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DAVID ENYORI

Queensbury Tunnel is a miracle, driven by 600 men over four years in conditions beyond our imagination. But the world moves on and, given the current economic climate, there is no room for sentiment about disused engineering feats.

Highways England's Historical Railways Estate (HRE), custodians of the tunnel on behalf of the Department for Transport, regard it as a liability and intends to spend £3 million of taxpayers' money on concrete, sealing its entrances and backfilling five ventilation shafts. Thereafter it will be abandoned and allowed to collapse.

The Queensbury Tunnel Society believes there is a viable and positive alternative - transforming the tunnel to serve as the centrepiece of a cycle path network connecting Halifax to Bradford and Keighley.

However, in 2016, HRE's consulting engineers completed a desk study which put the cost of refurbishment at more than £35 million. Understandably, this was deemed to be unaffordable by a Transport Minister, leaving the path clear towards abandonment.

But a team of experienced engineers and contractors, after inspecting the tunnel on behalf of the Society, have developed a detailed 44-week repair programme costing £2.8 million, a similar sum to abandonment.

same period - that's £3.20 for every £1 invested. Construction would support around 80 direct jobs.

Bikes and cars do not safely mix. If we are serious about tackling our dependency on fossil fuels and moving to more active forms of travel, high-quality infrastructure will have to be provided.

Please support our efforts to prevent the tunnel's abandonment in 2018 and help us realise our vision. Queensbury Tunnel can play an inspiring transport role for generations to come and deliver a much-needed boost to the local economy.

- 2,287** The length of Queensbury Tunnel in metres
- £15.5K** The cost of HRE's repair scheme, per linear metre
- £12.5K** The cost of new tunnels for HS2, per linear metre
- £2M** The cost of repair in 2009, according to HRE's consultants

Today there are almost 60 former railway tunnels on the National Cycle Network, some becoming attractions in their own right. The longest, at more than a mile, is Combe Down Tunnel in Bath which opened in 2013 and hosted 250,000 journeys in its first year.

A recent study by Sustrans found that an ambitious cycle network built around Queensbury Tunnel would cost £11.6 million over 30 years. However £37.6 million would be accrued in economic, health and tourism benefits over the

- 3.2:1** The Benefit-to-Cost Ratio of a cycle network around the tunnel
- £10.8M** The 30-year tourism boost from the tunnel alone.
- 95** Number of indirect jobs induced by a cycle network.

**Can we really afford to turn our backs on those benefits?**

-  **Background information**  
[www.queensburytunnel.org.uk](http://www.queensburytunnel.org.uk)
-  **ePetition on change.org**  
[tiny.cc/QueensburyTunnel](https://tiny.cc/QueensburyTunnel)
-  **Facebook campaign page**  
[facebook.com/queensburytunnel](https://facebook.com/queensburytunnel)
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