



Sevenside Community Rail
Partnership c.i.c

Progress Report

Published
January 2009

*Working to achieve
quality local rail services
matched to community needs*

Progress Report

Community Rail Partnerships are a means by which stakeholders play an active role in the development of their local rail service. They bring together train operators, local authorities, employers, local organisations and community groups.

The Severnside Community Rail Partnership was formed in summer 2004. Its main aim is to identify and implement measures to encourage the use of local trains on routes radiating from Bristol; to ensure that access to local stations is easy and that stations provide a safe and welcoming environment. The emphasis is on working with partners and local communities to deliver quick wins and small-scale initiatives that make local rail services more attractive and bring passenger benefits

The Partnership covers the network of routes radiating from Bristol, bounded by Gloucester, Bath/Freshford, Weston-super-Mare, Taunton, and the Severn Estuary; this includes the branch line to Severn Beach.

The Partnership's principal sponsors are Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils, Business West, First Great Western, and the West of England Partnership, who together form the Management Board for the Partnership. We have also welcomed participation from CrossCountry Trains and Passenger Focus. The Principal Sponsors also have the option of being nominated as Directors of the Partnership, who are legally responsible for the conduct of the Partnership, in accordance with the Companies Acts. The Principal Sponsors fund the running costs, including the post of Partnership Officer, our one employee. Projects are funded largely through specific grants, assisted by local and community voluntary work. The Partnership was re-constituted in June 2008 as a Community Interest Company.

During summer 2008 the Bristol - Severn Beach line was formally designated by the Department for Transport as a Community Rail Service. One of the benefits will be to give the local community more say in the development of the line. As part of the designation process, the Partnership produced a Line Action Plan (available on the Partnership's web-site). Bristol City Council also committed funding for a more frequent train service, as well as infrastructure improvements including station CCTV coverage. First Great Western is installing a new passenger information system. The reliability of the train service, which has improved considerably over the last few months, will benefit further from a new turn-back facility at Clifton Down.

The Partnership was very pleased that the support given by Nick Monks, the First Great Western member of staff responsible for station maintenance on the

Severn Beach line, was recognised in the Community Rail Awards by the award of first prize in the Outstanding Railway Staff Contribution category. The tremendous work done by our Partnership Officer, Sarah Collins, was also recognised by an award in the Outstanding Community Rail Partnership Officer category.

This report is published in January 2009. It covers our activities throughout 2008. Financial information is for the 2007-8 financial year.



Nick Monks and Sarah Collins

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Improving local stations

During 2008 we continued to focus on working with communities to improve local unstaffed stations to provide a safer, and more friendly, waiting environment. Three quarters of the stations in our area have now benefited from improvement schemes. We have been greatly supported in this work by the Probation Service - much of the heavier work has been done by offenders under Community Service Orders. This is then followed up by encouraging local schools to look after station gardens and to brighten up the stations with artwork displays. Some local stations are now being formally "adopted" by local schools. Experience has shown that involving the local community, and particularly local schools, encourages more pride and less vandalism at stations. We are also grateful to Bristol Clean and Green, the local Councils, First Great Western and Network Rail for their support, funding and encouragement in the station improvement programme. Thanks also goes to the British Transport Police who have provided additional support through their Neighbourhood Policing Team.

In 2008 we have delivered

- a complete "makeover" at Weston Milton including restoration of the station gardens, and repainting the station.
- clearance of overgrown foliage at Nailsea and Backwell station, which improves sightlines and visibility in the car park, thus enhancing passenger security. This was followed by a station repaint, and the provision of silhouette artwork by Backwell School.
- further environmental improvements at Keynsham, and installation of artwork by Chandag Infants School and Wellsway Secondary School
- platform plant displays at Parson Street; this will be followed by mosaic artwork by local school children from Parson Street Primary School

Two successful bids were made for the Department for Transport's "Access for All - Small Station Schemes" funding. The first bid for £86,000 involves improving access at eleven stations (ten on the Severn Beach line plus Patchway). It includes shelters, signs, lighting, seats, steps, handrails and improved access. The second bid for £110,000 is for real time information at eight stations on the Severn Beach line. Both bids will be match funded by the local councils. The improvements will be implemented during 2008/09.

The Partnership has also participated in the stakeholder group, being led by FGW and South Gloucestershire, developing the Bristol Parkway Station Travel Plan.

We are working with

- Yatton station group to achieve a station cafe and other improvements
- Patchway station group and Patchway Community College to provide new landscaping and artwork
- Oldfield Park station group on further landscaping
- Yate station group on improvements to the station access and car park
- Worle Secondary, Milton Park Primary and Westhaven Schools to produce artwork and provide plants for Weston Milton
- Backwell Secondary School to add further artwork and develop community links at Nailsea and Backwell station
- First Great Western and Somerset County Council to develop community contacts in Somerset with a view to improving local stations



On the Severn Beach line stations we have worked closely with partners and the local community to deliver the first part of a comprehensive station improvement package.

