



A platform full of winners

Dream tickets

Awards honour our stations and the army of volunteers who make them first class

PHOTOS: Ian Hulme

Cheshire Best Kept Stations marked 21 years of awards at an evening of celebration at the Grange Theatre in Hartford. The event was attended by the Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire Lady Alexis Redmond, mayors from the eight boroughs that constitute the former County of Cheshire, and town mayors and the awards were presented by Professor Paul Salveson, a leading figure in the community rail movement.

Professor Salveson said: 'Cheshire Best Kept Stations is something very special – I

am amazed it has been going for so long – a wonderful achievement. Very often station awards just focus on the gardens – and Cheshire has some superb examples. But it's great to see support for both station staff and volunteers at stations big and small. Covid could so easily have killed off so many community projects, but Cheshire Best Kept Stations has emerged with renewed vigour and in so doing helped to strengthen station friends groups.'

Mark Barker, chair of Cheshire Best Kept Stations, told the finalists: 'What

volunteers do is amazing: the passion, commitment, ingenuity, resourcefulness and sheer hard work has improved our stations for passengers, the community, the railway, and for yourselves through team working, meaningful activities, using your skills, and exercise. You are all winners. Please keep on doing what you are doing.'

The 170 guests were presented with commemorative booklets published to honour 21 years of achievements of Station Friends groups.

WINNERS



Rebecca Styles, Kelvin Briggs, Paul Salveson and Mark Barker

CHESHIRE BEST KEPT STATION AWARD Alderley Edge

The Friends Group is hard-working, ingenious and ambitious for its station, giving much TLC to transform its image. Supported by Northern and the C2M Community Rail Partnership, there is plenty of planting on forecourts and platforms, including a herb garden. High-quality artwork shows the beautiful natural environment of the village, local maps and the history of the Manchester-Crewe line. This is clearly a station the community cares for and about.



Mayor of Warrington Steve Wright, Philip Eastty, Paul Salveson, Julie Eastty, Mark Barker and Becky Styles

HALTON & WARRINGTON AWARD Glazebrook Station

This relatively new group has made a huge impact with excellent planters, clearing debris behind the station building to reopen a right of way, a commemorative bench and a community event with a neighbouring Friends Group to mark the opening of the Cheshire Lines railway.



Mark Barker, Trisha James, Kathie Richardson, Gina Haigh, Paul Salveson, June Twelves, Janice Neve, Douglas Bowyer-Bates, Malcolm Reid and Mayor of Cheshire East Rod Fletcher

CHESHIRE EAST AWARD Nantwich Station

It is the superb gardening that catches the eye here, described by the judge as, 'an ongoing horticultural triumph'. The station has good facilities for its size and is a gateway the town can be proud of. A stalwart member of the group, Hilary Slack, who passed away last year, was remembered.

Highly Commended Sandbach Station

WINNERS



AVANTI SUSTAINABILITY AWARD Disley Station

The excellent garden area has continued to develop with perennial pollinator-friendly plants and shrubs complementing the wildflower garden. Birds have not been forgotten with bird feeders and a bath provided, and 'Btingham Palace' is home to many insect species.



NORTHERN BEST STAFFED STATION AWARD Brinnington Station

A station that was once a byword for anti-social behaviour has been transformed by a community art project that gives identity to the area. What has put the station at the heart of the community is a community swap shop set up by the station staff, which enables locals to obtain and donate homewares, books, clothing, DVDs, etc. A fine example of staff going above and beyond the call of duty. **Highly Commended Handforth Station**



ART PROJECT AWARD Goostrey Station

Projects to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth and the Coronation of King Charles brought 60 adults and children together to design, paint and decorate clay discs. Once fired, the Platinum discs were displayed in a waiting shelter in spring 2023 and the Coronation discs on planters throughout the station last August. It was a busy year for community artist Debbie Goldsmith.



IN BLOOM AWARD Rose Hill Station

Gardening is one of the key activities at this station and the effort that has been put in clearly shows in the hanging baskets, beds and landscaped areas around the station.



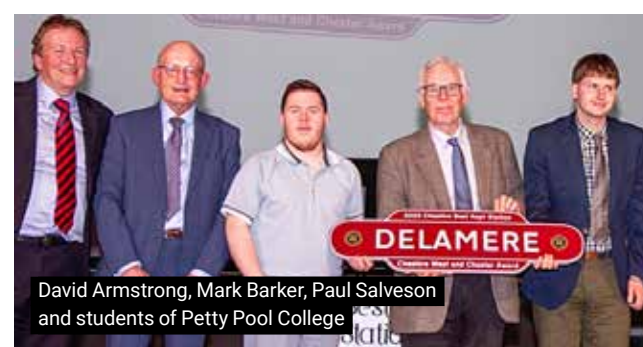
CHRIS DALE TRAVELWATCH AWARD FOR LARGE STATIONS Macclesfield Station

A railhead for long-distance trains to London and the South, as well as for local services, this station is located in the heart of the town. It is clean and bright with welcoming staff and a good café. Artwork around the station gives it a community feel.



