

Press Release

7 March 2024

Avanti West Coast marks World Book Day through the power of verse

- *West Coast operator joins forces with North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership to launch poetry booklet on World Book Day*
- *Three local schools attend poetry reading session at Crewe station to help celebrate the town's links to the railway*
- *Avanti West Coast donate 200 books to each participating school*

Avanti West Coast has teamed up with North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership and local schools in Crewe to mark this year's World Book Day.

Pupils from three local schools, Brierley Primary, Edleston Primary and Springfield School visited the station to recite poems they had created to reflect the town's strong links with the railway.

They were joined by local poet Gareth Williams, whose poem 'Tracks are our veins' features on a 12-metre mural installed at Crewe station last year.

A book bearing the same name, which features Gareth's poem and the verses penned by local children has been produced and given to the pupils and railway users passing through the station.

Avanti West Coast has also donated 200 books to each school to help improve reading skills. Colleagues from the West Coast Operator have also offered to visit each school to deliver career and safety talks.

Taryn Banks, Station Manager for Avanti West Coast at Crewe said: "It was great to see so many smiling faces at the station celebrating World Book Day.

"I loved reading and hearing the poems. They really do capture the town's close links to the railway, something we should be all so incredibly proud of, and a great way to celebrate World Book Day."

The event was a follow on to a number of activities that took place over a 12-month period culminating in 2023 to mark Crewe station's 185th anniversary.

Emma McIntosh, Community Rail Partnership Officer for North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership said: "It was wonderful to welcome pupils to Crewe Station on World Book Day and see them perform their fantastic poems. We look forward to continuing to work with the schools and Gareth to create railway themed poetry which will be displayed at the station."

In addition, Community Rail Network and the Department for Transport have funded a poetry workshop project. The three schools will each have two poetry workshops with Gareth Williams and produce train travel themed poems that will be temporarily displayed in the waiting rooms at Crewe Station on rotation.

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About Avanti West Coast

Avanti West Coast, operator of intercity rail services on the West Coast Main Line, is a joint venture between FirstGroup and Trenitalia, delivering a cleaner, greener railway that drives the West Coast forward.

We're on a mission to revolutionise train travel. Our refurbished Pendolinos are returning to the rails, with a £117m investment that's delivering best in class comfort. Rebuilt using sustainable materials wherever possible, including tables made from recycled plastic bottles, our upgraded fleet offers 25,000 brand new seats, free Wi-Fi, onboard recycling and much more.

New Hitachi trains are set to replace our Voyager trains from 2024, leading to a 61% cut in carbon emissions. Quieter and roomier, with more reliable Wi-Fi, wireless charging for electrical devices and a real-time customer information system, the new 23-strong fleet is the result of a £350m investment in sustainable travel.

We're tackling climate change wherever we can, from reducing energy and water use to training drivers in eco-driving techniques and sourcing food and drink from local suppliers. Our goal is to be net zero carbon by 2031. We're on track.

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Press Office: 0845 000 3333