



The Historical Railways Estate: Securing Its Potential

MAY 2021



The HRE Group

Foreward

The Historical Railways Estate (HRE) is a collection of around 3,100 legacy structures, owned by the Department for Transport (DfT) and managed on its behalf by Highways England (HE). Around 30% of these bridges, tunnels, culverts and viaducts are located in Scotland and Wales, responsibility for them not having been devolved.

Over the years, many of the structures have been rehabilitated to carry parts of the National Cycle Network. In the late Nineties, a large portfolio was transferred to Railway Paths Ltd, sister charity to Sustrans, as a means of quickly and simply delivering new routes. HE's predecessor, British Railways Board (Residuary), also granted leases for the use of their structures within active travel schemes.

The results of this collaboration can be seen and enjoyed through an expanding collection of routes, many of them benefiting from iconic viaducts and tunnels.



Hengoed Viaduct in South Wales, Devonshire Tunnel in Bath and Glen Ogle Viaduct in Central Scotland all now host active travel routes, bringing social and economic benefits to the people they serve and areas they pass through.

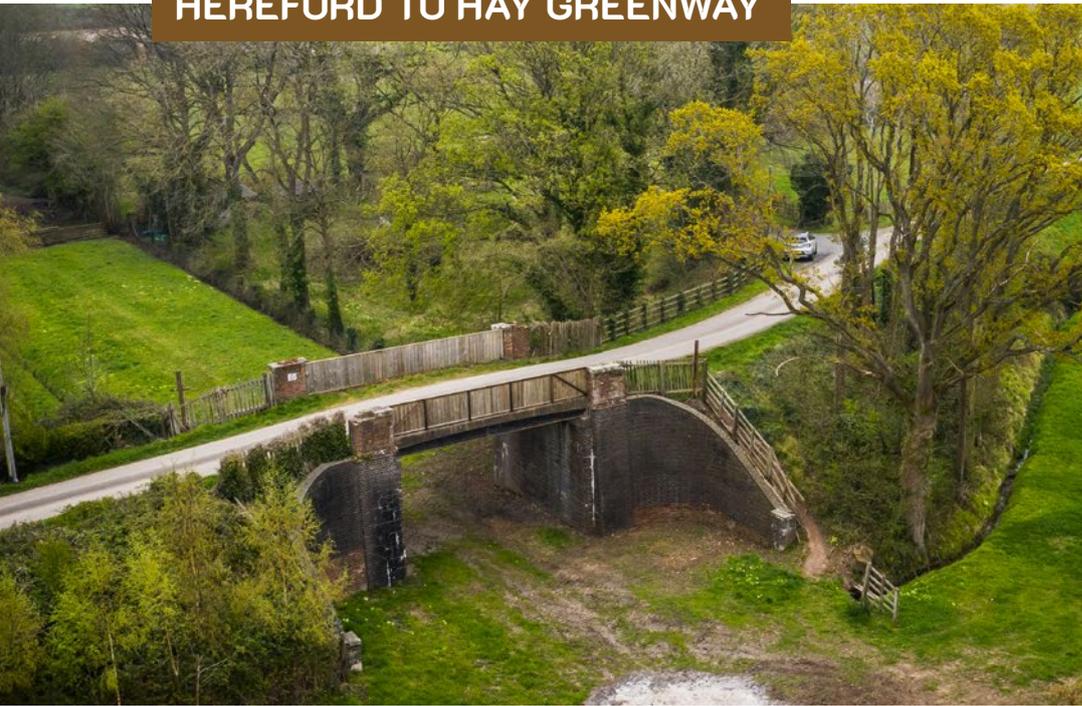
Regretably, Highways England's management agreement with the DfT now frames the Estate as a liability, the risks from which have to be minimised. Structures can only be brought back into positive public use upon transfer to another statutory body. Given the financial plight in which many local authorities find themselves, this policy has generally had the effect of condemning the Estate to decline.

In January 2021, it was revealed that Highways England intends to infill 115 bridges and tunnels, and demolish a further 15 over the next five years. As many as 480 structures could ultimately be under threat of demolition according to the company's 2016 Strategic Plan for future management of the Estate.

As this document illustrates, this programme of damaging interventions could thwart the development of active travel routes, railway reopenings and extensions to heritage lines, with 41 of the at-risk structures already intended for incorporation within such schemes or having identified future potential. All of the featured bridges and tunnels are under threat of infilling or demolition.

Given the Government's stated commitment to a green transport revolution, The HRE Group believes these plans are unsustainable and must be challenged before irreparable damage is inflicted.

HEREFORD TO HAY GREENWAY



ACTIVE TRAVEL ASSETS

BRIDGES: Four
CONDITION: Generally Fair
INTENTION: Infill
REASON: “To prevent an emergency arising”
STATUS: Permitted Development rejected for two bridges
 Planning application rejected for two bridges
 Strong local objections, elected representatives involved

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP



PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

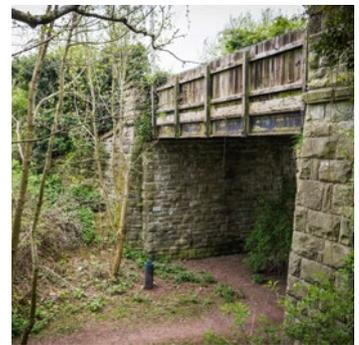


PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

The Hereford to Hay Greenway is an ambitious community-led project to create a 20-mile active travel route - mostly along a former railway - to attract visitors and secure a more sustainable future. It supports the Government’s plans for the environment and the County Council’s ‘Ambition for Herefordshire’. It is one of three schemes being developed to the west and south of Hereford, the others being the Golden Valley Active Travel Route and the Hay to Brecon Greenway.

Promoters say the link could be accessed by an estimated 60,000 people within half-a-mile of the route and by 200,000 people within 10 miles. The strong business case flows substantially from tourism, stimulating more than 200 adjacent businesses and encouraging new ones to open.

However Highways England intends to infill four metal span bridges along its route and notified the local planning authority (LPA) in September 2020 that it intended to undertake the work “to prevent an emergency arising”. The structures are in generally Fair condition.

