

# Northumberland Line

## Keeping You Connected

[Edition 7 | March 2023]



### Photos of the month



Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper, Northumberland County Council Leader Glen Sanderson and MP for Blyth Valley Ian Levy visiting the Northumberland Line

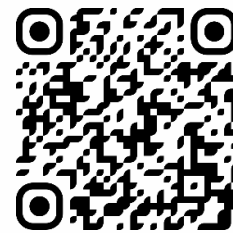


Night works underway between Holywell and Seghill during the recent snow

Welcome to the March 2023 edition of the Northumberland Line newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to give an overview of upcoming site work, as well as letting you know about key project milestones.

This edition includes information about a recent visit from the Secretary of State for Transport, how you can find out more about proposed changes to highways at six level crossings along the line, and an update on the Ashington track upgrade works. As usual, we also have an update on the progress of construction along the Northumberland Line.

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Northumberland Line

## Keeping You Connected

# What is the Northumberland Line?



The Northumberland Line will bring passenger trains back into service between Ashington and Newcastle. It will provide new stations between Ashington and Newcastle Central Station, taking 35 minutes with no need to change trains. Alternatively, you can switch from the Northumberland Line at Northumberland Park to Tyne and Wear Metro for onward journeys to the Airport, Tynemouth and South Shields.

The freight trains that currently use the railway will still be able to do so, helping support the economic aspirations of both Lynemouth Power Station and the Port of Blyth.



# Progress update and look ahead

## Northumberland Line summer 2024 opening announcement

On 6 March the Transport Secretary Mark Harper visited the site of the future Newsham station to mark the announcement that regular train services will return to Northumberland in 2024.

He confirmed the government's commitment to the scheme, noting its potential to improve the region's economy through the provision of better transport links. The line's construction work alone has already created almost 100 high-skilled jobs and apprenticeships, showing the benefits it's already having on the local community. Congestion and air quality are also expected to plummet as people will be encouraged away from cars and onto trains.



Mark Harper, Glen Sanderson and Ian Levy welcoming the news of the Northumberland Line opening in summer 2024

*"Communities in Northumberland can get ready for regular train services that will better connect people to jobs, education and opportunities while growing our economy. Restoring lost railway connections will drive tourism, boost local business opportunities and encourage investment across our regions, which is why I'm pleased to say that we are on track to reopen this historic line next summer."* **Transport Secretary Mark Harper**

*"This is such a transformational scheme which will bring benefits for residents, businesses and visitors for generations to come. We have been working so hard over recent years to make this scheme happen, getting all the necessary planning and stations approved and preparing the line for the major works. This is the moment we've been working towards, and I am so excited we've reached this point as we prepare to get trains rolling again through this part of our county."* **Northumberland County Council Leader Glen Sanderson**

*"This is hugely welcome news as we get closer to delivering a transformed railway which will support the re-introduction of regular passenger trains and connect communities in Northumberland and Newcastle. We're proud to be working with our industry partners on this truly revolutionary project, which will boost economic growth and bring a new lease of life to the region."* **Network Rail's North & East Route Director Matt Rice**

*"We were absolutely delighted to have been invited to the ceremony with the Secretary of State in which the opening was formally announced. We've been campaigning for this re-opening for 18 years, so in one sense it's been a long time coming, but we applaud both the Council and the Government for this decision. It proves that campaigning really does work, as very few people were listening to us when we first put our ideas forward in March 2005. Special thanks are due to the team at Northumberland County Council who have been working very hard going through the processes to turn this re-opening aspiration into reality. I'm very much looking forward to catching a train from my local station in Bedlington in just over a year's time!"* **The South East Northumberland Rail User Group's Chair Dennis Facett**



# Progress update and look ahead

*"This month it was with great pleasure that I welcomed two VIPs to the Northumberland Line. Firstly, in February Rail Minister Huw Merriman paid a visit to Newsham and I had an opportunity to take him through the progress we have made to date on the line, highlighting not just the engineering work but also the positive things we are doing in the community to add social value.*

*At the beginning of March the Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper, also paid us a visit and we escorted him onto the construction site and track at Newsham to see first hand the work that continues to progress.*

*Both the Rail Minister and Secretary of State were hugely supportive of our scheme and they reinforced the Government's commitment to it.*

