

Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership



2023-24 Annual Report



Contents

Introduction by the Chair	3
Providing a Voice for the Community	4
Promoting Sustainable, Healthy and Accessible Travel	5
Bringing Communities Together, Supporting Diversity and Inclusion	6
Supporting Social and Economic Development	7
Meldreth Wonderpass	8
Strengthening the Partnership and Accreditation	9
Financial report and funding	10
Our Partners	11
Who We Are	12

Cover photo credit: Peter Alvey, GTR Mobile Assistant, Diane and Zen at Meldreth

Introduction by the Chair

I'm delighted to present this annual report, reflecting a year that has seen a flourishing of community activity stimulated by our railway and the connections it offers to all who live around it.



Artwork at the amazing Wonderpass celebrates a collaborative community and facilitates safe active travel journeys to the railway at Meldreth.

Sustainable Shepreth, our new station partner for Shepreth Station, is a local leader in promoting ideas for more sustainable everyday living.

Forging connections with other community groups has enabled stronger results, as seen with our Active Travel Day in June.

Recognition that active travel is helpful to people in so many ways – for good physical and mental health and well-being, for friendship and community support – is in evidence every week with the Melbourn Wellbeing Walk.

Our station gardeners at Foxton, Shepreth and Meldreth Station continue to provide year-round tender loving care to the platform gardens that mark out each station.

Shepreth Wildlife Park, on the doorstep of Shepreth Station, has continued to host the CRP, reminding us of the long-standing connection between the train operating company and a well-known local business that encourages sustainable travel by train whenever possible.

GTR's new Mobile Assistance team was heartily endorsed by local rail user Diane Rose, who with her guide dog Zen, says she can more confidently access train travel on a routine basis, exemplifying that the railway is for everyone.

All in all, we've seen a community spirit that is fundamentally local but equally, collaborative and looking to the horizon.

Susan van de Ven

Chair, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership

Providing a Voice for the Community

Melbourn Greenway

Despite the proposed travel hub at Foxton being paused by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, we have stayed in touch with the Greenway project team, helping to steer the direction and priorities. We are delighted that work to widen and light the path between Melbourn and Meldreth station is starting this spring.



Cambridge re-signalling, re-lock and re-control project (C3R)

Work is continuing on the re-signalling project, and we have continued to make our communities aware of where closures and rail replacements have been in place to facilitate this important work.

Cambridge South

We are very pleased that construction on this project has begun and is due to be complete in 2025. We were delighted to attend a Quality Panel meeting to discuss facilities at the station, which will improve access to education, employment and healthcare to our station users.



East West Rail

The East West Rail Company have continued to carry out public engagement this year on the proposed route into Cambridge from Bedford. We have sent representatives to each of these meetings to provide a voice for both rail users and members of our communities.

Ticket office closures

In July 2023 a national consultation was announced on closing railway station ticket offices. This would have affected our ticket office in Meldreth. We publicised the consultation to our rail users, and submitted our response before the initial deadline was extended, expressing our concern about any diminishing of confidence in using the railway. We welcomed the decision in October 2023 not to proceed with the planned ticket office closures.

Promoting Sustainable, Healthy and Accessible Travel

Active Travel Day

Around 100 people took part in our Active Travel Day in partnership with the A10 Corridor Cycling Campaign on Sunday 11 June. This encouraged people to use the A10 cycle path and spread the word about the Melbourn Greenway, which is designed to improve access to our three stations.

Cyclists, led by our Chair, Cllr Susan van de Ven, made the journey from Trumpington Park and Ride, while Melbourn Wellbeing Walkers, led by our Community Rail Officer, set out from the Melbourn Hub, with all converging at Phillimore Garden Centre in Melbourn. Once everyone reached Phillimore, they could try out e-bikes from Royston Cycles, and receive support from Melbourn Science Park's Dr Bike repair service.



Promoting mobile assistance

In February, we arranged for a blind Melbourn resident to help promote the new Mobile Assistance Service now available to rail travellers at Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Stations. Diane Rose visited Meldreth Station with her guide dog Zen, and the details of the visit and how to book assistance were [covered by the local press](#).

