



GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD

This is the story of how Network Rail, Frame and Grayling UK engaged with and educated local communities about the benefits of the longest new domestic railway built in Britain for over a century.

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The journey so far...

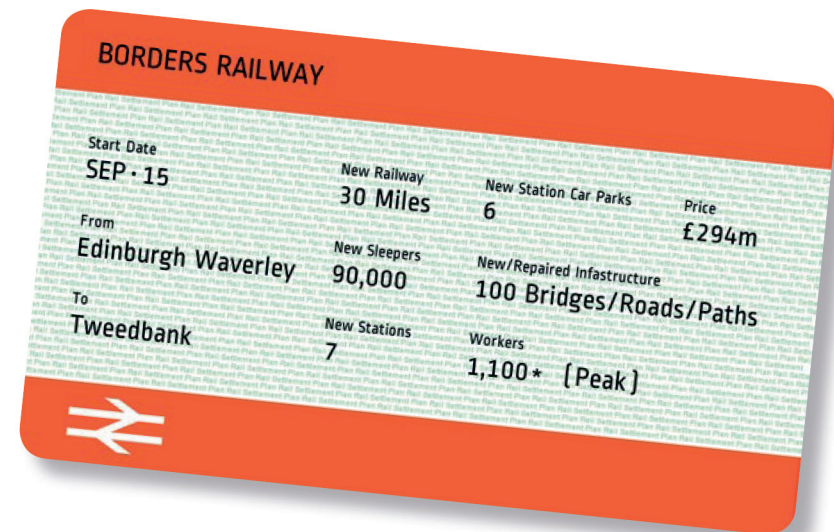
The Borders Railway will re-establish services in the Scottish Borders and Midlothian for the first time since 1969. The 30-mile railway is the longest new domestic railway to be constructed in Britain for over a century; and represents a significant infrastructure investment, with a capital construction cost totalling £294m. It includes the construction of seven new stations.

In November 2012, Network Rail became Authorised Undertaker, delivering the construction on behalf of the Scottish Government. Construction is due to be completed in June 2015, with services starting in September 2015.

The overall vision for the railway is to deliver a range of benefits for the economies of Midlothian, the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh. By better connecting the city region and its communities, the new railway has enormous potential to stimulate the growth of businesses, improve access to skills and learning, generate employment and boost tourism.

Network Rail recognised that while communities may benefit from having a railway operating nearby, individuals might also feel anxious about the impact the construction, and the future operation of the line, would have on their communities, with some sceptical about the benefits to them and to the wider region.

This is the story of how Network Rail's communications strategy established a strong brand identity for the project and delivered significant results and high levels of community engagement during the most intensive phases of construction in 2014.



Ambition & objectives

Independent market research was undertaken in 2012 to understand the attitudes and concerns of residents living along the route and surrounding communities.

The research also established where more could be done to enhance public perceptions of the project. There was a broad perception that the railway would not be built, there was inconsistent knowledge about the location of stations and support for the railway, while broadly positive, varied between locations. There were also some misconceptions about the immediate and wider benefits of the railway.

Using the research as a benchmark, the strategic communications objectives were established for 2014.

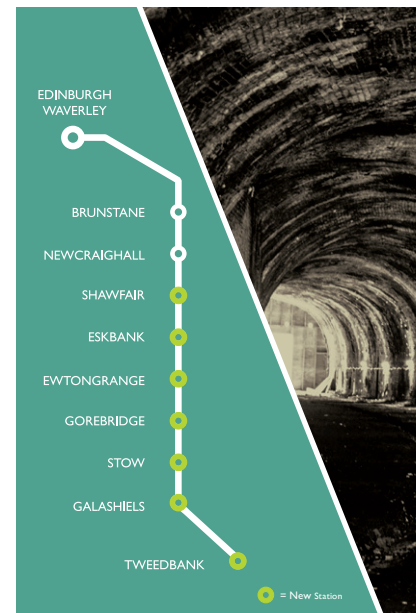
They were necessarily wide-ranging for a project of such scale and ambition, but clearly focused on the delivery of a broad-based public engagement campaign providing professional, consistent and regular communication with stakeholders and communities along the route.

