



ELR

PRESS RELEASE

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Wet Your Whistle At New ELR Cafe From This Weekend

Visitors to the **East Lancashire Railway** (ELR) will be able to enjoy a new refueling stop from this weekend - with the opening of a cafe at Heywood station.

The Whistlestop Coffee Carriage is housed in a former rail unit that has most recently been used for storage - and will serve coffees, teas and hot chocolates alongside an extensive range of sweet treats including cakes and up to 12 different flavours of ice cream.

It opens its doors for the first time this Saturday June 26th and is run by Michelle Worthington, owner of two hair and beauty salons in the local area, and her business partner Mark Redfern.

Michelle said: "We've got a nod to the railway inside, with pictures of the Flying Scotsman. It's quite light and airy and we've got lots of flowers and greenery, so it's quite fresh.

"We've replaced the floor, we've done a lot of repairs inside, and we've found some original features so we're going to show off those.

"We wanted to appeal to people who aren't just using the train. We want a standalone business so people would come to us because of what we offer and while they're here they might get a ticket for the train, so it benefits the railway as well."

In preparation for opening, Michelle and Mark have ensured they have followed all the necessary steps to comply with Covid-19 guidance.

East Lancashire Railway Chairman Mike Kelly added: "The unit at Heywood Station has always had a lot of potential so we're delighted that Michelle and Mark have transformed it into a lovely cafe after years of it standing empty.

"The opening is great news for families and individuals, who want to use a trip on the railway as an opportunity for a grand day out, complete with tea, coffee and cake. Visitors will now have more choice when it comes to food and drink."

The cafe has capacity for 24 inside with a number of picnic benches outside.

Initially serving takeaway options, it will be open on Saturdays and Sundays between 9am and 5pm. From Wednesday, July 21, seated customers will be welcomed between 9am and 5pm from Wednesday to Sunday.

It joins an already impressive range of food and drinks options on the East Lancashire Railway. These include its two pubs - the Trackside at Bury Bolton Street Station and Buffer Stops at Rawtenstall Station.

For more information visit: www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk

ENDS

Notes to editors:

ELR opened as a heritage railway in 1987, and hosts around 200,000 visitors annually, as one of the leading visitor attractions in the North West. Operating steam trains from Bolton Street Station in Bury, along a 12.5-mile line between Heywood, in Greater Manchester, and Rawtenstall in Lancashire, the railway was recently recognised with a TripAdvisor Travellers Choice Award for 2020.