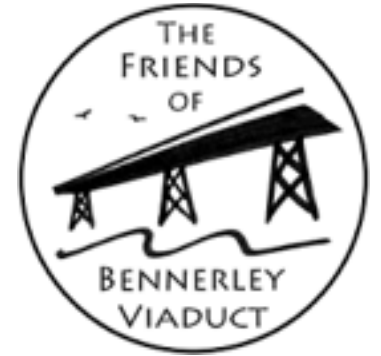

A Vision for Bennerley Viaduct

Friends of Bennerley Viaduct

2019



Our vision is to create an inspirational green space, with Bennerley Viaduct as its centrepiece where the rich industrial, natural and literary heritage of the Erewash Valley can be enjoyed, understood and celebrated by everyone.

Introduction



Bennerley Viaduct is a grade 2* listed wrought iron railway viaduct built in 1877 and last used for rail traffic in 1968. It is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile long (442 metres) and just over 60 feet high (18.5 metres), straddling the River Erewash between Awsworth in Nottinghamshire and Ilkeston in Derbyshire. A major project is underway to make it available for cycle and foot traffic, and to facilitate the appreciation of this historic structure'.

Preface

The Friends of Bennerley Viaduct was formed in 2015 to support the £8 million plan being developed by Sustrans to restore the viaduct and bring it back into use as a walking and cycling trail. From the outset, the Friends Group enthusiastically promoted the project and worked tirelessly to help realise that vision. The Friends group became principal partners in the project.

A £40,000 Heritage Lottery funded project to raise awareness and assess support for restoring the viaduct and bringing it into use for public access was delivered in 2016. In 2017, a further bid was made to HLF for £4.6m but this bid was unsuccessful. The project narrowly missed securing this funding at its first attempt but the HLF board considered the project to be a strong one and recommended re-submission.

In early 2018, Sustrans decided that the viaduct project was not a strategic priority for them and did

not resubmit the bid. This decision effectively halted the project.

Responsibility to develop a smaller project was passed to the viaduct's owners, Railway Paths Ltd, (RPL) a sister charity to Sustrans. RPL, in partnership with the Friends Group, are currently developing a smaller £0.5m project, focussed on carrying out some critical repairs and providing much needed access to both the deck and underside of the viaduct.

Whilst the Friends Group welcomes the proposed repairs and access arrangements, it views this as the first phase of an incremental approach to developing and delivering a project similar in size and scale to the original one.

Our ambitious proposals are set out in more detail below. Our aim is to engage and work with all sections of the community to realise this exciting vision.



About Our Project

1. Working in partnership with owners RPL and other stakeholders, Bennerley Viaduct will be restored and brought back into use as a walking and cycling trail.
2. Friends and volunteers will maintain and care for the viaduct, safeguarding the structure for future generations to enjoy.



3. The achievements of our Victorian engineers and those who constructed the viaduct will be celebrated. We will share our admiration and enthusiasm

for this magnificent wrought iron structure.

4. The viaduct will be connected to the area's walking and cycling network. The viaduct will become the iconic centrepiece of the Great Northern Greenway being developed by the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire County Councils. It will also connect both arms of the Erewash Valley Trail.
5. Access will be created to the deck and the area underneath and around the viaduct so the rich industrial heritage of the Erewash Valley can be fully appreciated and enjoyed.
6. Friends and volunteers will maintain and enhance the natural heritage of this part of the Erewash Valley, by managing the land to increase biodiversity.
7. An inspirational green space will be created providing opportunities for the community to walk and cycle.

This will improve the health of the local community. We will ensure that the viaduct and its surrounds are accessible to all.

8. Art and literature will form an important part of the project. We will promote the viaduct and surrounds as a vibrant cultural centre. We will celebrate the literary heritage of this part of the valley which was the setting for many of D.H. Lawrence novels.
9. Partnerships with schools and colleges will ensure that educational and training opportunities will be developed.
10. The knowledge, skills, drive and passion of this community will be harnessed to create a green public space which will help to regenerate this part of the Erewash Valley.



