

Northumberland Line

Keeping You Connected

[Edition 13 | September 2023]



Photos of the month



Track works at Bedlington Station

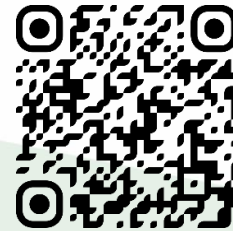


"Being an Ally" toolbox talk held to support LGBTQ construction delivered to principal contractor Morgan Sindall Infrastructure.

Welcome to the September 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 marks the first anniversary of the Northumberland Line newsletter, and we hope you continue to find this both informative and enjoyable to read. We certainly appreciate the chance to share information about this project with you. Along with our usual project updates, we have taken the opportunity to review our progress and achievements over the last year. We are also pleased to share with you public information events being held in October.

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.



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.



Review of the last 12 months

Construction work

Since the first newsletter in September 2022, our teams have been working day and night to create the new Northumberland Line. Below are just some of our key achievements over the last year.

- Ground investigation and mining remediation works have been completed at sites along the line, including Seaton Delaval and Bedlington, and are continuing at Northumberland Park and Chase Meadows.



Mining remediation works at Seaton Delaval

- Construction of stations at Ashington, Newsham and Seaton Delaval are progressing well, and works have now started at Blyth Bebside and Bedlington.



Platform installation at Ashington

- A total distance of 25 km of track has been renewed across the whole of the Northumberland Line, and upgrades to the level crossings and cabling for the new signal system have also started.



Track renewal works

- Several repairs and full construction of underpasses including underpasses in Backworth, South Newsham and Palmersville Dairy.



Rebuilt underpass along the Northumberland Line

- Existing railway embankments have been re-shaped at several locations along the line.



Embankment works south of Newsham

Review of the last 12 months

Our work in the community

- So far, station construction partners Morgan Sindall Infrastructure has delivered 1,644 hours of community engagement, £5.8m of social value delivery and £6.7m in local spend.



Morgan Sindall employees donating to Wansbeck Valley Food Bank

- We are supporting initiatives such as Women into Construction, and have created nine apprenticeships and three Institute of Civil Engineers QUEST scholarships.



Cheryl was in the Women into Construction programme and then was offered an apprenticeship.

- We have engaged with several local schools along the Northumberland Line including renovating a Pacer Train at The Dales Primary School, visiting the Dukes School Rail Club and engaging with Gateshead College.



Pupils from the Dales School and the Northumberland Line project team

- We have welcomed a number of VIP guests including Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper MP and Ian Levy MP for Blyth Valley.



Mark Harper MP, Ian Levy MP and Northumberland County Council Leader Glen Sanderson

- We have run a number of Special Services giving local school children, businesses and residents the chance to ride the Northumberland Line.



Local children on the Santa Special Service with Santa

Progress update and look ahead

"I was reminded recently that it is a year since we started this newsletter to keep you informed on our progress on the line. When you're continuously looking forward and negotiating the plethora of challenges that inevitably arise on a programme of this nature, you can be forgiven for not taking a moment to reflect on achievements to date, but what we have achieved is tremendous.

Some of the highlights for me are;

- 97% of all the track renewal and installation is complete,
- Upgrade of all the level crossings is complete or underway,
- Four new bridges have been constructed,
- 1 km of embankment earthworks has been completed,
- Station construction work is underway at all locations and Ashington is 95% complete,
- The trains required for operating passenger services have been secured,
- All the train drivers required to operate passenger services have been recruited and training well underway,
- The new integrated ticketing system has been developed,
- The planning around the people and processes required to operate the line has been done.

All of this, and more, has seen the teams overcome challenges presented by historic mine workings, contaminated land, unfavourable ground conditions, extreme weather events, ecological and access constraints, cost inflation and not to mention the legal agreements and planning permissions to secure land and enable its development. But despite these challenges, we have continued to make progress on all fronts and the last year feels like a huge step towards passenger services starting up again on the Northumberland Line."

Neil Blagburn, Northumberland Line Programme Director

Great work in August

Despite it being the summer holiday season, August was a busy month for the Northumberland Line delivery partners. Here are some highlights:

- Special trains ran on the line on 2nd August to highlight progress to stakeholders. Watch out for future opportunities to join us on a special service.
- Approximately 500m of track replacement has been completed at Bedlington and West Sleekburn
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Club workshop delivered for Museums Northumberland
- "Being an Ally" toolbox talk held to support LGBTQ construction delivered to Morgan Sindall staff



Attendees at the STEM Club Workshop

Blyth Bebside public information event

We are holding a public information event where you can find out more about the project and the construction programme for Blyth Bebside station on **Thursday 12 October 2023 between 6:00pm – 7:30pm** at **Porky's, Front Street, Blyth, NE24 4HW**. You will have the opportunity to meet the teams who are working to bring you the new Northumberland Line.

