



The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership Community Rail Partnership

PRESS RELEASE

February 2015

Discovering Connections on the Railway

Tyne Valley Community Railway Partnership Strengthened

Fiona Forsythe has joined the Hexham based team of the Tyne Valley Community Railway Partnership. Initially, Fiona and existing CRP officer John Gillott will job share which will provide more officer time for the Partnership. This is an important year as the Northern franchise moves from Northern Rail to Arriva. Service expansion and new trains are in Arriva's contract as are considerably more resources for Community Rail Partnerships across the Northern franchise.

Fiona has been involved previously with the partnership and the railway. Since 2000 she has been the station adopter at Prudhoe, the second largest community along the line. Her background offers connections in community and resource development. She is a qualified librarian whose first job was at the Denny Ship Model Test Tank. She has always enjoyed linking the unexpected, something she says is a critical skill for a librarian as well as being able to find money! Previous projects have included work with the Aycliffe Angels, development work for visually impaired library users, project management with Creative Partnerships and, in the autumn of 2015, audience development work for English Heritage.

Growing up in a railway family in Glasgow, Fiona can demonstrate a life-long commitment to public transport. "My parents never owned a car, it was either walk, cycle or get on a train." Fiona explained, "I grew at a time when the railway industry had a strong internal sense of community, and as a kid loved competing at Railway Staff Association for Scotland competitions. Their horticultural show in the Palace of Arts, Bellahouston was a magnificent event." It is that sense of community which Fiona wants to help foster along the Newcastle to Carlisle rail corridor.

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership has an ambitious action plan for the year ahead. Building on previous work which includes folk and jazz events, the whistle stop pubs leaflet, campaigning for improved services from Blaydon and Dunston, and of course the partnership developed with Dilston College to run the kiosk on Hexham Station, the focus this year will include developing cycling opportunities, supporting the campaign to re-open Gilsland Station, and developing links between the railway and Hadrian's Wall. In addition, the Partnership has been awarded a sum of money to develop an education and young people's project.

Does Fiona think the new job has any considerable challenges? "Yes" she replies, "there may only be one passenger train operator on the line but its stations cover four local authorities and six Parliamentary constituencies."

She adds "partnerships are always recruiting! In the Tyne Valley we need new faces willing to join our board who are interesting in marrying public transport and the community together. There's openings for young people too and anyone who wishes to build a portfolio in social media and can give us an hour or so a week should contact myself or John Gillott on tvcrp@hotmail.co.uk or 01434 607 216".

.....

END

.....

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership is a not for profit limited company and part of The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP).

The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership was designated by The Department of Transport as a Community Rail line in 2014.

Relevant urls are:

TVCRP www.tvcrp.org.uk The Chair or TVCRP is Malcolm Chainey and he may be contacted on malcolm@chainey.org.uk

John Gillott tvcrp@hotmail.com or 07801 031 000

Fiona Forsythe fiona@fionnconsultancy.co.uk or 07810 885 223

ACoRP www.acorp.uk.com

Department of Transport's statement on Community Rail
www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-rail-network/2010-to-2015-government-policy-rail-network (see Appendix 4)

Image of John Gillott and Fiona Forsythe attached.

The TVCRP has received funding for an education and young persons's project. A press release detailing this project will be available shortly.

Word count 552