In 2014, the project communications plan was broadly focused on:

- Maintaining consistent communications and activities throughout the construction period (general information, tackling misinformation, local updates, track-laying)
- Improving awareness and knowledge of the railway and station locations
- Promoting the wider community benefits and of rail travel in general

During main construction works in the first half of 2014 the communications plan focused on regular communications with residents, wider communities and stakeholders about the works which were happening in their areas and how this would impact on them.

Towards the end of 2014, the focus shifted to informing communities and stakeholders about what to expect from an operational railway and the benefits of the new line.



An effective strategy and plan to keep the project on track

The communications strategy had to address the needs of many stakeholder groups affected by the project:

1. Landowners & affected parties
2. Communities on the route and in the wider area
3. Elected representatives
4. Project partners - Scottish Government / Transport Scotland / local authorities
5. Media
6. Influencers
7. Statutory bodies
8. Environmental groups
9. Campaign groups
10. Transport and industry

Although, Network Rail performed the leading role in the communication of the construction element of the Borders Railway project, it was recognised that the project partners wished to remain closely linked to communications activities. Project partners included Scottish Government / Transport Scotland as funder, Scottish Borders Council, Midlothian Council, City of Edinburgh Council as project partners and BAM as principal contractor.

With such diversity the project relied heavily on a brand identity created by Frame that was instantly recognisable by internal and external audiences alike.

In order to increase community recognition and to avoid potential internal conflict about the prominence of partner logos, the new brand was used as the primary identity for project activities.



BordersRailway

Edinburgh • Midlothian • Scottish Borders

This approach gave cohesion to a communications strategy which was wide-reaching and which capitalised on a fully integrated marketing mix for effective communications.

An effective strategy and plan to keep the project on track

The strategy itself was focused on three communications pillars, driven by the key objectives:

Awareness & Knowledge

Information

Benefits

The key communications components of the strategy were:

- Advertising
- Radio partnerships & podcasts
- PR & media engagement
- Digital strategy – brand website, email newsletters and social media
- Printed newsletters & community leaflets
- Community information – helpline, drop-ins and face-to-face meetings
- Briefing papers for political stakeholders
- CSR & community safety initiatives
- Sponsorship

Effective planning was essential to ensure the effective delivery of the ongoing communications plan during 2014.

Therefore, stakeholder group's needs were carefully considered and a communications strategy and plan implemented for each.

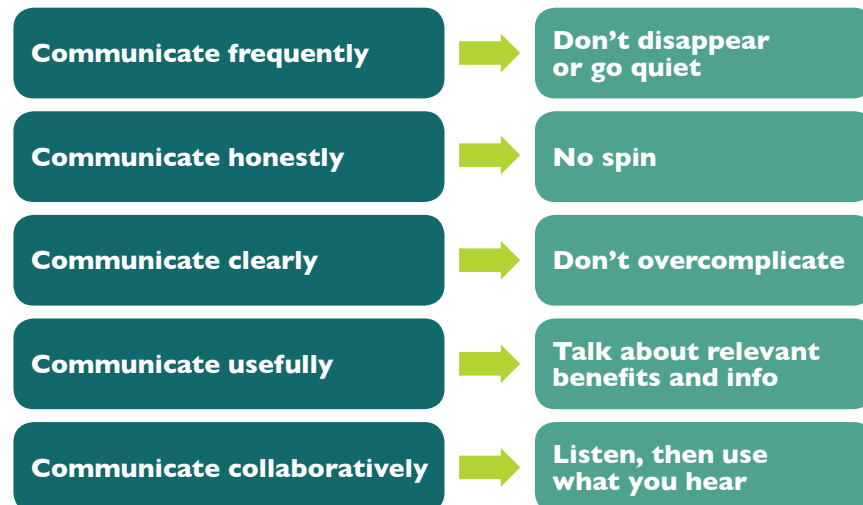
New network, new connections – impressive results

The overall approach to implementation was driven by a key strategic principle:
Turn information and facts into benefits.

