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Sun shines down on bustling May Fair celebration days



Photo: Johninsullphotography

» Traditions continue with streets packed for Great Torrington's May Fair and Carnival event. [See Page 3](#)

Station wins funds for revamp project

» Friends of Barnstaple Railway Station secures funding to draw up plans to improve station and mark its 170 years. [See Page 11](#)

History of railway to be celebrated with station improvement funding

by LEWIS CLARKE

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PASSENGERS at Barnstaple railway station are set to enjoy a fresher, greener travel experience after the station's volunteer group clinched a funding boost from Great Western Railway (GWR).

The Friends of Barnstaple Railway Station (FOBRS) have secured funding from GWR's Customer and Community Improvement Fund, a Department for Transport-backed initiative aimed at enhancing station environments across the network.

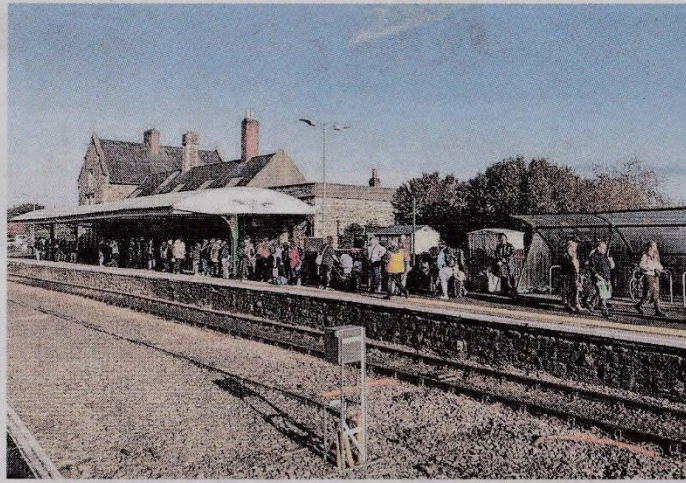
The successful bid will support a series of environmental improvements planned at the station.

FOBRS chair Tim Steer said he had submitted the application earlier this year on behalf of the group's committee and described the result as "amazing".

Tim added that the committee works closely with GWR and Network Rail to ensure that all volunteers operate safely and in line with official training and guidelines.

"The news of this funding means we can now improve aspects of the station environment," Tim said.

"We have now instructed potential teams to construct our



» Plans are being put together to makeover Barnstaple Railway Station Tim Steer

designs that will be unveiled later this year.

"We are going to make sure the history of Barnstaple railway station is remembered as well as joining this year's national celebrations of 200 years of the railway network.

"We hope to start more Community Rail Network projects to study the station history and how sustainable the railway is. This funding from GWR can help make sure these

community projects will happen."

Barnstaple station, which celebrated its 170th anniversary last year with a ceremony at the town's historic pannier market, is located on the North Devon line, affectionately known as the Tarka Line.

The route has seen significant passenger growth in recent years, prompting the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance to commission a business cases for line

upgrades and a potential extension to Bideford.

The station has earned national recognition for its environmental efforts, with FOBRS receiving top-level awards for four consecutive years.

Volunteers meet every Tuesday morning and are currently seeking new members to expand their work across other days of the week.

This latest round of funding coincides with GWR's plans to introduce its class 175 trains - recently cascaded from Wales - on the Barnstaple to Exeter line in a bid to enhance service levels.

GWR confirmed the news in an email to Tim Steer, stating: "Your project scored really highly, and we would like to take it forward. Congratulations on being one of our successful projects. We are so pleased that you put the bid in, and we really look forward to working with you."

Last year, the fund also supported a joint initiative between Railfuture and the Tarka Rail Association to develop an initial business case for re-extending the line to Bideford.

FOBRS continues to operate a free membership model and encourages anyone interested in supporting the station to get involved.