

# Northumberland Line

## Keeping You Connected

[Edition 6 | February 2023]



### Photos of the month



Works in action at Northumberland Park

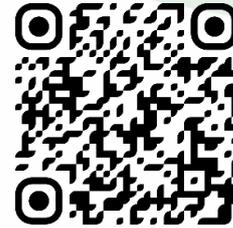


Morgan Sindall volunteers completing a litter pick at Newsham compound

Welcome to the February 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 on an exciting project to provide a new library for pupils at the Dales School in Blyth, an update from one of the apprentices who is helping with the construction of the Northumberland Line and details of upcoming track works in Ashington.

If you wish to receive future editions of this newsletter straight into your email inbox, sign up at [nland.cc/signup](https://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](mailto:rail@northumberland.gov.uk).



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 apprentices

There are eight apprentices currently working on the Northumberland Line at stations contractor Morgan Sindall, helping the project deliver on its social value commitments. One of them, Josh Watson, has been reflecting on his time so far.

"In August I joined Morgan Sindall as an Apprentice Site Engineer at Ashington Station whilst also attending Gateshead college to fulfil my Civil Engineering course.

During my time at Ashington, I have gained valuable knowledge of the industry by working alongside experienced engineers, which has given me the skills to work independently on site. I have enjoyed being out on site the most, gaining knowledge and experience.

I have enjoyed learning to work with surveying equipment and setting out on site. I would highly recommend an apprenticeship to anyone considering it, an apprenticeship will allow you to learn as you work and gain more experience on site every day. Being able to be on site and work hands on will provide valuable knowledge in this industry, every day is something new."



Josh on site at Ashington Station

## Old railway carriage becomes a new children's library

The Dales School in Blyth, for children with special educational needs, recently completed the conversion of a class 144 Pacer train carriage into a library, which was featured on Channel 4's 'George Clark's Amazing Spaces' in January.

Costs, materials, and volunteer time for the project, including the track, station, and ticket office, were contributed by local and national businesses. As well as supporting children's reading skills, the train has been fitted with a driving simulator to encourage career aspirations and to help children with sensory needs to experience the sights and sounds of the railway.

The school now plans to convert the train's second carriage into a science, technology, engineering and maths classroom. Once completed, it will also be used by Network Rail to teach railway safety and travel skills to pupils across the region in preparation for the opening of the Northumberland Line.



The before and after conversion of the carriage, featuring the original 80s-era train

Watch the episode here:

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/george-clarkes-amazing-spaces/on-demand/73975-004>

# Protecting you from scams and fraudsters

## Am I entitled to compensation?

We are aware that some companies may be approaching residents along the route of the Northumberland Line offering them help to make a claim for compensation for disturbance caused by the construction works.

Whilst this activity is legal, there are strict criteria set for when a person can receive compensation relating to construction works and is based upon where financial loss can be demonstrated as a result of the works.

If you are contacted by any company offering to investigate or make a claim for you, or offering other related services, then please be wary and **never pay or transfer money to them.**

If you would like more information on when and how to claim compensation from the Northumberland Line, please contact the team on [rail@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:rail@northumberland.gov.uk) or call 0345 600 6400.

If you believe you do qualify for compensation and wish to appoint a surveyor, please consult The Compulsory Purchase Association (CPA) 'Find A Surveyor' <https://www.compulsorypurchaseassociation.org/find-a-member.html> or similar at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS), which is available online at [www.ricsfirms.com](http://www.ricsfirms.com).

## Protecting yourself from fraudsters

We are also aware that as the Northumberland Line gets a higher profile that it can become a target for scammers. The people who commit these scams are clever and everyone has the potential to become a victim.

Tactics used may take a number of different forms, such as:

- being contacted by letter, phone or in person with a request for an upfront fee in return for some form of service or payout later; or
- an email asking you for money, or simply asking you to click on a link.

If anyone contacts you in whatever way and requests money or personal details, then be suspicious.

**The Northumberland Line will never, ever ask you for money, or passwords or any other related sensitive financial information.**

**We will not ask to enter your house to carry out a survey or any other activity without having contacted you first.** All staff working on the line will have identity badges or another form of ID and if they knock on your door you should ask to check those.

**If you have any concerns then please contact the Northumberland Line team in the first instance by emailing [rail@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:rail@northumberland.gov.uk) or calling 0345 600 6400**

# Upcoming track works at Ashington and virtual tours

## Ashington track works

### What are the works?

Network Rail will be doing essential works to tracks along the whole route of the Northumberland Line prior to the opening of the route. This is to enable passengers trains to run safely on the line once it opens.