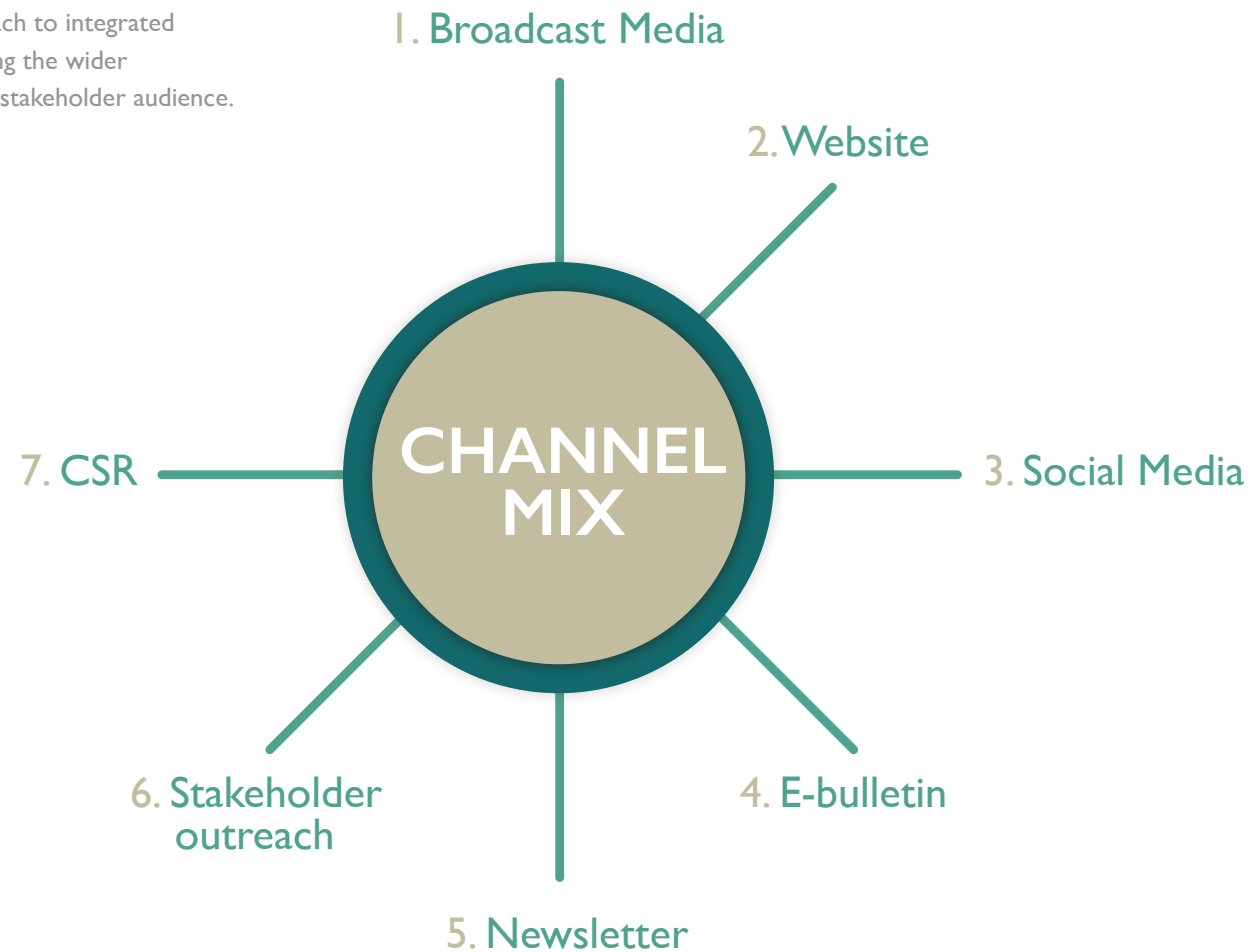
In order to:

- Encourage trust, and promote patience and understanding
- Personalise the project under the Borders Railway brand, and make Network Rail and project partners more approachable
- Help improve perceptions of the wider socio-economic benefits of the project

Driven by a strong brand identity created by Frame, the communications demonstrated originality and creativity in its approach:



In practice this meant an innovative and original approach to integrated communications that embraced digital whilst recognising the wider communications consumption needs of a wide-ranging stakeholder audience.



