

Severn Valley Railway appeal reaches £650,000

May 4, 2020



Thousands of people have dug deep to support one of the UK's leading heritage attractions, the Severn Valley Railway, which now has £650,000 secured for its Fight Back Fund.

The SVR launched an emergency appeal in March to keep it ticking over on a 'care and maintenance' basis during its enforced closure because of the coronavirus pandemic. A rush of donations and share purchases meant that the railway quickly passed its original target of £250,000. Now it's secured a further £400,000 to help mitigate the significant loss in income it is experiencing.

General manager Helen Smith said the level of support received has been remarkable: "We have been truly humbled to see how much people care about the railway, and how determined they are to make sure we survive. Some of the messages that people have sent with their donations talk about their hopes for the future and how they're looking forward to travelling with us again as soon as possible. We are immensely grateful to everyone who has got behind us to help.

"However, there's no escaping the fact that we face a huge challenge to get the railway through this crisis. It's not clear when we'll be able to reopen, or the nature of social distancing restrictions that will be

needed to operate safely. We've already suffered a huge loss in income from tickets and secondary spend, and don't know how long this will continue.

"In the course of a normal year, we make around £4.5 million of essential investments back into the Railway, paid for out of visitor revenue. Clearly during the current year we will not be able to fund all the work that's needed, although we still want to do as much as possible. That's why we're continuing to fundraise, to secure a viable future for the SVR."

The SVR ran its last passenger service on 15th March and closed its associated pubs, cafes and shops. It's also had to cancel a number of major revenue-generating events, such as the Spring Steam and Diesel Galas, its popular 1940s weekends, and the celebrations that would have been taking place later this month to mark the 50th anniversary of its public train services.

Donations to the Fight Back Fund can be made at www.svr.co.uk and the SVR has recently opened an online shop at www.svrshop.co.uk.

Photo credit: Keith Wilkinson