This Permitted Development (PD) approach was rejected by the LPA and, instead, planning applications were submitted for two of the bridges at Kinnersley. These were refused in April 2021 on heritage, ecological, environmental and sustainability grounds.



NEILSTON-UPLAWMOOR COMMUNITY LINK



ACTIVE TRAVEL ASSETS

BRIDGES:	Three
CONDITION:	Generally Fair, locally Poor
INTENTION:	Infill
REASON:	Fractures in the arch barrel, spalling to the wingwalls
STATUS:	Strong local objections, elected representatives involved, Transport Scotland investigating

PHOTO: ROSS COWMAN

PHOTO: ALLAN OGG

PHOTO: GOOGLE STREETVIEW



In December 2019, the Development Trusts for Neilston and Uplawmoor in East Renfrewshire commissioned a report in support of a Sustrans Stage 2 (concept design) bid for an active travel link along a disused railway between the two settlements. The Stage 1 report had demonstrated its strategic significance and feasibility, subject to landowner agreement. The proposal is endorsed by East Renfrewshire Council (ERC).

The fast and busy three-mile road link between Neilston and Uplawmoor restricts its suitability for active travel, with significant gradients and bends, poor visibility and no footway or level verge.

Nevertheless Highways England's plans to infill three unusual concrete bridges spanning the railway, blocking the route. These structures, dating from 1903, are in generally Fair condition, but with Poor elements.

ERC told Highways England that the former railway alignment is identified as part of a Strategic Cycle Corridor in the Local Development Plan and the Trusts believe that planning permission for infilling is unlikely to be granted. Kirsten Oswald MP (East Renfrewshire) recognises the concerns of those involved and has confirmed that officials from Transport Scotland are looking into the matter.



ALNWICK GREENWAY

ACTIVE TRAVEL ASSETS

BRIDGES: Two
CONDITION: Good
INTENTION: Infill
REASON: "To prevent an emergency arising"
STATUS: Permitted Development rejected
Strong local objections, elected representatives involved, LA considering transfer

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

In April 2020, Highways England notified Northumberland County Council of its intention to infill two bridges at Rugley and Mossyford, spanning the former Cornhill railway to the south-west of Alnwick. The Town Council and Civic Society objected as the schemes would severely impact emerging plans for a recreational foot and cycle path across Alnwick Moor.

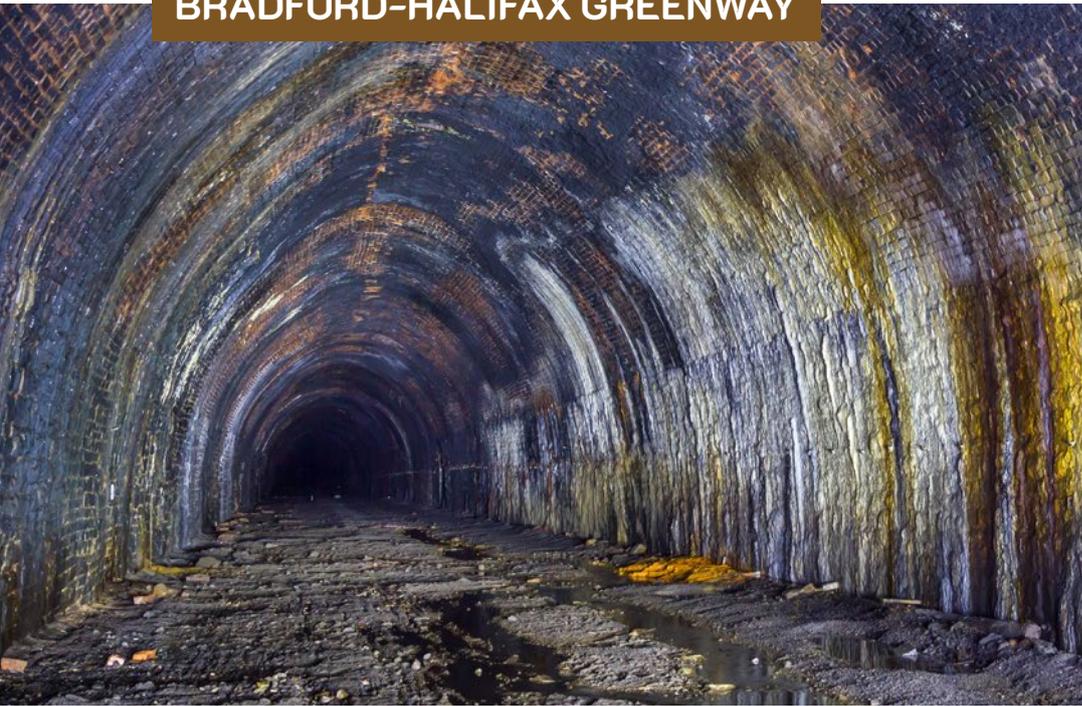
Five months later, faced with strong opposition, HE informed the local planning authority that the bridges would be infilled under Permitted Development powers "to prevent an emergency arising". Both structures are in Good condition.

Now known as The Alnwick Greenway, the first phase of the route is expected to extend for 2½ miles, heading west from a new housing development. Subsequent extensions could push it a further four miles to Edlingham Castle. Positive dialogue has taken place with the landowners; some preparatory drainage and vegetation clearance work has been undertaken. Much of the former railway has been informally used by walkers for many years.

As a result of the threat posed by Highways England, Northumberland County Council is investigating the viability of taking on the bridges' ownership.



BRADFORD-HALIFAX GREENWAY



ACTIVE TRAVEL ASSET

TUNNELS: One (1.4 miles long)
CONDITION: Generally Fair, locally Very Poor
INTENTION: Partial Infill
REASON: Perceived threat to public safety
STATUS: Planning application pending
 Strong objections, statutory bodies support repurposing

PHOTO: FORGOTTEN BELICS

Queensbury Tunnel is a 1.4-mile long disused railway tunnel between Bradford and Halifax in West Yorkshire, 400 feet below ground at its deepest point. Highways England claims that it presents a threat to public safety. Around 20% of it is in Very Poor condition; the remainder is Fair.