*I also had the privilege of visiting the Dales School to see the retired Pacer train they have in their yard. Half of the carriage has been transformed into a library, which is used as a place to encourage children with special educational needs to take up reading. The school are in the process of transforming the second half of the carriage into a STEM classroom and I have enlisted a team of volunteers for a day to help them progress this at the end of the month. This is just one of many small things that people on the programme are doing to help make a big and lasting impact on the communities around the line and something we will continue doing throughout the duration of the project."*

**Neil Blagburn – Programme Director**

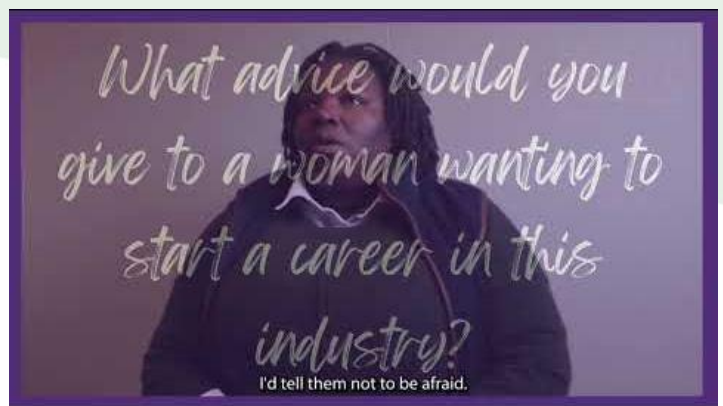
Read more about this in the Government's press release at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/historic-northumberland-line-to-reopen-next-summer>, or watch Mark Harper and Glen Sanderson discuss the Summer 2024 opening below.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cz9nvj\\_x1nA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cz9nvj_x1nA)

## International Women's Day

This International Women's Day (8 March 2023), Northumberland County Council interviewed some of the fantastic women from Morgan Sindall who are working to deliver the stations for the Northumberland Line. Find out about why they chose a career in construction and what they love about their job in the video below.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCR2HyqKjWU>

# Progress update and look ahead

## Diversion of Public Right of Way at Palmersville Dairy

A section of the Public Right of Way to the east of Proctor & Gamble's site close to Palmersville Dairy Level Crossing ("Forest Hall 005") will be temporarily closed until early November. This is to enable works to replace the current pedestrian crossing with a new route under the railway. A diversion has been agreed with North Tyneside Council. For more information, please visit: <https://www.northumberlandline.uk/post/temporary-closure-of-footpath-forrest-hall-005-palmersville>

## Ashington track works

During March, Network Rail successfully replaced approximately 1000m of track to the south of the Ashington station site. The work was required to enable passenger trains to run safely on the line once it opens.

A further phase of work is scheduled for **Thursday 20 July to Monday 24 July 2023**. This phase will see the renewal of a further 200m of track between Hospital Level Crossing and the new station.



Excavation of the track at Hospital Level Crossing

## Proposed changes to highway level crossings

As part of the Northumberland Line, the following six highway level crossings have been identified as needing changes as part of the scheme, with some impacts on the road layout.

- Bebside (Newsham)
- Marchey's House (Choppington)
- North Seaton (Ashington)
- Plessey Road (Newsham)
- Bedlington South (Bedlington)
- Green Lane (Ashington)

These changes have been identified from level crossing safety assessments and are required to improve operation for all users when passenger trains start using the line once more. The remaining level crossings along the Northumberland Line do not require changes to the existing highway.

Changes to Bebside, Marchey's House, North Seaton and Plessey Road level crossings will be subject to Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) submitted to Northumberland County Council as the highways authority, who will decide whether to give permission to proceed with them.

Bedlington South and Green Lane will be exempt from the TRO process, as they do not include further traffic restrictions above and beyond what exists at present.

Local residents and other stakeholders can view information about the changes online at <https://haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/transport/nl-lx-mitigation/> or by scanning the QR code below.





# Works by station location

## Palmersville Dairy

Works to construct a new underpass at Palmersville Dairy Level Crossing have started and the team are currently setting up their works area. Works are expected to be concluded in Spring 2024.

