



THE MCL MUSIC TRAIN the end of 2026 and here's to 2027!

Well, the 2026 Mid Cheshire Line Music Trains season has officially come to an end, and this is the last newsletter before we start anew next year. As the managing committee took over the reins at the start of this year, it was a daunting task – especially as it had been in such capable and experienced hands for many years.... It seems to have gone well with a few lessons learnt along the way. We are going to hold a review meeting shortly to consider how to apply these going forward as well as set dates for the new season. Any feedback you have, please don't hesitate to get in touch on musictrains@midcheshirerail.org.uk and we will add this into the mix.

One of the cornerstones of the Music Trains is the team of volunteer hosts who give their time to help out at each event. Without these people, the Music Trains wouldn't exist. So, a massive 'thank you' to Bev, Frank, Pat, Jim, Ali, Sarah, Mark, Delyth, Penny, Harry, Mike and Ann who have given their time this year to make sure each event runs smoothly.

It can be a long day or evening and extremely rewarding.... **BUT** we are desperately short of volunteer hosts.

- *With more volunteers we can put on more Music Trains.*
- *With more volunteers we can run other events, such as history walks.*
- *With more volunteers we can ensure the shift hours are more realistic.*
- *So, can you help us out next year?*

So, if you'd like to learn more about becoming a volunteer host for the CRP....

**..... drop a line to musictrains@midcheshirerail.org.uk and we can send you some more details and organise to shadow one of our experienced hosts to show you the ropes....
It's a really rewarding experience!**

What's in this final 2026 newsletter then? To finish off the season we have held two private Music Trains for **Vision Support** and **Knutsford U3A** both of which were well attended. The final open Music Train for the season ran too in September running from Altrincham to Mouldsworth so there is a bit below about how these all went.

There an update of the other events the CRP will be organising – history walks, station tours, ghost walks. ... so read on!

Back in August, we organised a private Music Train for the charity **Vision Support** running from Chester to **The Railway Inn** in Mobberley. Vision Support provides practical help, equipment, and social activities to improve the lives of people of all ages who are blind or partially sighted. A great day out was had! The sun shone and the group of around 35 left Chester bound for Mobberley with **The Weltones** providing the music on the way. Emma and Michael have been a



great addition to our musical offering on the Music Train this year – look out for them next year!

As ever, the generous donation from Northern of a travel pass for the clients of Vision Support was greatly appreciated. A huge thank you too to the two volunteer hosts for the day, Sarah and Ali, who were there every step of the way to ensure it ran smoothly from start to finish – making sure everything went to plan.

The Railway Inn were all ready and waiting for the group on arrival at Mobberley as the band and the group set up in the garden area to eat, drink and be merry whilst listening to the great set provided by The Weltones. After a couple of hours in the garden, the happy group joined the return train to Chester mid-afternoon, again with the band entertaining the client group and any other passengers who happened to be in earshot on the journey!

One of the clients said *"We really enjoyed our day out on the Music Train. It was good fun with great music from the duo that played for us and we were even given lunch. I'm sure everyone there had a good time and would love to go on another trip like this"*

Rachel from Vision Support kindly sent a letter to thank the CRP for arranging the event, along with the donation towards the day. Below are a couple of extracts from this....

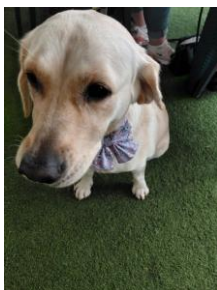
"I wanted to personally write to you, to say a heartfelt thank you for organising the Music Train trip this year. Along with the fantastic support from Sarah and Ali.

The day went very smoothly from start to finish and this is credit to Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership for your help and support in the planning and preparation stages and on the day itself.

The Music Train was such a fun day out for our service users especially those who are new to Vision Support. The duo 'The Weltones' were uplifting and energetic, and clients commented how much they enjoyed singing along to some well-known hits.

In addition, we would like to thank the staff at the Railway Inn Pub who made us feel very welcome. We received comments from people about how nice the food was on the day.

Thank you all once again for making the Music Train such a fantastic experience for everyone"



The final open Music Train of the season took place on the evening of 24 September from Altrincham to **The Goshawk** at Mouldsworth with a favourite band of ours – **Hound Dog Blues**.

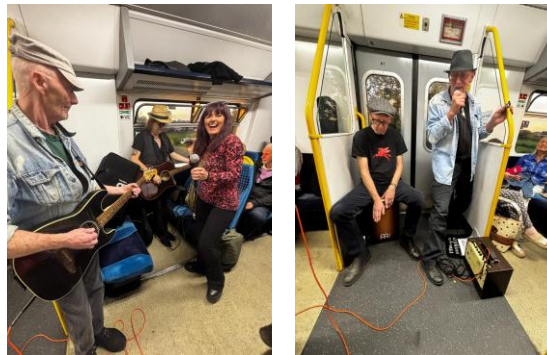


What a great night for everyone, a real treat!

After boarding the train quickly at Altrincham with the help of the hosts Bev, Frank, Penny and Harry, the band found a space to play which was in short supply on this journey but they adapted and set up entertaining not just the 40+ who had come along specifically for the Music Train experience but also all the other passengers too. After alighting at Mouldsworth station, the group and band crossed the road to The Goshawk and set up in the allocated space. Food was ordered and served, drinks were taken and the Hound Dog Blues continued with their excellent set. After a couple of hours or so, everyone packed up and headed back to Altrincham – an amazing night to finish off the open Music Train season. Keep your eye out for Hound Dog Blues next year – they are great entertainers!

