



Plumpton Station Partnership Scheme

Newsletter: Spring 2011

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships – ACoRP – is a federation of over 60 community rail partnerships and rail promotion groups, one of which is the Plumpton Station Partnership Scheme.

ACoRP is focused on practical initiatives which add up to a better, more sustainable local railway - improved station facilities, better train services and improved integration with other forms of transport are central to the work of ACoRP and its members.

This is what the Plumpton Station Partnership Scheme is all about:

- The station 'adoption' scheme was launched in June 2010
- The objective is that the community takes pride in its station and it becomes more welcoming for passengers
- The station becomes a 'gateway' for the railway operator, Southern, into the community and vice versa

SOUTHERN AWARDS PLUMPTON 'FIVE STAR' STATUS

Following inspection by Southern in March 2011 when it toured all the 90+ Southern stations across the network, only three stations were awarded '5 star' status.

Plumpton, scoring 97%, was one of these.

Graham Thrower from Southern said "it is an excellent achievement and not many stations in our area have this and it is a pat on the back for everyone involved at Plumpton".



BREAKING NEWS!!

PLUMPTON WINS GRANT FROM ACORP

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships ("ACoRP") has awarded a grant of £250 to the Plumpton Station Partnership Scheme for tools for habitat management, a bat detector device, sparrow nest boxes and information posters. The volunteer work will mainly be carried out by the Plumpton Wildlife & Habitat Group.



Wild flowers at the station

Establishing a wild-flower patch at the station was never going to be an easy or short-term project. While the soil was certainly poor in nutrients and well-drained, which many wild flowers like, it was also studded with rubble, pieces of tarmac, bricks, glass and the assorted debris cast away by commuters and railway workers over the years. We spent a lot of time clearing away the rubbish and cutting back overgrown vegetation and creating bare patches of soil to form a seed bed. In the autumn we sowed a wild flower mix and planted some small clumps of appropriate flowers from the wilder parts of our gardens. We also grew some plug plants in boxes and pots to overwinter.

Germination of the autumn-sown seeds was good but rabbits were more of a problem than we had anticipated. Their excavations exterminated young plants in several places. In the spring we tried to remedy this by sowing more seeds and protecting some vulnerable areas with netting, which we will remove when, and if, a turf forms. We also planted out our plug plants and tried to ensure their survival by watering them in well, repeating this 10 days later when we found that no rain was forecast in the foreseeable future.

It will be a couple of years at least before the plants we have sown will be large enough to start flowering. Once established these perennials should go on for years. This summer, though we should see ox-eye daisy flowers from plants we transplanted. The grasses also will be allowed to flower again, as they were last year with the new summer non-cutting regime.



We also expect to see corncockles in flower from last autumn's sowings. It is an attractive cornfield annual with bright pink flowers that are furled like a flag before they open. It was once abundant enough in arable fields, especially in rye fields, to be a menace because its seeds contaminated the crop. Bread made from the flour was bitter and even poisonous. Cleaner seed and modern herbicides have banished corncockle from our arable fields but it does turn up occasionally when deep-buried seed has been excavated. We decided to sow it to provide an attractive display while we wait for the meadow species to get going

Throughout the summer we will be keeping an eye on our young plants and carrying out some judicious weeding where necessary. The narrow strip immediately beside the platform will be kept short and the rest left to grow long so that we, and the insects, can enjoy the flowering grasses and other plants before we cut it all in late summer after seed has been set. It will then be kept short in the winter.

Meanwhile, we hope for rain to nourish our new plants and that the rabbits move on to greener pastures.

*Plumpton Wildlife and Habitat Group
April 2011*

PLUMPTON ON TRACK

Souvenir Ticket

RTN

Plumpton Station 17 DEC 2010
*11:44am

Celebration - Plumpton on Track

* New Hourly Timetable *

Plumpton - Lewes

Courtesy of Southern

PLUMPTONIANS were out celebrating on Friday, December 17 for the launch of the new rail timetable which now gives the village a service of at least one stopping train an hour throughout the day from Monday to Saturday. This made a fitting end to a year which had seen the launch of the Station Partnership Scheme.

The event obviously struck a chord with people, as villagers flocked to the station – some with their families, others taking a day off work to join in the celebrations!



