



West  
Midlands  
Trains

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September 2022



# On Track

Passenger records tumble • Guide Dogs on board • New trains

## Welcome

### Monthly news update from WMT

Welcome to this edition of *On Track* - your monthly news update from West Midlands Trains.

West Midlands Trains runs services under the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway brands, connecting communities across the country.

Through this newsletter we aim to bring you up to date with all the latest developments across our network, including timetable changes, station developments and any major planned engineering projects.

If you have any questions about our business, please do not hesitate to get in contact using the details on the final page of this newsletter.

## Record breakers

### Games crowds swell platforms



West Midlands Railway has thanked passengers after records were smashed during the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

In total, we estimate approximately two million journeys were made on rail in the West Midlands during the Games, with records broken at a number of individual stations close to venues.

In addition to our usual staff, more than 170 volunteers from WMR were deployed on stations during the Games, putting in more than 2,500 additional hours on platforms across the West Midlands.

In addition to assisting passengers, WMR volunteers handed out 40,000 free water bottles and 70,000 bags of sweets to Games-goers – even joining in with singalongs of 'Sweet Caroline' on the platforms.



# Charity Riders

Sponsored ride passes £10,000



## Community Hub

New facility at Wolverhampton



**A community hub celebrating Wolverhampton, offering passengers and residents a place to meet, access business advice and enjoy local art is preparing to open in the city's railway station.**

The 'Changemakers' scheme is the brainchild of the Wolverhampton Business Improvement District (BID) in a partnership with West Midlands Railway and fellow rail firm CrossCountry.

The facility is being fitted inside the brand-new station which opened last year as part of the Wolverhampton Interchange project - supported by funding from City of Wolverhampton Council, West Midlands Combined Authority and the Black Country LEP.

The hub has been made possible thanks to a development grant from CrossCountry's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund, while West Midlands Railway has provided project management and a community licence for the station unit.

The site is due to open later this year.



**A team of West Midlands Trains staff – nicknamed the 'bonkers bikers' are preparing for a mammoth charity cycle ride later this month.**

Our team, including operations director Darren Ward and head of drivers Sarah Higgins, have already had more than £10,000 pledged ahead of their epic two-day 132-mile ride from Whitehaven to Whitley Bay.

The group is raising money for the Railway Children charity supporting children in need across the world.

To find out more and lend your support, click [here](#).

## Hospital praise

**Award for WMT fundraising**

**West Midlands Trains has been awarded a Red Balloon by Birmingham Children's Hospital in recognition of its fundraising for the site.**

WMT is a long-standing supporter of Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity and has been working in close partnership for the last two years.

In the last 12 months WMT colleagues and passengers have raised more than £14,000 for the hospital through a variety of fundraising activities including a colleague donation scheme and at-station collections across the network.



# #RailStars

Unsung staff heroes hailed



## New coffee shop

Facility open at Northampton



**Passengers at London Northwestern Railway's Northampton station are enjoying new refreshment options after a new coffee shop opened its doors.**

SOHO Coffee Co. has opened its first ever Piccolo coffee shop, offering fresh food and premium coffee for commuters heading off on their journeys.

Annamaria Izzard, head of stations at London Northwestern Railway, said: "Our team welcomes millions of passengers to Northampton station every year and I am certain this new coffee shop on the concourse will enhance their travelling experience."

## Annual Conference

Reminder to 'Save The Date'

**There is just over one month to go until the West Midlands Trains annual stakeholder conference which takes place on Monday 10 October.**

Invitations are landing in inboxes this week for the event, which will take place at Symphony Hall in Birmingham city centre – if you haven't received yours and would like to attend just drop us a line.

**West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway are celebrating the unsung heroes of the network through our #RailStars initiative.**

Jay Boyle was working at Wolverhampton station when a male passenger stopped breathing after suffering a severe seizure. Jay worked with colleagues to administer CPR until the emergency services arrived and ensure he had the best possible outcome.

Anca Constantin was working at Watford Junction when she encountered a vulnerable woman who she believed may have been drugged. Anca stayed on past her shift to get her back to her family safely and even took contact details so she could check on her welfare the following day.

Visit our Twitter pages - [@LNRailway](#) and [@WestMidRailway](#) - for more #RailStars.

## New trains update

Class 196 fleet on the way



**Our new Class 196 fleet of diesel trains are nearing entry into service on the Shrewsbury Line.**

Driver training is progressing apace and the first of the new fleet to enter passenger service is expected this autumn. The trains will be coming to the Hereford and Worcester Lines next year.



# It's a dog's life

LNR welcomes trainee pups

## Student's story

Alfie enjoys railway placement



**Young train enthusiast Alfie Whittaker has been on placement with the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership from Bedford College since last year. Here he shares some of his experiences.**

My interest in railways began at a young age when I was given a Hornby train set. On my placement I have gained more knowledge and understanding of trains and how the rail network works as a whole and I now want to pursue a career as a member of train crew.

I have been part of the MVCGRP during celebrations for its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary which began in November 2021. I have helped organise anniversary events including the fun day and exhibition and input into the design of the anniversary vinyls on two of the Class 230 units.

Other placement highlights included attending the Community Rail Awards and being part of the Engaging Young People in Community Rail Panel at the Community Rail Conference in Nottingham.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the London Northwestern Railway head office in Birmingham during Community Rail Week where I met a range of staff including a driver, senior conductor and members of the management team to learn about their roles.

I am continuing my involvement with MVCGRP as a newly-elected Youth Ambassador following the conclusion of my placement this summer. This role includes attending MVCGRP meetings and volunteering one day a week and I am enjoying it already!

*For more information on getting involved with your local Community Rail Partnership, visit the [WMR](#) or [LNR](#) web pages.*



**The Abbey Line between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey was a dog-lovers delight last month as no fewer than seven pooches climbed aboard.**

It was all part of a training exercise run by Guide Dogs For The Blind to get the pups – all aged under one year - used to travelling by train with their companions.

## Abellio UK update

Changes at parent company

**Last month Abellio UK announced a management buyout from its sole shareholder, the Dutch Rail Company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS).**

If ratified, Abellio's existing UK rail and bus services will be UK-owned and run by the end of this year under a new company name – Transport UK Group Limited.

News of the change will have no impact on passenger services which continue to run as normal.

## Strike dates

Action to impact services

**Strike action is expected to impact West Midlands Trains services on September 15, 26 and 27.**

For more information on what services will be running, visit [wmr.uk/industrialaction](http://wmr.uk/industrialaction) and [lnr.uk/industrialaction](http://lnr.uk/industrialaction).



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