Bennerley Viaduct

About the Structure

1. Bennerley Viaduct is over quarter of a mile long. It is the **longest wrought iron Viaduct in the British Isles** straddling the Erewash Valley between Ilkeston (Derbyshire) and Awsworth (Nottinghamshire.)
2. The viaduct is a structure at risk through disuse but is protected by its Grade II* listed status. It is maintained by RPL and volunteers. It is both a **local and national treasure**.
3. There is only **one other viaduct of its type** left in the country (Meldon Viaduct Devon), but Bennerley is considerably longer. It has also remained unaltered since its construction in 1878.
4. The viaduct is a **local viaduct** with all the metal components having been prefabricated in Derby. The parts were transported to Bennerley and assembled on site using over **half a million rivets**.
5. The viaduct was **designed by Richard Johnson and Samuel Abbott** as part of the Great Northern Railway's Derby and Staffordshire extension (also known as the Friargate Line)

6. The viaduct was built on ground made unstable by mining subsidence and was made light and flexible to cope with any movement. The viaduct took eighteen months to build, opening to rail traffic in 1878.

7. The viaduct is a **"floating structure"**. It is not physically tied into the ground. The piers sit on cast iron baseplates which rest on brick pier bases. **It is held in place by gravity.**

8. The Viaduct **survived bombing in the Zeppelin** air raid attack on January 31st 1916.



9. The viaduct was built to carry coal but throughout its life it carried a variety of goods

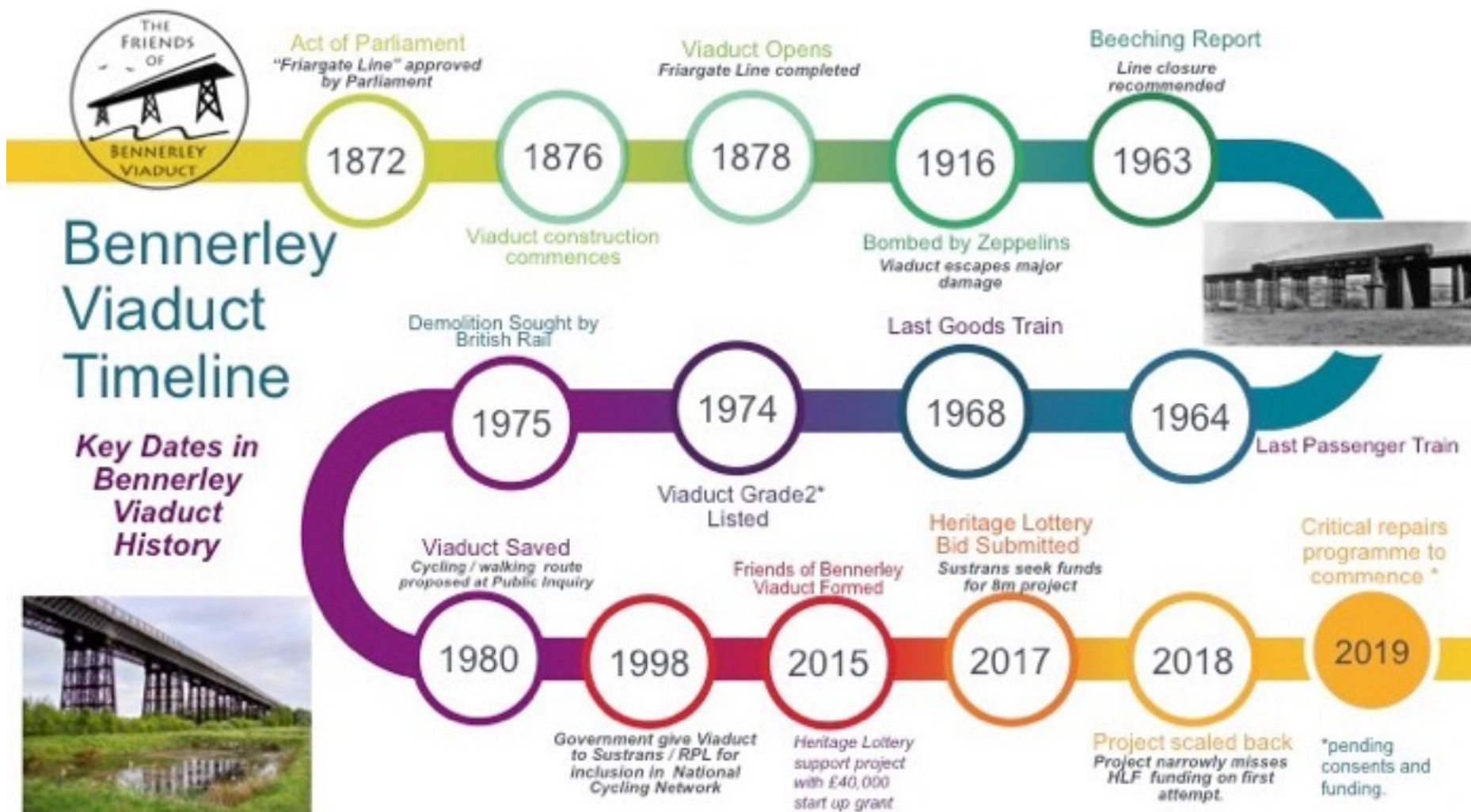


and passengers. Following the Beeching Report, the line closed in 1968 after over **90 years in use**.