I. Broadcast Media

Adverts

The single brand was particularly advantageous when publicising major disruption, for example, the temporary diversion of the A720 Edinburgh City by-pass or the closures of various parts of the A7. Large adverts were taken out in local newspapers and, in the case of the temporary diversion of the A720 Edinburgh city by-pass, radio adverts were also commissioned in order to reach a maximum audience. Despite impacting approximately 40,000 motorists a day during the city by-pass diversion, complaints to the project about this activity were limited to 2 emails.

PR

Regular press releases were issued and site visits offered allowing journalists to develop a deeper understanding of the project. As of January 2015, the media relations strategy has achieved 1,013 project cuttings, 84% of which are positive or neutral.

Radio Borders partnership

A monthly show with progress updates, planned works and Q&A with listeners. Additional monthly podcasts on the Borders Railway website have had over 5,000 listens.

**WE'RE BUILDING A NEW STATION.
AND THERE'S ONLY ONE-WAY TO DO IT.**

BordersRailway
Edinburgh to Tweedbank

In 2015, we plan to open the new Borders Railway linking Edinburgh to Tweedbank and passing directly through Galashiels.

Galashiels station will be located on Ladhope Vale opposite the new Transport Interchange.

To allow for the safe construction of the new railway station, Galashiels Town centre will temporarily revert to a one-way system between 27 July and 05 December 2014.

Ladhope Vale, Bridge Place and the junction of Stirling Street will be incorporated into the existing one-way system to maintain the flow of traffic through the town centre whilst the station is under construction.

We want to take this opportunity to apologise in advance for any inconvenience these changes may cause, and to thank you for your continued patience as we strive to deliver this brand new railway.




FOR MORE INFO AND REGULAR UPDATES:
0845 604 4146 | info@bordersrailway.co.uk | @bordersrailway | www.bordersrailway.co.uk

Network Rail | Scottish Borders Council | Edinburgh City Council | B&B | BAM

Edinburgh News

Borders Railway's bypass plan on track, say bosses



The tunnelling work ongoing underneath the City Bypass at Sheriffhall. Picture: Robert Ormerod

Rail bosses aim to have traffic back on the original route of the City Bypass by early May as they complete the most ambitious section of the Borders Railway project.

Published on the 10th March 2014 11:05



**LINKING
EDINBURGH, MIDLOTHIAN
AND THE SCOTTISH BORDERS**

BordersRailway
Edinburgh to Tweedbank

In 2015, a new railway will open between Edinburgh and Tweedbank and work is now well underway to build the line. Unfortunately, it's unavoidable that some roads will need to be temporarily diverted as a result. We apologise for any inconvenience but we promise there's light at the end of the tunnel.

ROAD CLOSURES
From September 23rd, Winston Road in Galashiels will be closed to all vehicles and pedestrians for up to 12 months. Closure will allow crucial construction progress including the building of a new railway bed and road bridge.

Vehicle diversions will be placed on either side of the closure, using Melrose Road and Tweed Road.

In addition, the temporary path between Tweedbank and Galashiels will be rerouted through Langlee via the footbridge on Dale Street.



