

Photos of the month



Volunteers working on the conversion of a Pacer train at the Dales School.

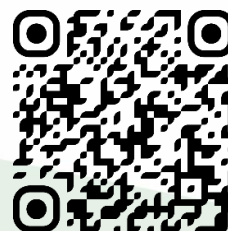


The team working to install new tracks on the line leading into Ashington Station.

Welcome to the April 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 an update on the progress of the construction work at the six station locations and works to upgrade the track ahead of the reintroduction of the passenger service. We are also pleased to share information about our work with the local communities along the Northumberland Line route, including the Dales School in Blyth.

If you wish to receive future editions of this newsletter straight into your email inbox, sign up at nland.cc/signup or use the QR code below.



Alternatively, if you would prefer to have a paper copy delivered to your doorstep, please let us know by calling **0345 600 6400** or email rail@northumberland.gov.uk.

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

Work continues at the Dales School to convert old railway carriages

Back in February, we shared details of the conversion of a class 144 Pacer train carriage into a library at the Dales School in Blyth, which was featured on Channel 4's 'George Clark's Amazing Spaces' (the episode is available to watch on [Channel 4's website](#)). The school is for children from Blyth and Ashington who have Special Educational Needs.

Work has now started on the second carriage, and will see it transformed into a science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) classroom. Our Northumberland Line project team were keen to lend a hand, and in March they took a break from their day jobs to help with the works to clear the train ahead of its conversion.



Volunteers working on the Pacer train at the Dales School.

Once complete, the carriage will be used to help children develop early career aspirations, develop STEM skills, and deliver railway safety lessons using a real train.

The school is now fundraising so it can complete the transformation of both the library and the STEM classroom. Completing work on both carriages will help inspire generations of children, giving them a better future. If you would like to make a donation, please do so by clicking 'donate' on the school's [JustGiving page](#).

You can read more about the school's involvement in the Northumberland Line and the impact the Pacer train will have on the school through their '[Train Blog](#)'.

The project will continue to support the school including through support for landscaping proposals for the school's garden. The school is also set to be a "station adopter" for the new Blyth Bebside station, meaning the pupils will be able to contribute to making the station a welcoming environment for users.



Pupils from the Dales School with Glen Sanderson (Northumberland County Council Leader), Richard Wearmouth (Deputy Leader of Northumberland County Council), Neil Blagburn (Northumberland Line Project Delivery Director), and Kim Waugh (Northumberland County Council Communications Officer).

Progress update and look ahead

Supporting communities

As well as the work to build six new stations and lots of track works along the Northumberland Line route, stations contractor Morgan Sindall is providing a mix of training and work opportunities, and the team are actively supporting local community projects and schools. Here are just some highlights of what we have been up to recently.

- Four work placements for a Women into Construction pilot programme have taken place, with one candidate being offered an apprenticeship role on the project.
- A site clearance at Forest Hall Young People's Club so that an outside area can be used for sport and recreation purposes.
- Attendance at a World of Work Careers Fair at Duke's Secondary School and provision of an ongoing mentoring programme.
- Bridge Building & Dream Big for Engineering workshops at two local schools.
- Delivery of Mental Health First Aid training to 20 participants and Mental Health Awareness courses to a further nine people, in partnership with North Tyneside VODA.



Attendees at the Mental Health First Aid training



Women into Construction placement trainee enjoying her work experience placement on site at Newsham.

To find out more about how the Northumberland Line can support your community project or school, please contact the team via [our website](#) or email us at rail@northumberland.gov.uk.

There have been many highlights on the project over the past month, which show great progress against our goals and illustrate the value being added to local communities.

A personal highlight for me was working with a team of volunteers to help the Dales School with the refurbishment of the second half of their Pacer train, which they are transforming into a STEM classroom.

Northern Trains have also started recruitment of future conductors for the line, which is another step towards having all of the necessary crew ready for operations on the line next year.

As we look forward to passenger services starting on the line next year, we are also planning a rail safety awareness campaign. The trains on the line will be faster, quieter and more frequent than anyone will have encountered on the line before, and this means risk is increased and people need to understand the dangers of things like trespass. We look forward to sharing more details of this campaign in due course.

Neil Blagburn – Programme Director

Progress update and look ahead

Railway embankment works

Works to re-shape the existing embankments on a section of railway track between New Hartley and Newsham are progressing well. The works are required to support the upgrade of the track to enable it to carry passenger services.



Earthworks taking place at Newsham.

