

Press release: Drivers advised to plan journeys ahead of Bridgwater Carnival event

The annual Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival is the largest illuminated carnival in Europe, attracting up to 120,000 spectators, and traffic levels are expected to increase between junctions 23 and 24 throughout late afternoon and evening.

Drivers are also advised that access into Bridgwater from junction 24 will be closed from 6pm on the night.

Gareth Price, Highways England emergency planning officer for the South West, said:

The carnival is a popular event in the south west and can lead to increased traffic volumes between junctions 24 and 23 of the M5, particularly between 5pm and 7pm and from 9pm onwards.

We advise all road users to allow extra time for their journeys, listen out for radio updates and to check our traffic and travel information channels.

Highways England provides live traffic information [via its website](#).

Travel information is also available by phone from the Highways England Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 and updates will be provided via Twitter.

Carnival goers can also find further information on the [Bridgewater Carnival website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

News story: First of a Kind competition: transform tomorrow's train journeys

The First of a Kind (FOAK) competition invites bids from companies to fund existing innovations that may be in use outside the rail industry but which could benefit rail passengers. This could, for example, be to create more space in carriages or provide improved assistance to passengers with a diverse range of needs.

The competition, run by Innovate UK, is part of the [Department for Transport's \(DfT\)](#) wider Accelerating Innovation in Rail (AIR) scheme. This is aimed at introducing cutting-edge ways of improving the whole passenger experience on rail, such as helping rail services to run efficiently and on time.

AIR develops ideas from concept, whereas the FOAK scheme aims to fund ideas already working in the real world that could be successfully transferred to the rail industry. As they already exist, under the scheme passengers will be able to use them in trials and give feedback.

The first challenge in the FOAK competition is rolling stock. Organisations are invited to bid for funding for technology not previously used on trains and examine how they can be integrated. Later funding will focus on other aspects of the railway network.

Passengers at the heart

Rail Minister Paul Maynard said:

As well as encouraging innovative ideas from concept, we want to help develop existing ideas that can be transferred successfully to the rail industry for the benefit of passengers.

The aim of government, train operators and infrastructure managers is to put passengers at the heart of everything we do. If we can help fund development of these inventive and ground-breaking ideas then this will help support the biggest modernisation programme in rail since the Victorian era.

Ian Meikle, Innovate UK's Director – Infrastructure Systems, said:

We want to unlock the talent of UK companies to demonstrate tomorrow's trains today. This first of a kind competition will result in tangible, realistic prototypes that have the potential to

meet the challenges of passenger journeys.

Gordon Wakeford, Chair of the Rail Supply Group, commented:

The rail supply sector is continually seeking to improve the passenger experience by developing new and better products and solutions. This competition will provide a stimulus for the many innovative companies in our sector to develop new and ground-breaking ways to enhance rail journeys.

I am confident that the rail industry will rise to this challenge with commitment and creativity.

Competition information

[News story: UK to host global conference to crack down on wildlife crime](#)

Ministers have today (30 October 2017) officially launched the London 2018 Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference, with less than a year to go before the global conference begins.

Foreign Office, Defra and DFID ministers brought together NGOs, academics and key countries affected by the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) to call on them to work with the UK to help stamp out this crime. It is now the fourth most lucrative transnational crime in the world after drugs, weapons and human trafficking.

Building a strong, global consensus on tackling IWT is a priority for the government as this crime, which is destroying entire populations of endangered species and causing misery for local communities, can only truly be addressed through international collaboration.

From previous conferences in [London in 2014](#) through to [Kasane in 2015](#) and Hanoi in 2016, the UK has shown the leadership and ability to secure the political commitment needed to bring an end to IWT.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The illegal trade in wildlife is a serious organised crime and an

utter abomination which has no place in the twenty-first century.

The criminals who run this trade do more than damage wildlife – they use the same networks of corrupt officials and agencies to commit further crimes, such as drug smuggling and people trafficking, along with financial crimes by laundering their illicit money.

Only by building global consensus and working together will we be able to stop wildlife crime in its tracks, and I am determined that the UK will continue to drive forward this agenda. I am proud to say that London will once again host the next global IWT conference next year.

Watch the Foreign Secretary discuss the corruption and criminality at the heart of the illegal wildlife trade

[Foreign Secretary discusses the corruption and criminality at the heart of the illegal wildlife trade](#)

Earlier this month the government announced [new plans to ban ivory sales in the UK](#).

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

The international community shares a common aim to end merciless poaching and criminal trading – but now is the time to step up decisive action.

Building on the success of past summits to protect critically endangered species, the London conference marks a collective intent to work together, share learnings and forge new partnerships to disrupt the criminality that is destroying flora and fauna on an unprecedented scale.

The UK government has committed £26 million between 2012 and 2020 to fund practical action around the world to help fight the illegal wildlife trade. This includes, to date, 47 projects funded through the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund.

The UK will host the fourth consecutive conference on IWT on 10 to 11 October 2018.

Press release: PM meeting with First Minister of Wales: 30 October 2017

The Prime Minister met with the First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones in Downing Street today.

As well as discussing domestic issues, they spoke about Brexit and the Prime Minister explained how the UK Government's priority was delivering a successful EU exit that works for the whole of the UK.

On the important engagement with Wales and the other devolved administrations, they spoke about constructive dialogue at the recent Joint Ministerial Committee and the progress made on working together to establish principles on common frameworks.

They also discussed the EU Withdrawal Bill and the Prime Minister made clear that we are working to ensure that as powers are repatriated from Brussels back to Britain, the right powers are passed to the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in a way that works for all parts of the UK.

News story: Open Call for Innovation paused for low-TRL Defence proposals this financial year

Since its launch, the Defence and Security Accelerator has assessed nearly 700 proposals from almost 400 organisations and has successfully awarded its defence portion of the 'Open Call' budget for this year. Subsequently the Open Call for Innovation has been paused for new Defence-related proposals.