Bringing Communities Together, Supporting Diversity and Inclusion

Station gardening

The tubs at Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton, and the station gardens at Shepreth and Meldreth continue to delight visitors to our stations. We are very grateful for the support of Foxton Gardens Association, Sustainable Shepreth, Meldreth Veg Club and our team of Duke of Edinburgh watering volunteers for keeping our stations so beautiful in challenging weather conditions.



Promoting positive mental health

Our Community Rail Officer has trained as a Wellbeing Walk Leader and Mental Health First Aider. Sarah has supported mental health events held by Melbourn Science Park and continues to support the weekly wellbeing walks in Melbourn, which bring people together to walk for health but also for mental wellbeing.



Supporting Social and Economic Development

Sustainable Shepreth Eco Fair

In January we took the opportunity to have a stall at the first Sustainable Shepreth Eco Fair. Some great discussions were had with residents and like-minded people about active travel. We helped promote the event to local cycling groups who came in their droves for bike marking by the local police.

We promoted our rail trails, which show the way to local pubs, churches and nature reserves which are accessible from our stations. We also publicised our walk leaflets which include circular walks from the stations and station to station walks, all including local places to eat and drink. As a bonus, we had “Arlo’s Adventures” books to give away, promoting rail safety to local children.



Meldreth Wonderpass

The underpass between Melbourn and Meldreth Railway Station had become a focus for anti-social behaviour. The existing 15-year-old artwork had been badly disfigured by graffiti. Pupils at Melbourn Village College labelled the underpass “dark” and “intimidating”. We surveyed local residents who said they wanted some new artwork designed by the community.

We asked local schools, places of worship, youth groups, environmental groups and community organisations in Meldreth and Melbourn to contribute artworks for the underpass and engaged a local artist to create a magical, fantastical border. 40 new artworks were created, representing different aspects of community life in the two villages. During six painting days in the 2023 Easter holidays more than 200 volunteers attended and around 100 of these were under 18. The project received enthusiastic media coverage including online and print coverage in the Cambridge News and Cambridge Independent.

As a result, the Meldreth Wonderpass is now lighter, brighter and friendlier. Feedback on the completed project from participants and residents has been overwhelmingly positive. A year later, there is still no graffiti over the new artwork, and the lessons learned have been presented at a GTR Community Rail Conference.

The project has been shortlisted for the 2024 Community Rail Awards in the category of Community Creative Projects and Station Arts.



Strengthening the Partnership



Sustainable Shepreth

Sustainable Shepreth are our new station partners in Shepreth. Initiated in January 2023 by a group of residents, they are passionate about finding ways to address the effects of climate change and its impact on the biodiversity of our community.

With assistance from the Cambridge Re-Signalling project team and Sustainable Shepreth, we hope to tackle Shepreth Memorial Garden in the coming year to make it a haven for wildlife.

Financial Report and Funding

We are extremely grateful for the continued funding support from Govia Thameslink Railway and South Cambridgeshire District Council. We are also thankful for continued funding from Melbourn, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Parish Councils.

Accounts for 2023-24

Income

Core Funding	£16,401
Grants	£4,000
Brought forward from 2022-23	£24,112
Total Income	£44,513

Payments

Partnership Officer	£16,645
Operational Expenses	£79
A10 Underpass	£5,748
Administration Expenses	£600
Total Payments	£23,072
Balance at 31 March 2024	£21,441



Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership

Our Partners



Melbourn Parish Council

Melbourn Village College

Meldreth Parish Council

Melbourn Practical Solutions Group

Shepreth Parish Council

Melbourn Timebank

Foxton Parish Council

Foxton Gardens Association

Phillimore Garden Centre

Meldreth Veg Club

Who we are

Our Community Rail Partnership aims to develop links with schools and local businesses associated with our local rail services, and to enhance sustainable transport links in the wider area. The Partnership is hosted by South Cambridgeshire District Council and funded by Govia Thameslink Railway, the Parish Councils of Melbourn, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton, and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The partnership is accredited by the Department for Transport. Accreditation is formal recognition by the DfT that a Community Rail Partnership operates to a high standard and that its objectives and activities are supported by Government.

The Partnership would like to thank all our station volunteers, members of the Stakeholder Group and Sarah Hatcher and Hilary Marsh for recording the minutes of the meetings.

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