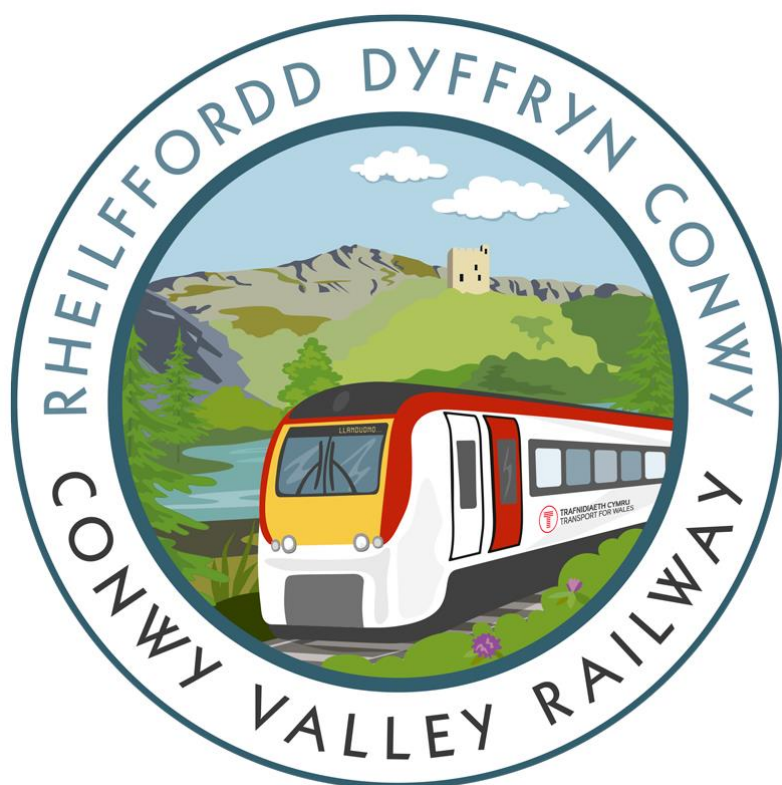


Conwy Valley and North West Wales Coast Railway Partnership Annual Report 2020/21



Karen Williams
Community Rail Officer

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Foreword



The past year has seen significant changes to the CRP in a number of ways. Our Community Rail Officer, Melanie Lawton, left after her successful tenure with the Conwy Valley having secured a position with Transport for Wales as their Community Rail Manager covering North and Mid Wales. Mel introduced many innovations in her time with us - not least in raising the profile of the CRP in social media and establishing firm links with the business and tourism sectors. We are pleased that Mel will still be very much a presence around our patch and we look forward to working with her in her new role.

Around the time of Mel's departure, the CRP gave serious consideration to reviewing the hosting arrangements with Conwy County Borough Council. This was largely triggered by internal changes within the Council's structure and the need for us to become more community related in harmony with TfW's vision that Community Rail should become less reliant on local authority systems and procedures which did not necessarily provide the degree of flexibility we needed in the future. The CRP decided to engage with Creating Enterprise, a local community enterprise which is a subsidiary of the major registered social landlord in the area, Cartrefi Conwy. After due negotiations, the hosting was transferred to Creating Enterprise in September 2020. Our view is that the collaboration with Creating Enterprise is working well and has led to the refurbishment of disused accommodation at two of our stations to provide a drop-in centre and hot-desk facility and a social enterprise café. We are very grateful to Hugh Evans, TfW's Head of Community Rail for all his support and guidance through the transfer process.

In succession to Mel, the CRP appointed Karen Williams, a project manager with Creating Enterprise, who has a successful background in community engagement across North Wales. Karen has settled in well despite the obvious restrictions imposed by the Covid19 virus which have reduced the ability to progress areas we wish to develop. A challenge for Karen has been the extension of the CVRP to include the section of line between Llandudno Junction and Holyhead. Going forward, we will engage with communities, particularly on Anglesey, to promote station adoption and local initiatives. In addition, we will need to amend our name and logo!

Philip C Evans JP FloL

Chair, Conwy Valley Rail Partnership

Conwy Valley Railway

The Conwy Valley line, part of the National Rail network at 27 miles long offers one of the most beautiful rail experiences in Britain. 13 stations serve the line; Llandudno, Deganwy, Llandudno Junction, Glan Conwy, Tal Y Cafn, Dolgarrog, Llanrwst North, Llanrwst Town, Betws Y Coed, Pont Y Pant, Dolwyddelan, Roman Bridge and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

The Conwy Valley Railway Partnership members include Transport for Wales, Network Rail, Ffestiniog and Highland Railways, Creating Enterprise, Conwy County Borough Council, Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park, North Wales Tourism, and two Station Adopter Representatives.