## Northumberland Park

Preparations for mining remediation works, which will ensure the voids left by historic mining are completely filled in, are due to start in April 2023. This work is expected to take between three and six months.

## Seaton Delaval

Station construction works are due to re-start in the Spring this year. In preparation for start of the construction of the new station, a number of precast concrete units will soon be delivered to site.

## Newsham

Piling works are currently underway as part of the station and platform construction. This activity is expected to continue into May 2023.



Piling works at Newsham Station site

To the south of the new station site, works have started to re-shape the existing embankments forming the edge of the railway track. The works are required to support the upgrade of the track to enable it to carry passenger services.

## Blyth Bebside

Ground investigations to determine if any works are needed to fill in former mine workings and to make the ground stable before station construction starts have recently been completed. Further investigations will be undertaken in Spring, while work to construct the station is due to start in later in 2023.

## Bedlington

Works to construct the station will commence in 2023, and more details will be shared in due course. Outside of the station site, track renewal and level crossing works are ongoing.

## Ashington

As reported above, works to upgrade the track into Ashington station have been undertaken throughout March and will continue into April. At the station itself, works continue to upgrade the Wansbeck Square car park area.

## Virtual tours

Every month our stations contractor Morgan Sindall will be providing a 'behind the fence' look at each of their active sites. By using the QR codes below, you will be able to walk through the sites and see the progress being made, as well as learning how some of the work has been delivered and details of the machinery involved.

[Ashington](#)  
[2023.02.24](#)



[Newsham](#)  
[2023.02.24](#)



[Palmersville Dairy](#)  
[2023.02.24](#)



[Northumberland Park](#)  
[2023.02.24](#)



## Upcoming road closures

We understand how disruptive any road closures (either partial or full) can be for journeys. Unfortunately, they are needed on this project, to allow the team to complete all the necessary works safely.

Where possible, we share information about road closures in advance to allow people to plan their journey. These will be shared via Northumberland County Council's social media channels, primarily on Twitter [@N\\_landCouncil](https://twitter.com/N_landCouncil).

The following is a list of the road closures currently planned. Please note, these may be subject to change.

### Seghill Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access across the level crossing will be restricted on the dates and times listed below.

- From **10pm on Saturday 22 April to 6am on Monday 24 April.**
- From **10pm on Friday 28 April to 6am on Monday 1 May.**
- From **9pm on Thursday 4 May to 5am on Friday 5 May.**

A replacement bus shuttle service will be available for pedestrians during closures.

### Holywell Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access across the level crossing will be restricted on the dates and times listed below.

- From **9pm on Friday 14 April to 5am on Monday 17 April.**
- From **9pm on Thursday 20 April to 5am on Friday 21 April.**
- From **9pm on Wednesday 17 May to 5am on Thursday 18 May.**

## Plessey Road Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access across the level crossing will be restricted on the dates and times listed below.

- From **10pm on Saturday 15 April to 5am on Monday 17 April.**
- From **10pm on Saturday 22 April to 5am on Monday 24 April.**
- From **10pm on Saturday 29 April to 5am on Monday 1 May.**

## Green Lane Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access across the level crossing will be restricted on the dates and times listed below.

- From **12am to 5am on Sunday 16 April.**
- From **11:30pm on Thursday 11 May to 2am on Friday 12 May.**

## North Seaton Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access across the level crossing will be restricted on the dates and times listed below.

- From **10pm on Saturday 29 April to 5am on Monday 1 May.**
- From **10pm on Saturday 6 May to 5am on Monday 8 May.**

## Hartley Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access across the level crossing will be restricted on the dates and times listed below.

- From **8pm on Saturday 6 May to 6am on Monday 8 May.**
- From **9pm on Friday 12 May to 5am on Tuesday 16 May.**

# Connect with us



Connect with us and keep updated online by signing up at [nland.cc/signup](http://nland.cc/signup). Alternatively, scan the QR code below to sign-up to receive the digital newsletter **monthly**.

Up to date information about the project will be included on the scheme website <http://www.northumberlandline.uk/>.

If you would like to get in touch with us to ask any questions, please use the details below and we will try to ensure the appropriate person responds to you as soon as possible.



# Keeping You Connected

Northumberland Line... Connecting Communities, Businesses and People