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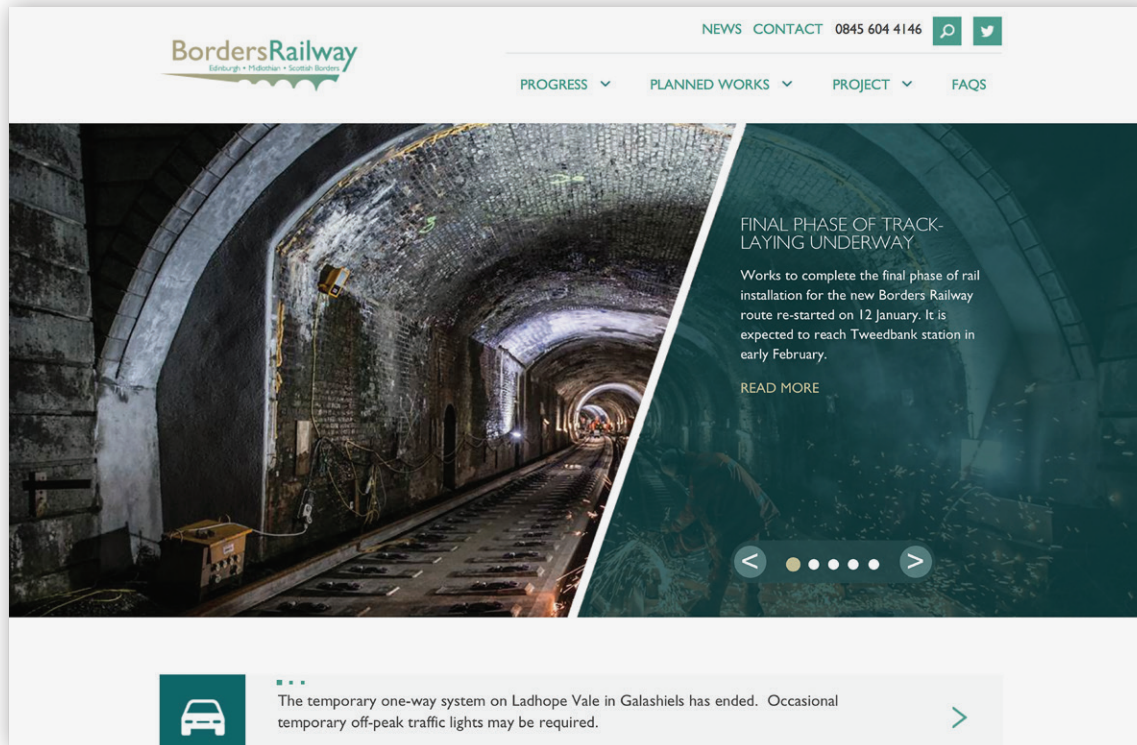
Network Rail | Scottish Borders Council | Edinburgh City Council | B&B | BAM

Rails cross into Borders



Scottish Borders Council Leader, Councillor David Parker, Network Rail project manager for the central and south sections of the Borders Railway, Ken Macdonald, and Scottish Borders Council Chief Executive, Tracey Logan, join the Borders Railway rail installation team as the rails cross into the Scottish Borders at Culterston Burn.

2. Website - www.bordersrailway.co.uk



Sessions

454,332

Users

236,210

Pageviews

1,745,286

The website content is regularly refreshed in order to remain relevant and to reflect the changing nature of the construction phases.

The website is the central hub hosting information including monthly podcasts, closure notices, maps & plans and video content. Two films created by Frame, about structures and the track laying process, attracted more than 34,000 views via the Borders Railway website and the Network Rail YouTube channel.

<http://www.bordersrailway.co.uk/progress/videos.aspx>

The site has attracted over 230,000 unique visitors with a high number of repeat visitors.



3. Social media

Twitter has been an extremely important tool for communicating project progress and engaging with audiences.

It has over 2,500 followers and provides a public face for the project, providing a point of contact for people to ask questions or comment.