Plumpton has for years enjoyed an excellent commuter service, but there had been no stopping trains during the afternoon period, making it impossible for travellers to use the rail network during off-peak times without first travelling by car to Haywards Heath or Lewes. Much lobbying to improve services has taken place over a period of years by the Parish Council, the Village Action Plan, Junior Transport Minister and local MP Norman Baker as well as many individuals. Gradually improvements have been made, culminating with the latest huge leap forward.

On an icy cold day some 150 locals turned up at Plumpton station to mark the event. They were greeted by a brass band playing seasonal music and treated to light refreshments.

Our Station Master, Mick Newman, was thanked by Paul Nicholson for all the support he has given the community – recently, of course, through the launch of the Plumpton Station Partnership Scheme – this won a well-deserved round of applause!
Cheers, Mick!



Following that Norman Baker, MP arrived by train from Lewes and was joined by about 40 locals on a complimentary “new” train journey to Lewes



Pictured (L to R): David Score, Franchise Improvement Director at Southern Rail, Paul and Carole Nicholson, MP Norman Baker and District Councillor Tom Hawthorne.

On arrival in Lewes, much needed hot chocolate and mince pies were enjoyed at the ever-popular Runaway station café. A large group, including the VIPs, were treated to a champagne reception at the Pelham House Hotel hosted by General Manager Paul Morgan. Then it was back on the 14.20 train (another new service) to Plumpton where the Winning Post pub laid on tea, coffee and mince pies.

The brass band comprised members of a variety of bands from across Sussex who had never played as a group before. One of the numbers was a specially composed fanfare played as the train arrived. Their skills were warmly acknowledged by enthusiastic applause from the assembled company.

The day was an enormous success, supported by so many local people, which reflected their gratitude to Southern Rail for listening to and acting on their pleas for improved services. Of course, the onus is now upon locals to use the service or lose it! If you haven't already used one of the new services – give it a go – people in the village have already commented that it has ‘changed their lives’!

Article and images courtesy of Reg Stone and Carole Nicholson

PLUMPTON STATION PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

What has been achieved since June 2010:

- Twenty volunteers have joined the scheme
- There is an active library facility (in first 6 months donations amounted to £69 for St Peter & St James Hospice)
- 6 hanging baskets and 6 planters have been planted with sponsorship from Garden Pride over the whole year – not just Summer - and tended by the volunteers
- Decades of rubble and rubbish have been cleared filling a large skip – again thanks to volunteers
- Southern, working with the Plumpton Wildlife & Habitat Group, has put up bat-boxes
- The Wildlife & Habitat Group has cleared perennial weeds, planted wild flowers seedlings and manages the cutting of grass in season for the wildflower management in partnership with contractors
- After years of lobbying by the community, the Scheme hosted celebrations in December 2010 for the introduction of hourly train services in both directions Monday to Saturday
- The station has been redecorated by Southern
- Poster boards have been provided for the use of the community
- The main waiting room has become a venue for poster displays
- Southern has provided cycle shelter facilities enabling station users to reduce their carbon footprint

It is anticipated that, in line with other 'station adoption' schemes, Plumpton will see:

- Continued minimal vandalism around the station
- Less rubbish accumulating
- More people using the trains

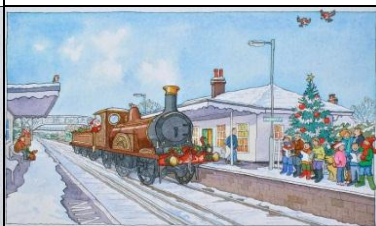
And plans for 2011:

- Shortly, Garden Pride will be replacing the winter planting with summer plants.
- We will be improving the watering facilities for the plants.
- We will be seeking to improve signage at the station for the Racecourse.
- We will be working with the Parish Council and Southern in examining improvements to parking.
- We will be looking at how to work with the new National Park authority.

If you feel that you have a few hours a month to spare and would like to lend a hand watering/dead-heading etc – you will be made to feel very welcome.

Please contact Paul Nicholson on 01273 891725 or by email paul.nicholson1@virgin.net

Images at start and end of newsletter courtesy of Ken Beard and Lyndsey Smith



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