



## NEWS RELEASE

### Bluebell Railway Wins £75,000 Award

The Bluebell Railway is delighted to announce that it has won an award of £75,000 from the Department for Transport's Heritage and Community Rail Tourism Innovation Competition. 17 projects to boost rail related tourism were announced in the £ 1million competition, funded by the UK Government. The projects based across England, Wales and Scotland will create new opportunities for UK and overseas tourists to enjoy the hidden gems of the country's heritage and community railways.

For the Bluebell Railway the award will go towards the restoration of Pullman Car No.54 which will include provision for disabled access. Originally built in 1923 Car No. 54 is a brake carriage and therefore wheelchair users will be able to enter the carriage via a ramp into the Guard's compartment before proceeding into the dining saloon. Part of the saloon will be in a First Class seating arrangement with individual armchairs that can be removed to make way for a wheelchair.



Awards under the scheme were for between £25,000 and the maximum £75,000 – Bluebell were pleased to learn that their application was considered 'outstanding'.

Rail Minister – Claire Perry said: -

*'We want to show the best of British to our visitors and Heritage and Community Railways are part of that package. I am delighted that the Bluebell Railway is one of the 17 winners across Britain. I look forward to seeing this scheme develop, providing another good reason to visit Sussex.'*

Bluebell Railway plc Chairman – Dick Fearn said;-

*'I am delighted that this award has been made to the Bluebell Railway to restore Pullman Car No.54 to its former glory, whilst also making it available to all. The Bluebell Railway is committed to making all its heritage railway attractions fully accessible and this will in fact be the 4<sup>th</sup> accessibility conversion that we have*

*carried out on our vintage railway carriages, although this will be the first on a Pullman Car.*

*Our Golden Arrow Pullman Car fine dining train services are widely recognised as amongst the very best in the UK and we are determined to make that experience of travelling and dining in such beautiful surroundings accessible to everyone.'*

The Bluebell has now raised three quarters of the £490,000 estimated cost of this restoration project – therefore raising the remainder is high on Funding Director Roger Kelly's task list. He would of course be very pleased to hear from anyone who may be interested in supporting the restoration.

Bluebell Railway in Sussex was the country's first standard gauge preserved line and has been operating steam hauled passenger services since 1960.

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For more details on the Bluebell Railway's services visit [www.bluebell-railway.com](http://www.bluebell-railway.com) or call 01825 720800