WIRRAL AWARD Hoylake Station

A busy, spacious station graced with a classic art deco station building. Attractive and well-maintained planters and artwork demonstrate a strong community involvement that not only improves this station but has led to Station Adoption groups forming at other stations on this line. Last year the station was looking at its best as it played host to thousands of golf fans visiting the British Open.



CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER AWARD Delamere Station

A picture-postcard country station cared for by students with learning difficulties from the nearby Petty Pool College. It has a lovely café that is popular with the many walkers enjoying the surrounding forest.



THE KING'S CORONATION AWARD Romiley Station

The community were asked to produce scarecrows made from recycled materials, in keeping with the new monarch's support for sustainability. The first scarecrow – of King Charles – arrived at the station on a scheduled bus service with students from a special needs school that had made it. It was soon followed by Queen Camilla. The group joined forces with the community for a 'Coronation Street' party near to the station. **Highly Commended Hale Station**



MERSEYRAIL BEST KEPT GARDEN AWARD Meols Station

A commuter station that has been transformed by the group with attractive, colourful and skilfully planted beds and planters. The mature rose bushes are particularly fine.

WINNERS



Mark Angelucci, John Morton, Mark Barker, Barbara Judson, Paul Salveson, Ross Evans, Phil Rowbotham, Nick Berry and Monika Sayed

TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER AWARD Heaton Chapel Station

This is a station that shouts the identity of its communities not only to station users but also to passengers on passing trains. Traditional station name signs, poetry displays and well-stocked planters, including one produced by the local Men in Sheds group, make this an attractive station with bold, eye-catching artwork. The latest artwork is a dramatic image of the iconic local viaduct. A welcoming and well-cared-for station that is a credit to the Friends Group.



Becky Styles, Graham Hallett, Mark Barker, Andros Kokas, Russell Davies, Paul Salveson and Nigel Nutt

BEST UNSTAFFED STATION AWARD Greenbank Station

A small dedicated group of volunteers with special needs keep the station in tip-top appearance with planters, a memorial garden and a mural commemorating those fallen in war.

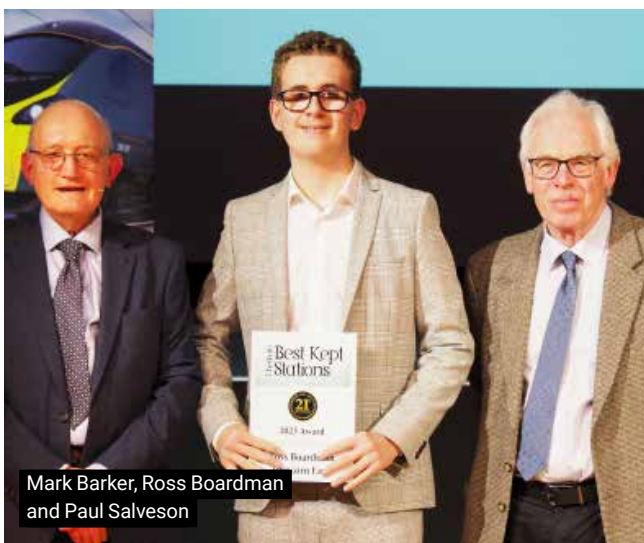


Mayor of Cheshire East Rod Fletcher, Mark Barker and Paul Salveson

COMMUNITY RAIL NETWORK AWARD FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Alsager Station

The station was awarded Dementia Friendly status by the Alzheimer's Society in 2021, and to continue this support, a trip was arranged for members of the town's Memory Cafe to show that the railway can be inclusive and to give dementia sufferers and their carers more confidence in using the train. The group were entertained on the train with live music from the 1950s to the 1970s, and a free lunch provided on arrival at Derby.

Highly Commended Marple Station

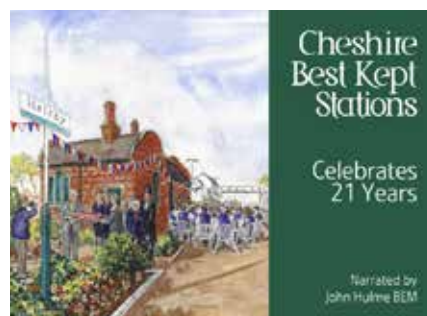


Mark Barker, Ross Boardman and Paul Salveson

PHOTOGRAPHY

SPECIAL COMMENDATION

Ross Boardman, a 14-year-old volunteer, received a special commendation for his work at Runcorn East Station.



The celebration booklet with cover watercolour by Bernice Tackley, celebrating Helsby's win 21 years ago