PHOTO: FORGOTTEN BELICS

Since 2018, HE has been progressing an abandonment scheme. Due to a landowner dispute, the £545K of preparatory works - which were intended to take four months - have been ongoing for almost three years, with the cost having risen to around £7.5M. More than 7,600 people have so far objected to the planning application. The cost of the tunnel's repair is thought to be around £7M.



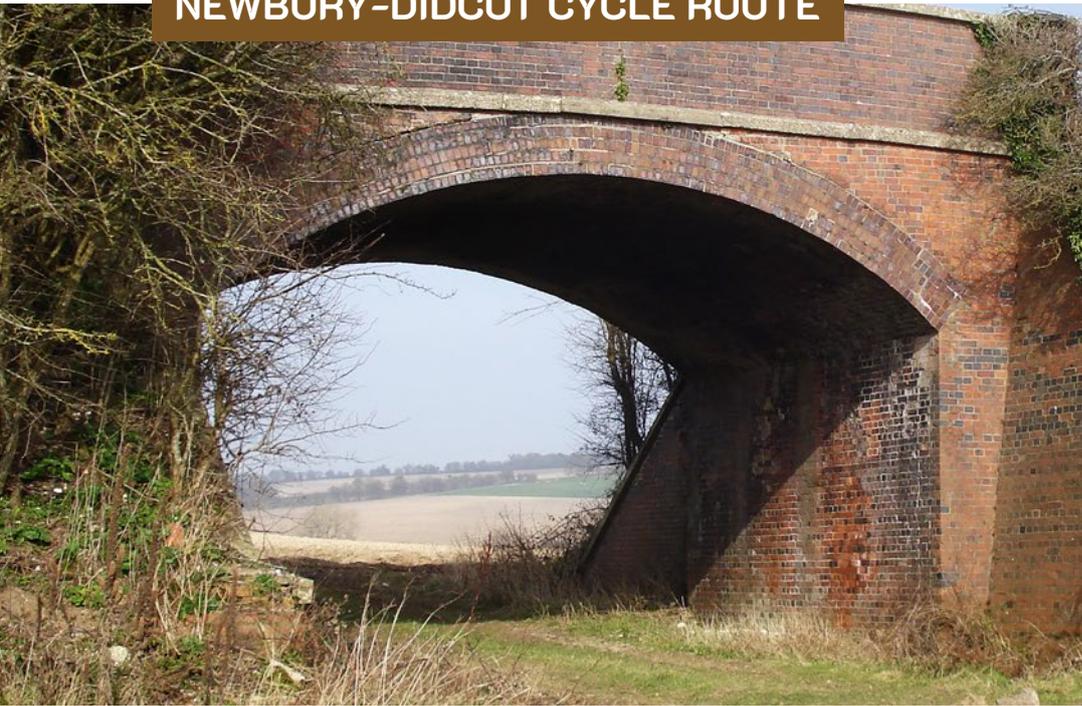
PHOTO: FORGOTTEN BELICS

The Bradford-Halifax Greenway is a proposed active travel link between two substantial conurbations separated by challenging Pennine topography. Its core route would serve commuters whilst a spur heading north to Keighley would connect tourists to Brontë Country and a steam railway. A 2017 Sustrans study suggested the Greenway could generate £37.6M in social, economic and tourism benefits over 30 years. A Benefit:Cost Ratio as high as 5.6:1 has been suggested.



The tunnel represents a key strategic asset, without which the active travel aspirations - supported by multiple stakeholders - could not be delivered.

NEWBURY-DIDCOT CYCLE ROUTE



ACTIVE TRAVEL ASSET

BRIDGES:	One
CONDITION:	Generally Fair
INTENTION:	Infill
REASON:	Arch ring separation evident throughout
STATUS:	Permitted Development invoked

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP



PHOTO: BILL NICHOLLS

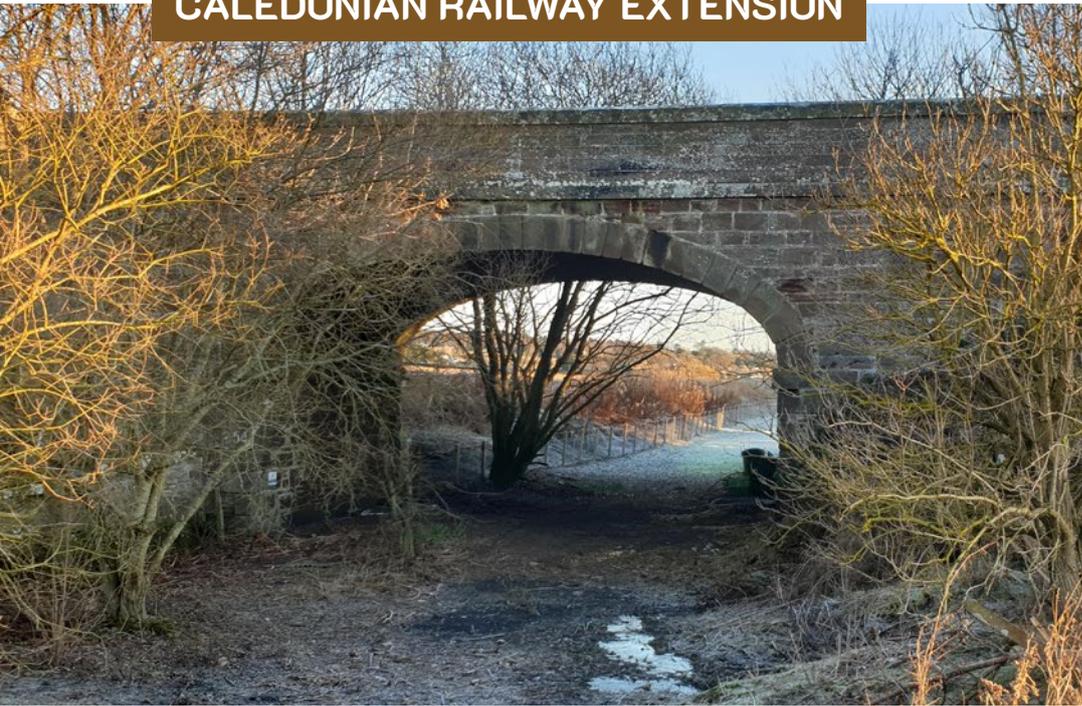
In 2005, a local campaign group carried out a feasibility study into the repurposing of the former Newbury-Didcot railway as a cycle path, their long-standing aspiration. The section between Hermitage and Hampstead Norreys was the easiest section to convert, the route being largely intact except for its severing by the M4 motorway.

