



Station booking office clerk Darrell Gardiner is delighted with the new bee garden which features this information board (more pictures below)

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Bee-friendly garden creates a buzz at Downham Market

Passengers and pollinators will soon be able to enjoy a colourful new bee garden that has just been planted at Downham Market station in Norfolk.

The garden project is a partnership between Great Northern's parent company Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and environmental charity Groundwork East.

The plants are all selected for their flowers, which are especially attractive to bees and other pollinators. They include lavender, sedum, sage, rosemary and

verbena. An interpretation board on the fence explains the different species and the benefits that pollinators bring to the world.

Groundwork East has donated some money to the local WI who manage other spectacular floral displays at the station as they will be helping water the bee garden plants.

Chris Dungate, Groundwork East's Operations Manager, said: "It's great for us to be working with GTR on creating a new pollinator-friendly area at Downham Market station. We hope commuters and station staff enjoy the new planting."

Downham's bee garden is one of six being planted as part of GTR's multimillion-pound station improvement programme. The others are at Sandy, Flitwick, Palmers Green and New Southgate in North London, and Newhaven Harbour in East Sussex. All were suggested by local people when GTR consulted passengers and community groups about their priorities for improvements.

Tom Moran, Managing Director for Great Northern and Thameslink, said: "We're making stations more attractive for our passengers, and more sustainable assets for their local communities. These bee gardens are a great example of how we're doing just that. We're proud to be working with Groundwork East, among hundreds of partners across our network, to support the post-lockdown recovery – building back better and greener."

Ends

Notes to editors

Why bees are important

It's estimated that one third of the food that we consume each day - fruit, vegetables, meat and other animal products - relies on pollination. Some of this is done by other insects, birds and bats, or by wind, but bees pollinate about 80 per cent of the world's plants, including 90 different food crops. Globally there are more honey bees than any other type of pollinating insect. Many animal species rely on bees for their survival.

About GTR's wider station improvement programme

GTR's network-wide, multimillion-pound improvement programme involves over 1,000 projects, many of which were suggested by local passenger and community groups, at more than 250 stations. While we're working hard to achieve the punctuality and reliability our passengers rightly expect, we want them to know we are with them all the way and making their stations better places to pass through.

The vast number and range of improvements can be described under three themes:

1. Giving many stations a better ambience by redecorating, planting and installing artwork, often with substantial input from the local community
2. Making stations work better for passengers, improving comfort and safety with new waiting rooms and shelters, seating, lighting, information screens, defibrillators for public use, and accessibility schemes
3. Making stations more sustainable, with schemes such as electric vehicle charging points, secure facilities for cyclists, rainwater retention systems, and even bee gardens.

We've created dedicated web pages where passengers and local communities can get updates on what's happening at their station. They can be found at:

- <https://www.greatnorthernrail.com/about-us/our-commitments/improving-your-stations>
- <https://www.thameslinkrailway.com/about-us/our-commitments/improving-your-stations>
- <https://www.southernrailway.com/about-us/our-commitments/improving-your-stations>

For more information, contact the press office on 0203 750 2031.

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) operates Thameslink, Great Northern, Southern and Gatwick Express services as follows:

- Thameslink – cross-London services between Bedford/Peterborough/Cambridge and Brighton/Horsham/Littlehampton/East Grinstead, and between Luton/St Albans and Sutton/Wimbledon/Rainham; plus services between London and Sevenoaks
- Great Northern – services between London and Welwyn, Hertford, Peterborough, Cambridge and King’s Lynn
- Southern – services between London and the Sussex coast (Brighton, Worthing, Eastbourne, Bognor Regis, Hastings) and parts of Surrey, Kent and Hampshire (Ashford International, Southampton, Portsmouth)
- Gatwick Express – fast, non-stop direct services between Gatwick Airport and London Victoria

www.southernrailway.com, www.thameslinkrailway.com, www.gatwickexpress.com, www.greatnorthernrail.com