Progress update and look ahead

Mayoral visit to Northumberland Park Station

Station contractor, Morgan Sindall Infrastructure recently welcomed the North of Tyne Mayor Jamie Driscoll to the site of the Northumberland Park station.

The North of Tyne Mayor was given an update on the progress on the new station platform. This will allow customers to interchange from the new rail service to Metro trains at Northumberland Park, and discussed the social value ambition and impact so far across the whole project.



Left to right: Site Agent Adam Payne, Community Investment Coordinator Clair Parker, North of Tyne Mayor Jamie Driscoll and Project Manager Tony Lloyd at Northumberland Park

New look bus times to support the Northumberland Line

Making public transport a more attractive option is a key part of the Northumberland Line project. From September 2023, the 434 bus service will see the introduction of a new timetable, with buses running hourly on Mondays to Saturdays and a new route connecting to Widdrington, as well as serving stations at Ashington and Bedlington on the Northumberland Line.

The hourly service will make a huge difference for residents in Linton, Cambois, North Blyth and East Sleekburn with an improved bus frequency.

Fares are a maximum single fare of £2 for Adults and £1 for those 21 and younger.

You can find the updated bus schedule at: <https://www.northumberlandline.uk/post/new-look-bus-times-to-support-the-northumberland-line>

Northern workshop for job seekers in Ashington

Join the Northern job seekers workshop to unleash your job seeking potential and find out how train travel can connect you to more employment opportunities.

The workshop is open to all and will take place on **Friday 6 October 2023, 10.00 – 13.00** at Wansbeck Workspace, Rotary Parkway, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 8QZ.

The workshop will focus on:

Being Northern

- Who we are and where we go!
- Our vision and values

What is great customer service?

- How to communicate effectively and build a good rapport
- Improving your attitude and product knowledge

CV writing, interview coaching, and building self-esteem

- How to make your CV stand out
- How to prepare for an interview and best structure your answers
- The importance of good self-esteem and understanding 'imposter syndrome'

Plus a Q&A roundtable with all hosts

Places are limited so please reserve your spot [here](#). Participants will be given a Northern accreditation certificate which states they have completed the workshop.

Progress update and look ahead

August track renewals at Bedlington

The August track renewals at Bedlington offered local journalists an ideal opportunity to visit the Northumberland Line and witness the project's progress first-hand.

Network Rail's media team, with the help of Tom Stevens, Project Manager for the Northumberland Line, arranged for Kayleigh Fraser from the Northern Echo and James Robinson from the Chronicle to come out on track and see the collaborative work taking place to prepare the line for passenger services next year.

The journalists saw sparks fly as welding and grinding teams applied the finishing touches to the recently laid track. The visitors also saw two tampers rolling slowly along the line and were able to capture close-up footage of the machines in action.



Track works being completed at Ashington

"Our teams have done brilliantly to renew three switches and crossings units, replace approximately 400 yards of track and reinstate old drainage systems. It's been great to get local media on-site so we can share the good work that's taking place on the project."

Tom Stevens, Project Manager for the Northumberland Line

Newsham Station construction updates and public information session

Construction works for the new station at Newsham have now entered a new phase with the conclusion of piling on the site. Works will now be focussed on the building of the new station platforms, as well as improvements on the track and signalling infrastructure. Works will also begin along the A1061 to divert the existing watermain.

The completed station construction will see the diversion of the A1061 over a new road bridge and the closure of the existing level crossing. A pedestrian footbridge will also be built to allow travellers to access both platforms.



Artist's impressions of the Newsham station

We are holding a public information event where you can find out more about this work and the construction programme for Newsham. The event will be held on **Thursday 5 October 2023 between 6:00pm – 7:30pm** at **Morgan Sindall Infrastructure Newsham Site Compound, South Newsham Road, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 3QJ.**

Please note there is no parking on site however there is public parking a short walkway at Blyth Town Football Club (Sandringham Drive, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 3PS). For anyone wishing to attend please report to the security gate house on arrival.

Works by station location

Palmersville Dairy Underpass

The construction works at Palmersville Dairy are now entering their final stage, following successful installation of the underpass to maintain the public right of way across the Northumberland Line.

