NORTH YORKSHIRE NYMR® MOORS RAILWAY

AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway Trust

STRATEGIC PLAN FROM 2026

NYMR.CO.UK

INTRODUCTION

Just ten years after the opening of the first modern railway in 1825, the Whitby and Pickering Railway opened, forming one of the first links in Yorkshire's rail network. After closure in the 'Beeching' cuts, local people formed the North Yorkshire Moors Railway Trust and raised money to buy the route and recruited volunteers to reopen it as a community heritage venture. Over its fifty years of operation the NYMR has far exceeded the vision of its founders. It has enjoyed great success, won public affection and has successfully weathered huge challenges.

As the Trust looks forward to the bicentenary of its unique railway, it's time to shape a direction and priorities for the years ahead.

Today's challenges are different from those confronting our founders but are at least as great. We need to shape a way forward that ensures the long-term future of a very special organisation in a rapidly changing world. This document sets out the direction we envisage and sketches out what success might look like. It reminds us of the purposes and guiding principles that provide the foundation on which we want to build.

WHAT IS THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS RAILWAY?

The NYMR is an independent charitable trust which owns, cares for and operates its 18-mile heritage railway from Pickering to Grosmont.

Uniquely amongst heritage railways many of its trains continue their journeys onward over the National Network to Whitby under the terms of an operating licence. The NYMR's crews are the only volunteers who drive passenger trains on the National Network.

The Trust is an Accredited Museum under the scheme administered by Arts Council England. It is a statutory Light Railway and a Licensed Train Operator regulated by ORR.

The Trust is dependent on its income from visitors and donors to fund its operations. It has no underpinning public funding. It relies on its supporters, including 8,000 members and 800 volunteers, together with legacies and occasional capital grants to fill the gap between fare income and the ca £11M annual cost of preserving and operating the railway, and delivering its education, training and conservation objectives.

In 2023 it became the first Heritage Railway to be admitted to Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisation programme of supported cultural organisations. The Trust therefore currently benefits from a five-year support programme worth £250k per annum.

With around 100 full time equivalent staff, the Trust is the biggest employer in the North York Moors National Park. It is estimated to contribute around £30M each year to the local economy, not least from the high proportion of staying visitors that the line attracts into the area.

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

As we look to the decade ahead, we are reminded that the most remarkable progress starts with a roadmap; it is a declaration of intent. It reflects our unwavering commitment to growth, innovation, and creating lasting impact.

The next 10 years will bring unprecedented change, through environmental and technological breakthroughs, shifting societal needs, and global challenges we can't yet fully predict. But with change comes opportunity. By anchoring ourselves to a clear roadmap, we give shape to that future rather than letting it shape us.

This plan is our compass. It challenges us to think bigger, act with purpose, and lead with integrity. It invites every team member, partner, and stakeholder to join us on a journey fuelled by curiosity, courage, and conviction.

We are not simply reacting to the future; we are building it.

Let's get to work.

Jerry Swift,
Chair
North Yorkshire Moors Railway Trust

OUR PURPOSES

The NYMR is a unique institution – it isn't a commercial visitor attraction or a transport provider. It is a community-based heritage organisation embedded into a unique landscape. It's a charity and an Accredited Museum which stands or falls by its own efforts. Its four Charitable Purposes outline the NYMR's functions:

- **Caring for the heritage**: preserving and sustaining the operation of a near 200 year old railway, its infrastructure, heritage rolling stock, operating and associated equipment and skills to provide an immersive experience for visitors and volunteers alike.

- **Telling stories and engaging curiosity** by providing a compelling experience for all our visitors – families, school groups, specialists and researchers.

- **Building our community of supporters**, volunteers, visitors and staff by breaking down the barriers to engagement for new generations of diverse audiences.

- **Addressing the world's increasing concern for the environment** by understanding and caring for our unique green corridor through the North York Moors National Park.