The next phase of track works will take place between **Sunday 5 March and Saturday 1 April** between the area next to Sovereign Business Park and the site of the new Ashington Station. This will cover approximately 1000m of track.

A further phase of work is scheduled for **Thursday 20 July to Monday 24 July**. This phase will see the completion of works to renew a further 200m stretch of track from Hospital Level Crossing to the new station.

### What to expect during these works

Some freight operators retain the right to use the line during the day, which means Network Rail is only able to do these works at night. This means that works will take place from **9pm until 6am**. Please note, you may also see workers on site outside of these times preparing and removing materials from site.

To ensure tracks are safe for the trains, the team need to complete several tests using heavy machinery, and this is noisy. Local people will be able to see several machines on site doing these tests, and will also sometimes be able to hear their horns being sounded. Unfortunately, this can't be switched off and is essential to maintain the safety of those working in and around the machinery.

Network Rail are exploring noise reduction techniques, including noise barriers, battery operated equipment and on-site communication methods. However, some noise is still unavoidable.

The works also require both Hospital Level Crossing and Green Lane Level Crossing to be closed during the works between Friday 10 March and Saturday 1 April. This is because the new tracks, sleepers, and ballast (the stones beneath the track) need to be laid through both areas at the same time.

### Why are these works happening?

We appreciate the potential impacts of these works near to properties, and that working overnight is far from ideal. We are sorry for any disruption this may cause.

This work is crucial, however, to facilitate the new train services entering and exiting the new station at Ashington. This significant investment in the infrastructure has not been done to this scale since the 1960s on this line.

## Virtual tours

Each month our stations contractor Morgan Sindall are 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 station sites and see the progress that has been 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](#)



## Palmersville Dairy

Works to construct a new underpass at Palmersville Dairy Level Crossing are due to start in March 2023. Initial works to set up a new temporary access road off Whitley Road (A191) began in January 2023. This included installing temporary traffic lights and a narrow lane system. These measures were removed in February and we would like to thank everyone for their patience while they were in place.



Aerial photo of Palmersville Dairy taken on 22 February

## Northumberland Park

Site clearance is currently underway at the site of the new station at Northumberland Park. Once complete, the area will be prepared for mining remediation works, which will ensure the voids left by historic mining are completely filled in. This work is due to start in March 2023 and take between three and six months to complete.

## Seaton Delaval

Station construction works remain on pause until Spring 2023. Essential works to upgrade the track and level crossings to the south of Seaton Delaval, between Backworth and Seghill, are continuing and are expected to be completed in March 2023.

## Newsham

Works to construct the new station at Newsham are continuing, and construction of a new site access from the existing roundabout on the A1061 started in February.

## Blyth Bebside

Ground investigations have recently started to see if any works are needed to fill in former mine workings and to make the ground stable before station construction starts. Work to construct the station is due to start in later in 2023.

## Bedlington

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

## Ashington

The works at the site of Ashington station have been concentrated on the upgrade of the Wansbeck Square car park area. As detailed above, a programme of track upgrades is due to start to the south of the station site in March 2023.



Aerial photo of Ashington Station taken on 22 February

## 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.

### Bomarsund Level Crossing footway closure

Pedestrian access across the level crossing will be restricted between **7am and 5pm** every day between **Monday 27 February and Friday 3 March**.

### Seghill Level Crossing closure

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

- From **8pm Friday 3 March to 6am Monday 6 March**.
- From **8pm Friday 10 March to 6am Monday 13 March**.
- From **10pm Saturday 22 April to 6am Monday 24 April**.
- From **10pm Friday 28 April to 6am Monday 1 May**.
- From **9pm Thursday 4 May to 5am Friday 5 May**.

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

## Green Lane Level Crossing closure

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

- Between **5am and 9pm** every day from **Friday 10 March to Monday 13 March**.
- Between **5am and 9pm** every day from **Thursday 16 March to Friday 17 March**.
- Between **6am and 8pm** every day from **Monday 27 March to Saturday 1 April**.

## Hospital Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian access across the level crossing will be restricted:

- Between **5am and 9pm** every day from **Friday 10 March to Monday 13 March**.
- Between **5am and 9pm** every day from **Thursday 16 March and Friday 17 March**.

## Hartley Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access will be restricted:

- From **10pm Friday 10 March to 6am Monday 13 March**,
- From **10pm Friday 17 March to 6am Monday 20 March**.

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

## Marcheys Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access will be restricted on the dates and time listed below:

- From **9pm Friday 24 March to 5am Monday 27 March**.

## North Seaton Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian and vehicular access will be restricted between **6am and 8pm** every day between **Monday 20 March and Saturday 25 March**.

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

# 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