This has included

- initial planning of a garden and artwork at Severn Beach, in liaison with Severn Beach Primary School
- continuing station maintenance work at Avonmouth
- a new garden, and clearance of overgrown foliage at Shirehampton





- clearance of rubbish and overgrown foliage from the Clifton Down car park, and the provision of a prominent station sign on the road overbridge
- renovation and repainting of the station building at Redland (the only original station building left on the line)
- continuing work on the station garden and mural at Montpelier
- the start of work on the ambitious community garden centre "Eastside Roots" at Stapleton Road. The Partnership had assisted Bristol Eastside Traders since 2006 in their negotiations with Network Rail. Work started in January 2008 when the Probation Service and the Partnership worked together to undertake heavy clearance of the disused track bed. The Partnership and Eastside Roots continue to work together on this project.



Better local train services

Early in 2007, it became clear that there were major problems with the recently introduced train timetable, and that these would only be solved by a fundamental restructuring of the pattern and times of local services. This was implemented in December 2007.



The revised pattern of service, with more through cross-Bristol trains to a variety of destinations, has reduced the need for passengers to change trains, which has been welcomed by passengers. A new more frequent service on the Severn Beach line, including the provision of Sunday trains has been a considerable success. Spurred on by a new management structure at First Great Western, performance has improved throughout the year, with a much more reliable and punctual train service. The improved reliability of the service has resulted in considerable increase of passengers on local routes, but this has put a real strain on the capacity of the train fleet. A shortage of trains means that there is now a serious overcrowding problem on a growing number of services in the West of England. More rolling stock is an urgent priority.



The Partnership has pressed for a number of gaps in service to be filled, in particular for an enhanced morning local service at Highbridge, Bridgwater and Taunton. We are pleased that this has now been implemented.

Attracting more passengers to use local trains

One of the aims of the Partnership is to attract more passengers to those trains where there is space. We have

- produced a range of leaflets aimed at encouraging families to go by train to local attractions
- worked with Somerset County Council on a leaflet encouraging more passengers to use Highbridge station, which was circulated to households in the Highbridge, Berrow and Brean areas
- commissioned a new web-site, specifically for the Severn Beach line - severnbeachline.org. As well as details of times, fares and general information, this gives direct access to First Great Western's live train running system. It was introduced in July 2008, and between then and December 2008 there have been over 36,000 visits to the site.



- encouraged scholars to use the train, where there is capacity, by promoting, and issuing on behalf of First Great Western, scholar season tickets for the Severn Beach line, and to Filton College
- worked with the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways on a summer count of passengers using the Severn Beach line, and on other promotional activities
- worked with the Ramblers' Association to produce and distribute a leaflet promoting guided walks from stations in greater Bristol.

Passenger Statistics

During 2008 there was another increase in the number of passengers using trains in the West of England, in particular 18% growth in passenger journeys on the Bristol-Weston-super-Mare-Taunton line; while an increased service, and better reliability, has resulted in over 30% growth on the Severn Beach line

Passengers using local stations on weekdays

Station	2006	2007	2008	Station	2006	2007	2008
Yate	765	694	707	Severn Beach	111	135	107
Patchway	199	139	156	St Andrews Road	12	30	19
Filton Abbey Wood	1666	1958	2065	Avonmouth	254	218	294
Bedminster	222	156	280	Shirehampton	132	86	158
Parson Street	73	108	208	Sea Mills	156	121	166
Nailsea and Backwell	1221	1315	1477	Clifton Down	629	500	827
Yatton	1121	1192	1346	Redland	329	264	474
Worle	781	841	1084	Montpelier	497	253	495
Weston Milton	235	261	268	Stapleton Road sb	428	326	489
Weston-s-Mare	2297	2279	2253	Lawrence Hill sb	296	263	334
Keynsham	799	839	972	Temple Meads sb	926	649	1250
Oldfield Park	837	841	985	Severn Beach line trains total	3770	2845	4613
Freshford	95	89	98	Stapleton Rd nsb	66	91	300
Highbridge		408	410	Lawrence Hill nsb	59	49	183
Bridgwater		474	542	Stations - Temple Meads - Severn Beach - all trains	3895	2985	5096
				Greater Bristol local stations grand total (excl Somerset)	14206	13697	16995

Notes: The above figures are for a November weekday (except Somerset stations at Highbridge and Bridgwater, which are July daytime only). The figures show the total number both boarding and alighting at the station on the day of the count. Some 2007 figures might have been affected by train disruption on the day of the count. The 2008 figures are provisional. The increase of passengers at Worle followed the introduction of stops by high speed trains in December 2007. The Severn Beach service was considerably increased from May 2008.

nsb = not Severn Beach line passengers; **sb** = Severn Beach line passengers

Passengers using local and regional trains in West of England 2008

Route	2008
Cardiff - Bristol - Westbury - Portsmouth/Weymouth	6,737,000
Bristol - Severn Beach	505,000
Bristol - Weston-super-Mare - Taunton - Exeter	1,576,000
Bristol - Gloucester - Great Malvern	970,000
Total West of England local/regional journeys	9,788,000

Notes. These figures are from First Great Western ticket sales allocated Lennon data and only include FGW journeys. Some journeys made for example on rover tickets or employee passes, or on substitute buses, may not have been recorded. So the figures may underscore the total journeys, but this is unlikely to be significant.

