

Manager of East Lancs Railway releases urgent video plea

April 3, 2020



The General Manager of East Lancashire Railway has issued an urgent video plea for help in its survival.

Tracey Parkinson says the station is silent, all the engines have stopped steaming and they are now desperately trying to keep the legacy alive.

Last month the Bury heritage attraction and registered charity made the difficult decision to cease all services and close all stations until further notice because of the coronavirus crisis.

Just a day after the closure and it was targeted by heartless thieves who stole up to £10,000 worth of equipment – which further threatened the railway's continued existence.

Tracey said: "We are in a strange and unusual time and we really need the public's help to keep everything going."

"The video is very heartfelt from me because it is very personal. We're not in it to make money, but to keep the heritage going.

"We've got no revenue coming in, but we have money going out on refunds for events we've had to cancel and the extra security we've had to pay for following the theft.

"It is very much a survival situation. We've looked into the business grant available, but unfortunately we don't qualify."

Speaking last month, the Heritage Railways Association (HRA) said it is working to ensure that its members, key players in the country's leisure and tourism sector, receive meaningful support and is calling for clarity on issues specifically related to heritage rail, particularly on the treatment of charities, payroll support, and insurance cover.

Steve Oates, the CEO at HRA, said: "We're also providing railways with regular and frequent updates on Covid-19, with guidance and advice to meet the particular needs of railway operation in mind.

"We've also provided a business resilience action plan, to help railways plot a path through the threats and risks posed by Covid-19. And, of course, we're talking to many of our members on a daily basis, providing advice and, equally important, gathering information.

"We're calling on our members to work together, to share experiences and ideas, to work towards common solutions wherever possible, to provide practical aid to each other, and to form a single, powerful voice."

To help the East Lancashire Railways, or for more details, visit

<http://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk/the-elr-needs-you.aspx>

Photo credit: John Sagar