Stakeholder engagement brought widespread support, including from West Berkshire Council, local landowners and parish councillors. Funding was attracted from Highways England's ring-fenced cycling fund - which was actively looking for projects - and the company contracted Kier to undertake the first phase of works, opening in February 2020. Two HRE structures were transferred to the Council to accommodate the path. The plan is to extend the route towards Newbury before pushing it north to Didcot.

That latter section is intended to follow the former railway beneath a bridge earmarked for infilling, half-a-mile north of Hampstead Norreys. Despite its Fair condition, Highways England says that arch ring separation is evident throughout and action is needed "to prevent an emergency arising".



CALEDONIAN RAILWAY EXTENSION



STEAM RAILWAY ASSET

BRIDGES:	One
CONDITION:	Generally Good (Grade C listed)
INTENTION:	Infill
REASON:	Water ingress with staining and open joints throughout
STATUS:	Opposition from Council and heritage railway No Permitted Development rights

PHOTO: JON GILL



PHOTO: SIMON DOUGLAS

Caledonian Railway (Brechin) Ltd operates steam trains on a four-mile section of line built by the Aberdeen Railway in the 1840s. Its long-term ambition is to extend the route 3½ miles eastwards to Dubton.

But Highways England is intending to infill a bridge on the extension, blocking the route with aggregate and foamed concrete. Embankments are proposed to both sides of the structure, occupying private property, although the landowner has not been approached.

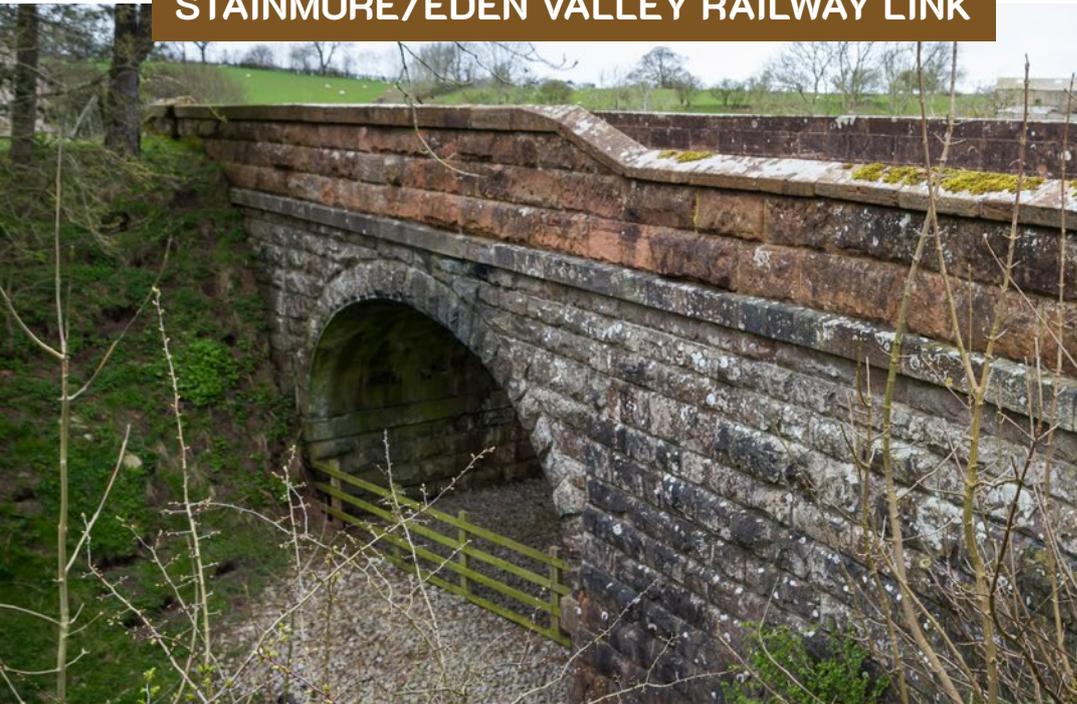
The bridge - which is in Good condition - is unusual in construction, with an arch comprising five masonry ribs. It is Grade C-listed. Despite this, Highways England says that there is staining from water ingress and open joints; as a result, infilling is considered necessary “to prevent further deterioration and remove the risk of future collapse”.

Generating tourist income, the railway enjoys an excellent relationship with the local council and is supported by MPs/MSPs. Infilling would have significant impacts and a replacement structure would have to be built.

The Council has made clear that no Permitted Developments rights are applicable.



STAINMORE/EDEN VALLEY RAILWAY LINK



STEAM RAILWAY ASSET

BRIDGES:	One
CONDITION:	Generally Good
INTENTION:	Infill
REASON:	1998 assessment rated its capacity at 17 tonnes
STATUS:	Heritage railways opposed, engagement with local council and elected representatives

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP



PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP



PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP



In 1995, the Eden Valley Railway Society (EVR) was formed with the primary objective of restoring the line's six-mile Warcop-Appleby section and progressing the possibility of extending it to Kirkby Stephen. Meanwhile, since 2000, the Stainmore Railway Company has established a base at Kirkby Stephen East Station, sharing the long-term aspiration of the EVR to connect the two operations. This would greatly enhance the tourism offer in the Eden Valley and deliver economic benefits.

The five-mile missing link presents a number of engineering challenges but outline plans are being developed to overcome them. Two bridges are thought to be under threat from Highways England's infilling programme although only one has been confirmed, a masonry span at Great Musgrave.

Although it remains in Good condition, Highways England says that an assessment in 1998 rated the structure as suitable only to carry 17 tonnes. It is therefore progressing an infilling scheme to "remove the associated risk of structural collapse and harm to the public".

Blocking the trackbed would significantly affect the viability of reconnecting the two heritage operations and support in challenging Highways England is being sought from the local council and elected representatives.