Northumberland Park

Northumberland Park will be the first stop for trains travelling from Newcastle.

Mining remediation works are currently underway to ensure the voids left by historic mining are completely filled in. The mining remediation works is expected to take between three and six months to complete.

Seaton Delaval

Seaton Delaval will be the second stop for trains travelling from Newcastle.

Work has re-started to prepare the site for the construction of the new station. We look forward to sharing the progress of the construction works in future newsletters.

Newsham

Newsham will be the third stop for trains travelling from Newcastle.

Work is progressing for the construction of the new road bridge and roundabout off the A1061 South Newsham Road, which will require temporary traffic management to be in place (see below for more details).



Aerial view of Newsham station site

As reported above, works have now begun on for the building of the new station platforms.

Please join us at our Public Information event on **Thursday 5 October 2023 between 6:00pm – 7:30pm** at **Morgan Sindall Infrastructure Newsham Site Compound, South Newsham Road, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 3QJ** to find out more about the works in this location.

Blyth Bebside

Blyth Bebside will be the fourth stop for trains travelling from Newcastle.

Works to enable the start of station construction are continuing, with removal of vegetation and the building of the access road to the station. Please join us at our Public Information event on **Thursday 12 October 2023 between 6:00pm – 7:30pm** at **Porky's, Front Street, Blyth, NE24 4HW** to find out more about the works in this location.

Bedlington

Bedlington will be the fifth stop for trains travelling from Newcastle.

Works to dismantle the old station platform are continuing ahead of construction of the new station. We look forward to sharing the scheme's progress in future newsletters.

Ashington

Ashington will be the final stop for trains travelling from Newcastle.

Works at Ashington are now concentrating on completing the new car park and its access. The car park is expected to partially re-open in October 2023.

Work is also continuing to upgrade Green Lane Level Crossing, finalise the track replacement and ensure all the new cabling is fully installed and tested prior to the line opening.

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 via **@N_landCouncil**.

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

A186 (Rotary Road) southbound closures

The southbound lane of the A186 (Rotary Road) and the adjacent footway is now closed until **March 2024**.

A1061 South Newsham – traffic management and partial road closures

Temporary single lane closures will be installed in phases between Sandringham Drive and South Newsham Road roundabout, adjacent to Railway Cottages, starting from **Monday 2 October 2023 for up to 12 weeks**. These lane closures will be controlled by traffic signals (temporary traffic lights and hand-held Stop/Go boards) and will be in use **24/7 including during evenings and on weekends**.

The south side footway will be closed with pedestrians and cyclists advised and diverted at both the Sandringham Drive crossing and South Newsham Road Crossing to use the footway on the North side of the A1061 South Newsham Road. Cyclists will be advised to dismount and walk through this section. This will be in effect for up to 12 weeks, until the works are concluded.

Please note that access will be maintained to the Public Right of Way Blyth Valley Footpath 162 Blyth.

Green Lane Level Crossing closure

Vehicular access across the Green Lane Level Crossing on Green Lane, Ashington, will be restricted on the following dates and times.

- From **10pm on Saturday 28 October to 5am on Monday 30 October (24/7 works)**
- From **10pm to 5am on Monday 30 October and Tuesday 31 October (night-time works)**
- From **10pm to 5am between Wednesday 1 November to Saturday 4 November (night-time works)**
- From **10pm to 5am between Monday 6 November to Friday 10 November (night-time works)**

Bedlington North Foot Level Crossing closure

Pedestrian access across the Bedlington North Foot Level Crossing between Barrington Road and Blenheim Drive, Bedlington, will be restricted on the following dates and times.

- From **10pm on Sunday 8 October to 6am on Monday 9 October**
- From **10pm on Monday 9 October to 6am on Tuesday 10 October**
- From **10pm on Tuesday 10 October to 6am Wednesday 11 October**
- From **10pm on Wednesday 11 October to 6am Thursday 12 October**
- From **10pm on Saturday 28 October to 5am on Sunday 29 October**.

A pedestrian diversion will be available via the Blenheim Drive Footway, Blenheim Drive, Station Road, Station Street and Park Terrace.

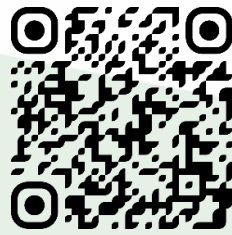
Connect with us



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.



Keeping You Connected

Northumberland Line... Connecting Communities, Businesses and People



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