

£2 million spring clean to rid Britain's railway of graffiti

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Network Rail teams across the country have been working to freshen up Britain's railway in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year with more than £2 million of funding being used to target the removal of unsightly graffiti which blights infrastructure.

The additional funding has been distributed to each of Network Rail's routes to help remove eyesores from railway infrastructure in hotspot areas.

Network Rail chief executive, Andrew Haines said: "We have a wonderful and historic railway in Britain with engineering marvels spanning back to Victorian times, but all too often it is blighted by unsightly graffiti and vandalism which is an eyesore for our passengers and railway neighbours.

"Our teams have been working extremely hard to remove graffiti and to make the railway more inviting. This is no easy task and cannot be done overnight but I know that this investment will make a real difference to communities and our passengers across the country"

Network Rail's regional teams identified problem areas and used this funding to dispatch teams to remove

and paint over stubborn spray-painted tags, also applying anti-graffiti paint where possible to deter people from targeting the same areas in future.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said: “A railway journey offers the chance to take some time out, sit back and enjoy the view. So, it’s a shame to have it spoilt by unsightly graffiti.

“I’ve asked Network Rail to tackle this problem and they are working hard to remove these eyesores, making our railways and surrounding areas more appealing and welcoming for all.”

More than 450 sites have been cleared of graffiti in the south east along with high-profile sites such as the Hungerford Bridge and the Bermondsey dive-under in London. Heavily graffiti-tagged infrastructure across Bristol and Keynsham are among the dozens of areas which have been targeted in the south west.

In the West Midlands, a graffiti hit squad has been working for nearly a year to improve the railway in preparation for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. Thousands of tags have been removed across the region, most recently from routes in and out of Birmingham New Street station, in the Stechford and Sutton Park areas, and from railway-owned walls and buildings in Birmingham city centre.

In the East Midlands, residents of Melton Mowbray are enjoying a more pleasant route over the railway following the removal of graffiti on a footbridge and unsightly tags have also been removed by Network Rail’s graffiti hit-squads across Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds; notably at Burley Park station and through Ashton Road Tunnel in Wigan.

Graffiti is an expensive and dangerous problem for the railway. Not only are the costs in removing it significant, but those trespassing on the railway risk tragic consequences or life-changing injuries.

To report people vandalising the railway or acting suspiciously, contact the British Transport Police via text on 61016 or by phoning 0800 40 50 40.

Photo credit: Network Rail