MID-NORFOLK RAILWAY EXTENSION



STEAM RAILWAY ASSET

BRIDGES:	One
CONDITION:	Generally Fair
INTENTION:	Infill
REASON:	2003 assessment rated its capacity at 3 tonnes
STATUS:	Heritage railway opposed, engagement with local council

PHOTO: NORFOLK ORBITAL RAILWAY



PHOTO: NORFOLK ORBITAL RAILWAY

The Mid-Norfolk Railway (MNR) is operated by volunteers from their base in Dereham. From there, the 11-mile line connects to the market town of Wymondham, west of Norwich.

The long-term ambition is to push northwards to Fakenham and discussions have been held with North Norfolk District Council regarding the railway's reinstatement and with Fakenham Town Council about a station close to the town centre. The trackbed has been safeguarded from prejudicial development for this purpose. Once completed, the route would pass for 23 miles through the middle of Norfolk.

Plans for the Norfolk Orbital Railway are also proposed via the MNR, linking Wymondham to the coastal town at Sheringham, both on the national rail network.

At Gateley, a bridge comprising six longitudinal cast iron girders carries a narrow country lane over the former railway. Highways England says that an assessment in 2003 found the structure suitable only to carry 3 tonnes and a weight limit has been applied accordingly. However the structure is intended for infilling, blocking the route.



PENRITH-KESWICK RAILWAY REOPENING



RAILWAY REOPENING ASSET

BRIDGES: Two
CONDITION: Good/Fair
INTENTION: Partial Infill
REASON: 1999 assessment rated its capacity at 3 tonnes
STATUS: One scheme completed following planning application
Opposition from railway reinstatement group

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

The reinstatement of the Keswick branch in the Lake District - which closed in 1972 - is advocated for social, commuting and tourism purposes. A study has suggested that as many as 450,000 passengers would use it annually. Traction was gained in 2020 when the DfT confirmed it would work with partners to develop an application for feasibility funding. The proposal is supported by local MPs and councillors.

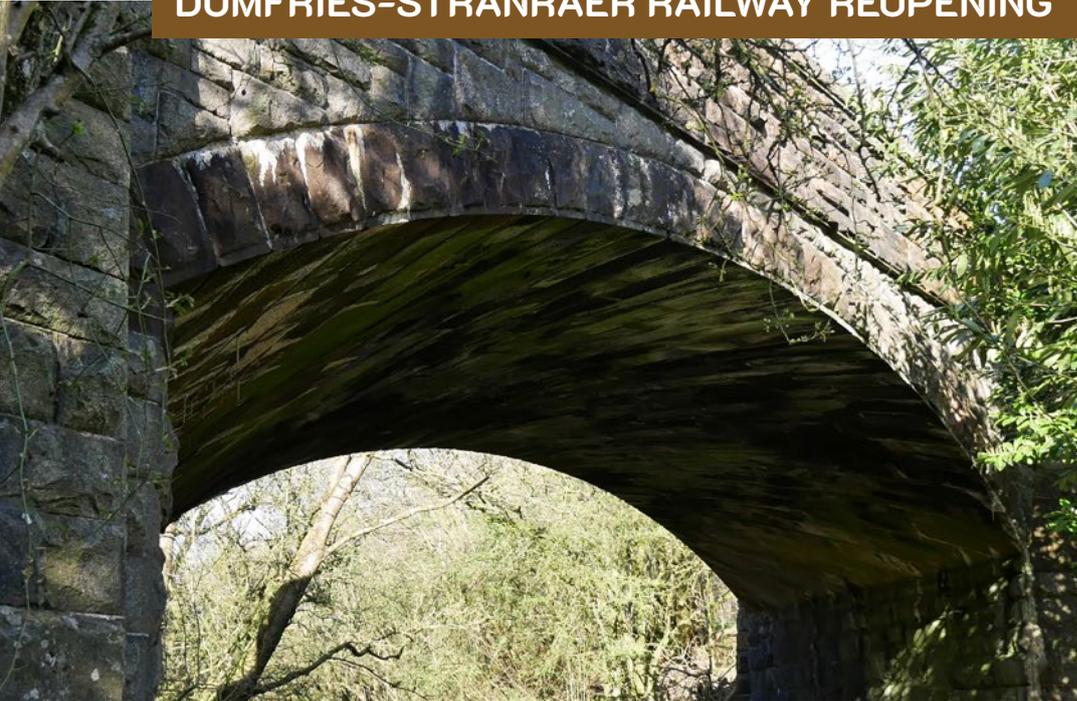
Highways England has already partially infilled one bridge on the route and two more were earmarked as part of its ongoing programme. One of these was completed in the spring of 2021 and the other has been granted planning permission despite the objections of campaigners and the route's safeguarding for sustainable transport use.

The remaining bridge comprises five brick jack arches spanning transversely between six longitudinal cast iron girders. Highways England says that a structural assessment in 1999 rated it as suitable only to carry 3 tonnes. It remains in Good condition and is crossed by a track to two outlying farmhouses.

Although an archway formed of Asset Multiplate is intended for installation, it would not offer sufficient structure gauge for trains. As a result, any reinstatement of the line would likely involve the reconstruction of the bridges, negatively impacting on the business case.



DUMFRIES-STRANRAER RAILWAY REOPENING



RAILWAY REOPENING ASSET

BRIDGES: One
CONDITION: Fair
INTENTION: Infill
REASON: Arch barrel has open joints
STATUS: Opposition from railway reinstatement group, elected representatives contacted
Permission to infill granted

PHOTO: CHRIS ROSINDALE



PHOTO: CHRIS ROSINDALE

The 73-mile line between Dumfries and Stranraer is being considered for possible reopening by the Scottish Government as part of measures to improve transport links to the Irish Sea ferry gateways. The idea had first been discussed in 2016 as an alternative to carrying freight on the A75 and it now features in a study of opportunities for better regional connectivity.