We deliver our purposes through the involvement of several hundred volunteers, supported by the paid staff who make us one of the biggest employers within the North York Moors National Park. Around 8,000 supporters are Members of the Trust. The passion and commitment of staff, supporters and volunteers are what makes the NYMR possible.

Much of the development and change envisaged in "Steaming On" (our last ten-year plan) has been delivered. Now is the time to be clear about where we aim to be ten years from now and what we must deliver if we are to get there.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Whilst change is necessary to ensure our future success, we must remember what is important to us and the guiding principles that define us:

- Our commitment to the heritage and landscape in our care and to helping new generations enjoy and value it.
- Maintaining steam and other heritage operations on our railway from Pickering to Grosmont and on to Whitby.
- A community based on members and volunteers, led by volunteer Trustees and aided by professionals, many of whom we develop ourselves.
- Putting visitors, volunteers and supporters at the forefront of our thinking.
- Being a great place to work or volunteer.
- A paramount commitment to the safety of all those who participate in our activities.
- A continuing determination to succeed no matter what.

All of us, visitors, volunteers, staff, feel that sense of wonder that railways in general, and steam in particular, have always generated. We want everyone touched by the Railway to feel that tingle. That little boy's expression in the famous Southern Railway poster, sums it up. The friendly driver, the little boy in awe of him and his mighty steam engine. The excitement of the train to the seaside. Gleaming brass, hissing steam, the smell of coal and oil – it's a different age and our job is to help new generations understand how this iconic technology shaped the modern world.

Image courtesy: Creative Commons

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NYMR

Our vision is very simple – it is that the NYMR continues to do what it currently does – but better and more sustainably. To do this in a rapidly changing world, we understand that continual change is necessary.

We aim to be:-

the place that year by year opens peoples' eyes to the railway story by delivering –

UNFORGETTABLE HERITAGE JOURNEYS ACROSS THE MOORS

– for our visitors and the teams who make it possible – today and into the future

We get great feedback today. Our vision is that we hear these responses consistently from the widest range of contacts:-

Visitor A wonderful experience, welcoming to all and not to be missed.

The team A great place to work or volunteer.

Specialists and enthusiasts The best heritage railway experience and a key part of the North East's heritage.

Learners A great place to find out about the North York Moors, the story of railways and heritage skills.

Our peers A centre of excellence in heritage care and interpretation.

The region An asset to the community, the region and the North York Moors National Park.

To achieve that consistency, there is always a lot to do:-

- Unleash an organisation moving confidently forward.
- Develop a confident, professional, passionate and well-trained team.
- Understand the needs of our historic infrastructure and keep it in good order.
- Provide experiences and services attractive to audiences today and tomorrow.
- Achieve financial robustness.

It's a big and broad-ranging agenda that can best be summarised under four simple headings:-

THE FOUR MAIN JOBS WE DO

We aim to care for the **HERITAGE**, to provide great **EXPERIENCES** for people and to encourage **PARTICIPATION** from those who want to help make it happen. All this can only happen if we successfully make our organisation **ROBUST** and flexible enough to navigate challenging times.

The NYMR is a complex organisation and our success will depend on our ability to focus.
We can keep things simple by focussing on these four main jobs we do:

1. PRESERVING AND IMPROVING OUR HERITAGE:
Caring for our historic railway, its heritage collections and its environment.

2. DELIVERING GREAT EXPERIENCES:
Offering great heritage experiences in the North York Moors National Park

3. ENCOURAGING ENJOYABLE PARTICIPATION:
Engaging diverse communities as both visitors and volunteers.

4. ENSURING A ROBUST ORGANISATION:
Strengthening resources, governance, Membership, and Partnerships to ensure a successful charity.

To deliver that vision we will concentrate on these four tasks:

1. PRESERVING AND IMPROVING OUR HERITAGE

Caring for our historic railway, its heritage collections and its environment.

