

# Steam engine rolls into Moor Street Station to launch new Vintage Trains partnership

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Historic steam engines are set to play a greater role in the region's rail network following the signing of a ground-breaking new partnership.

The West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) has teamed up with Tyseley-based Vintage Trains in a bid to establish the Shakespeare Line as Britain's premier mainline heritage railway.

The company runs historic steam engines on a range of routes including the hugely popular Shakespeare Express between Birmingham Snow Hill and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Turnover from the UK's heritage railways has doubled over the decade to 2016 and a Parliamentary inquiry valued the annual contribution at £250 million.\*

WMRE, which oversees rail services in the region, is recognising the valuable contribution Vintage Trains makes to the local economy – boosting tourism, creating jobs and retaining valuable engineering skills at the Tyseley Loco Works.

In 2018 it became a Train Operating Company status allowing greater access to the main rail network.

They will now look for more opportunities to run steam engines on the rail network and to link with major events such as the Coventry City of Culture and Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street said: “Vintage Trains do a wonderful job bringing the golden age of steam to many thousands of visitors each year.

“Riding a steam train through the Warwickshire countryside is certainly a deeply exciting and nostalgic experience and I would urge everyone to give it go.

“But this partnership is also looking to the future. It is about how we make the most of this valuable asset, grow the Vintage Trains network and encourage more community volunteers as well as create more jobs and more apprenticeships.”

Michael Whitehouse, Chairman Vintage Trains Community Benefit Society said: “This partnership with WMRE will build on the Victorian initiatives that enabled the City of Birmingham to become the greatest manufacturing centre the world has ever known and for its citizens to develop skills and pride in their work as exports were sent by train worldwide.

“We will continue to provide exciting tourism experiences on the Shakespeare Line between Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon, create more jobs, teach and retain skills at our Tyseley depot and involve the diverse communities along the route in all that we do so that everyone who joins in can be proud of their contribution.”

Cllr Roger Lawrence, chair of the WMRE added: “Vintage Trains has already demonstrated how popular mainline steam can be. We are delighted to be working together with them to build on this so that mainline steam brings even greater value to the West Midlands rail network and the wider region”

Under the partnership we agree to:

- Identify additional opportunities for heritage services on the mainline to provide further value to the West Midlands rail network
- Integrate Vintage Trains into the work of the wider rail industry in the region, including future plans for Moor Street station
- Work together to realise community opportunities, including through the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership and through working on a joint plan for improvements at Tyseley station
- Bring Vintage Trains into wider industry planning for major events, such as the Commonwealth Games, to identify opportunities for mainline steam

Notes:

\*Figures from the [Heritage Railway Association](#) and [All Parliamentary Group on Heritage Rail](#)