TransWilts

Annual Report

2024 - 2025

Castle Combe, Wiltshire

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Fonthill Estate, Wiltshire

Introduction

Welcome to the TransWilts CIC Annual Report for 2024-25 and thank you for taking an interest in what we do.

During the past year we have concentrated on delivering projects to introduce new users to public transport, particularly trains, strengthening our online profile and making an active contribution to debates and reports about transport developments aligned to our strategic priorities.

Sophie Martin has been here, there and everywhere, engaging with schools, colleges, refugees and asylum seekers bringing to many people the joys of travelling by rail to places which are completely new to them. This work has been supported very well by staff from GWR, including the great talent of being the Caller on specially arranged “Bingo Trains”. What talent! Sophie’s report is on page 6.

Bob Morrison has led the work to develop our website and widen our profile online. Thanks to his efforts, our website has increased its views from an average of around 2,500 a month to 5,400 by the year end, an increase of 116%.

We have seen two important reports published this year, which are vital for the development of transport links in our area. Network Rail has worked with stakeholders to produce the Wiltshire Rail Strategic Study. The purpose of the report is to make recommendations for the development of rail services “required to support planned growth in Wiltshire, in answer to the headline question How can rail best support sustainable economic and housing growth in Wiltshire? The report and its recommendations are intended to inform decisions by strategic planners and funders considering the further development of rail passenger and freight services in the Wiltshire area to 2030 and beyond.”

The second report of great interest is the Western Gateway Sub National Transport Body’s strategic investment plan. Wilshire is one of the eight local authorities and one mayoral combined authority in the Western Gateway’s region and so the report includes developments outside Wiltshire.

Transwilts was able to contribute to and comment on both reports which align with our priorities and give impetus to their development. However, there is the never-ending problem of finding revenue funding to enable further stages of project scoping to take place and then the major issue of capital to finance construction. Our priorities are:

- Introducing a loop line at Melksham to remove the current problem of the single track;
- Opening Platform 0, the fourth platform at Westbury to enhance the opportunities for a rail route east through Wiltshire to Hampshire linking with routes to London;
- Open a new station at Devizes to maximise the benefit of a fourth platform at Westbury and enhance capacity to the east through Bedwyn and Pewsey; and,
- Open a new station at Corsham to link up with an enhanced service from Bristol to Oxford and also to link to the London route.

For Transwilts to function well and make a contribution to the development of more sustainable travel, we need sound finances and our accounts are shown on page 5, produced under the oversight of Chris Johnson. We are a viable company, but we have the challenge to broaden our income base to reduce our reliance on public sector funding during these times of ever-tightening budgets in public bodies. We are grateful for the multi-faceted support we have received from GWR, Wiltshire Council, Knorr Bremse, Siemens Mobility and the Community Rail Network to enable our work to carry on.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow directors for their interest and insight they bring to our discussions. The collective work of the CIC has set us on a path in this last year which enables to approach 2025-26 with confidence. We have made progress during this year and this gives us momentum to build on further in 2025-26.

Paddy Bradley MBE
Chair Transwilts CIC

Year in Review

As the 12 months to the end of January 2025 concluded there were the first green shoots of the long awaited improvement in reliability of the TransWilts service.

2024 was marred by continuing industrial action leading to days where every train between Swindon and Westbury failed to run and no alternative transport was provided. In addition the breakdown in goodwill with staff led to few volunteering to work at weekends. For historical reasons the railway relies on crews agreeing to work overtime or their rest days to operate services outside the normal working week. This led to cancellations, many at short notice, on a Sunday. This again meant some days when all, or the majority of, services were cancelled.

The unpredictability made it very hard to organise events surrounding the train service for fear of running into last minute problems.

Our issues were not unique, with reliability problems blighting services across the GWR area. However, with an infrequent two hourly service, any disruption is clearly magnified for those travelling between Swindon and Westbury. This is particularly the case at Melksham, which relies totally on the TransWilts trains for its trains.