Temporary works areas

A number of temporary compound areas are being set up along the route of the Northumberland Line in order to provide welfare facilities for the construction team, and to also provide secure locations for machinery, equipment, and materials. In most cases, these areas will only be used for the duration of the works and will be returned to their former use once the line is in operation.

A key site for the track works is located on land off the A1147 (the T T Electronic Welwyn Components site). This area provides safe access to the track, and it will play a key role in the delivering of the track upgrades. Activity here will increase as works for the upgrade of the railway for passenger use continues.

Works are due to start soon on a temporary compound to the west of the A19, near the Northumberland Park Station site. Residents living nearby will have received notifications in advance of the works to set up this compound.



Location of temporary work site north of Bedlington (Google Maps Imagery @2023 CNES/Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky. Maxar Technologies, Map data @2023).



Location of site compound near Northumberland Park station site (Google Maps Imagery @2023 CNES/Airbus, Getmapping plc, Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky. Maxar Technologies, Map data @2023).

Northumberland Park public drop-in session

A public drop-in session will be held on **Thursday 18 May** at Backworth Hall, Station Road, NE27 0AH. This session will offer local residents to ask questions about works associated with the new Northumberland Park Station, with members of the project team on hand from **4.30pm to 7.30pm**.

Works by station location

Palmersville Dairy Level Crossing

Works to construct a new underpass to replace the existing Palmersville Dairy Level Crossing started in January 2023 and are currently ongoing. They are expected to be concluded in February 2024.

Northumberland Park

Northumberland Park will be the first stop for trains travelling from Newcastle. Preparation for mining remediation works, which will ensure the voids left by historic mining are completely filled in, are due to start in May 2023. This work is expected to take between three and six months to complete. Construction of the new station will start once the mining remediation has been completed.

Seaton Delaval

Seaton Delaval will be the second stop for trains travelling from Newcastle. Station construction is due to restart in Spring this year. In preparation for this, precast concrete units will soon be delivered to site.

To the north of Seaton Delaval, works to upgrade the level crossing in New Hartley are continuing.

Newsham

Newsham will be the third stop for trains travelling from Newcastle and construction of the station and platform are underway.

Works will also soon be starting on the construction of the footbridge, which will allow passengers to transfer between the platforms at the new station.

North of Newsham Station, works to upgrade the signalling at Plessey Road Level Crossing are continuing.

Blyth Bebside

Blyth Bebside will be the fourth stop for trains travelling from Newcastle and construction of the station is due to start

later in 2023. Ground investigations to confirm if any works are needed to fill in former mine workings and to make the ground stable before station construction starts are ongoing.

Bedlington

Bedlington will be the fifth stop for trains travelling from Newcastle and works to enable the station's construction will begin in early May. Early works will include clearing vegetation from land at Park Terrace, establishing a site compound and demolishing the existing platform.

Works to upgrade the level crossings to the north and south of the station site have begun and are ongoing.

Works to bring the disused railway sidings at Furnace Way, to the south of Bedlington, are also progressing well, with new tracks now installed. Construction works for a new maintenance yard have also recently started.



New tracks being installed for the Northumberland Line.

Ashington

Ashington will be the final stop for trains travelling from Newcastle. Station construction started last year and recently the focus has been on the creation of a new car park area. Works to upgrade the track and signalling into the station are also progressing well.

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**.

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 Friday 28 April to 6am on Monday 1 May.**
- From **9pm on Thursday 4 May to 5am on Friday 5 May.**
- From **9pm on Thursday 1 June to 5am on Friday 2 June.**

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 from **9pm on Wednesday 17 May to 6am 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 29 April to 5am on Monday 1 May.**
- From **midnight to 6am Sunday 18 June.**

Bedlington South 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 6 May to 6am on Monday 8 May.**
- From **10pm on Saturday 13 May to 6am on Monday 15 May.**
- From 10pm on Saturday 20 May to 6am on Monday 22 May
- From **8pm to 6am each night from Monday 8 May to Friday 12 May and Monday 15 May to Friday 19 May.**
The crossing will be open during the day.

Green Lane Level Crossing closure

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

- From **11:30pm on Thursday 11 May to 2am on Friday 12 May.**
- From **11:30pm on Thursday 18 May to 2am Friday 19 May.**
- From **10pm on Saturday 3 June to 6am on Monday 19 June.**

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.**
- **Sunday 18 June from 3am to 6am.**

Connect with us



Connect with us and keep updated online by signing up at 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.



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