



December 19th 2025

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

TRANSPENNINE UPGRADE: STALYBRIDGE TO DIGGLE(SADDLEWORTH) SCHEME TWA ORDER
To whom it may concern

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Uppermill Whit Friday Band Contest to register our concern about the damaging impact of any road closures or other traffic restrictions necessitated by the above Transpennine Upgrade will have on our contest.

You may know that the Saddleworth and Oldham Band Contest takes place across 11 Saddleworth villages each Whit Friday, with Uppermill being the largest (around 4,000 spectators usually attend the Uppermill contest alone) and very much central geographically. On the day well over 100 Brass Bands travel between the villages by coach to compete in the contests. Bands try to play in as many of the contests as possible and most bands will play in at least 6 contests in order to qualify to compete for the Area Prizes which, in some circumstances, provide a much-needed part of their annual income, enabling their continued existence.

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 U.K. and abroad.

Bands and spectators must travel between the 11 contests in quite a short space of time, resulting in a large number of coaches and cars moving around the Saddleworth area, particularly Uppermill. Disruption to the roads in Saddleworth on Whit Friday will cause significant problems for the contests, the bands and the spectators. Close, ongoing liaison with Oldham Council ensures that detailed plans are put in place to ensure traffic can move safely around the area with the necessary arrangements to deal with the influx of coaches on the day, and cars used by spectators to access the contests.

We would ask that those planning and overseeing the Upgrade to factor into their plans, arrangement to mitigate the potentially devastating disruption the Upgrade activities will inevitably cause to the contests. Whit Friday falls on the dates listed below for the coming three years: Friday 29th May 2026, Friday 21st May 2027, Friday 9th June 2028.

Full details of the event can be found on the website: <https://saddleworthwhitfriday.co.uk>

I would urge you to do whatever possible to avoid road closures and the significant disruption they will inevitably cause to the Saddleworth Whit Friday Band Contests.

Yours sincerely,

John Tobin
(Chair Uppermill Whit Band Contest Committee).

