

SADDLEWORTH & OLDHAM WHIT FRIDAY BAND CONTESTS OBJECTION TO:

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

STATEMENT OF CASE

This Statement of Case is submitted on behalf of the Saddleworth and Oldham Whit Friday Band Contests Area Committee.

The Saddleworth and Oldham Band Contests have taken place across Saddleworth annually on Whit Friday since 1884 and hold a special place in the brass band calendar and in the local community. The event attracts thousands of spectators and over 100 Brass Bands from all parts of the UK and increasingly from Scandinavia, other parts of Europe, North America and even Australia. The contests are justifiably an important source of pride to the local community as well as being a major boost to the local economy. Details of the event can be found on our website: <https://saddleworthwhitfriday.co.uk>

Bands travel between the eleven participating villages by coach to compete in as many of the contests as possible, resulting in large numbers of coaches and cars moving around throughout the Saddleworth area having to negotiate the essential road closures and traffic control measures in place that are necessary for the contests to occur. We liaise closely with Oldham Council to put plans in place to ensure traffic can move safely around the area and although every attempt is made to minimize problems, some traffic disruption is inevitable. Any additional disruption to the roads in Saddleworth on Whit Friday arising as a result of measures in place as a result of the Upgrade would have a significant adverse effect on the contests, the bands and the spectators.

Of particular concern are the proposed works relating to Greenfield Station and the adjacent A669 Oldham Road bridge and the works involving Oaklands Road in Greenfield. Works at these locations on Whit Friday would cause major disruption to the Contests closest to them, with the potential that it might be impossible to safely hold those contests dependent upon the level of disruption caused. We also anticipate a significant “knock-on” effect disrupting access to the other Saddleworth and Oldham Contests from these works.

We understand that these works are necessary and will ultimately benefit the local community, but we respectfully urge those responsible for managing the Upgrade to consider the significant adverse impact on our contests of any road closures, traffic diversions or other restrictions on a Whit Friday. The dates for Whit Friday over the next four years are set out below.

WHIT FRIDAYS-

Friday 29th May 2026

Friday 21st May 2027

Friday 9th June 2028

Friday 25th May 2029

