

Haywards Heath and Balcombe landslips repaired and speed restrictions now lifted

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An £11m initiative to carry out critical repairs to earthworks at Haywards Heath and Balcombe this month has now seen speed restrictions lifted.

Work on both Sussex projects has been ongoing since the winter when heavy rainfall caused landslips on the steep sided cuttings. [Network Rail](#) engineers responded to the slips immediately to keep passengers moving safely, however work to implement a long-term fix has been ongoing since.

[Network Rail](#) was able to use the nine-day closure of the Brighton Main Line in February (2022), to complete some of the most challenging and disruptive elements of the work, as well as undertake 28 other major improvement projects to minimise further disruption to passengers and residents.

- [New electric vehicle charging points installed at Network Rail stations](#)
- [Network Rail gears up for nine-day total closure of Penge Tunnel](#)
- [Network Rail shares how it manages the lineside environment](#)

Katie Frost, Network Rail's Sussex route director said: "Thank you so much to our passengers and our

neighbours for their patience with us while we worked on the Brighton line this year.

“Our work at Hayward’s Heath and Balcombe has been going on for many months and most people outside our immediate neighbours wouldn’t have known we were there. But the work we’ve completed will mean one of the country’s busiest railways will be safeguarded from landslips on two really vulnerable parts of the line for years to come.

“Permanently strengthening the sides of the railway here means that speed restrictions which are in place to keep passengers safe can be removed, making journeys faster and more reliable.

“To give you an idea of the scale of the project, without the nine-day closure of the railway in February we would have had to close the railway for up to 20 weekends and we’d still be working there now and well into the winter.”

Chris Fowler, customer services director for Southern, said: “On behalf of our customers, we welcome the completion of these vital stabilisation projects. People using the Brighton Main Line can now be confident of more punctual services and less disruption during severe weather.

“Speed restrictions of 10mph were put on trains travelling through the affected sections of track while repairs were under way.

“Now that work is complete, trains can run at the full line speed of up to 90mph, helping people get to their destinations on time.”

At Haywards Heath more than 300 metres of the cutting slope was stabilised using a reinforced protective wall and 256, 5-metre-long metal nails hammered into the embankment to hold 1,300 metres of mesh in place and stop debris falling on the tracks. More than 900 tonnes of earth was removed to make the cutting less steep and reduce the risk of landslips.

At Balcombe, 250 metre of reinforced protective wall was built and 101, 13-metre steel beams were driven into the embankment slope to stabilise it. Approximately, 5,000 tonnes of material was removed from the cutting slope to reduce the steepness, and more than 1,100 concrete blocks were installed trackside to add further protection.