- **We will care for our heritage** by continually assessing the needs of our infrastructure, stations, rolling stock and our other collections and delivering effective programmes to ensure their continual improvement.
- **We will improve our capabilities** and facilities for conservation, care and maintenance to meet our needs.
- **We will consolidate our environmental sustainability** through innovative good practice and initiatives across the organisation and providing leadership in our sector.

2. DELIVERING GREAT EXPERIENCES

Offering great heritage experiences in the North York Moors National Park for our visitors.

- **We will bring the world to North Yorkshire** to discover the Whitby and Pickering Railway, bringing to life the line's history and sharing the joy of the heritage journey across the North York Moors.
- **We will offer a great visitor experience** through a diversity of offers aimed at a broad range of audiences from across the region and beyond.
- **We will demonstrate** several facets of rail travel since 1900 with steam trains at the core but embracing heritage steam and diesel travel with our historic rolling stock and a range of on-train experiences.
- **Creating reasons to visit** we will build the range and quality of activities and experiences we offer to attract more diverse audiences for learning and leisure.
- **An organisation for learning** Our learning and education programmes will continue to attract new audiences – both young people and adults and including a new generation of junior volunteers, apprentices and education providers.
- **Understanding visitor needs** better through survey programmes and communications to maximise our attractiveness.

3. ENCOURAGING ENJOYABLE PARTICIPATION

Engaging diverse communities as volunteers and supporters.

- **Volunteering and community will be at the heart of what we do,** creating opportunity for both employment and volunteering for diverse groups.
- **Bringing on board new generations of volunteers,** bolstering our approach to recruiting, engaging and motivating the volunteers who lie at the heart of the NYMR to meet their changing needs.
- **Building a great volunteer experience** Working to improve communication, fulfilment, management and a team-based culture in our volunteer teams.
- **Developing our people** we will become a training -driven organisation to build our professionalism for trustees, paid staff and volunteers alike to build quality and job satisfaction.
- **Working more closely with partner organisations** to deliver our aims.
- **Building our supporter base of members, volunteers and ambassadors across the region.**

4. ENSURING A ROBUST ORGANISATION

Reinforcing our long-term viability as a successful charity for our region.

- **Safety will be at the forefront of everything we do.** Safety, compliance and good practice lies at the heart of our work.
- **Focus on income generation to support delivery of our charitable purposes** by expanding commercial and fundraising initiatives to ensure we are robust financially.
- **Ensuring we deliver high-quality outcomes for the public by continually reinvesting** to deliver our core heritage purposes.
- **Our environmental plan** will see us reducing our reliance on non-renewable energy sources, and supporting the work of the North York Moors National Park.
- **Building and empowering staff and volunteer teams to** help them raise efficiency and do a great job first time.
- **We will maintain longer and shorter-term investment and business plans** so that we know what we must achieve to meet our goals.
- **Working with the region, industry, suppliers and supporters** to embed the NYMR as a pillar of North Yorkshire success.

PARTICIPATION: GETTING INVOLVED

D AT THE NYMR...

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

So that we can review progress on delivering our plan, here we paint a picture of where we want the NYMR to get to by the time of the bicentenary of the Whitby and Pickering Railway in 2036.
If we succeed, then by 2036 we will have:-

JOB 1 – PRESERVING AND IMPROVING OUR HERITAGE

- A full understanding of the conservation needs of our precious rolling stock, our infrastructure, our stations and other heritage collections and we'll be delivering the care they need.
- We will have improved our workshop and maintenance facilities to meet our needs.
- Reduced our carbon footprint and use of coal but will have access to the fuels we need. Our green areas will be recognised as a key diversity and conservation corridor through the North York Moors National Park.
- Become a centre of training excellence for scarce conservation and heritage operating skills, providing training services to others from our North Yorkshire base.

