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**Iconic railway station unveils new facilities for**

**people with complex access needs**

La’al Ratty’s iconic heritage railway station at Ravenglass has installed state-of-the-art facilities to support people with complex access needs.

Based in a converted building on Platform One at Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway station, the fully accessible changing room and toilet facilities have been match-funded by the Government’s ‘Changing Places’ fund via Cumberland Council - to provide the right facilities for disabled people to wash, change and use the toilet safely and easily.

The new Changing Places facilities include a hoist, an adult sized changing bench and space for carers, and will supplement existing disabled parking spaces and level access to the platform. The new facilities can be used by anyone, not just visitors to the railway, the Turntable Café and Ravenglass Railway Museum.Out-of-hours they will remain accessible by RADAR key.

One of the Directors of Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, Georgina Townsend, says she had two personal reasons for wanting to officially open the Changing Places facility.

She comments, “*Promoting access to all is really important to us and we are thrilled to receive Changing Places funding through Cumberland Council to help bolster our own investment in enhancing accessible facilities.*

*“Also, my late mother had many years with motor neurone disease, was in a wheelchair, and personally had many challenges in her latter years trying to find suitable facilities on her days out and about. So this is a really worthwhile legacy and I am very proud and grateful to be able to officially open a Changing Places facility here in this special location on the west coast of Cumbria.”*

Councillor Anne Quilter, Cumberland Council’s Executive Member for Vibrant and Healthy Places, said:

“We want to ensure visitor destinations in our area are inclusive and can be enjoyed by all. We were pleased to provide support for the funding application and are delighted that this has resulted in a successful conclusion - that will benefit the venue and wider area.

“A changing place offers freedom to explore new destinations. Resulting in new experiences, and having a great day out discovering our coast, city, towns and countryside.”

The Changing Places toilet was devised and installed by expert disability technology company Innova Care Concepts. Managing Director Tom Hulbert: “*Our primary mission is to utilise the technology we have in order to make the UK a more equitable society with access for everyone. We were delighted to install these new facilities at Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway to make accessibility easier for all their visitors and the general public*.”

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway is a family-owned business operating one of the oldest and longest narrow-gauge railways in England, on the Western Coast of the Lake District. Affectionately known as La’al Ratty, the railway is surrounded by stunning views and walks and is based in Ravenglass, the only coastal village in the Lake District National Park.

The new Changing Places facilities have been installed with support from grant funding provided by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in association with Muscular Dystrophy UK.

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Notes to Editors:

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