



BHP Case Study:

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The North Yorkshire Moors Railway (NYMR) Trust is a not-for-profit charitable organisation operating one of the biggest heritage steam railways in the country.

The line runs the 18 miles between Grosmont and Pickering across the North York Moors National Park, with additional services via National Rail to Whitby on the East Coast, which is a unique arrangement.

The railway was first built in 1836 by none other than George Stephenson and the Trust took over ownership of the line in 1969, following its closure due to the Beeching cuts.

With approximately 10,000 members including a core team of around 110 full-time staff and 40 seasonal staff, supported by 1,000 regular volunteers, the NYMR Trust works hard to enhance the experience of the 150,000 annual visitors travelling on the railway.

The charity aims to improve the quality of the infrastructure, preserve the locomotives, look after the lineside and promote volunteering and community development opportunities.

Image by Charlotte Graham



BHP

Changing accountants

North Yorkshire Moors Railway has been working with BHP since 2019, having switched from their previous accountants. After looking at a number of local and regional firms, they chose us to deliver their audit services and support them with charity taxation matters.

Garry Mumford, Finance Director at the NYMR Trust, said: “We didn’t really feel that the relationship with our previous accountants was working well for us, so we were keen to build a relationship with a firm such as BHP.

“What we were impressed with was the quality of the presentation, the depth of knowledge and the personalities at BHP. An auditor is there to do a job, but it doesn’t have to be an adversarial relationship — it can be friendly where both sides are working towards the same goal, and that’s where I think BHP scores highly for us.”



Difficult times

After a difficult beginning, with the charity’s first BHP audit taking place in 2020 right in the middle of the pandemic, the NYMR has had to adapt considerably.

Garry continued: “What’s really changed dramatically for us, in common with other heritage railways and tourist attractions, is that the world has changed a lot since Covid. We haven’t seen a return to how things were before, and now we’re in a difficult economic environment as well.

“We’ve had to make best use of the fact that we’re a charity and think of ourselves as a charity first and a railway second. We’ve done a lot of work on building the charity aspect of our operations, broadening our objectives. It’s not just about running a railway anymore; it’s about all the other things that come with it, such as education, the environment and people’s wellbeing through volunteering. We need to be able to supplement our income in other ways.”



Image by Charlotte Graham

Giving back to the charity sector

Garry was also impressed by BHP’s commitment to supporting third-sector organisations, having attended our annual charity conference on several occasions.

He commented: “I take my hat off to the fact that BHP does that sort of thing free of charge for the sector and gives so much back.

“We’ve continued to be impressed by the firm’s ethos and values it stands for, which are very much aligned with us as a charity, and we’ve built a very good relationship on that basis.”



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Garry Mumford, Finance Director

Looking to the future

Today, the way the organisation is managed is very different. There has been a big shift in the way that the Trust thinks, which has been necessary to enable them to grow and move forwards. BHP has been there to support the charity through difficult times, offering their experience and expertise, and providing valuable advice.

Garry said: “We’ve been through a lot in recent years and the experience of the team at BHP has really helped us — knowing that people are there to answer questions and give us another dimension on things has been invaluable.

“I certainly don’t regret the move. BHP was always top of the potential list and, even going through the proper tender process, the firm stood out to us. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and I think that the railway has been a stronger place for having that relationship.



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