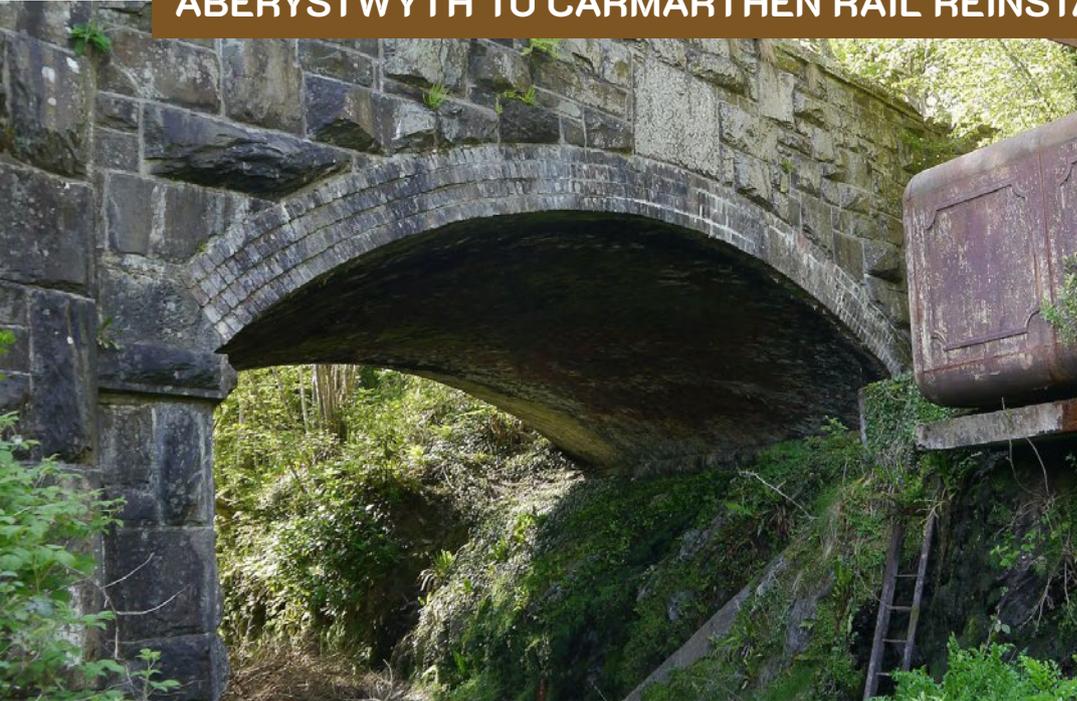
At Lochanhead, the former railway passes beneath a masonry arched bridge which is intended for infilling. Although it remains in Good condition, Highways England says that the arch has open joints throughout and the scheme would “remove the associated risk of structural collapse and harm to the public”.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has concluded that the work constitutes repair and given its consent for the work to take place without planning permission, thus preventing public scrutiny of the proposals and their impacts.

Campaigners have challenged the Council’s planning team and approached elected representatives.



ABERYSTWYTH TO CARMARTHEN RAIL REINSTATEMENT



RAILWAY REOPENING ASSET

BRIDGES: One
CONDITION: Fair
INTENTION: Infill
REASON: "Fit for purpose"
STATUS: Opposition from railway reinstatement group

PHOTO: BOB MORGAN



In 2018, Transport for Wales (TfW) commissioned Mott MacDonald to undertake a feasibility study into the reinstatement of the railway connecting Aberystwyth and Carmarthen. It was funded by the Welsh Government in recognition of the 'Case for Change' in the improvement of strategic connections between the two towns.

The study concluded that the project does not present a positive economic case and is only likely to be progressed on the basis of wider societal needs and strategic aims. Politically, reopening is seen as important to revitalise the Welsh economy following the Covid-19 pandemic. The cost is currently estimated at £620M.

The study recognised that any need to provide new infrastructure would weaken the business case. Near Llanddewi Brefi, a masonry arched bridge carries a lane over the former trackbed. Highways England describes it as "fit for purpose" and that no action is currently required; however it has earmarked the structure for infilling.

BRIDPORT RENEWAL CORRIDOR



RAILWAY REOPENING ASSET

BRIDGES:	One
CONDITION:	Poor, locally Very Poor
INTENTION:	Demolish
REASON:	Fractures and open joints, ongoing movement and rotation of the abutments.
STATUS:	Objection from development group, elected representatives involved

PHOTO: NIGEL EWENS



PHOTO: NIGEL EWENS

The Bridport Renewal Corridor is an innovative, ambitious and sustainable project incorporating a narrow-gauge community railway with a multi-user path alongside it, and the sensitive regeneration of villages delivering local solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges. It aims to enhance biodiversity, wellbeing and reduce environmental footprints.

The transport elements rely on the alignment of the former Bridport Railway. Near Toller Porcorum, the route crosses Barrowland Lane on a single span metal bridge which is in generally Poor condition, exhibiting fractures, open joints, bulging and movement/rotation of the abutments.

Highways England proposes to demolish the structure and grade the embankments back to 1:2.5. This arrangement would be undesirable for a cycle route, forcing users to cross the road on the level rather than benefiting from grade separation. For the proposed light railway, it would demand significant re-engineering of the approaches to meet the standards for a modern replacement bridge. The costs are likely to be prohibitive, imposing an additional burden estimated at £750K.

Highways England has told Dorset Council that “we do not anticipate that a planning application will be required” and that works are intended to be in August 2021 subject to completion of relevant ecological studies.



STAWARD STATION



PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP

HERITAGE ASSET

BRIDGES: One
CONDITION: Good
INTENTION: Infill
REASON: 2009 assessment rated its capacity at 18 tonnes
STATUS: Permitted Development rejected
Strong local objections, elected representatives involved

Built primarily to serve local lead mines, Northumberland's former Allendale branch opened in 1868, engineered by Thomas Bewick. It had three intermediate stations, including a halt at Staward which closed to passengers in September 1930 and freight on 20 November 1950.

The main building is now a dwelling whilst the former waiting room has been sympathetically converted for rent as a holiday let. Together with the adjacent masonry arched bridge, the site has considerable heritage value as a fine example of a small rural station.

In September 2020, Highways England notified Northumberland County Council that the bridge was going to be infilled under Permitted Development powers "to prevent an emergency arising". An assessment in 2009 had rated it as suitable only to carry 18 tonnes, although an independent inspection and others by council officers have recorded it as being in Good condition. A minor road crosses it.

