**Newsletter - Bolton and South Lancashire Community Rail Partnership (B&SLCRP) and Bolton Station Community Partnership (BSCP).**

24th August 2020

Dear Colleague

We hope you are keeping safe and well and getting back to some normality in your lives. Please find below some news items from our recent joint committee meetings.

Best wishes,

Paul and Julie.

**Committee Meetings**

We have now held three joint committee meetings by Zoom and the last one, held on the 14th August, was filmed for Northern to use as an example of how Community Rail organisations have adapted during lockdown. Although Zoom has its limitations, it does allow ease of participation and we have had some very far flung locations featuring on the calls as people have been away on holidays and day trips when they have dialled in.

**Guided Walks Programme**

We are developing a programme of guided walks and a pilot route has been mapped out by a group of walk leaders. Steph Dermott, B&SLCRP Community Rail Officer, made a successful application to the Station Adoption Fund for boots, coats and equipment that can be loaned to people who do not have these but who would like to take part in the walks. The first walk will hopefully be held towards the end of September. Clothes and boots will be sanitised between uses in the way clothes and shoe shops are doing this. There will also be an appeal for donations of other equipment including walking poles and Ordnance Survey maps.

**Update from the University of Bolton**

Good progress has been made with the University of Bolton’s involvement in the building refurbishment project. The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dr. Kondal Kandadi, came for a visit and gave assurances that the University are still very interested and looking to progress the lease arrangements as soon as possible. A member of the facilities team has been appointed to work with the Council regarding the rates payable on the premises. Sam Johnson (Head of Schools of the Arts and Creative Technologies) is now talking to students and staff as to how they can be involved and a successful internal funding proposal has been made for a £5,000 research project to look at this. The initial plan is for two community groups from Farnworth, working with Bolton at Home, to make art works for display at the station. Students will be involved and research papers will be written to evaluate the project. Sam is hoping to start the project in September. Sam said, ‘There is lots on the horizon with many opportunities coming up including exhibitions in the Platform Gallery. The University sees the station building as a long-term project, not a short investment.’

**Platform Planters’ Garden Project**

Dave Mills, together with the other members of the Platform Planters, has produced a power point proposing the re-planting of the existing troughs on platforms 4 and 5 and to have other

containers along the platforms planted up. The group are concentrating on 2021 now and are initially looking at red and white flowers planted separately as well as larger foliage plants. They also want to include different herbs and spices and have plants linked to the moors. The presentation is an interim plan – a full plan will be developed later in the Spring of 2021.

Richard Walker, Treasurer, asked David if the group could create some costings for the project so that funds can be identified.

Anyone who is interested in joining the Platform Planters gardening group, please send an email to Julie Levy julielevy9@yahoo.co.uk in the first instance.

**Community Rail Officer’s report**

Steph reported that she had been visiting other Community Rail and Station Adopters groups including the Station Friends at Westhoughton. She has also met Martin Keating, the Regional Community and Sustainability Manager at Northern. Steph recently submitted a successful bid for the Guided Walks programme (see above) and attended various Zoom meetings online, including one delivered by Community Rail Network which looked at how to encourage people back to using the railways as many are afraid to use them again. Steph has also completed Level 3 Safeguarding training course and will now become the Deputy Safeguarding Lead. She also reported that she had assisted in taking the new display boards to the Platform Gallery and had visited Bromley Cross and Walkden stations.

**Platform Gallery**

Phil Porter, a Horwich based artist who was artist in residence at the station last year, has been working since then on a series of paintings of passengers travelling to and from the station. We hope to open the Platform Gallery (P5) with his exhibition called ‘This Journey’ in late September.

Maddie Smith, a Bolton based artist, is writing an Arts Council bid to work in partnership with the Platform Gallery and other art venues to make artworks exploring the concept of ‘shielding’. This will include community workshops for artists with disabilities. The application will be submitted soon and there have been two meetings with Steph and Julie to discuss the project.

**Any Other Business**

1. The ‘Cotton Queens’ project, lead by Kath Thomasson from the City of Sanctuary in partnership with Gaynor Cox from Bolton at Home, has been shortlisted for the Community Rail Network annual awards. This project was featured in the University’s online Worktown Festival and included the creation of different textile pieces in the Community Room as well as the writing and recording of an audio drama piece recreating the lives of some mill workers, which has been very well received.

2. Mark Foster, Chair of the Bolton Model Railway Society, has offered to make films for our two organisations to be used for marketing, documentation and promotional purposes. Everyone agreed this was a good idea and thanked Mark for this offer.

3. Paperwork has been prepared by Richard to register the B&SLCRP as a Community Interest Company. This process was completed on the 26th August and the CRP is now officially Bolton and South Lancashire Community Rail Partnership Ltd. Bolton Station Community Partnership currently remains the same, though we are having a look at whether charitable status would suit our purposes.

4. Nigel Valentine reported he is still working on the task of getting some poster cases for the groups to use. An application will be made to the Station Adoption Fund in the first instance.

5. Poetry Competition update. The deadline for the 25 years and over applications was the 31st August 2020. The Under 25 categories are now open and terms and conditions are available on the website.

<https://www.boltoncommunityrail.org.uk/>

6. We are looking at a possible twinning of our station with the Hauptbahnhof – the main station in our twin town of Paderborn. There is a very active Anglo - German group there and a newer PaderBolton group here in Bolton that would welcome this move.

If you have any items of news you would like to contribute to the newsletter or know of someone who would like to join our group, please get in touch with –

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julielevy9@yahoo.co.uk