



## NEWS RELEASE

### BLUEBELL RAILWAY SUFFERS ATTACKS FROM VANDALS OVER AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY

The Bluebell Railway has suffered from a spate of attacks from youths over the 3 days of the August Bank holiday.

The attacks all occurred in the same vicinity just north of Dean's Crossing on the line between Horsted Keynes and Kingscote. The incidents started on Saturday when 3 passenger trains were attacked by ballast being thrown at the windows of the passing trains and a similar situation on Sunday – in one case a carriage window shattered and it is pure fortune that a mother and her 3-year-old child did not sustain personal injury.

The police were informed of the situation but unfortunately matters escalated on Monday. Two Bluebell Railway volunteers agreed to locate themselves in the vicinity to act as a deterrent to further action and also as a Look Out for passing trains. They came under personal verbal and physical attack from missiles being hurled from the 2 individuals – the result being that one of the volunteers sustained a facial injury which required hospital attendance. The age of the youths is thought to be around 12. Notwithstanding their youth one of the individuals was also carrying a knife. Sussex Police are taking the matter very seriously as are the Bluebell Railway.

Dick Fearn, Bluebell Railway Plc Chairman said “any act of mindless vandalism is a matter of real concern. The safety of our passengers and our staff/ volunteers takes the highest priority in all that we do. In this instance the physical attack and threat takes matters to the highest level of both concern and dismay, and from perpetrators so young.



The police investigation is ongoing I am however pleased to confirm that our volunteer, who spent his Bank Holiday Monday afternoon in East Surrey A&E, was duly discharged with thankfully no lasting damage to his eye.”

The Bluebell Railway will of course take whatever action it feels necessary to reduce the potential for such occurrences in the future but acknowledges that much of its railway runs through open countryside. Details will not be provided on these measures for operational reasons.

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**Bluebell Railway Plc**

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