Despite the supposedly urgent circumstances, no work had taken place by March 2021, prompting the Council to reject the use of PD powers and insisting instead that planning permission is obtained.

As the community views the structure as a valuable historic asset, the infilling scheme is now the focus of considerable local opposition.



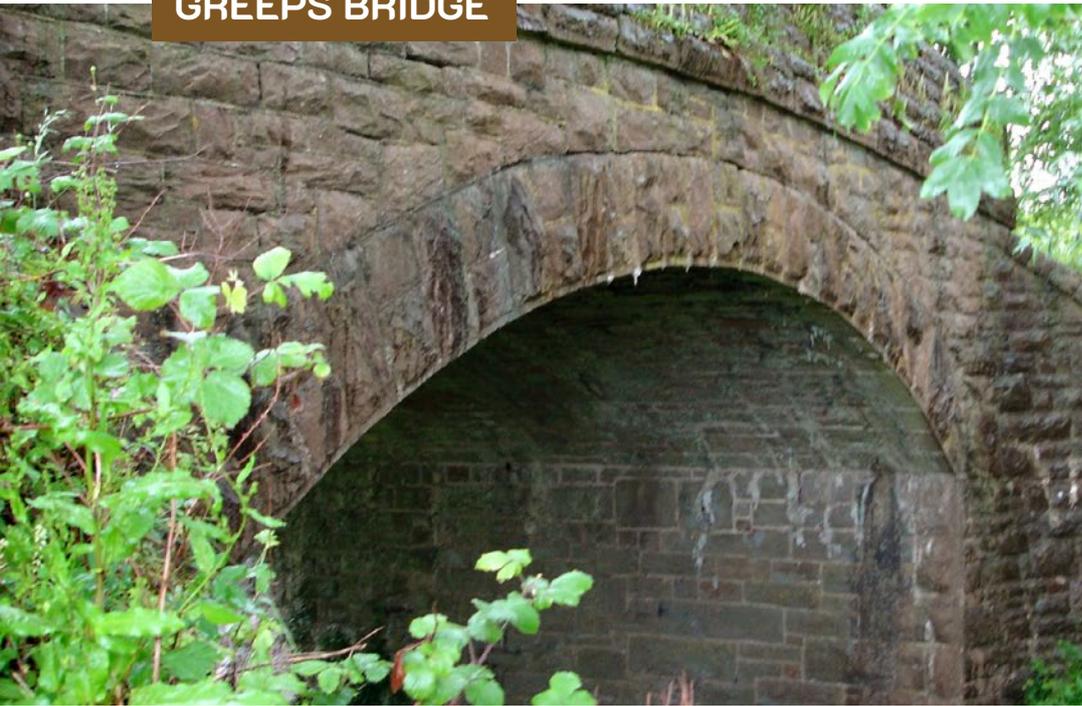
PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP



PHOTO: THE HRE GROUP



GREEPS BRIDGE



HERITAGE ASSET

BRIDGES: One
CONDITION: Fair
INTENTION: Infill
REASON: “To prevent an emergency arising”
STATUS: Opposition from local history group



Prior to its diversion in 1908, the Cornwall Railway between Saltash and St Germans followed a route closer to the River Lynher. Engineered by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the line opened on 4 May 1859, four months prior to his death.

The route’s six timber viaducts were all dismantled following closure, leaving Greeps Bridge - carrying the access road to Ince Castle - as a rare survivor of Brunel’s original alignment.

The structure is in Fair condition, damp in places with some calcite deposits. It is showing no signs of distress.

However Highways England has told Cornwall Council that the bridge “represents an ongoing and increasing risk to public safety” and should be infilled “to prevent an emergency arising”.

KINNELL BRIDGE

HERITAGE ASSET

BRIDGES:	One
CONDITION:	Fair
INTENTION:	Infill
REASON:	Hairline fractures in the arch ribs and open joints throughout
STATUS:	No Permitted Development rights

PHOTO: SIMON DOUGLAS

PHOTO: SIMON DOUGLAS

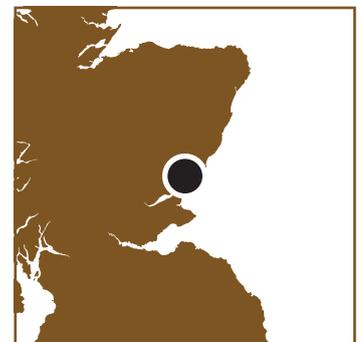
The Aberdeen Railway connected the city to Arbroath, Forfar and onwards to Central Scotland. It was engineered by Alexander Gibb (1804-1867), with the southernmost section opening in 1848.

Located here was the castellated Friockheim Viaduct of nine 60-foot spans, elliptical in shape and rising just 16 feet. The arches were unusual in form, with each one comprising six longitudinal masonry ribs bonded by transverse links, two of which were inserted at the crown. The structure saw no traffic after 1908 and was demolished in the 1980s.