Engineering work was also another issue. The need to divert long distance trains away from the Berks & Hants line through Newbury to enable track work led to several midweeks where the usual local service was sacrificed to provide capacity for trains to and from the West of England. Then towards the end of the year a major programme of works at Westbury meant four weeks of only two trains a day with buses filling in for the rest of the day. In fairness the planning went well and all but one of the advertised services ran as scheduled during the month.

The welcome resumption of trains at the end of January saw a sea-change in the quality of the service. Although outside the period in review, February saw only ten cancellations in total on the core route.

So we enter the current year filled with optimism but there is still much to do. The Department for Transport has given GWR permission to negotiate with the unions over Sunday working and in the meantime the goodwill to work at weekends has returned. There are still days when trains are cancelled but the levels are much reduced. One cancellation is one too many and causes undoubted inconvenience to those affected however increased reliability is key if we are to drive up passenger numbers and promote the service.

For many areas of GWR the traditional rush hour is a thing of the past since the pandemic with many more now travelling for leisure. Indeed on some lines, Sunday is now the busiest day. The TransWilts line still has a commuter focus although, of course, people do use it as a means of connecting into other services at either Westbury or Swindon to more distant places. We continue to work on improving on those connections.

As we reached the end of the year passenger figures were within touching distance of equalling the distant days of 2019. Around 18,000 journeys are made along the line each month and we have the fervent hope that the more reliable service will both win back former passengers and attract new travellers.

Despite the trials and tribulations of the last year we have not stood still and as you will see elsewhere in this report, we have been busy on a number of fronts to promote not only rail but also all forms of transport in the area. We look forward to building on that in the coming year.

Financial Report 2024-2025

Registered number: 09397959 **Year ended 31 January 2025**

Balance Sheet	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed Assets	-	229
Current Assets	55,726	41,623
Prepayments and accrued income	0	0
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	(26,457)	(19,507)
Net Current Assets	**29,269**	**22,116**
Net Assets	**29,269**	**22,346**
Reserves	**29,269**	**22,346**

Notes

1. Average number of employees, including directors, during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
Office and administration	1	1

2. Company limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company, in the event of a winding up, such an amount as may be required not exceeding £1.

3. General Information

Transwilts Community Interest Company is a private company, limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales, registered number 09397959. The registered office is Westbury Station, Station Approach, Westbury, Wilts. BA13 4HP.

For the year ending 31 January 2025 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions and the provisions of FRS 102 Section 1A - Small Entities, and delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

On behalf of the board.

Paddy Bradley MBE
Chair

Community Rail Officer Report

Sophie Martin

At the heart of our work is a clear and consistent mission: to raise awareness of rail travel, increase the use of public transport for the benefit of all, and bring communities together through inclusive, purposeful engagement.

While every year presents new challenges—from funding pressures to changing travel habits—we remain committed to unlocking the social value of the railway. Through a combination of bold initiatives and grassroots collaboration, we have continued to demonstrate how the railway can be a force for good in people's everyday lives.

Over the past 12 months, we have not only deepened our partnerships with local businesses, schools, and voluntary groups but also broadened our reach to include underrepresented and vulnerable communities. Our work has helped build a stronger sense of place, pride, and participation across the areas we serve. Whether through educational trips, volunteering programmes, creative arts projects, or inclusive travel initiatives, the railway has proven to be much more than a means of transport—it is a platform for social connection, learning, and opportunity.

Key achievements and initiatives implemented over the past year include:

- Community engagement and inclusion
- Education and training
- Strategic communication and digital outreach
- Long-term planning for Railway 200 (the bicentenary of the railway)
- Strengthening partnerships with schools, local authorities, and rail industry stakeholders.

We are extremely proud to have implemented some fantastic projects over the last year. Some of the highlights include:

Bingo Trains: Swindon Borough Council – A group of asylum seekers joined us at Swindon for a return trip to Westbury.

Volunteer Recruitment: We have successfully recruited approximately 25 additional volunteers across along our line.

Litter Picks: We hosted collaborative events with Siemens, DfT, Network Rail, local volunteers and community groups.

Youth Engagement: Meetings with Scout, Cub and Beaver groups to plan events, creative projects and platform activities.

