps for Peterborough suitable for all ages and abilities. All the maps help to improve first and last mile journeys to and from our stations along with encouraging leisure visits and tourism. <a href="#">Walking &amp; Cycling Maps   Hereward Community Rail Partnership</a></p> <p>The CRP promoted a minibus service from Ely Station to Welney Washes Wetland Centre on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The finance was from Greater Anglia Community Fund.</p>
6	Influence DfT Policy	<p>Working in partnership with other key stakeholders, the CRP has responded and supported lobbying for improvements at Ely Station and Haughley Junction. We continue to provide information to the train companies to support their reporting to DfT and have input via Community Rail Network in respect of Great British Railways.</p>
7	TOC Involvement in the Community	<p>All the TOCs have again supported and assisted the CRP significantly in the last 12 months. They attended our events and met the public as part of Meet the Manager and promotional activities. Train company community funding has also enabled us to do more events and work with stakeholders and the public.</p>
8	Publicity & Awareness	<p>Please refer to the details elsewhere in this table and to the information in section 2 of this report, all of which include lots of details about how we promote the railway and the local line. In addition, a second phase update for 25/26 has been completed on the Hereward CRP website. This upgrade can be viewed from the following link: <a href="#">Hereward Community Rail Partnership   Explore the Hereward line</a></p>

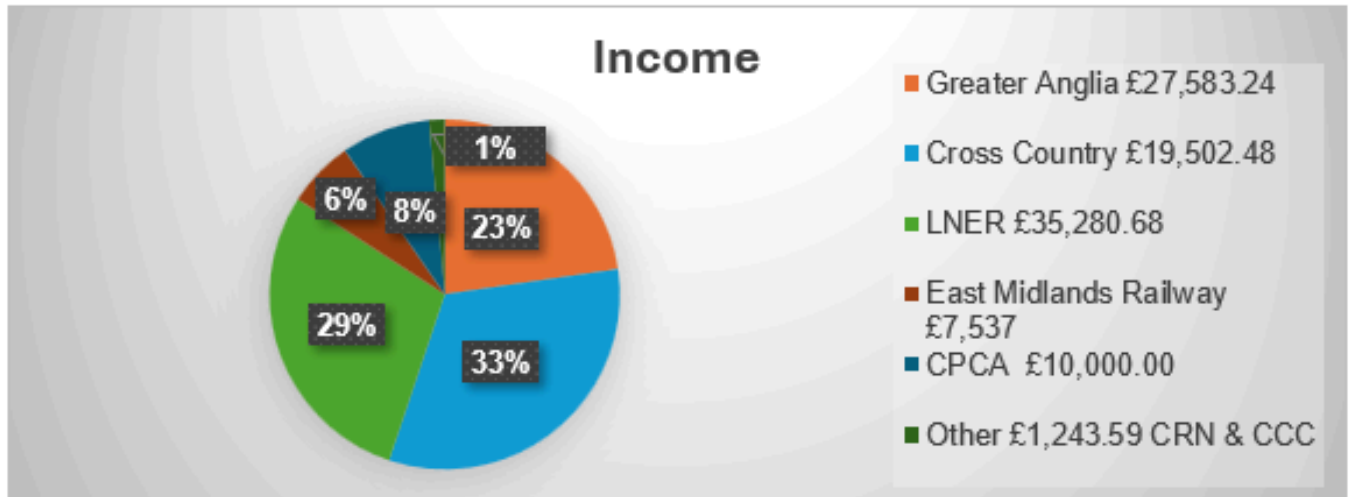
#### 4. Hereward CRP Annual Finance Report April 2025 – March 2026

