

December 17th 2025

Network Rail,
Waterloo General Office,
London,
SE1 8SW

**TRANSPENNINE UPGRADE:
STALYBRIDGE TO DIGGLE(SADDLEWORTH) SCHEME TWA
ORDER**

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Saddleworth and Oldham Whit Friday Band Contests to register our concern about the possible adverse impact on our contests of any road closures or other traffic restrictions necessitated by the proposed Transpennine Upgrade.

You may know that the Saddleworth and Oldham Band Contest takes place across 11 Saddleworth villages each Whit Friday. The event features over 100 Brass Bands who travel between the villages by coach to compete in the contests. Bands will try to play in as many of the contests as possible and most bands will play in at least 6 contests. Full details of the event can be found on our website: <https://saddleworthwhitfriday.co.uk>

Brass band contests have been held in Saddleworth on Whit Friday since at least 1884. The Whit Friday contests in Saddleworth hold a special place in the brass band calendar and attract thousands of musicians and spectators, from all parts of the UK. An international flavour is added with bands coming from other parts of Europe, Scandinavia and North America to take part in the contests.

Because bands and spectators travel between the 11 contests, with a high number of coaches and cars moving around the Saddleworth area, any disruption to the roads in Saddleworth on Whit Friday would cause significant problems for the contests, the bands and the spectators. Currently we liaise closely with Oldham Council and plans are put in place to ensure traffic can move safely around the area with the necessary arrangements to deal with the coaches and the activities of the contests themselves.

I would ask those responsible for managing the Upgrade to factor into their plans the adverse impact on our contests of any road closures, or other travel

disruption on a Whit Friday. The dates for Whit Friday over the next four years are set out below.

Please do whatever you can to avoid highway closures or significant disruption in the Saddleworth area on a Whit Friday.

Contest dates;

Friday 29th May 2026

Friday 21st May 2027

Friday 9th June 2028

Friday 25th May 2029

Please acknowledge safe receipt. You can contact me on 07774 261491 if you have any queries on how the contests operate.

Regards

Peter Norbury

Chair, Saddleworth and Oldham Whit Friday Band Contest Area Committee

