

Ridgmont station

Historical overview

Ridgmont station sits at the mid-point of the Marston Vale Line that runs from Bedford to Bletchley. This line once formed the middle section of a longer rail link – The Varsity Line – between Oxford and Cambridge and many of the stations along the Bedfordshire section served the once-thriving brick industry.

The line itself was the first one to be built in the county and the station building was opened on 17th November 1846. Whilst the line is still very much used by local people and an increasing number of visitors to the area, the station building itself has been redundant since the late 1970s. It is the last station building on the line not to have been sold off either for private or commercial use.



BRCC is working closely with The Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership in this exciting project.
Web: www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk

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Ridgmont Station 'Back on track'

A new community, heritage and social enterprise resource for Bedfordshire





Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) works to encourage thriving and sustainable communities. As part of a study commissioned by EEDA, BRCC recognised great potential in the beautiful Victorian building that stands at Ridgmont Station on the Marston Vale railway line.

Unused for several decades, it is currently in a very poor state of repair. However, with the investment of time, money and a little imagination, BRCC is aiming to convert the disused building into a multi-purpose centre serving the needs of the local community, surrounding businesses and train travellers alike. Moreover, it will be an exemplar in terms of environmental sustainability.

Janet Ridge MBE, Chief Executive

Our vision

BRCC wants to see the station building brought back into life and preserved for future generations to appreciate. We want it to become a local hub for business and community activities.

We will:

- create office space across three first-floor rooms for small-scale/start up social enterprises.
- preserve the original Victorian booking hall, which will become the focus for a heritage display area. It will house exhibitions linked to the history of the Bedford-Bletchley railway line, together with the brick making industry that it served for many years.
- create two ground-floor rooms available for community activities, and a third room which will be used as the office of the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership Officer

- provide a fully equipped kitchen that will service a much-needed café at the station, together with toilet facilities
- encourage the establishment of additional facilities, including cycle hire and links to the Marston Vale "Hidden Britain Centre" walks and the proposed Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway towpath walks.

Recent achievements

What have we achieved so far? BRCC has already made substantial progress during the last 12 months.

So far:

- a steering group has been set up
- a long-term lease has been secured from Network Rail
- land for car parking has also been secured
- over £150,000 of funding has been raised, with a further pledge of £125,000
- studies have been carried out on noise impact; sustainability and access
- extensive public consultation has taken place
- local interest in running the café has been secured
- a planning application has been submitted