Accounts and financial statement

SEVERNSIDE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008 - BALANCE SHEET

	£ 2007-8	£ 2007-8	£ 2006-7
Fixed Assets		280	561
Current Assets			
Cash at Bank	16078		8385
Debtors	968		20
	17046		8405
Creditors; amounts falling due within one year	(375)		(250)
Net Current Assets		16671	8155
Net Assets		16951	8716
Funds			
Restricted	11039		1000
Unrestricted	5912		7716
		16951	8716

The Directors are satisfied that the Company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 1985 relating to the audit of accounts by virtue of s249A(1), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to s249B(2) of the Act. The Directors have acknowledged their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with s221 of the Act. The Directors have acknowledged their responsibilities for preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the company and its profits for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of s226 of the Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of this Act relating to accounts, so far as applicable to this company

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Income	57697	42208
Administrative Expenses	(49462)	(38701)
Surplus	8235	3507
Interest Receivable	0	0
Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation	8235	3507
Corporation Tax	0	0
Accumulated reserves brought forward	8716	5209
Balance Carried Forward	16951	8716

The company has no recognised gains or losses other than the surplus/deficit for the above financial period. None of the Company's activities were acquired or discontinued during the above financial period

SEVERN-SIDE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008 - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE INFORMATION

	£ 2007-8 restricted	£ 2007-8 unrestricted	£ 2007-8 total	£ 2006-7 total
£ Income				
Contributions from Partners		39180	39180	39228
Special trains	1415		1415	1980
Acorp Prize				1000
Severn Beach line marketing	500			
Keynsham/Oldfield Park Boards	4460			
Montpelier	1239		1239	
Avonmouth	711		711	
Keynsham	290		290	
Oldfield Park	162		162	
Yatton	3300		3300	
Leaflets	1370		1370	
Scholar tickets	5070			
	18517	39180	57697	42208
Expenditure				
Salary costs		31480	31480	21440
Travel and subsistence	54	3172	3226	1673
Telephone/IT		2568	2568	6102
Accountancy and Insurance		733	733	622
Meetings, conferences		852	852	1288
Postage, stationery		238	238	
Miscellaneous		1661	1661	755
Depreciation		280	280	280
Severn Beach timetables	943		943	529
Special trains	633		633	496
Printing/publicity	924		924	4781
Montpelier	1239		1239	
Avonmouth	606		606	
Keynsham	290		290	
Oldfield Park	276		276	
Parson Street	105		105	
Scholar tickets	3408		3408	
	8478	40984	49462	38701
Surplus/Deficit for the year	10039	(1804)	8235	3507
Balance at 1st April 2007	1000	7716	8716	5209
Balance carried forward	11039	5912	16951	8716

Contributions in kind: travel passes provided by First Great Western and CrossCountry Trains are not included above

Local authorities gain considerable benefits from their funding towards the running costs of the Partnership.

Active help in delivering Local Transport Plans and other Targets

Local authority targets to attract increased use of local rail services will not be achieved without considerable work; the Partnership's active role in this is

- working with train operators to achieve more frequent and regular off-peak local train services - already largely delivered
- working with train operators to resolve problems of lack of peak capacity
- making rail travel easier for local passengers
 - simplified timetable posters - displayed at many unstaffed stations
 - better, and better targeted, local publicity through leaflets and special promotions
 - reducing barriers to travel
 - improving station safety and security
 - better station access - the Partnership is able to sponsor, and attract match funding, for small schemes
 - promoting integration - eg combined bus-rail tickets

The Partnership's work also helps local authorities deliver a sustainable transport system, as well as achieving the wider objectives set out in Local Area Agreements, assisting with local regeneration schemes, and promoting economic growth

Augmenting Councils' influence on the rail industry

The Partnership provides an opportunity for local authorities to have regular and easy access to senior rail management; and for local authorities to come together with other Partnership members and the train operators to make representations, for instance to the Department for Transport. The Partnership "club membership" provides a mechanism for consultation, input and influence on rail issues varying from significant policy development to more practical issues such as local timetables, which would not otherwise be so readily available

Information for local authority members and transport officers

The Partnership provides a source of independent expertise and briefing for local authorities on rail issues, such as timetable changes, rolling stock and performance issues. The briefings help local authority members and officers, and reduce the need for each local authority separately to devote time and effort to researching rail issues

Support for the local economy by encouraging rail tourism

The partnership works closely with tourism agencies, and has produced a range of attractive leaflets promoting days out by train in the West of England

Access to funding, which is not available to local authorities

As a Community Interest Company, the Partnership is able to attract grants and match funding not available to public sector bodies. This has already helped deliver local station improvements

A mechanism for involving communities in supporting public transport

The Partnership provides a mechanism for involving local communities constructively in supporting public transport - for example not only do station art displays and gardens help to make the stations more friendly places, but local "ownership" helps reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour