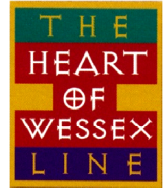


HEART OF WESSEX RAIL PARTNERSHIP 2012 PROGRESS REPORT



PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES

Promoting and adding value to the 87 mile rail route from Bristol to Weymouth, our rail partnership brings together

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL, BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL, WILTSHIRE COUNCIL, SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL, SOUTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL, DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL, WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL & FIRST GREAT WESTERN

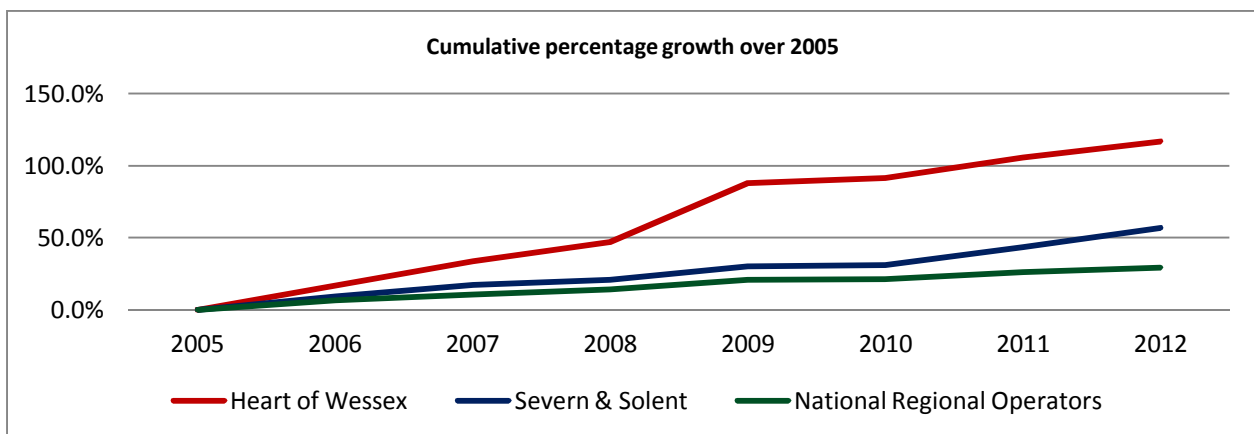
The partnership's overall objective is to **raise awareness and increase use of the Bristol to Weymouth line** by **building community involvement**, improving **information provision & promotion** of the line's destinations/local economies, and **enhancing station environments and facilities**, including access to them by other modes of travel. The partnership's **Steering Group**, chaired by Eric Egar from Wiltshire Council, meets quarterly to review major projects, budget and strategy. The **Community Rail Working Party** of local voluntary representatives from the stations and communities along the line meets regularly with the train operator to progress local station adoption, customer information and promotional initiatives and is the "engine room" for much of the partnership's practical day to day work.

PROGRESS TO 2012

Raising awareness and increasing use of the line.

Passenger journeys grew 5% in 2011-12 to **1,718,000** and have grown a further 5.6% to date in 2012-13. The line has seen 117% growth since 2005, compared with 29% for National Regional Routes, and 57% for the total of eight lines in FGW's Severn & Solent region over the same period. (Data sources: H of Wessex & Severn & Solent total: FGW. National Regional Operators: ORR)

117% growth since 2005
since 2005
(versus 29% for National Regional Routes)



This growth in use of the line has been achieved **without any increase in services**. A Business Case for an improved service on the line was submitted to the DfT for inclusion in the new franchise originally due to start in 2013. That process has now been delayed, and we will be working to ensure that the priced option for an enhanced Bristol and Weymouth service will continue to feature in the next Invitation to Tender for the region's services.

DfT COMMUNITY RAIL DESIGNATION

The partnership made a successful application to the Department for Transport in late 2011 for official **designation as a community rail service**. In February 2012, First Great Western helped us to celebrate with a beautifully refurbished train with our logo.

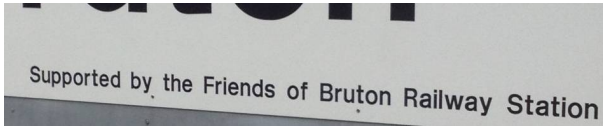


Building Community Involvement

108 volunteers
contributed **9540**
hours of work in 2012

Station adoption and other voluntary initiatives aimed at **adding value to the work of the train operator** and responding to local needs, continued to grow and develop during 2012. A total of **7120 hours** of voluntary work was dedicated to station adoption and enhancement

projects in partnership with First Great Western's Station Manager and his team.



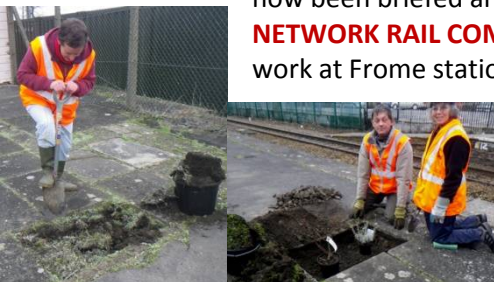
Groups dedicated to individual stations continued to attract new members in 2012, and the volunteers along the line also came together as a mobile task force to tackle larger challenges.



The special team effort for the disused platform at **FROME** was repeated in September 2012. A total of 18 volunteers based along the line from Bristol, Wiltshire, Somerset & Dorset have now been briefed and licensed under the

NETWORK RAIL COMMUNITY SCHEME to work at Frome station, and Bristol and

Dorset friends have since returned to contribute some new planting.



1020 voluntary hours were put into **working groups, passenger counts** and special projects including the **Olympics support team**.

An additional **1400 hours** were dedicated to designing, coordinating, promoting & leading 36 **WESSEX WANDERERS** free guided walks from our stations between May and October.



