



PRESS RELEASE

26 January 2026

“Let’s get this done ...and open the railway”: Lord Peter Hendy lends personal support to Rother Valley Railway Heritage Trust’s Buildings Appeal



Lord Peter Hendy, the former Chair of Network Rail, has lent his personal support to the Rother Valley Railway Heritage Trust’s £350,000 Buildings Appeal, launched in December last year.

In a specially recorded [video message](#) for the Trust, which went live today (26 January 2026), Lord Hendy spoke of his lifelong support

for heritage railways and in particular for the RVR project to reconnect the Kent & East Sussex Railway to the mainline railway at Robertsbridge.

The five-minute highly personal message encourages donations to the Buildings Appeal to help complete what he describes as a *“brilliant”* project that is close to his heart, and which represents a *“gargantuan effort”* by all concerned.

After highlighting the immense amount of work completed to date and the importance of creating the final buildings at Robertsbridge Junction, Lord Hendy said that the reinstated line: *“Connects real places ... and we should just get it done.”*

He goes on to explain that having a dedicated locomotive shed would ensure that visiting engines and trains could use the line and would: *“bring people, drive revenue and make the railway successful”*. The appeal, he says, is therefore well worth supporting with as large a donation as people can afford.

He concludes: *“Let’s make this a success, let’s build a locomotive shed and let’s open the railway.”*



Speaking as the video went live on the RVR website and [YouTube channel](#), Chair of the Rother Valley Railway Heritage Trust, Gardner Crawley said:

"We're deeply grateful to Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, for offering his personal support to our fundraising appeal — a moment of real encouragement for everyone working on the Rother Valley Railway project."

"In making this video, Lord Hendy has recognised the dedicated work of our team so far in bringing the railway between Robertsbridge to Tenterden back to its full glory."

The Phase 2 building programme will include six core elements: covered accommodation for locomotives; inspection pits; fuelling points for steam and diesel engines; staff rest and washroom facilities; public viewing areas, and solar panels to reduce long-term energy costs. These important facilities will support a flexible and efficient heritage train service from Robertsbridge to Tenterden, says the Trust, benefiting visitors.

The total cost of the locomotive facilities project has been calculated at £600,000, of which over £250,000 has already been secured through gifts and grants. The Buildings Appeal is therefore seeking to raise the remaining £350,000 to complete the task.

The Trust has maximised the ways in which supporters can contribute to the Building Appeal - from making one-off donations of any amount to providing significant upfront amounts to committing to monthly giving. All options can be found on the website at rvr.org.uk/fundraising.

Supporters can subscribe via direct debit, make a payment online or download a donation form from the website which, once completed, can be returned by post. Forms can also be obtained by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to the Appeals Director at Robertsbridge Junction Station.

Donations from UK tax payers are eligible for Gift Aid, increasing their value to the Trust by a further 25 per cent at no extra cost to the donor.

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