Digital Strategy: Enhancement of our social media and website presence and develop monthly campaign themes.

Remembrance Project: "Poppies to Paddington" participation from Swindon station.

Transport Accessibility: Ongoing discussions with Wiltshire Council and partners on developing a travel card and inclusive journey planning tools.

Some of the planned projects for the next 12 months:

- Travel Confidence promotional video with Fairfield College and GWR.
- "Fishing for Change" initiative combining train and river travel for educational purposes.
- "Along the Line" photo competition in partnership with The Arts Society as part of Railway 200.
- Bedwyn and Pewsey Station Artwork. All pieces have kindly been created by the local primary school children.
- STEM engagement programme with Siemens for local schools.
- Anti-fare evasion campaign aimed at schools to encourage use of scholar tickets and promote safety.
- Dementia-friendly train trip with residents in partnership with The Dementia Society.
- Projects with the GWR and The National Trust to highlight Wiltshire as a rail-accessible destination.

Trends & Strategic Direction

We will continue to anticipate future developments while considering local trends and strategic direction.

Holistic Community Engagement: Continue to engage with all age groups, including children, youth, older adults, and underrepresented groups.

Focus on Inclusion: We are committed to projects that support asylum seekers, neurodivergent residents, individuals with dementia, and women, such as initiatives for menopause awareness.

Digital Maturity: Transitioning from basic social media use to integrated multimedia, CRM-style platforms.

Legacy Building: Utilising Railway 200 as a foundation for legacy projects, including murals, videos, QR codes, archives, and partnerships.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build on our momentum with ambitious plans to expand community involvement across our network. A key focus will be encouraging more residents to join their local station adoption groups, fostering a greater sense of ownership and pride in their local railways. Increasing the reach and impact of our community rail activities remains central to our vision of creating a more accessible, environmentally sustainable, and inclusive railway—one that truly serves and reflects the needs of the communities it connects.

Communication

Bob Morrison

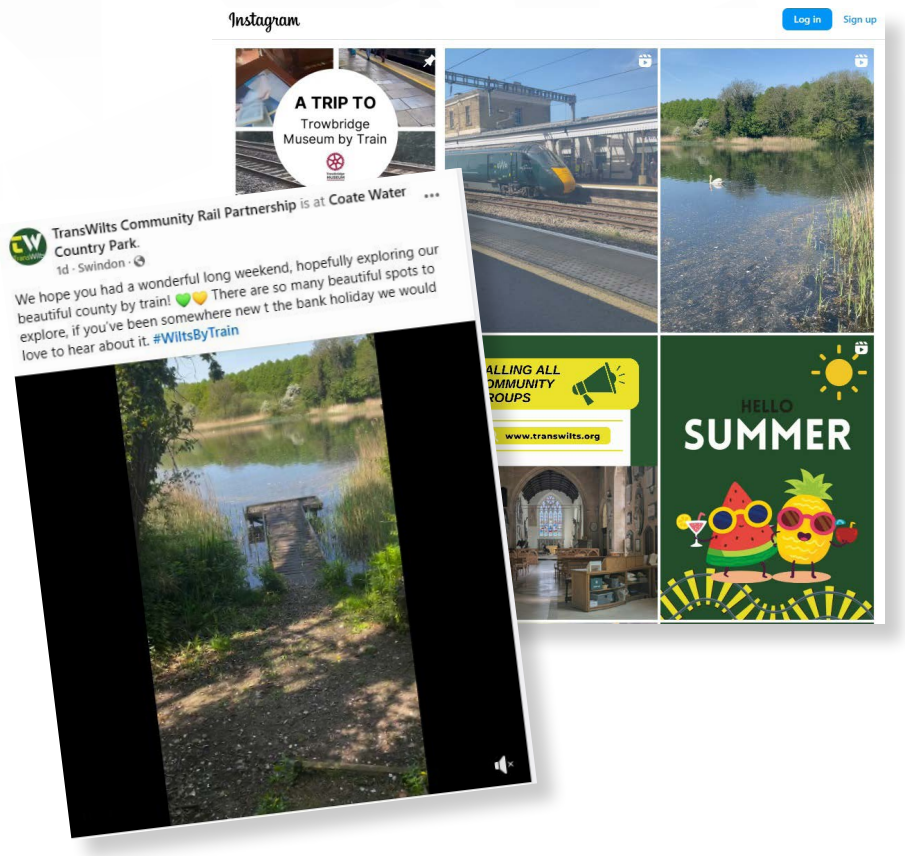
Over the last year we have looked at how we communicate with the various groups we interact with.

