

Strathspey Railway Association

Survive to Thrive Appeal

This is an appeal from the Trustees of the Strathspey Railway Association (SRA) for donations to ensure the survival and continued development of the Railway. Our target to help the railway through this winter and into the future is £250,000.

As a charity our purpose is to preserve our Highland Railway heritage, while educating our members and the general public about our history. As a major tourist attraction, the Strathspey Railway runs along the stretch, with the magnificent backdrop of the Cairngorm Mountains. The best way we can educate people is to let them travel in 1950s style, in heritage coaches, hauled by one of the railway's fleet of steam and diesel locomotives.

The last few years have been very challenging for the railway. First it was closed down during the covid pandemic, then came the energy crisis and that was followed by the cost of living crisis. The cost of coal has rocketed, as has diesel oil. In respect of electricity, the SRA has helped to fund a 20KW solar panel array, to help cut workshop costs. The SRA has also been able to support various preservation projects, but this appeal is to enable us to recapitalise the Strathspey Railway Company (SRC), which operates the train service, as well as maintaining and preserving the heritage of the one-time Highland Railway mainline.

The railway's income is highly seasonal, requiring a substantial financial buffer to keep us on track. This needs to be replenished. A cost cutting exercise will see the SRC becoming more dependent on volunteers, many of whom live a long way off.

This appeal will enable us to invest further in the SRC, the better to deliver on our aims of preservation of our heritage and the delivery of an educational experience. The railway is more reliant on the generosity and support of others to see us through than it has ever been.

Without the support of members and volunteers, and their optimism and encouragement, the Strathspey Railway quite simply would not be here, and we are very conscious that they have helped and supported the railway in its developments and at times when things were tough in the past – most recently during Covid-19. We feel that we have to appeal to you and others, if you feel that you are able, in order to ensure that our railway can survive. This is not a request that we are making lightly or without regret, and we know that it may raise concern. **We do believe however that with your help, if you feel able, the railway will be in a good position to have a successful year in 2024.**

If you are able, please consider donating to this appeal, it will enable us to SURVIVE AND THRIVE. You can send a cheque to Strathspey Railway, Aviemore Station, Dalfaber Road, Aviemore, PH22 1PU. Please write 'Survive to Thrive' on the rear of the cheque. If you can gift-aid the donation, via the Strathspey Railway Association, this will permit us to recover additional funds from HMRC without any additional cost to you if you are a UK taxpayer. If paying by BACS, please include the word SURVIVE in the reference.

It may however be easier for you to contribute online. If this is preferable for you, please head to the donation page on the SRA website:

www.strathspeyrailwayassociation.co.uk/survive2thrive/