

## **Department for Transport: Rail tourism winners announced**

*HM Government - Press Releases*

Heritage and community rail-related tourism winners released.

- winners of million pound tourism competition announced
- competition will boost rail-related tourism right across Britain
- winners will receive grants ranging from £25,000 to £75,000

A host of innovative projects to boost rail-related tourism have been announced in a million pound competition, funded by the UK government.

The projects, based across England, Wales and Scotland, will create great new opportunities for UK and overseas tourists to enjoy the hidden gems of the country's heritage and community railways.

Examples of the innovative projects funded by the competition include:

- extending the heritage line from Chinnor to its former terminus at Princes Risborough station
- expanding the luxury Pullman services on the North Yorkshire moors, and adapting them for wheelchair users in Kent
- developing a new 'velorail' in Kidwelly, creating a new tourist attraction, giving visitors the chance to drive a train by pedal power

Rail Minister Claire Perry said:

We want to show the best of British to our visitors, and heritage and community railways are part of that package.

Thanks to this competition, 17 railways organisations right across Britain will be able to invest in promoting and boosting what they have to offer to visitors".

The competition offers grants to rail operators for innovative ideas and trials and is aimed particularly at heritage railways and community rail partnerships. It hopes to encourage more tourists and make it easier to explore the UK by rail.

The competition has generated 17 winners, who will receive grants ranging from £25,000 to £75,000 to develop their ideas. It is part of the government's 5-point plan to boost tourism across the UK.

Tourism and Heritage Minister David Evennett said:

We want more tourists to experience the hidden gems the whole of the UK has to offer.

Heritage and community railways are important local attractions, and these projects will help support our railway history and promote it to visitors from home and abroad.

Deirdre Wells OBE, the Chief Executive of UK Inbound, said:

It was a privilege to be involved with this competition. Heritage and community rail plays a vital role in our vibrant and often quirky tourism industry.

We want to do all we can to encourage more of the 36 million annual inbound visitors to the UK to explore more of our beautiful country by rail.

Judges for the competition included Mark Garnier, MP, Lord Faulkner; Deirdre Wells OBE and Sir William McAlpine.

#### National

Association of Community Rail Partnerships: Britain's most scenic train journeys - £75,000. A new national website will introduce British and overseas visitors to the best of Britain's community rail lines through the showcase of a new national website, backed by significant marketing with international reach and available in foreign languages.

#### Eastern

University Campus Suffolk: travel back in time with King Raedwald – discovering Suffolk's Saxon shore - £51,320. Visitors viewing the Sutton Hoo finds in the British Museum will be encouraged to travel by train to Suffolk and enjoy the ship-burial site and other visits, through innovative new digital and other products.

#### East Midlands

Ecclesbourne Valley Railway, Derbyshire: heritage railcar visitor experience - £74,500. The project will convert an existing building into an innovative visitor centre, allowing people to see work being undertaken on the heritage fleet; track and signal enhancements allowing for increased train services; and provide targeted marketing and promotion.

#### South-east

Bluebell Railway: Pullman accessibility for people with disabilities - £75,000. A vintage Pullman carriage will be completely renovated, providing accessibility for people with disabilities, including wheelchair users, restoring the carriage's original 1920's ambience and increasing the railway's Pullman dining seating capacity.

Chinnor and Princes Risborough Rail Association (C&PRRA): heritage rail interchange with main line services at Princes Risborough - £75,000. The project will extend the heritage rail line from Chinnor to its former terminus at Princes Risborough station and see the reinstatement of a platform and loop line at Princes Risborough for interchange with services from London and other main line destinations.

Visit Kent Ltd: connecting Kent's heritage railways - £75,000. The project will improve how the heritage railways in Kent link up and raise awareness of visit opportunities.

#### South-west

Compass Holidays: development of a cycle / rail hub in Cornwall - £75,000. The project will develop a new cycle and rail hub, provide bike hire for both local residents and international

tourists, and help improve access to the countryside and create new jobs.

VisitCornwall CiC: Cornwall as seen on screen - £60,000. A scheme to build on the tourism draw of TV shows like Poldark, Rosamund Pilcher and Doc Martin – popular in over 20 countries – with targeted marketing to increase the number of visitors to Cornwall, especially from overseas, using heritage and community railways along with public transport.

Swanage Railway Trust: extending the Swanage Railway heritage steam services - £75,000. Extending the railway's heritage steam services will enable the railway to add main line capability to a steam locomotive and set of 5 coaches with a capacity for 330 passengers and attract more tourists and day trippers to the region and to rail travel.

#### West Midlands

International Manufacturing Centre, University of Warwick: a very light rail shuttle between Dudley's tourist attractions - £75,000. The project is to undertake a feasibility study for a new very light rail service linking Dudley Zoo and the Black Country Living Museum.

Severn Valley Railway Charitable Trust: transforming disabled facilities - £75,000. A scheme to transform disabled facilities to allow wheelchair users to travel on all services, access all the railway's attractions, and experience authentic heritage dining in a uniquely-designed 1950s carriage.

#### Yorkshire and Humberside

Community Rail Humber Ltd: the Cleethorpes to Scarborough experience - £31,700. The project will create a heritage and tourism trail that starts from Cleethorpes in north-east Lincolnshire and stretches all the way to Scarborough in North Yorkshire.

North Yorkshire Moors Railway (NYMR): Pullmans from Whitby, innovation in a mouthwatering, scenic experience - £60,000. The North Yorkshire Moors Railway Pullman services will be expanded so that visitors to Whitby can enjoy Pullman dining in the magnificent scenery of the NYMR and the Esk Valley Line.

#### Scotland

Caledonian Railway and the University of the West of Scotland: making the connections - travel and tourism, community and culture - £30,000. The project will address how to extend the railway's active season, enhance community involvement, improve cultural awareness and increase the number of visitors.

#### Wales

The great little trains of Wales: use the big train to visit the little trains - £67,000. A promotional package will be developed, including a modern equivalent of the Bradshaw's guide, to attract more visitors, both UK-based and overseas tourists in London.

Rheilffordd Cwm Gwendraeth/Gwendraeth Valley Rail: valley community rail corridor and velorail development £75,000. A unique 'velorail' rail bike visitor attraction will be developed on a disused Network Rail branch and rail-side land starting in Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire.

Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway (W&LLR) Preservation Co Ltd: disability first - £42,500. This project will help to improve disabled access to narrow-gauge trains, including platform lifts and carriage modifications.

#### Heritage and community railways

The vast majority of heritage railways and community railways are outside London. A major objective of the competition has been to encourage more visitors to the UK to travel to destinations beyond the capital. Currently around 10 million people a year visit a heritage railway with the sector contributing an estimated £250 million to the UK economy.

Community rail lines account for around 40 million journeys per year. They are often rural-based and many support the tourism industry of these areas.

The awards are subject to contract agreement.