

Media release: 19 November 2021



Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway to receive £451,500 from third round of Government's Culture Recovery Fund

Cumbria's iconic heritage railway, Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway, has received a grant of £451,500 from the Government's latest round of the Culture Recovery Fund to help it recover from the impact of the Covid pandemic.

The money is a lifeline for the heritage railway, which is one of the oldest and longest narrow gauge railways in England – known affectionately as La'al Ratty.

The family-owned attraction takes a spectacular scenic seven-mile journey in the Western Lake District and



was first built in 1873 – but has felt the financial impacts of the pandemic on many areas of its business operations including staff retention, covid safety measures and keeping up with its railway preservation projects.

This funding will help the Railway with its recovery and give it a much-needed boost to get through the winter months ahead.

It is among hundreds of arts, heritage and cultural organisations across England which will receive a share of £107 million from the additional £300 million announced by the Chancellor at March's budget for the Culture Recovery Fund – bringing the total cash support package made available for culture during the pandemic close to £2 billion.

Peter Hensman, Director Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway, says, *“The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway has had a very tough and difficult time through the pandemic, having had to reduce passengers because of social distancing and cut important maintenance work to conserve funds. This grant will be of enormous help in securing our infrastructure and rolling stock and will ensure that this much-loved little heritage railway continues to enchant Lake District visitors in the years ahead.”*

Gill Haigh, Managing Director of Cumbria Tourism, comments: *“Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway is such an iconic attraction for the Western Lake District and Coast. It is great to see they have been recognised by the Culture Recovery Fund as it will help to safeguard this long-standing heritage attraction as we head into winter.”*

From this round of funding, more than £100 million will be awarded in continuity support grants to over 870 previous Culture Recovery Fund recipients administered by Arts Council England, British Film Institute, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England. Helping organisations survive and allowing them to resume programmes and events, the funding will mean people can have access to and enjoy everything they have to offer.

£6.5 million will be shared by 57 organisations in need of urgent financial support. Grants from this emergency resource support will protect jobs by saving the future of important arts and cultural organisations.

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Notes to Editors:

Hi-res image attached:

Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway (Please credit Mark Fielding)

For media enquiries or interview requests, please contact:

Rachel Bell, Ullswater Steamers: Rachel@lakedistrictstates.co.uk / 07831 630867

OR

Heather Sewell, Cumbria Tourism: hsewell@cumbriatourism.org / 01539 822222

An additional £300 million was announced by the Chancellor at March's budget for the Culture Recovery Fund, bringing the total cash support package made available for culture during the pandemic to close to £2 billion.

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