

Press notice | For immediate release: 11 October 2022
From Kent Community Rail Partnership | <https://kentcrp.org/>

Kent Community Rail Partnership and Five Acre Wood School scoop national award for raising awareness of hidden disabilities

Kent based Community Rail Partnership, hosted by walking and cycling charity Sustrans, and Five Acre Wood School in Snodland, have been recognised at the national Community Rail Awards for their innovative work engaging communities with their local railway lines and stations.

Kent Community Rail Partnership fought off strong competition to be named winner of the Small Projects Award.

The winning project saw the installation of a sunflower mural at Snodland Station. Put together by the Partnership and designed by students at Five Acre Wood School, it helps raise awareness of hidden disabilities and to celebrate people's individuality and differences.

Working in partnership with Southeastern, the school designed the mural with a link to the train operator's 'Just A Minute' (JAM) scheme, using the globally recognised symbol for hidden disabilities - the sunflower.

The JAM scheme recognises that some passengers may have hidden disabilities and require additional support. Southeastern issue JAM cards and sunflower lanyards to passengers that require them.

Andy Place, Kent Community Rail Partnership Project Officer at Sustrans said:

"We are delighted for all the students at Five Acre Wood who have worked extremely hard to produce a wonderful mural to help raise awareness that everyone is different -so let's celebrate this.

"Back in 2019, Five Acre Wood designed a garden at the front of the station, and the students have already identified ideas for their next project - rejuvenating an overgrown allotment area. We are excited to be supporting them with this and projects in the future.

"We would like to thank all our partners, community groups, volunteers, and schools that we work with to serve the communities along our lines."

Kent Community Rail Partnership, delivers a wide range of community engagement and social inclusion initiatives, supports volunteering at stations, promotes green travel and tourism by rail, and works with railway and local authority partners.

The partnership was also recognised for its Youth Engagement project and took third place in the Involving Children and Young People category.

Over the last year Kent Community Rail Partnership has engaged with over 1800 young people working on a number of various projects with a range of primary schools, Ashford and Sheppey Colleges, Five Acre Wood SEN School and Strood Academy.

The 18th national Community Rail Awards were held at Manchester's Central Convention Complex on Thursday 6 October, hosted by Community Rail Network.

This year's awards recognised a diverse array of projects. 15 winners were chosen from more than 200 entries, all demonstrating how the community rail movement continues to build links, positivity and awareness between local people and their railways.

The awards celebrate the crucial, often unsung, work carried out by community rail partnerships, station friends, volunteers, and community groups. This is in areas such as community and youth engagement, community-led station development, diversity and inclusion, and sustainable development.

Jools Townsend, chief executive of Community Rail Network, said: "The Community Rail Awards give deserved recognition to community rail partnerships, groups and volunteers across Britain. We were thrilled to welcome more than 430 guests, alongside ministers and rail industry leaders, emphasising the great value of community rail, helping to build stronger, fairer, greener communities, served and connected by their railways and wider sustainable transport network.

"Despite another challenging year, the array of entries defied expectations, showing how community rail continues to strive to help people get the most from their railways and stations, and impact positively on local places and people's lives.

"Our congratulations go to the Kent Community Rail Partnership and Five Acre Wood School, Snodland and all our winners, and thanks to everyone who supports community rail, helping the movement to go from strength to strength."

Full details of all winners can be found [here](#).

ENDS

For more details and follow-up interviews, please contact Andy Place 07920088441 andy.place@sustrans.org.uk

Notes to editors:

1. Community rail is a grassroots movement spanning Britain that is made up of community rail partnerships, which work along railway lines or across regions, and volunteer station 'friends' groups, to connect communities with their railways. There are over 80 community rail partnerships and 1,200 station friends volunteer groups across Britain www.communityrail.org.uk
2. Community rail involves working with train operators, local authorities, and other partners to involve local communities with their railways and stations, promoting sustainable travel, social inclusion, and local development, and helping communities to have a voice in rail and transport development.
3. Established in 2000, Community Rail Network supports those working and volunteering in community rail and their partners. It shares best practice and connects community rail partnerships and groups together, while working with governments at different levels, the transport industry, and voluntary sector to champion community rail and shares its insights on sustainable and inclusive transport development.

More about Kent Community Rail Partnership

The Kent Community Rail Partnership is a community resource managed by Sustrans and funded by Southeastern Railway, Kent County Council, Medway Unitary Authority and other partners.

Kent Community Rail Partnership work closely with schools and colleges, local community groups and station adopters to organise events along the line and at stations.

If you would like to become involved with community rail and supporting your local station or find out more about what Kent CRP does, then please contact Kent CRP through our website <https://kentcrp.org/contactus/> or email kentcrp@sustrans.org.uk

More about Sustrans

The Kent Community Rail Partnership is hosted by Sustrans, Charity No 326550. Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

For further information on Sustrans' work please contact **Sustrans' press office:** 020 7780 7231 **e-mail:** press@sustrans.org.uk or visit www.sustrans.org.uk