



## **Keighley & Worth Valley Railway Press Release: Worth Valley Railway announces major bridge replacement programme.**

*Issued on: Wednesday 1st May*

**The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, one of Britain's leading heritage steam railways and one of Yorkshire's top tourist attractions, is planning a partial three-week closure of their five-mile line in September.**

The Haworth to Oxenhope section of their route will be shut down for up to four weeks while the Railway undertakes one of their biggest ever volunteer-led civil engineering projects, the replacement of the 135-year-old Bridge 27. The Keighley to Haworth section of the Victorian branch line will remain open to weekend passenger services while the work is being undertaken.

Engineers are plotting the shut-down following the key school summer holiday period's daily passenger train services. The target is to replace Bridge 27 which spans Bridgehouse Beck, one of the River Worth's main tributaries, over three to four weeks.

The railway was awarded one million pounds from the Government's Community Ownership Fund which is part of the 'levelling up' programme to undertake the work on the bridge.

The current bridge was built in 1889 as part of a reconstruction of a previous bridge erected in 1867 for the opening of the line. The existing bridge is two separate structures, but they both utilise the same abutments and pier. One carries the line into Haworth Yard, but this span received significant work in the late 1970s and is not part of the up-coming scheme.

The other structure that carries the K&WVR's main line now needs renewal due to the poor condition of the supporting abutments, the mid-stream pier it sits on and its iron girders.

James Barlow, the Keighley & Worth Valley's Chief Civil Engineer, explained: "We have had the replacement of Bridge 27 on our radar for more than 10 years and we've been planning its renewal since around 2015.

"Our regular inspections had picked up the deterioration that has to be expected in a structure of its age. It's replacement this year is the culmination of nearly 10 years of effort by our volunteer engineering team, supported by specialist designers and contractors.

"We have been working with our designers Cass Hayward since 2019 on the design and are in the process of entering into contract with multiple suppliers for the physical construction works."

"During the spring of 2024 we will remove the track and install 12 No. 16m reinforced concrete piles behind the existing structure. After which we will put the track back to enable the summer services to run.

"At the end of the summer, starting on the evening of the September 1st, we will demolish the existing bridge and install a new one placed on the piles. Replacing the existing structure with one

that requires less maintenance in the future will also enable our volunteers to focus on the maintenance and improvement of other areas of the railway.”

“We really appreciate the support shown by both our volunteers and the local community during this job, for which we are all eternally grateful.”

Preparatory work for the project is scheduled to take place between May and the beginning of September and will have an impact on car parking in the Haworth Station and Bridgehouse Mill area.

Full details of the project can be found on the railway’s web site:<https://kwvr.co.uk/bridge27update/>

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**For more information please contact:**

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**About the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway:**

The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway is a registered charity (number 1136853) and is operated by a team of over 500 volunteers.

The Keighley & Worth Valley is a unique 5-mile branch line railway set in the heart of West Yorkshire, running heritage steam and diesel trains through stunning Brontë Countryside.

The railway passes through iconic stations like Haworth & Oakworth which featured in the 1970 film "The Railway Children" and the new feature film "The Railway Children Return".

The railway runs services at least every weekend, with extra services through the summer & holiday seasons.

Come and experience the sound & smell of a steam railway, travel along five-mile of heritage railway, visit six individual stations, full of character and two museums with one of the finest collections of restored railway carriages and memorabilia of how railways used to be.