Balance Brought Forward from 2024/2025 - £39,312.21

##### Income

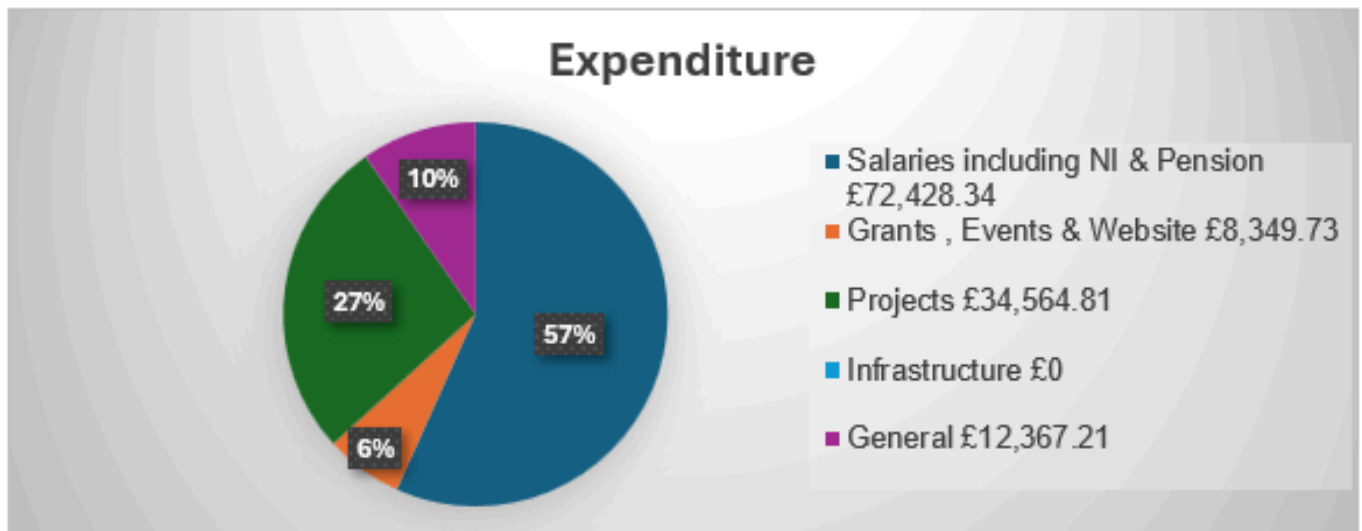
Total net income 2025/2026 - £93,268.58 = £61,834.78 core and £31,433.80 project funding

Total income available for 2025/26 - £132,580.79 (b/fwd + 25/26 net income)



##### Expenditure

Total expenditure for 2025/26 – £127,710.09



**Total balance to carry forward to 2026/2027 - £4,869.70** (total income available minus total expenditure)

## 5. Demonstrating greater use and awareness of the Hereward Line - Key stats and use of the line

### About the Hereward Line

The Hereward Line between Peterborough and Ely is a route of 29.25miles (47.07km) with a journey time end to end of approximately 41 minutes. The route is the gateway linking East Anglia and the East Midlands to the wider railway network across England, Scotland and Wales. Interchanges along with origins and destinations to and from Peterborough show that of the 4million + journeys a year recorded, around 1million travel along the Hereward Line.

### Case Study - FACET Sunflower

FACET is a March based charity with a focus on providing training and day care for adults with disabilities across Fenland. The sunflower made from upcycled materials was started in mid-2018 and involved many of the students drawing the design then cutting, painting and gluing the blocks in place to help build up the overall image. In 2020, once assembled, the sunflower sat for some time without a home. A chance visit to the FACET office by Hereward CRP staff generated a response that the sunflower should be seen. The CRP and Greater Anglia have now been able to install the stunning sunflower mosaic made by the students and staff from upcycled materials March station.