With the decline in the popularity of X (formerly Twitter) we have moved away from that platform but are active on both Facebook and LinkedIn. We have also brought the running of our website in house.

Following a successful application to GWR's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF), we appointed social media experts Introtweet on a 12 month contract to help us improve the presentation of our messaging. This has seen our audience figures increase year on year and we will look to continue that as we take the process back internally at the end the agreement.

Our website is now run by us following the retirement of our previous supplier. We have taken the opportunity to remove some of the dead wood around the site and freshened the front page. Visitors can now quickly access the latest train running information and current TransWilts timetable. We have also increased the frequency of updates to the news pages. This has seen visitor numbers climbing rapidly. In the first six months of the project our website has increased its views from an average of around 2,500 a month to 5,400 by the year end, an increase of 116%.

Having looked at our presentation we are now working on the way we compose our messaging and how we communicate with our various target audiences. We talk to stakeholders, potential sponsors, local authorities, current passengers, would be travellers, schools, volunteers and many others. Another grant from CCIF will allow us to appoint a communications expert and once again we will use it as an educational exercise so we can maintain the impetus after the funding ends.



Supporting community rail to thrive – Siemens Mobility + TransWilts CRP

Community Rail Network's corporate partners offer a variety of different skill sets, knowledge and opportunities to aid our members' work and support the growth of community rail across Britain.

One fantastic example comes from our corporate partners Siemens Mobility, who have developed a close partnership with TransWilts CRP, providing support with station projects as well as a member of the team joining the CRP's board.

The partnership has seen

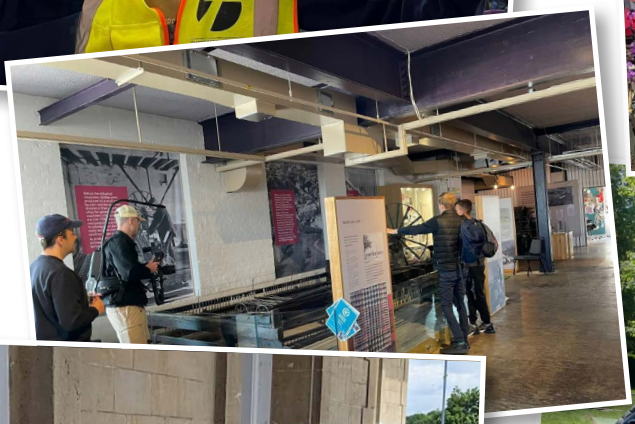
- Volunteering days at Chippenham and Trowbridge stations throughout the year – litter picking and planting
- Liz Chawner joining the board – looking to diversifying the board and exploring funding streams
- Working with our educational project Platform Rail
- Site visits for schools to Chippenham

Sophie Martin, community rail officer at TransWilts CRP, said:

"It has been lovely to see the enthusiasm shown by staff from Siemens Mobility. They have enjoyed working with other volunteers to improve the environment around our stations. It has also been very helpful to have Liz's input at our board meetings."

Elizabeth Chawner, sustainability advisor at Siemens Mobility, said:

"Joining the Board at TransWilts has been an enlightening experience, offering a deeper appreciation for the remarkable work undertaken by the Partnership and the essential support it provides to local communities. It has been both rewarding and fulfilling to contribute my experience and networks from the corporate sector to help advance the mission and impact of TransWilts. I look forward to future collaborations between Siemens Mobility and Transwilts as we work to support the local communities in Wiltshire."



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Community Interest Company (Company Number 9397959 registered in England and Wales)

Community Rail
Accredited Partnership
2023-24

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