



## **GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY**

LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **Online Vote gives boost for Mountsorrel Railway**

The Mountsorrel Railway Project is to receive a valuable cash boost after being successful in an online election arranged by NatWest Bank's Community Force.

Nationally, over 5,800 community projects registered to take part and these were then voted for by the public, either online or by telephone, in an election that was sub-divided into regional competitions. To achieve success the Mountsorrel Railway had to compete with 45 other projects in the Burton/Loughborough area. The prize for the railway is an award of £6,275 which is expected to be presented early in the New Year.

The online voting totals seemed to show the railway to be neck and neck with its nearest rival at the time votes closed. But, with phone votes taken into account the railway actually **WON** the Burton and Loughborough voting area by a good margin.

Things get even more impressive when you look where the Mountsorrel Railway came nationally, bearing in mind that it is a relatively small community group aiming to bring benefit to a small corner of Leicestershire without the benefit of a paid marketing and fund-raising team that some of the competing organisations can boast. In addition, some of the participating groups also aimed to bring benefit to a wider area and therefore had a larger pool of potential voters to tap into.

Project leader Steve Cramp was delighted with this news. **"Nationally 5813 projects took part and over 366,000 votes were cast. To find that we came 47<sup>th</sup> nationally, well within the top 1% of all the projects, is simply astounding. I always knew that we had something very special here, but what I didn't quite appreciate was the scale of public support and strength of feeling for the project. Not only does this allow our track-laying to continue unhindered,"** said Steve, **"but it raises the profile of the project both locally and further afield. Like so many community projects, we often find it an uphill battle to gain publicity and this kind of recognition is invaluable for raising the public's awareness of us. What makes the award so special is the knowledge that the public share our vision of bringing**



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**what we hope will be a much valued educational and recreational resource to our community."**

The aim of the project is to relay just over a mile of railway from south of Swithland Reservoir to Bond Lane, Mountsorrel. When completed the branch line would become an additional attraction for the Great Central Railway, which would operate trains from Rothley along the branch to Mountsorrel. The restored railway branch line will form a working linear museum that will allow forgotten scenes from our industrial past to be recreated for today's generations to experience and learn from. So far over 500 metres of track have been re-laid. The grant from NatWest Community Force will enable track-laying to progress rapidly towards Wood Lane, Mountsorrel.

ENDS

WORDS 486

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Details on the above and all forthcoming events can be found on the Great Central Railway's extensive website: [www.gcrailway.co.uk](http://www.gcrailway.co.uk)

Additional information can also be obtained from the Booking Office, Loughborough Central Station, (Daily 9.00 - 5.30) on 01509 632323

### **NOTES**

Voted number 12 on the list of the 50 greatest railway journeys in the world the Great Central Railway is the UK's only double track, main line heritage railway. It's the only place in the world where full size steam engines can be seen passing each other – just as it was when steam ruled the rails. The preserved railway celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2009, and is manned by around 700 volunteers and a small team of permanent staff. Preservation of this section of the Great Central Railway began in 1969. The route was originally part of a main line from Sheffield to London. The 8 mile preserved section between Loughborough and Leicester is fully operational and the 4 stations reflect a different period of the railways 111 year history. Around 100,000 visitors a year come to the railway from all over the world.

Trains run every weekend of the year, bank holidays and daily in the summer. In addition, First Class Restaurant Car Services provide famous dining experiences course, whilst passengers travel between Loughborough and Leicester. Childhood engine driver dreams can come true with a Drive a Train Experience. We also run a number of family events, including Santa Specials.



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The railway has won a number of awards including “independent railway of the year”, and a gold award for the East Midlands best visitor experience and is a quality assured visitor attraction as designated by Enjoy England.