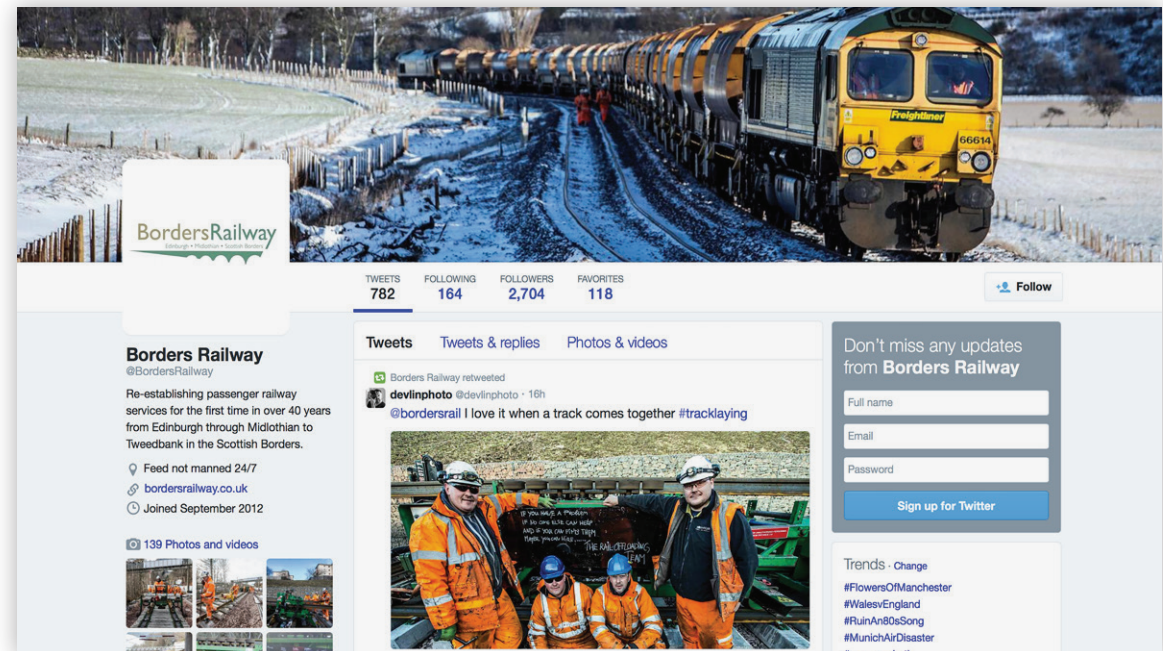
There were nearly 0.5 million Twitter impressions in November and December 2014.

216,000 impressions in Nov 14 – over 7k per day

211,500 impressions in Dec 14 – nearly 7k per day

Between November 2014 and January 2015 follower numbers have increased by over a quarter. On average, there are now over 1,000 clicked links in tweets, 237 retweets and 270 favourites per month.

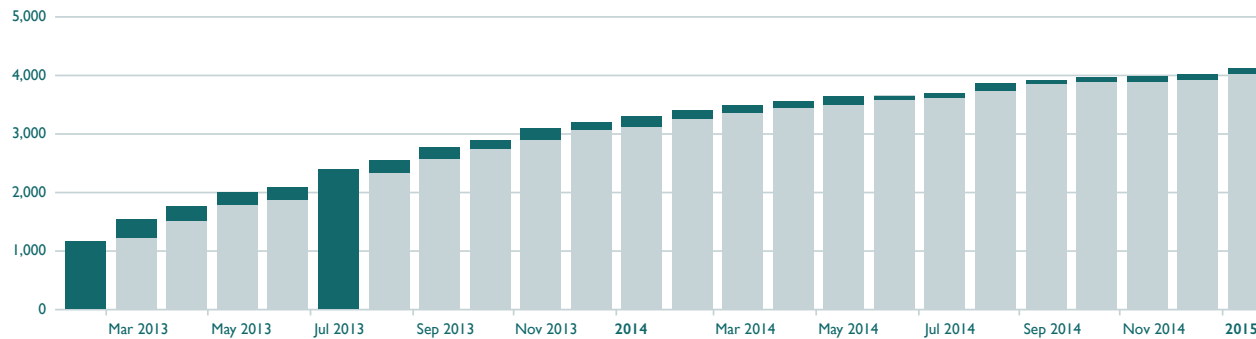
Followers are becoming advocates of the railway and opponents are becoming less vocal.



4. E-bulletin

From an initial list of 1,000 recipients, over 4,100 people are now subscribed as of January 2015.

Followers Growth: 2013 – 2015



trouble viewing this email? view online version here

Dear Richard,

Welcome to the first Network Rail newsletter for the Borders Railway project. We hope that our newsletters will keep you up to date on the project's progress and ensure that you have all the information that you need to understand how the construction work could affect you.