2012 OLYMPICS

A team of 16 voluntary supporters worked with FGW to support the rail services during the games, with briefing, training and logistical planning beginning in March 2012.



The team constructed detailed schedules ensuring that the stations would be attended for the major part of every day during the games, running hotlines to the FGW team to report back on services & loadings, and giving help to customers



During 2012 an average of 22 lead members of station adoption and community groups participated in our **COMMUNITY RAIL WORKING PARTY** (CRWP) to share ideas and resources and to work on timetable, customer



information and station projects with First Great Western. At the late summer CRWP meeting (left) our special guests were **Ian Mundy** and **Luke Farley** of FGW's Publications Team, who regularly use our feedback for rail publications, in addition to providing support for our own initiatives.

At the same CRWP meeting we said farewell to our FGW stations manager, Dave Martin, whose final year saw several special



highlights, including a Royal visit to Yeovil Pen Mill in May for which the local community turned out in force.



In the autumn we warmly welcomed our new Station Manager **NICK REID**, who has



begun his rounds to get to know the station adoption groups. Hugh Delap captured him after a meeting at Freshford (left), and Sue Blake took this shot of him with **Gary Mildon**, Health and Safety representative, on his first visit to the Dorchester West team run by Wally Gundry. Nick manages 20 stations, including those on the Freshford to Dorchester West stretch of our line.



Weymouth and Upwey stations are run by South West Trains and station friends there also welcomed a new manager, **Rik Gabriel** (second from the left in this photo).



Up to 15% of our annual budget is used for a **COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME** for projects initiated by the voluntary groups along the line. In 2012, grants for garden supplies and/or equipment were made to Freshford, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Yeovil Pen Mill, Dorchester West, Upwey and Weymouth. Other items included community notice boards, support for a new heritage style customer seat at Bradford on Avon and enhancements to Dorchester West identified by the Friends from their regular contact with customers on or arriving at the station. The fund also helps to support the Wessex Wanderers programme.

Promoting the line and its destinations/local economies



The principal investment for the partnership is the **Line Guide**, produced three times a year in editions of just over 30,000 each.

2012 editions focused on **Family Days Out** and **Car Free Walks** in Bristol, Bath, Keynsham, destinations along the Kennet and Avon Canal, Maiden Newton, Bruton and Dorchester, with the Autumn/ Christmas edition dedicated to a special feature on **Yeovil** as a top shopping destination.

The line guide includes travel tips from the community rail team, rail staff and customers themselves. The content tries to address frequently asked questions, and the easy to read, large print timetable is often quoted as a principal reason for its popularity.

The breadth of distribution for the line guide, thanks to support from First Great Western, adds a valuable additional opportunity for promoting our local economies to visitors from around the country. The photo right shows the current edition on display at Paddington Station, which, with an annual footfall of 32 million, is one of several of the larger stations around the country that provide an outlet for the line guide.



The latest edition, on display in this photo, addresses some of the most frequently asked questions about tickets, and gives details of the current trial for the use of Concessionary Bus Passes as a potential alternative to the older persons railcard.



Enhancing station environments and facilities

Small scale improvements can be delivered by the Station Adoption Groups, supported with the Community Grants Scheme as mentioned above, subject to approval from our Station Manager. Dorchester West has had a series of improvements in 2012 with more to come in the next few months, and larger grants have also been awarded for projects at Bradford on Avon and Freshford. Most of our grants are small contributions to the work of the station gardeners, with very big results in terms of ever more attractive station environments, created and nurtured by hardworking, dedicated volunteers.



Larger scale improvements to stations led by our Local Authority Partners that continued to be progressed in 2012 were both aimed at making stations fully accessible – Keynsham station, led by Bath & North East Somerset Council, and Dorchester West station led by Dorset County Council. Working Groups were also set up in 2012 to look at potential improvements to walking routes to stations, in particular at Bruton, and we have continued to support and promote the bus link between the two stations in Yeovil .

SUMMARY OF ISSUES WE HELP TO ADDRESS	EXAMPLES OF CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2012
ECONOMIC GROWTH: Supporting economic regeneration and growth. Attracting visitors locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to destinations along the route.	Line Guide, Website and support for/participation in other local promotional initiatives. Family Days Out promotion in summer 2012. Support for 2012 editions of "insiders guides" to local retail and leisure with strong focus on local independent businesses. Shopping guide to Yeovil for Autumn/Christmas 2012..
CARBON REDUCTION / tackling climate change. Stimulating behavioural change by encouraging more use of the rail route as an alternative to the car, and both encouraging and facilitating walking to and from stations.	Customer "tip sheets" created for Yeovil and Dorchester showing walking routes and connections for station staff, train crews and volunteers, as well as in PDF form for website. Working Group set up to study potential for improvements to Bruton footpath to station.
LOCALISM: Building sustainable communities and demonstrating how localism and the big society can work for transport	Five adoption groups recruited new members, and volunteer turnover was zero, taking total number of regular volunteers to 108. Olympics Team project with FGW. Three all day Community Rail Working Party meetings tackling issues, projects and developments for the line and its stations.
HEALTH: Encouraging active travel and leisure and facilitating walking.	Wessex Wanderers , Website "mini guides" and Dorset AONB Walks. Car Free Walks promotion for Spring 2012.
ACCESSIBILITY: Helping to address accessibility and equality for new rail users or those with disabilities, & promoting/ facilitating use of intermodal links.	The Line Guide easy to use timetable in 14pt text, travel tips and mini- guide to tickets (current edition). Yeovil Bus Link , "Insider" guides and tips, some developed by the communities themselves e.g. www.bru-toncarytrains.co.uk