### Case Study - Promotion in the Moment Magazine

The CRP has worked with The Moment Magazine in Peterborough to reach a new audience by sharing with them a story about the delights of the Hereward Line and two cathedrals. A Rail of Two Cities follows writer Toby Venables and his journey along the line from October 2025. The magazine has a readership of around 69,000 people covering a wide area in and around Peterborough. Our article covered 50 pages in the magazine. Rail of Two Cities | The Moment Magazine

### Case Study - Mini Map Promotion - Walking from Peterborough to Whittlesey

In Spring 2025, we launched a new series of mini maps aimed at encouraging walking to and from our stations. In March 2026, in partnership with Peterborough Civic Society, we decided to test one of the routes by inviting members of the U3A group at Ely to join us for a walk from Peterborough to Whittlesey. Light refreshments and a train ride home followed. All 10 mini maps can be viewed from the website: Walking & cycling maps | Hereward Community Rail Partnership

### Case Study - Railway 200 Memories in partnership - Friends of March Station & 20Twenty Productions

Memories of older people who had worked on the railway or had been involved in March Station were recorded. They were turned into a fascinating and wonderful film giving perspective on the history of the station and Whitemoor marshalling yard. The film lasts over two hours and can be viewed from the link below. A preview launch event was attended by 50 people.

<https://www.youtube.com/@FriendsOfMarchRailwayStation>

## 6. Round up - Other CRP Matters

During 2024/2025 the CRP have undertaken a varied and extensive work programme as you have already been reading. It would not be possible to provide details of everything we have achieved across the year but in this section, we are setting out further achievements in brief.


- The Hereward CRP National Re-accreditation by the Department for Transport was approved in July 2024 for another 12 months, confirming national CRP standards are met
- The Think Travel Tool was shortlisted at the 2024 Community Rail Awards. This tool, available on the CRP website, aims to provide information on the impacts of different travel options. It aims to help people make informed decisions about how they travel, and it supports sustainable transport modes. The tool can be viewed from the following link [Think Travel Tool | Hereward Community Rail Partnership](#)
- Station Adopter awards - the CRP nominated all the stations for awards during this year as all the stations looked particularly stunning with their floral displays. At the Greater Anglia Station adoption awards in October 2024, Ely Station won joint Highly Commended for the flower tubs and hanging baskets. Geoff Howes, our Whittlesea Adopter, was obtained the best community involvement award.



- We are working in a partnership to promote travel by train to and from Ely for leisure visits, short breaks and events. With Visit Ely, the train companies, the District Council and Community Rail Network, we are promoting Ely as a destination that you can travel to easily by train. Following a taster day in June 2024, we developed a three-year action plan to take the promotion of Ely forward. The CRP will develop new walking and cycling maps and we are promoting events and activities through our social media pages. Community Rail Network has been writing blogs for the Scenic Rail Britain website. The Visit Ely 2025 Brochure contains a section on travel by train and railway 200. Social media is also being used to promote visits to Ely by train.
- The CRP Management Board helped to start the promotion of the 2024 - 2027 CRP Marketing and Tourism Strategy by holding one of their meetings in Whittlesey. The day consisted of the morning Management Board meeting, and a talk about how the relationship between the CRP and the District Council includes the benefits of the two working together. The day ended with a visit to the Whittlesey Heritage Walk and some dancing with the Whittlesea Strawbear! Further details about Whittlesey Heritage Walk can be found at [Whittlesey Heritage Walk - Fenland District Council](#)


# Appendix 1 - Hereward CRP Highlights Report 2025 2026

Add website link when available



## Hereward Community Rail Partnership Annual Highlights

### April 2025 - March 2026



#### Passenger numbers

The latest Office of Road and Rail figures for April 2024 - March 2025 show great growth at all Hereward Line stations:


	23-24	24-25	Passenger increase	%
Peterborough	4,730,686	5,299,726	579,040	+12.27
Whittlesey	43,364	51,194	7,830	+18.06
March	340,976	373,732	32,756	+9.17
Wanslea	24,904	29,758	4,854	+17.60
Ely	2,052,282	2,299,004	246,742	+11.34

#### Our year in numbers

- 5 Try a Train trips - 110 people travelled - 35 hadn't used the train before.
- 7 Meet the Manager (community rail) days.
- 14,000 Hereward CRP walking & cycling maps handed out.
- 193 young people learned about railway safety at a local station.
- 1,200 Hereward CRP gears handed out.
- 189 year 5 pupils created 18 new art boards at 3 stations.
- 78 people got festive on our Santa Train.
- 1 tourism day in Peterborough.
- 1 guided walk to Whittlesey.
- 38 people enjoyed a Poetry Train.

