

Eridge station improvements “lift off” to provide better access for passengers

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Work at Eridge station in East Sussex is underway to provide step-free platform access making the station much easier to use for Southern Rail passengers with mobility issues, older people and parents with young children.

This £1.9m project is being delivered as part of the Department for Transport's Access for All programme and includes a lift on platform one that has capacity for 16 people. The project team will also be installing an accessible ramp at the station entrance leading to the ticket office.

This follows previous work by Network Rail engineers at the station including a £1.8m upgrade of the footbridge that was completed in September 2020 and £500,000 spent on a range of platform improvements that finished in January 2021.

Meanwhile, Southern has also recently finished a full refurbishment inside and out of the station buildings with a welcoming new heritage-style waiting room and more seating as part of its multimillion-pound station improvement scheme. More heritage-style signs are coming soon.

The Railway Heritage Trust donated £30,000 and invaluable design advice for the waiting room on platform 1, and there was significant support from the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership and Rotherfield Parish Council, which is adopting the station and commissioned and funded a mural incorporating an historic railway map of the area – [click here to read more](#).

Eridge station serves the rural district in East Sussex with Southern trains services via the Uckfield branch of the Oxted line. The lift and ramp is due to be completed by the end of October 2021.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris, said: “It is vital that everybody can use our rail network with ease and these brilliant accessibility improvements, funded by our Access for All programme, will help make this a reality.

“Our ambition is that the entire transport network is accessible for all by 2030, so that disabled people can travel easily, confidently and without extra cost.”

Shaun King, Sussex route director for Network Rail, said: “We strive to put passengers at the heart of our approach to running the railway, and with these further improvements, this complements the work we have completed at Eridge station to give better journeys to the people who need to travel on this route.

“We are working closely with contractors to keep disruption to a minimum and I’d like to thank passengers in advance for their patience and understanding whilst the work takes place.”

Southern Customer Services Director Chris Fowler, said: “We want to create a more accessible and inclusive railway, where everyone has the confidence to travel no matter what their need for assistance. I’m delighted that the bid we made for a lift at Eridge was successful and that work is now under way. It will make such a difference to the community.

“The lift will be the icing on the cake for Eridge where we have been working with our fabulous community partners and Network Rail to improve the station with heritage features, celebrating its history and role in village life. I would like to pay tribute to the parish council, the SCRP and Railway Heritage Trust.”

Photo credit: Network Rail