JOB 2 – DELIVERING GREAT EXPERIENCES

- Attracted growing numbers of new and returning audiences, with more opportunities for them to discover stories of our unique railway and the attractions of the North York Moors National Park.
- Ensured returning visitors always discover something new – a range of heritage and hospitality experiences in our (and our partners') historic rolling stock and around each of our stations.
- Enjoyable learning activities for schools, families, students and enthusiasts, from curriculum-related learning to driving experience opportunities.
- Flexible operating and safety systems, responsive to market, weather and season.

JOB 3 – ENCOURAGING ENJOYABLE PARTICIPATION

- Modernised our membership arrangements to build increasing support for the Trust and its work.
- Engaged and retained more volunteers by focusing on the experience we offer, meeting their needs, providing better accommodation and improving communications.
- Volunteer teams with clear roles and responsibilities, supported from the centre, playing a valued role in delivering progress across the NYMR.

JOB 4 – ENSURING A ROBUST ORGANISATION

- Much increased contribution from core and ancillary commercial activities to match and exceed our organisational running costs, directly or through wider partnerships.
- A co-ordinated approach to mobilising support from individual, corporate and public supporters.
- The resources to invest sufficiently to maintain and renew our assets.
- Reserve funds rising towards our assessment of oganisational risks.
- A regularly reviewed structure, simplifying our administration and bringing efficiencies.
- A single team culture: staff, volunteers and partners working confidently together.
- Teams trained to provide the professionalism, efficiency and scarce heritage skills we need.
- Far greater stress on delivering through partnerships, sharing resources, working with local businesses and regional suppliers.
- Our cultural and economic impact seen to contribute to regional and community success.

NYMR
VISITOR

THE TEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

Alongside our routine operations, our continuing ability to operate as a railway and a cultural attraction requires us to deliver a programme of change, renewal and improvement. Our project programme is continually under review but we currently envisage that over the next ten years we will need to deliver an Action Plan covering some of these highlights. **More detail will be found in departmental plans:**

1. CARING FOR OUR HERITAGE

LOCOS

- In a first for an English heritage railway, we will reduce use of coal and increase fuel flexibility by **converting two locomotives to oil fuel**. Omaha will be completed in 2026 and Vera Lynn is planned to follow in 2029.
- We aim to complete a steam locomotive overhaul each year and a diesel or railcar every two years. This will **ensure that, both on the core line and onward to Whitby, motive power is available for all types of operation, for periods of high moorland fire-risk and able to provide properly heated trains**. We work closely with indiviual and charitable partners in this work.
- We will introduce improved water treatment for locomotives at Pickering and **extended servicing facilities** at New Bridge.

CARRIAGES

- We maintain a programme of maintenance and improvements to our core carriage fleet of Mark 1 vehicles to **ensure a high-quality experience**.
- We will work with partners to ensure we can offer services using a range of attractive and historically important carriages providing experiences portraying travel through the 20th century.
- Work will commence in 2026 on a scheme in partnership with its owners to bring the three-car **Diesel Multiple Unit train back into operation**.

WORKSHOPS

- Our hugely inefficient **Grosmont locomotive workshops will be renewed**, providing separate spaces for diesel and steam loco care. **We will invest in a relocated carriage restoration facility at Pickering** to make us self-sufficient in this work. **Integrated cranage** will be a key improvement at both sites.

TRACK AND STRUCTURES

- We will continue our programme of **incremental track renewal** to ensure a safe and comfortable ride and reduce maintenance costs.
- **Modernising our track maintenance systems** to raise efficiency.
- Priorities include reinstallation of a **single slip crossing at Goathland**, access to the **bay Platform at Pickering, double track at Pickering High Mill** and renewal of **New Bridge level crossing trackwork**.
- A programme of investment in our ageing structures will continue, with care of **Bridge 42** at Grosmont, our oldest and busiest bridge, our current priority.
- **Stabilising mine workings** under the Grosmont platform 4 site leased from Network Rail is also a priority.
- We will push forward a plan to ensure that our **historic stations and lineside buildings** are in good order and fit for purpose.
- We will prioritise commissioning Grosmont's **new MIC building** and construct a **relay room at New Bridge**.