Dave from the Hound Dog Blues dropped us a line afterwards

“From our viewpoint the evening went very well, and our thanks go to Bev and Frank for their great organisation. Also, I would think that the pub were satisfied with proceedings, as were the guards on the train journeys. Lots of smiling faces from the passengers who weren’t expecting to be entertained. Best wishes, Dave & band”



The very last Music Train of the season was a private one commissioned by **Knutsford U3A**. Around 45 people put their name down for the trip and gathered on Knutsford Station on the afternoon of 14 October to make a trip with **Pastry Shoes** – back to **The Goshawk** in Mouldsworth again!

Everyone was awaiting the 1053 train at around 1045 the train was cancelled! After some deliberation and discussion, a decision was made to disband, go for a coffee in some warmth and regroup an hour later to start the day out again – a big ‘thank you’ to **The Curzon Cinema** who took in in their stride when around 30 people descended on them as they opened!

The 1152 was on time and everyone got on to listen to Pastry Shoes –toes were tapping straight away... both the U3A membership and the regular passengers were suitably entertained. The Goshawk welcomed the group and once the band had set up the entertainment started again playing a couple of sets. Due to other commitments, a small number of the group had to return at the original time but the vast majority returned to Knutsford with the band on the 1507 from Mouldsworth..... the school children who joined at Greenbank had a real treat, enjoying and filming the music as well as joining in the resounding applause for the band as they finished



their set ready to disembark at Knutsford. Another good day out was had.



Onwards and upwards into 2027!

All told, we feel we've had a really successful year....

- 5 open music trains have taken place
- 5 private ones too including for 4 charities
- 9 brilliant bands have entertained us
- 4 different venues have fed and watered us
- 12 volunteer hosts have generously given their time
- providing a novel experience for just short of 500 people...

.... not a bad year and a great foundation for next year – onwards and upwards!

We have definitely learnt a lot! We have a meeting planned before the end of this month to highlight these and inform the planning for 2027 – some things have worked well; some things could be better but all in all we're pretty pleased with how the year has gone. We have lots of ideas and feedback already – but remember, if you'd like to add to that please let us know on musictrains@midcheshirerail.org.uk and we can add it to the mix.

Our first learning point is that we would like to set the dates for 2027 before the end of 2026 so watch out for the email dropping into your inbox in the next few weeks.

Other events on the Mid Cheshire Line

The Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership is here to make the Mid Cheshire Line part of your community from Manchester to Chester and all ports of call along the way.... We like to publicise what is happening throughout the year, look after our stations so it is a pleasure to use them from keeping it clean to planting and looking after borders, tubs, gardens, planters and shrubbery – this is only possible through funding from our partners as well as the volunteers who give their time and expertise to design and maintain the planting displays.

We also like to put on some unusual events to encourage people to not only use the line but to find out something about the different places along the way....



As you know, we ran our very first Nature Walk in July. In September, we held our first ever organised urban walk in Manchester. The walk was entitled **Radical Manchester** and was led by **Dave Smith**. This tour brought to life the city's rich and fascinating radical history. Fifteen people attended and thoroughly enjoyed Dave's talk which included the roles of Canal Street, Chethams Library, the Suffragettes and the Peterloo Massacre in the history of Manchester. MCCRP donated to the British Heart Foundation on Dave's behalf in thanks for his time and expertise. Thanks too to the Community Rail Officer, Sarah Muir who was on hand to make sure no one was left behind.



We have some other events, listed below, for you that you might be interested in attending – come along and do something different! We are always thinking of more things you can do or access by using the MCL so keep an eye out for details either in this newsletter or on our socials.

Places are limited on all these events, so please register your interest to the Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership at contact@midcheshirerail.org.uk

Timing	Event	What it entails	Additional information	Cost
3 December 2026	Walk from Plumley to Knutsford Markets – led by Sarah Muir	Walking across pastures, field edges and pathways walking approximately 4 miles from Plumley Station to Knutsford where the Christmas Markets will be in full swing.	You will need to wear suitable attire and footwear for this terrain and be able to walk this distance	FREE event
Postponed until early 2027 – date to be advised	Knutsford Ghost Tour Led by George Williams	You will visit some of the towns most haunted buildings and places – you can even have a go at being a ghost detective!	You will need to wear comfy walking shoes	FREE event All you need is a valid MCL train ticket for that day



Spring 2027 – exact date to be advised	Walking tour – Statues of Manchester Led by Dave Smith	You will visit the key statues in Manchester on this walking tour and learn all about them and their role in Manchester	You will need comfy walking shoes. There is time for a coffee too	FREE event All you need is a valid MCL train ticket for that day
In 2027.....				
Dates to be decided	Walking tour – Radical Manchester led by Dave Smith	Visiting key sites which played such an important role in establishing Manchester as a place of activism.	You will need comfy walking shoes. There is time for a coffee too	FREE event All you need is a valid MCL train ticket for that day
Dates to be decided	Northwich Railway History led by Trevor Booth	You will go to several locations and hear all about the history of the railway in Northwich	You will need to wear comfy walking shoes.	FREE event

Why do we do this?

Music Trains are arranged by volunteers on behalf of the Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership to promote the Mid Cheshire Line. We want people to use the line, enjoy the experience and come back again – that’s our sole purpose. The train line is for everyone to use, and we actively encourage this. So, we run the Music Trains, we produce booklets of circular walks from every station along the line and advertise many events and activities that take place during the year, and you can take the train to get there. Find out more at.....

- the Mid Cheshire Line website (www.midcheshirerail.org.uk)
- subscribe to this newsletter for news and more details at musictrains@midcheshirerail.org.uk
- follow **MidCheshire CRP** via social media - Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X – just look for Mid Cheshire Rail.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU NEXT YEAR!!