Latest News

De-Vegetation

Initial work to clear the vegetation from the old track-bed of the former Waverley Line began in XXX and is almost complete, with only a small amount remaining due to environmental constraints. [...read more](#)

Demolition at Galashiels

Demolition work at Beechbank Place, Galashiels began in May. The demolition of the flats was necessary as they lie on the proposed site of the railway in the town centre. All of the residents were rehoused earlier last year. [...read more](#)

Mine remediation works

Site investigation has been on-going to identify any mine remediation works required. The mine remediation works will include filling in or stabilising the ground ahead of the construction work beginning. [...read more](#)

Follow us on Twitter
 Call the helpline on: 0845 604 4146

VISIT US AT WWW.BORDERSRAILWAY.CO.UK

If you no longer wish to receive emails from bordersrailway.co.uk you can [unsubscribe here](#)

5. Newsletter

'Connections' is issued quarterly, distributed in public locations on route and sent to the stakeholder database. This ensures people without internet access still receive a full update and is particularly important given the rural nature and demographics of the area.



Project updates also regularly feature in the partner local authority newsletters.

6. Stakeholder outreach

Letters

Mailings were issued at key milestones and included detailed information on construction works that created more extensive disruption, providing an effective, catch-all channel for 'must know' information.

Dedicated resource

A dedicated telephone helpline and email address, manned by a Network Rail community liaison executive during the day, with the National Helpline picking up calls outside normal working hours, was set up to provide a personal approach to enquirers.

Face-to-face

There was an extensive presence at community council and resident meetings with over 2,500 people attended community drop-in events.

Briefings and site visits were held with elected representatives, from community and local councils, and the Scottish and UK Parliaments to discuss issues affecting constituents. Briefing papers equipped them with answers to the most commonly asked constituent questions.



7. CSR community safety

Ensuring the project had close links with the community was imperative to the success of the communications strategy.

Community safety

The project enlisted the Scottish Youth Theatre (SYT) to help bring creativity to important safety messages. In May/June 2014 workshops reached 1,500 primary school pupils.

Partnering with the Scottish Football Association (SFA) to sponsor a series of events and tournaments encouraged children to become more active and served as a distraction from playing near the new railway, spreading the rail safety message.

SFA activities have reached over 3,200 children aged 5-16 years in Midlothian and over 4,400 aged 5-17 years in the Scottish Borders.

Sponsorship

The project sponsored the Melrose Sevens, raising awareness to a much wider audience. With the stadium just one mile from Tweedbank station, the 2016 Melrose 7s tournament will be an early beneficiary once services begin.