SIGNALLING AND TELEGRAPH

- Continue our programme of **elderly asset renewal** and spot renewals of timber signal posts and wiring.
- **Short term priorities include**
  - Trout Farm Crossing enhancement
  - New Bridge power, cable and relay renewal
  - Commission Levisham switch out
  - Design and implement interface for Network Rail Esk Valley line upgrade
  - Pickering south end indicators.

OUR GREEN CORRIDOR

- **Conservation and partnerships:** We will continue to shape strong landscape-scale conservation partnerships, like Wild Newtondale and Linking Levisham, enhancing biodiversity and maintaining a safe, wildlife-rich railway corridor.
- **Heritage conservation:** We will preserve our historic structures and lineside artefacts, safeguarding them for the future and using them as active resources for learning and interpretation.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

- Continue review, conservation and interpretation **of our collections**, including disposal programme for out-of-policy artefacts.
- Implementation of restoration and **care programme for wagon collection**.
- Continue to expand **web access to collection** and knowledge databases to reinforce our corporate memory and to stimulate research.

2. DELIVERING GREAT EXPERIENCES

We will plan and implement **continual enhancements to our visitor offer**. We aim to ensure our programme offers them **something new every tim**e they visit.

We'll offer **a diversity of travel experiences** – steam and diesel-hauled trains, diesel railcars, dining and observation carriages.

A high priority is to introduce Pullman **dining services based on Pickering**.

We will keep the access agenda under constant review, making improvements to both physical and virtual access to our endeavours whenever practicable.

We will strengthen support for station teams to help them make **each of our stations an exciting destination** in its own right for our visitors.

We will **help our visitors discover** more about the railway, the landscape and our destinations through **a growing range of learning experiences** on trains, on-line and at our stations: interpretation and informal learning for adults and families, curriculum-related experiences for schools and research opportunities for scholars.

Moving our carriage workshops to Trout Farm creates opportunities for much **extended visitor facilities at Pickering**, linked to development of the Station Hotel.

3. ENCOURAGING ENJOYABLE PARTICIPATION

We will continuously develop and implement the **NYMR People Plan** for staff and volunteers to increase their effectiveness and enjoyment of their roles.

We will introduce more events and activities that give visitors **a taste of volunteering** – footplate experience, conservation volunteering and back of house tours.

We will place much increased emphasis on **recruitment and induction of volunteers and staff** followed by support, development and periodic review.

We will develop a learning programme to support our activities through **training, apprenticeships and staff development**.

We will focus our internal systems on improving **visibility and communications**.

Strengthen **support, oversight and recognition** of volunteer teams – particularly for stations.

Seek to **enhance staff and volunteer accommodation, shower and mess provision** to meet needs.

4. ROBUST ORGANISATION

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Over the plan period we will work to ensure commercial and fundraising contributions balance the NYMR's books year on year, relying on appeals and grant aid for the capital developments and renewals necessary to deliver our charitable purposes.

GENERATING INCOME

Core business

- Strengthen marketing activity with more partnerships and packaged visits
- Use operation plans to fix event and timetable frameworks twelve months ahead.
- Broaden offer to include extended journey options – premium dining, first class and facilities for groups and guided observation car travel.
- Strengthen marketing of Whitby sales and launch dining services from Pickering.

Secondary trading

- Research and adopt a commercial development programme
- Invest in making our trading premises fit for purpose
- Raise standards in our holiday accommodation business
- Explore opportunities to expand engineering activities including Armstrong Oilers
- We will monetise our digital activities and grow our online presence.
- Expand catering offer

Membership

- Promote a membership journey to build supporter base and foundation
- Promote membership to all visitors and passengers
- Build events and activities aimed at members

GRANTS, DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

Finalise and deliver a properly supported and structured fundraising plan.

ORGANISATION

We will keep our organisation structures, our access to necessary skills and services and the opportunities presented by partnership working, continually under review and will reshape as necessary.