In June 2020, the partnership agreed to include the North West Wales Coast line which serves the communities of Llandudno Junction, Conwy, Bangor, Llanfair PG, Bodorgan, Ty Croes, Rhosneigr, Valley and Holyhead.



In September 2020, Conwy Valley Railway Partnership changed host from Conwy County Borough to Creating Enterprise a local social enterprise and subsidiary of Cartrefi Conwy Housing Association, who reinvest profit back into employment in initiatives through their Creating Futures academy.



Also, in September, the partnership recruited a new rail officer to replace Melanie Lawton, who became TfW's Community Manager for North and Mid Wales. Karen Williams, project coordinator at Creating Enterprise was successful and is now Conwy Valley Railway Partnership's rail officer, covering 23 stations along the Conwy Valley and North West Wales Coast, from Llandudno Junction to Holyhead.

Work has started at Llandudno Railway station, as part of TfW SCDP programme, where disused buildings and rooms are being refurbished for community use. Creating Enterprise and Cartrefi Conwy will potentially be taking on a new Community Hub at Llandudno railway station. Offering a 'One stop shop' for tenants who may need support with tenancy or financial advice and offering training opportunities and job search support from their 'Job Café'. Work is set to be completed, with occupancy from late spring, early summer.



Some of the projects that Karen will be working on over the next 12 months include a Ports Past and Present project, an EU funded project developing new tourism opportunities at port towns and their surrounding communities.



Teaming up with TAPE, DWP and TfW, Conwy Valley Partnership are working with and part funding, a 'post Covid' confidence project, supporting young adults to regain confidence in train travel, using the train to commute to job interviews and for work. During the pandemic, isolation has had a detrimental effect on people already struggling with anxiety and other mental health conditions



Karen is working with North Wales Ambulance Service, Awyr Las (Blue Sky) NHS charity, TfW and Network Rail to bring much needed lifesaving equipment to the Conwy Valley Railway and North West Wales coast lines. 12 stations in total will have defibrillators fitted for use by customers and the local community. Fundraising starts early 2021 with the roll out planned for Spring. Facebook reach for this post alone was almost 3400 people.



Carolyn Hodiren, Transport for Wales' Community Engagement Officer and Karen Williams, Rail Officer for Conwy Valley Railway Partnership teamed up for the Light up Purple Event 2020 – a day to acknowledge employees with hidden disabilities and were able to have Flint Castle lit up for the event. Twitter post reached over 6200 people.



As part of the Light Up Purple event, Karen and Carolyn interviewed Robert Mann, TfW official photographer and Autism ambassador. In the short video, he spoke about how being involved with TfW had helped him manage his anxiety and coping strategies he uses to help him go about his daily activities.



Creating Enterprise have agreed to adopt Llandudno Junction station, maintaining new planters and baskets. Karen will be working closely with Richard, Volunteer coordinator at Creating Enterprise assisting with the recruitment of the adopters in the coming weeks



13 blogs have been added to the Conwy Valley Railway Partnership website since September 2020, including the reopening of the line in September following closure after Storm Gareth, back in February 2020. At a cost of £2.2m. 2020 saw 35,000 hits to the CVRP website



Conwy Valley Railway welcomed Michael Portillo as he filmed his next series of 'Great British Railway Journeys' Michael was chaperoned by Melanie Lawton, TfW Community Rail Manager (North)



Conwy Valley Railway Partnership and TfW continue to support station adopters with regular check in and catch ups, local Covid restrictions depending. We are looking forward to welcoming back, and supporting new adopters in 2021



September saw the reopening of the Conwy Valley Railway line after Storm Gareth caused flooding and washed away part of the track and the platform at Dolgarrog. Dolgarrog platform has since been rebuilt by our partners Network rail at a cost of £1m. Tfw Community Manager and Chair of Conwy Valley Railway Partnership; Cllr Philip Evans were interviewed by regional news.



Coming up in 2021

We will continue to work closely with Tfw and other organisations on post covid recovery projects.

Station adopters will be recruited for the recently added North West Wales Coast railway line to Holyhead.

Llandudno's new community hub will be opening it's doors to tenants of Cartrefi Conwy, and residents of Conwy County as Creating Enterprise take on the lease to offer a 'One Stop Shop' for tenancy and employment support.

Llandudno Junction will have a new tenant in the café. Local charity Crest will be working in partnership with Dylan's to offer work placement opportunities to local people.

Karen will be working closely with Awyr Las NHS Charity, Network Rail, Tfw and Welsh Ambulance service to fund defibrillators at some stations along both lines serving neighbouring communities.

More information can be found:

[Conwy Valley Railway Partnership](#)

[Conwy Valley Railway Partnership - Home | Facebook](#)

[Conwy Valley & North West Wales Coast CRP \(@LeinDconwyVLine\) / Twitter](#)