



**EVERY STOP IS A START...**



## EAST LANCS RAILWAY REOPENING FAQs

### **August Reopening FAQs**

As we welcome passengers back to our railway, we've put some FAQs together to address some of the questions you may have on our operations in the first few weeks.

These will be regularly updated as our operations gradually return to normal - if there is anything not covered below please get in touch with our customer services team on 0333 320 2830.

### **Reopening**

*When do you reopen?*

We're delighted to let you know that we'll be running our steam locomotives again from 8th August. We're starting with a trial timetable for August and will be building the service back up from there. We can't wait to see you again! To book tickets visit: [www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk](http://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk).

*Are services running to all stations on the line?*

Yes, we're pleased to announce that the full line is reopening with services running all the way from Heywood to Rawtenstall.

### **Booking & Ticketing**

*Do I need to book in advance now?*

We are asking all visitors to book in advance to ensure we can meet safety guidelines on distancing in our carriages.

*How are you taking bookings?*

You can book tickets online at [www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk](http://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk) or by calling our customer services team on 0333 320 2830.

*How are you taking payments?*

Where possible, we would ask customers to pay by contactless card payments. If this isn't possible, we can facilitate other card payments and cash transactions.

*Has the timetable changed?*

Yes, we have introduced a special timetable on a trial basis at first. For more information visit: [www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk](http://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk).

*Do I have to book specific tickets?*

In the first two weeks, prices will be fixed at a full return journey, with no singles or part fares, to simplify our ticketing process. You're welcome to get on or off at any point along the line.

Tickets will be booked on an individual basis so single travellers and groups are welcome on board.

*What do I do if I had booked tickets or vouchers before Covid-19 that I want to redeem now?*

If you think you have tickets or vouchers that are valid for our regular services please contact our customer services team on 0333 320 2830 to confirm and make arrangements.

If you have vouchers for dining trains or other events, such as our footplate experience, you should hold on to them until these resume.

## **Traveling on the Railway**

*What safety measures have you put in place at the stations?*

We've worked hard to introduce new measures in stations to protect our customers, staff and volunteers.

There will be an enhanced track and trace system in operation and visitors and staff will be required to have their temperature taken upon arrival at our stations. Anyone who exhibits a high temperature will not be permitted to enter.

We've also introduced enhanced cleaning regimes at all stations, these will take place between every train journey and in station toilets on a regular basis. Cleaning will include a surface sanitiser that has a 30 day working life.

Stations may be operating a one way system and we ask you to take note of the changes and follow the directional signs throughout the station.

*Will hand sanitiser be available?*

Hand sanitiser will be provided at key points throughout all stations. If you feel more comfortable bring your own as well, you're welcome to.

*How will people board the trains?*

We will be directing people to board carriages in order of the seating available starting from the Heywood end of carriages.

Once you're on board, for the safety and comfort of everyone, we would ask you to stay in your carriage.

*Am I able to choose my own seats?*

Once on the train, you will be able to select your own seats. If you're travelling as a group, we would ask you to stay together at all times when you're on board.

*How will you keep people 1m apart on the train?*

We have taken a number of seats in each carriage out of service to ensure that passengers will all be able to maintain 1m plus distancing.

*Are facemasks mandatory like with public transport?*

We are asking all customers to bring a face mask or covering with them to wear while they are in the station and on the train.

*What is the maximum number of people allowed in a carriage?*

We have reduced the amount of seating available in carriages to ensure that everyone can observe 1m plus distancing - each carriage varies depending on its layout but we have ensured that everyone can travel safely and comfortably at all times. If you have any concerns, please discuss your specific journey with our station staff on the day of your visit and they can provide further details on the individual carriage you will be travelling in.

*Can I visit with members of other households?*

Groups will be requested not to mingle with other people outside their own household or social bubble.

*Are toilets available?*

Toilets are available at Bury, Heywood, Ramsbottom and Rawtenstall stations. Unfortunately, in order to maintain safety for passengers, toilets aren't available on the trains apart from in an emergency.

*Do I need to arrive early?*

We would ask you to arrive earlier than you would have before to give us plenty of time to get everyone on board the trains and ensure you're comfortable before services depart.

*Are refreshments available?*

Both ELR Pubs - The Trackside at Bury Bolton Street Station and Buffer Stops at Rawtenstall are open with social distancing measures for you to enjoy a drink before or after your journey. Please check online for the latest opening times: [www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk](http://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk). At Bury Bolton Street Station refreshments will also be available for takeaway when trains are running.

## **Visiting the Pubs**

*What safety measures have you put in place in the pubs - how will you keep people 1m apart?*

We've worked hard to introduce new measures in our pubs to protect our customers, staff and volunteers.

We've introduced enhanced cleaning regimes at both pubs, cleaning will include a surface sanitiser that has a 30 day working life.

We're also only serving drinks at our outdoor seating and we ask you to take note of the changes and follow the directional signs throughout the pubs.

We'll be recording details of all guests in line with Government track and trace policy.

*Is there a limit on the time I can spend at the pubs?*

We aren't limiting timings in the pubs but we would ask customers to be mindful of other visitors at busy times.

*How many people can be in a group?*

We aren't limiting group sizes in the pubs but for the safety and enjoyment of your party and others you should consider that our tables seat up to eight people when planning your visit.

*Can I book a table in advance? / Do I need to book a table in advance?*

We're operating on a first come, first served basis in both The Trackside and Buffer Stops so you don't need to book a table in advance.

## **Fundraising**

*Are you still raising money? / Why are you still raising money?*

We're delighted to be reopening soon however we've missed a huge portion of our summer income and we won't be able to get back to our full timetable and events straight away, so we will still need support as we get back on our feet. Our fundraising page is still open for anyone who wishes to donate.

*How much money has been raised in total?*

We've raised over £140,000 in our public appeal and the East Lancs Railway Preservation Society generously donated £125,000 to support us. We're hugely grateful for all the support we've received over the past four months.

*How has the money raised been used?*

We've used the generous donations from the public and from the East Lancs Railway Preservation Society to keep our beloved railway going during lockdown. We furloughed the majority of our staff but there were still a number of operating costs that the railway had to meet, including heightened security and maintaining the lines. We're also investing the funds to help us prepare for reopening, including running safety trains to test the lines, and repair damage to the fencing caused during lockdown.

## **Other queries**

*When will dining trains restart?*

At the moment, we're only running regular services. We're hoping to be able to restart our dining trains in September, keep your eye on our website and social media for more information.

*Are any events planned soon?*

We're restarting our timetable with our regular services but we're hopeful that we will be able to reintroduce some events - such as our Santa Specials - later in the year, keep your eye on our website and social media for more information.

Unfortunately, our planned Flying Scotsman events in 2020 have been rescheduled to 2021. The five dates are being rearranged with the Flying Scotsman owners at the moment and as soon as new dates are confirmed all customers will have their bookings automatically transferred. Customers with existing bookings will all be contacted directly to inform them of the changes.