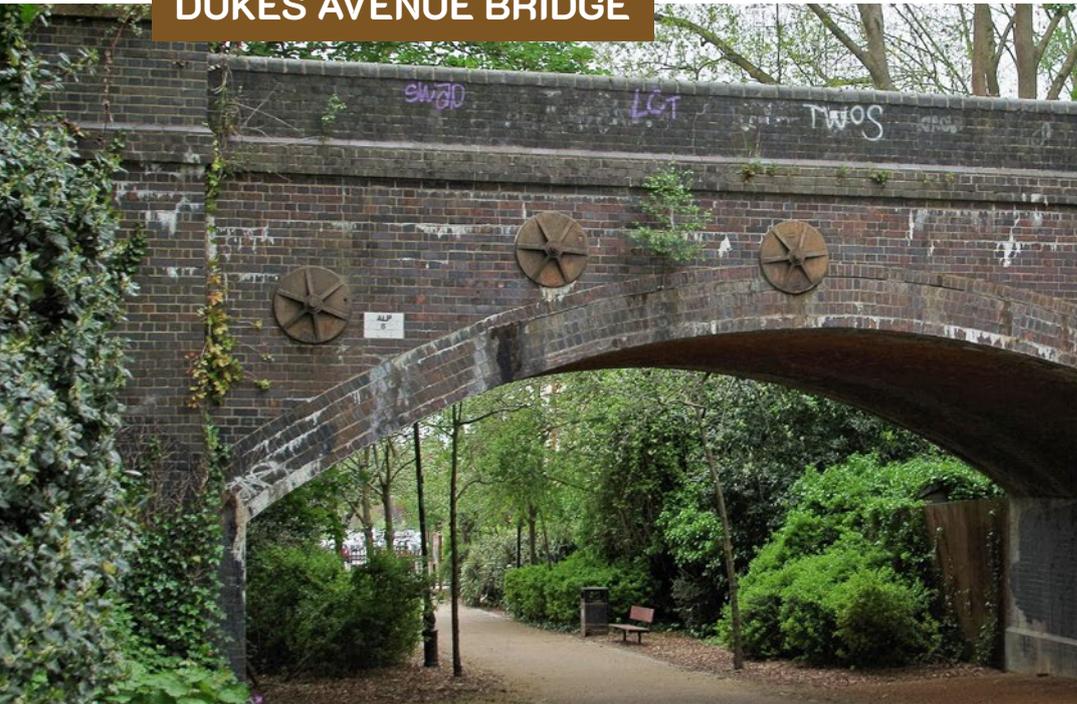
However a number of the route's overline bridges were similarly constructed. One of those surviving carries a country lane over the trackbed near Kinnell.

The structure is in Good condition, but Highways England says that there are open joints throughout and several hairline fractures; as a result, the company proposes to infill the bridge to "remove the associated risk of structural collapse and harm to the public".

It stands as an elegant and exceptional piece of engineering, although the reasons behind the adoption of its design are unknown.



DUKES AVENUE BRIDGE



HERITAGE ASSET

BRIDGES:	One
CONDITION:	Fair
INTENTION:	Demolish
REASON:	Natural shrinking/ swelling of London clay will cause deterioration
STATUS:	Strong local objections, elected representatives involved Permitted Development powers invoked

PHOTO: MATT BUCK

PHOTO: YURRI



Dukes Avenue bridge is thought to have been opened as a significant entry point into Alexandra Park and Palace in 1906.

The brick structure is listed within Haringey's Local Plan and sits inside a Conservation Area, resulting in a presumption in favour of retention. It constitutes a non-designated heritage asset due to its architectural and historic importance, making a valuable contribution to the area's character. It is also listed as a Designated Site of Industrial Heritage Interest (GLIAS).

According to Highways England, the bridge represents a risk to public safety. Its engineer has expressed concerns that the increasing cycle of drought and very wet weather affects the ground conditions, and the natural shrinking and swelling of the London clay will cause a rapid deterioration of the bridge's condition, leading to an emergency.

HE is seeking to demolish the structure under Permitted Development powers which are only applicable if an emergency is arising presenting a threat of death or injury. Haringey Council does not accept this scenario and draws support from an inspection report carried out by its own structural engineers.

HORSPATH BRIDGE



COMMUNITY ASSET

BRIDGES: One
CONDITION: Fair
INTENTION: Demolish
REASON: Unclear
STATUS: Parapets demolished as emergency intervention
 Considerable local opposition
 Road closure being discussed to allow repair

PHOTO: SIMON LOGAN

The railway from Thame to Oxford opened in 1864, with a halt provided in Horspath next to Cuddesdon Road bridge. The line closed in 1967.

A section of the old trackbed through the village was acquired by Horspath Parish Council in 1982 and is now managed as a nature reserve. The adjacent tunnel has been converted into a bat hibernaculum.

The community regards the bridge as an important heritage asset, acting as both a traffic calming measure and wildlife corridor. However attempts to acquire it have been rejected, with Highways England asserting that locals would not have the necessary expertise to look after it properly.

In February 2021, almost eight years after assuming maintenance responsibility for the structure, HE's contractor arrived unexpectedly in the village, closed the road and began the emergency demolition of its parapets. This prompted a protest during which two dozen residents occupied the deck. It is believed that roots had forced their way into the brickwork, causing the parapets to lean.

Highways England intended to fully demolish the bridge, but has now committed to undertaking a repair if Oxfordshire County Council grants the necessary road closure.



PHOTO: HELEN MORGAN



PHOTO: ROS O'DAY



Postscript

The 24 HRE structures referenced in this report represent a snapshot of those that should be secured, either for defined future transport roles or their enhanced heritage value. Others are needed for proposed active travel schemes - one for a country walk in Bedfordshire, another for a bridleway in Kent - and a further collection has identified potential for medium-term use, for example within missing links in Devon and Cornwall's cycle network. These span disused railways safeguarded from adverse development under policies adopted in the councils' Local Plans.

Our evaluation suggests that about one-third of the 130 bridges and tunnels earmarked for demolition or infilling by Highways England has demonstrable value, although another third has no realistic value and could reasonably be put beyond use without apparent consequences.

It is recognised that the 3,100 structures of the Historical Railways Estate have to be managed appropriately to ensure they present no meaningful public safety risk. A handful of the threatened bridges carry A-roads and potentially hundreds of vehicles every day. Most however are on quiet country lanes and farm tracks, are in Good/Fair condition and show no signs of being overloaded.



Photographs showing the typical nature of the roads crossing the bridges intended for infilling. Whilst this does not prevent all heavy vehicles using them, it significantly restricts the size and volume of traffic.

In many cases, Highways England has redefined the word “emergency” by attempting to invoke Permitted Development powers for routine asset management schemes. No evidence has been provided to support any likelihood of a collapse. However this approach circumvents any possible difficulties associated with planning applications. It is clear that HE's actions are disproportionate, costly (a typical infilling scheme costs £145K) and unjustified, as well as undermining the efforts of communities to build a better future. They could have negative impacts for generations to come.

We encourage anyone who recognises the opportunities offered by the Historical Railways Estate to sign the petition set up by The HRE Group to demonstrate opposition to Highways England's destructive programme.

www.change.org/theHREgroup



The HRE Group

The Historical Railways Estate: Securing Its Potential (May 2021)

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