Borders Railway community fund

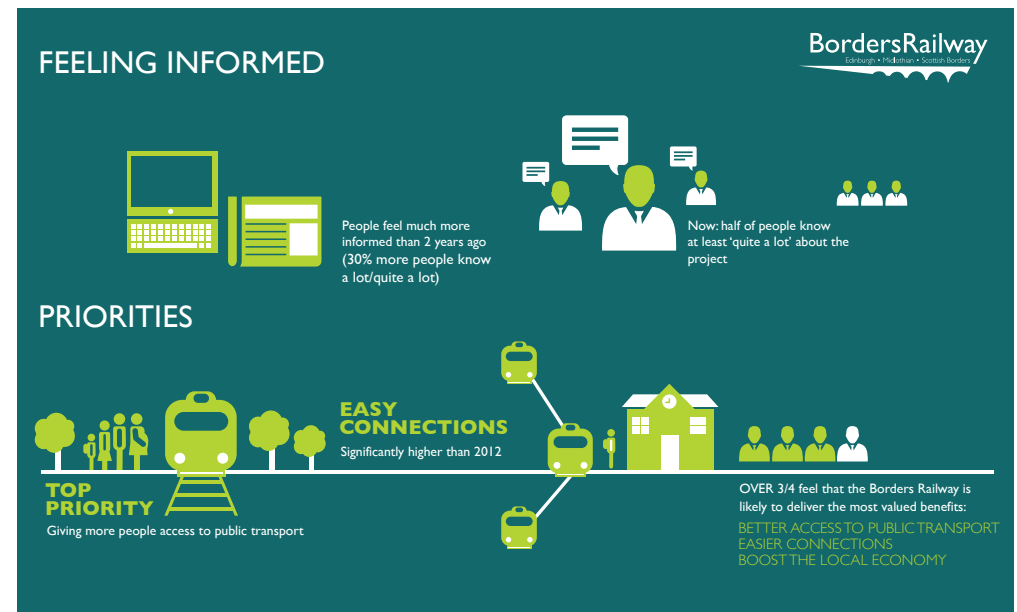
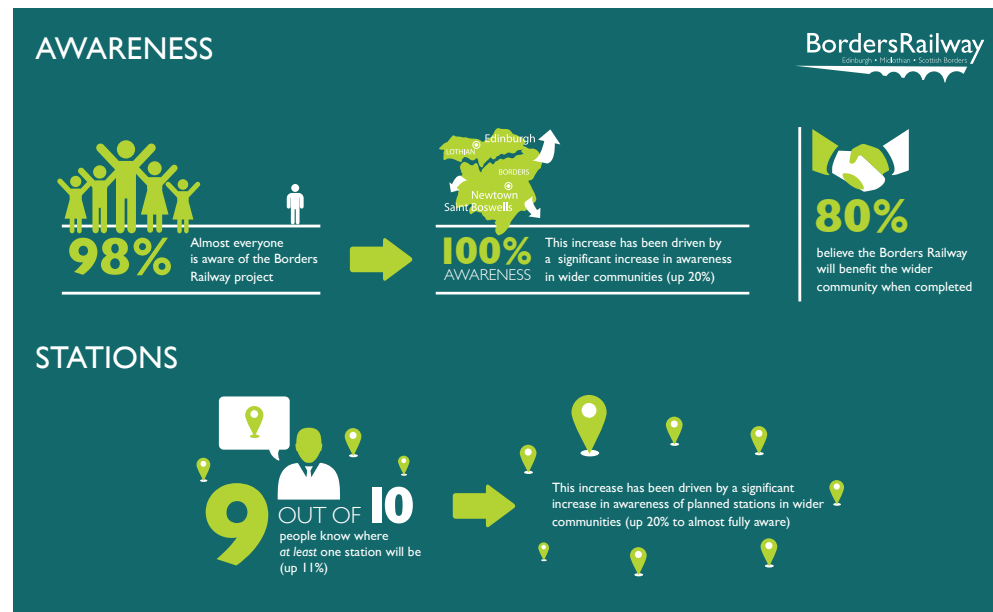
The Borders Railway community fund offered applicants up to £250 for projects relating to intergenerational work, community collaboration and encouraging community engagement. So far, 44 projects have benefitted from the fund.



All aboard

The wider success of the communications strategy in improving awareness and knowledge and the community benefits of the line and rail travel were highlighted following further independent research in 2014. The overall results showed some significant increases from

2012, thanks to the successful delivery of the communications plan in 2014. The main highlights were:



Summary

With a clear strategy, communications planning and wide-ranging and innovative activation, the Network Rail communications team delivered against its core objectives for the Borders Railway in 2014. Through engaging with and listening to local communities and communicating through a clear brand identity, the strategy is on track to educate communities about the benefits of the longest, new domestic railway constructed in Britain for over a century.

"With less than a year to go before trains are back up and running it is fantastic to see another milestone for the project arrive."

**Claudia Beamish MSP, Border Telegraph,
08 October 2014**

"By the end of the year the tracks will connect the seven stations along the route for the first time in 45 years and this will give a massive boost to the region's economy and restore links for communities which will result in employment, study and social opportunities."

**Christine Grahame MSP, Midlothian Advertiser,
22 October 2014**

"The opening of the Borders Railway is less than eight months away. This is a fantastic opportunity for local businesses in a wide range of sectors, and is something that must be grasped, especially in such tough economic times."

**Jack Clark, Chairman of Scottish Borders Business Forum,
Southern Reporter, 15 January 2015**