10. British Rail attempts to demolish the viaduct were **thwarted by local people**, councils and special interest groups who considered the viaduct was an **invaluable part of our industrial and railway heritage**



Bennerley Viaduct Timeline



The Friends of Bennerley Viaduct

About the Group

1. The Friends of Bennerley Viaduct (FoBV) was formed in 2015 to support the Sustrans plan to restore Bennerley Viaduct and bring it back into use as a walking and cycling trail
2. The FoBV is a thriving and active group. Its interest in the viaduct and its surroundings is wide ranging. The Friends have made an immense contribution to the project so far by promoting the project; mounting exhibitions; organising events; engaging in volunteer workdays; raising funds; presenting illustrated talks; leading guided walks; producing interpretation materials and securing political support for the project.



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3. The Friends Group fully support the smaller project, currently being developed in conjunction with Railway Paths Ltd (the owners of the structure) but aspire to something more.
4. The Friends Group has a clear and ambitious vision for the future of the viaduct and its surroundings and is taking steps to take ownership of the wider project. To bring this vision to fruition, the FoBV intends to convert

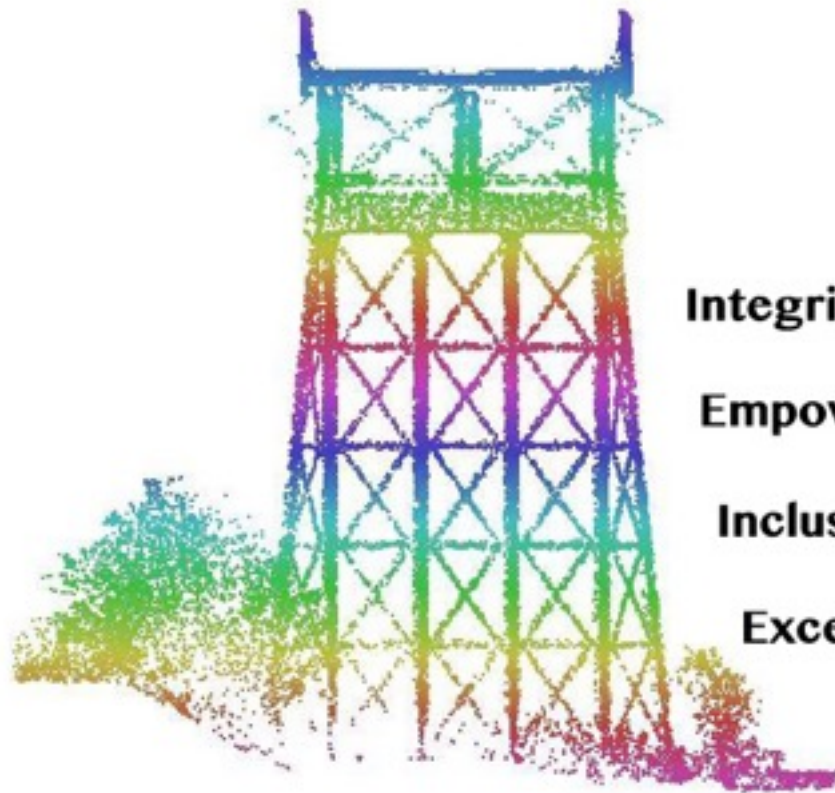
the group into an Associative Charitable Incorporated Organisation, as this will provide us with the appropriate structure and governance to deliver a substantial project.

5. The Friends of Bennerley Viaduct are committed to work in an open and transparent way with owners, landowners, MPs, elected representatives, council officers and other societies and organisations.



