

# Rural Community Rail Chester-Shrewsbury Community Rail Partnership



# Rural Community Rail

## Chester-Shrewsbury Community Rail Partnership

- Established in late 1990's
- Assigned to lines which were failing
- DfT Community Rail Strategy

# Rural Community Rail

## Chester-Shrewsbury Community Rail Partnership

- Brings together local communities and the railway
- Delivers sustainable local improvements
- Increases ridership

# Rural Community Rail

## Chester-Shrewsbury Community Rail Partnership

- Does a lot with a little
- Take opportunities
- Look at innovative solutions
- Work with the community

# Rural Community Rail

- Rail is an economic driver
- Access to jobs, health and education
- Access to family & friends
- Access to retail outlets and attractions

# Rural Community Rail

- Meeting expectations

# Rural Community Rail

- Meeting expectations
- Do rural railway stations meet expectations?

# Rural Community Rail

- Meeting expectations
- Do rural railway stations meet expectations?
- Is it a shelter and seat on the platform?





# Rural Community Rail

- Meeting expectations
- Do rural railway stations meet expectations?
- Is it a shelter and seat on the platform?
- Or can they be developed to make them valuable community assets?

# Rural Community Rail Gobowen Station



# Rural Community Rail

- Gobowen
- Population (2011) 3270
- North Shropshire
- Nearest town Oswestry
- Current train service 1 train per hour
- Direct trains to Chester/Holyhead/Birmingham/  
Shrewsbury/Cardiff
- Car park developed through an RPP scheme

# Rural Community Rail Gobowen Station



# Rural Community Rail

- Severn Dee Travel
- Booking Office staffed 7.15am to 5pm
- Provide a waiting room
- Toilet facilities
- Information
- Café

# Rural Community Rail

- Severn Dee Travel established 1995
- Not for profit since 2006
- 6 volunteer Directors
- Employs 2 full time staff and casual cover
- A welcoming atmosphere

# Rural Community Rail

- Severn Dee Travel established 1995
  - Not for profit since 2006
  - 6 volunteer Directors
  - Employs 2 full time staff and casual cover
  - A welcoming atmosphere
- 
- Community Rail ethos – does a lot with a little

# Rural Community Rail





# Rural Community Rail



# Rural Community Rail

Derwen College Café

A work experience opportunity for students

A café serving local produce for passengers and residents



# Rural Community Rail

- Involving diverse groups



Students working on branding

# Rural Community Rail

- Involving diverse groups



We encourage them to display and sell the products made at the college

# Rural Community Rail

- Public Artwork

# Rural Community Rail

- Public Artwork
- Brief was it should transform not just be 'pretty pictures'

# Rural Community Rail



# Rural Community Rail

Chirk Pop. 4468	Footfall	68,444
-----------------	----------	--------

Ruabon Pop. 4274	Footfall	92,986
------------------	----------	--------



# Rural Community Rail

Chirk Pop. 4468	Footfall	68,444
-----------------	----------	--------

Ruabon Pop. 4274	Footfall	92,986
------------------	----------	--------

Gobowen Pop. 3270	Footfall	214,000
-------------------	----------	---------

Increase on previous year 6%

# Rural Community Rail

- Its not all 'sweetness and light'
- 2016/17 particularly challenging

# Rural Community Rail

- Its not all 'sweetness and light'
- 2016/17 particularly challenging
- Buildings placed in Auction.....
- Needed to secure jobs and businesses
- Community Right to Bid

# Rural Community Rail

**SOS**  
gobowen station

**Gobowen**  
Save our station

working together to save the most historic building in Gobowen.

# Rural Community Rail

## The story so far

---

One of the biggest benefits we have in **Gobowen** is that we have a **main line railway station** at its heart. It sadly no longer links to the nearest town, **Oswestry** but reopening that link is being worked on by one of our partners the Cambrian Railways Heritage Trust. We are also fortunate that despite the size of **Gobowen** we have a railway station which is staffed and run as a not for profit rail agency by Severn Dee Travel who also provide a booking office, a heated waiting room, toilet facilities and allow a small café to operate staffed by students from the local Derwen College; a residential college for those with learning difficulties.

The most important historic buildings in the village are those at Gobowen Station. **Grade II listed and built in 1846** they were designed by T M Penson. The main building is an outstanding design in a Florentine style, more like an Italian villa than a railway station. With stucco facing, pairs of round-topped windows, a semi-circular apse, and a small turret, it is a real gem.

However these buildings are no longer in railway ownership and over the years have sadly deteriorated with the rendered building in particular in a sorry state.

In **September 2015** it came to our attention that the two main buildings were to be auctioned after being advertised for sale for some years with no buyer found.

Approaching the owners of the property we appealed for time to try and put together a bid for community ownership to ensure these buildings were developed both for community and railway benefit.



# Rural Community Rail

## What is GAIP? Our vision

---

### Gobowen Area Improvement Project

In May 2015 through the **Chester-Shrewsbury Rail Partnership** brought together organisations in an effort to make improvements. All of us in one form or another had been trying to make small improvements to the station and the area in general but by combining our resources and working together we know we could achieve more.

#### It has representatives from:

- Shrewsbury Chester Rail Users Association
  - Gobowen & Selattyn Parish Council
  - Cambrian Railways Heritage Trust
  - Arriva Trains Wales Station Adopter
  - 3 Parishes Big Local  
One of 150 Big Local programmes around the country. Each Big Local area has been allocated at least £1m to make a massive and lasting positive difference to their communities.
  - Severn Dee Travel  
Operates the rail agency as a social enterprise with 6 volunteer directors and employing 3 staff.
  - Chester Shrewsbury Rail Partnership  
The community rail partnership for the line
  - OSBT  
Oswestry Station Building Trust
- 4 | Gobowen SOS Save Our Station

Our vision is simple; we wish to ensure Gobowen Station buildings are:

- Acquired by a community focused organisation
- Restored, in a programme works including addressing the render problems
- Managed in the future with full community involvement



**Gobowen**

- To acquire by a community focused organisation
- To restore in a programme of works
- To manage with community involvement

# Rural Community Rail

## Restoration Work units 1A & 1B

Here are some of the vital improvements we need to make to units 1A & 1B.

re-rendering work  
£58,010



Estimated other fees  
£33,300



External work  
£22,000

Internal work  
£7,300

Roofing Work  
inc. gutters  
£54,485



Scaffolding hire  
£15,000

**total**  
**£194,795**

# Rural Community Rail

## Restoration Work unit 2

Here are some of the vital improvements we need to make to unit 2.



Work on leaning chimney stack  
£5,000

Repair to roof timbers, fascias, soffits  
£5,000

Roofing Work  
inc. gutters  
£5,000

Estimated other fees  
£7,500



**total**  
**£22,500**



# Rural Community Rail

How did we get on?

- OSBT became the financial enabling partner
- Detailed business plan drawn up

# Rural Community Rail

How did we get on?

- OSBT became the financial enabling partner
- Detailed business plan drawn up
- Grants & loans identified

# Rural Community Rail

How did we get on?

- OSBT became the financial enabling partner
- Detailed business plan drawn up
- Grants & loans identified
- Purchase achieved within the 6 month deadline

# Rural Community Rail

## Immediate future

- Refurbishment of empty unit for 2018
- Café refurbishment for 2018

# Rural Community Rail

The end?

# Rural Community Rail

It never ends.....

- Seeking restoration funding
- In discussion with Planning and conservation
- In discussion with Network Rail

# Rural Community Rail

It's merely the end of the first chapter.....

