

Landslip prevention works finish on Hastings line

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More than 100 engineers have finished work to prevent landslips on the 160-year-old Hastings line.

The line was handed back in time for services to resume on Saturday, following a seven-day closure.

Taking place over the October half term, the work was spread along the line and saw major engineering projects at several locations, including both ends of Wadhurst Tunnel, Strawberry Hill, Churchsettle, Nevill Golf Club and Crowhurst. Embankments and cuttings were shored up using a variety of engineering approaches, from sheet piling to soil nails and rock anchors.

During the closure, Network Rail took the opportunity to put down new track and carry out a series of station improvements, including vegetation clearance, repainting platform markings and deep cleans.

To aid the visually impaired, crews also installed new platform tactiles at Etchingham, and a major refurbishment of the station's footbridge will continue through to mid-December.

In an effort to improve biodiversity along the line, diseased and non-native trees have been replaced at

various locations to make the habitat more friendly to native species.

Fiona Taylor, Network Rail's route director for Kent, said: "The line is one of the oldest in the country and we have been working hard to make it truly fit for the 21st century and resilient against the impacts of climate change."

Gareth White, operations manager for BAM Nuttall, which carried out the works, said: "The works undertaken to stabilise the cutting at Wadhurst, and the completion of other necessary works on the line, are all part of our plans to make sure that we are putting the safety and wellbeing of passengers first.

"We are proud to be working alongside Network Rail and to have the support of our subcontractors, who helped us deliver this impressive milestone. We would also like to thank the residents in the vicinity for their understanding and patience during this time."

Steve White, Southeastern managing director, said: "Reducing the risk of landslips caused by bad weather helps us to deliver the reliable and punctual service that our customers deserve.

"I'd like to say a big thank you to our passengers for bearing with us and changing their travel plans while this essential work was carried out. I'm really pleased that the project was completed on time and our trains were running again as scheduled from Saturday."

Image credit: Network Rail