Friends of Bennerley Viaduct

Our Values



Integrity We are open, honest, accountable and transparent in all our dealings with people and organisations.

Empowerment The community has a say in decisions through our membership scheme.

Inclusiveness People of all backgrounds and abilities take part in our activities and benefit from the project.

Excellence We maintain high standards in the performance of all of our activities.

Supporting Bennerley Viaduct

Our Next Steps:

2019 - 2021

We will:

1. - create the most appropriate structure for our group to develop and deliver an ambitious project.
2. - identify ways of building capacity and efficiency of the FOBV and raise the necessary funding to support this capacity building.
3. - actively support the RPL led project due to take place in 2019-2020 (subject to permissions being granted, funding raised and RPL board approval) which will deliver critical repairs and access works'. We will promote the project, fundraise to support defined aspects, and actively engage our large pool of volunteers on workdays.
4. - develop partnerships with MPs, Ministers, Councillors, elected bodies, statutory bodies, interested groups, societies and organisations. We will organise and host quarterly Bennerley Viaduct Forum meetings where all interested parties can be involved in the wider ownership of the project.

5. - make links with projects in this country and overseas where redundant industrial and transport infrastructure has been converted into innovative and inspiring green public places.
6. - identify priority areas for the next phase of the project and raise the necessary resources to deliver those priorities.
7. - ensure that the Viaduct and its surroundings have a sustainable future.



2021 - 2028

Long Term Strategy

1. The long term strategy is to develop the project in a systematic and incremental way over the next ten years. It is not possible at this stage to give a detailed delivery timescale of all the tasks and initiatives which we would wish to undertake. However, the Friends Group, along with other stakeholders, will identify priorities and secure the resources to take the project forwards stage by stage in a focussed way.
2. 2028 marks the 150th anniversary of the opening of viaduct, and by that stage, Bennerley Viaduct will be established as being the centrepiece of the area's walking and cycling network and the focal point in an inspirational green space which celebrates the industrial and natural heritage of the Erewash Valley.
3. We will also develop a long term system of governance for the viaduct and its surroundings to safeguard the future of the structure, to ensure that it is a source of pride and enjoyment for many generations to come.

THE FRIENDS OF BENNERLEY VIADUCT THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR SUPPORT

Funding Trusts.

Heritage Lottery Fund
Railway Heritage Trust

Elected Bodies and MPs

Nottinghamshire County Council
Derbyshire County Council
Broxtowe Borough Council
Erewash Borough Council
Awsorth Parish Council
Anna Soubry MP Broxtowe
Maggie Throup MP Erewash

Groups and Organisations

Action 4 Cotmanhay
Amber Valley Ramblers
Association for Industrial Archaeology
Awsorth and Cossall History Society
Awsorth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Broxtowe Ramblers
Canals and Rivers Trust
Chinemarelian Historical Society (Kimberley)
Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum
Derby Cycling Group
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
D.H. Lawrence Society
East Midlands Assoc of Civic and Heritage Societies.
Erewash Canal Preservation and Development
Association
Erewash Museum

Erewash Ramblers
Erewash Valley Wildlife Group
Greater Nottingham Transport Partnership
Greenwood Community Forest Partnership
Historic England
Ilkeston and District Local History Society
Ilkeston Woodside Model Railway Society
Inland Waterways Association
Institute of Civil Engineers
Long Eaton Natural History Society
National Heritage Ironwork Group
Nottingham Civic Society
Nottinghamshire Local Access Forum
Nottinghamshire CTC
Parkside High Cotmanhay Youth Project
Pedals
Sport Nottinghamshire
West Bridgford U3A Cycling Group.

Education and Training

Awsorth Primary School
Granby School
Kimberley School
Derby College

Business and Companies

AMCO Giffen
Armstrongs Mill
Atkins

Bridge Inn, Cotmanhay
Business in the Community (Derbyshire)
Dewdrop Inn Ilkeston
East Midland Railway Forum
Gate Inn Awsorth
Harworth Estates
Hot Graphix
Interesting Times (Heritage Tours)
MAP Building
Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire
MSD Services
Network Rail
P3 Ilkeston
Raleigh
Shipleigh Photographic
Smoothie Bar, Ilkeston
S.V. Timber Ilkeston
Tesco
Tomlinson

THE COMMUNITY

Above all, we thank the thousands of people within our community who have so generously given their time, money, energy, support and encouragement to drive this project forwards