TRAINING AND SKILLS

We will expand our apprentice and training activity for scarce rolling stock conservation, signalling, operating and other skills, building partnerships with training organisations and heritage and today's industry where opportunities arise.

PROPERTY

We will develop a property strategy to ensure our buildings provide our people, our visitors and our assets with quality, fit for purpose and economical premises.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

We are committed to reducing our environmental impact through more efficient energy use, transparent CO_2e accountability, managing waste responsibly and sustainable procurement.

We will introduce programmes seeking to reduce costs and minimise energy use across the organisation.

OUR NETWORK OF SUPPORTERS

The NYMR Trust is a true community organisation, having grown over 50 years since the successful moves by the people of Eskdale and Ryedale who decided they needn't accept the loss of their local railway.

Today it's a significant local employer and a major plank of the Moors tourism economy. It's an integral part of the vibrant communities of Grosmont, Goathland and Pickering.

But what has been achieved could not happen without a huge constituency of support. The NYMR can't work as a commercial proposition. Our operations are hugely dependent on our volunteers from locally, the region and nationally. They are a key part of the network of support that ensures the heritage railway continues to serve the region. We also depend on our close relationships with individuals and other heritage charities whose locomotives and carriages extend our own collection and add to the quality of experience we can offer. We owe all these participants a huge vote of thanks.

Thanks too to individual donors who support appeals and our general funds. Foundation members contribute regularly to funds for essential capital projects, others to specific appeals for restoration work.

We also thank the National Lottery Heritage Fund (and, of course, all those who buy lottery tickets), DEFRA, the National Park Authority, Regional Agencies, the Coastal Communities Fund and Arts Council England who have all supported the work of the Trust over the last fifteen years.

With the continued help of our community of supporters, the Trust can continue to provide delight to many thousands of visitors by demonstrating our remarkable railway heritage and the remarkable landscape of the North York Moors.

NORTH YORKSHIRE NYMR MOORS RAILWAY

AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

IN SUMMARY, OUR VISION IS TO DELIVER –

UNFORGETTABLE HERITAGE JOURNEYS ACROSS THE MOORS

– for our visitors and the teams who make it possible
– today and into the future

by focusing on our four key jobs:-

1. PRESERVING AND IMPROVING OUR HERITAGE
Caring for our historic railway, its heritage collections, operating systems and its environment

2. DELIVERING GREAT EXPERIENCES
Offering great heritage experiences in the North York Moors National Park for our visitors

3. ENCOURAGING ENJOYABLE PARTICIPATION
Engaging diverse communities as visitors and volunteers

4. ENSURING A ROBUST ORGANISATION
Strengthening resources, governance and our supporter base to ensure a successful future for the charity

CAN YOU HELP US SUCCEED?

The NYMR works because people want it to be a success and an asset for the North York Moors.
There are many ways you can help ensure that the NYMR continues to enhance the experience of all who visit the Moors.

- Individuals can help by joining the Trust as a member. Better still, become a Foundation member, joining those making regular contributions to our maintenance funds.
- Make a donation or leave a legacy to support the Trust's work.
- Encourage partnerships where we have matching aims.
- Volunteer your time, your muscles or your skills.
- Tell your friends
- OR even just enjoy the ride!

