

Subway tunnel at Hassocks officially opened

June 13, 2022



A new subway at Hassocks in Sussex has been opened to enable people to cross the railway much more easily and safely.

It replaces an old level crossing which closed in summer 2021 due to safety concerns.

As part of the project, 22,000 tonnes of earth were removed from the railway embankment. Then, pre-cast concrete sections were slid into place to form the underpass structure. Following this, the embankment was reinstated and the railway put back over it.

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Katie Frost, **Network Rail's** Sussex route director, said: "Level crossings have no place on a modern railway and Woodside crossing in particular was becoming a real hot spot for vulnerable people, and we also had reports of children playing chicken with trains. We're really pleased to have replaced it with a new subway

that gives people a much safer and more accessible way to cross under the tracks.”

Most of the work was done during a nine-day closure of the Brighton Main Line in February 2022, with **Network Rail** carrying out upgrades at 30 worksites as part of a £15m investment. Engineers battled through Storms Eunice and Franklin to complete the work on time.

The nine-day closure, **Network Rail** ways, ensured the work was completed much quicker and with significantly less disruption to railway neighbours and passengers.

Ilr Kirsty Lord, West Sussex County Council, said: “In recent years, the proposed new housing and school in this part of Hassocks increased the concerns of local residents and councillors about the safety and accessibility of Woodside crossing.

“I am relieved that our concerns were heard and would like to thank **Network Rail** for delivering this tunnel and for their efforts to minimise disruption to local residents.

“I am delighted that both new and old Hassocks residents will now have a safer and more accessible route between their homes and village facilities, and that it will also provide a great new route for local walkers and cyclists.”

Cllr Sue Hatton, Mid-Sussex District Council, added: “We have been extremely concerned about safety on the old crossing for some time. This concern grew as the proximity of new housing to the railway line increased. I am personally very grateful that **Taylor Wimpey** and **Rydon** got together with **Network Rail** to enable this superb tunnel to be provided. A feat of engineering as they say, and in a timely way under difficult and restricting circumstances.”

Cllr Ian Weir, Hassocks Parish Council, said: “The whole community will benefit from this amazing new tunnel. It will form a key part of the network of safe off-road routes that the Parish Council is supporting around Hassocks to enable young people to travel independently to school and the village centre and for other residents to have cycling as an option for shorter journeys. Everywhere I hear positive comments about the brilliant job **Network Rail** have done and the care taken to cause the minimum disruption to local residents during construction.”

Adam Lelliott, land & planning director at **Taylor Wimpey** South Thames, said: “We are delighted to have contributed to the funding of this new pedestrian subway providing a safe passageway for residents of Hassocks and our Ockley Park development.”