WHAT A YEAR!

#### New addition at March station




FACET March's sunflower mosaic was unveiled at March station - it now sits proudly in the ticket hall and is enjoyed by everybody. The stunning mosaic was created using upcycled materials and hand painted by FACET students during and after lockdowns. Students were delighted to join in the unveiling and we're all very proud of their work!

#### Events


##### Meet the Manager

An event was held at March railway station in December to coincide with the launch of the CRP's Railway200 inspired travelling history board.




##### Community Rail Days

These were held in Lincoln, Louth and Cambridge (the latter two were held during the Railway200 Inspiration train visits). The Inspiration train days saw record numbers of people visit our stand and so many great conversations about days out along our line!




##### Peterborough Tourism Day

Stakeholders participated in a Tourism Taster Day in Peterborough. Working with The Peterborough Civic Society and Peterborough Positive, we enjoyed a jam-packed day visiting some of the city's highlights.



#### Try a Train trips

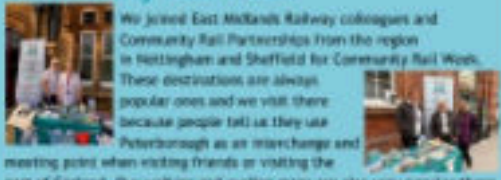
Many trips were held across the year, including days out in Ely for FACET students, with a picnic and ice cream; All Saints School pupils for a history visit; and members of Wobech's Dementia dementia group, who, with their carers enjoyed a trip with lunch and a walk by the riverside.



At Christmas, we enjoyed a day out in Ely with a group of young Carers from Centre33 - we visited the pantomime with them. Trips to March station were also enjoyed by Ely Beavers, while Doddington Beavers ventured to the New Valley Railway for a day out.

#### Community Rail Week

We joined East Midlands Railway colleagues and Community Rail Partnerships from the region in Nottingham and Sheffield for Community Rail Week. These destinations are always popular ones and we visit there because people tell us they use Peterborough as an interchange and meeting point when visiting friends or visiting the east of England. Our walking and cycling maps are also very popular there.




#### Special events

**Railway200 celebration poetry train** - poetry all the way from Peterborough to Ely, at the station, and by Ely riverside - a wonderful evening bringing together like-minded creatives & conversationalists. A booklet with all of the evening's poetry was created as a memento of the event.

**Santa Train** - two trips ran between Ely and Peterborough, with around 30 family groups enjoying the festivities and a winter trip along The Hereward Line, including, of course, a visit from "the man himself"!

#### Visit Ely guidebook - our new strapline!


A new strapline and advert for the Visit Ely guide book for 2026 was created, and, using images from along our line, we think the piece sums up our line and it's unique selling points perfectly!



#### Station Adopters & Friends

Another busy year for our adopters who make the Hereward Line stations look so cared for. Each group efforts, do not go unnoticed, and the results were recognised with short-listed award nominations in the National Community Rail Awards for The Friends of March Railway Station. Additionally, at Greater Anglia's adopter awards, Allyson from Wanslea, March adopters, and Libby & Peter Townrow were all recognised for their efforts.


★ Huge congratulations to you all! ★



#### Railway200 inspired station artwork


Together with 20Twenty Productions and local artist Ric Savage, pupils from Wanslea, All Saints, and Park Lane primary schools designed 18 eye-catching and creative art boards.


Following lessons on railway history (Railway200) and digital art, pupils created imaginative designs for Wanslea, March, and Whittlesey stations - these included ladybird, ice cream and football train!





#### Ely walking & cycling map


In the Spring of 2026, a new walking and cycling map was produced for Ely. Copies are now available to pick up from our stations and at all events we attend.






 @herewardline

 Hereward Community Rail Partnership







This report has been produced by  
The Hereward Community Rail Partnership  
c/o The Transport Team  
Fenland District Council  
County Road  
March  
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