For further information on how you can help the NYMR succeed please contact us:-

Visit **NYMR.CO.UK** Email **info@nymr.co.uk** or phone **01751 646810**

NORTH YORKSHIRE NYMR® MOORS RAILWAY

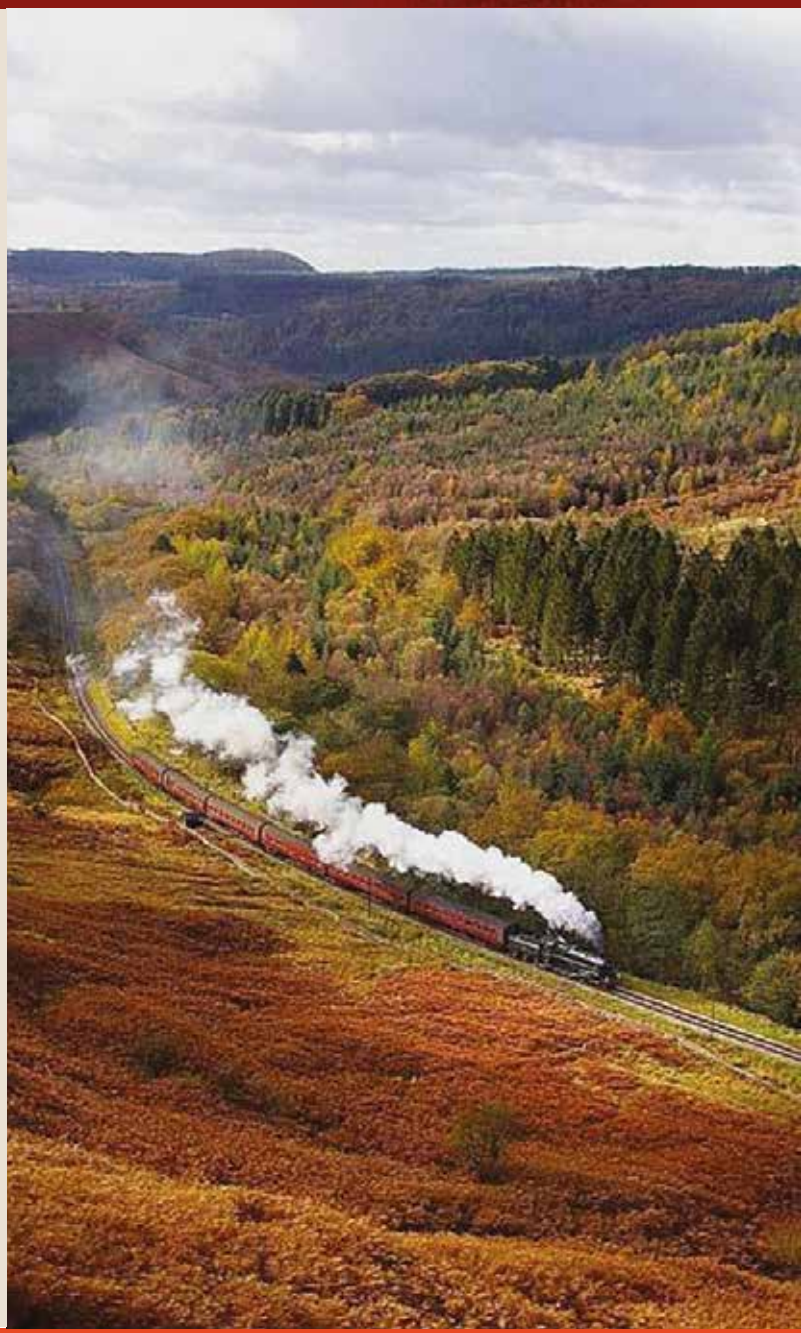
OUR VISION & VALUES

OUR VISION

A place that year by year opens peoples' eyes to the railway story by delivering –

UNFORGETTABLE HERITAGE JOURNEYS ACROSS THE MOORS

– for our visitors and the teams who make it possible
– today and into the future



THE VALUES OF OUR TEAM

Care: People matter to us. We support one another by showing kindness and respect; encouraging development, embracing diversity, and creating a safe, inclusive environment.

Engage: We celebrate our heritage by sharing our passion, skills and knowledge to connect with our team, visitors, partners and communities.

Inspire: We aim to create a can-do, positive and enjoyable environment which enables people to contribute, grow and make a difference.

Adapt: We work together to embrace change, ensuring we are innovative, resilient, relevant and sustainable.

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Company number: 01036704
Charity number: 501388
Accredited Museum
National Portfolio Organisation
Registered with the Fundraising Regulator
2/26

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