

The railway through Horsham reopens after nine days of work and a £22 million investment

August 23, 2021



Network Rail has completed nine days of work in a £22 million investment in Horsham – with the railway reopened today (Monday, August 23).

In all, more than 40 miles of railway was closed, from Saturday, 14 August, until Sunday, 22 August, for a mixture of upgrades and maintenance across over 120 different sites. Buses replaced trains between Arundel, Horsham, Crawley and Dorking for the nine days.

Network Rail Sussex route director Shaun King said: “This project was actually a series of many different jobs, spread out across the railway from stations, to track, to signals and earthworks.

“Through it all, passengers have been really understanding and patient with us as we know they would rather have been on trains and not buses.

“I know it was a big ask of them but by combining all this work in one 9-day package, we saved 15

weekends, or 30 days of disruption compared to doing it in the traditional way.

“We’ve also been able to use the efficiencies from this approach to build the business case for the extension of platform 2 at Littlehaven, a significant safety and passenger benefit we wouldn’t have been able to deliver using weekend and overnight working.”

Southern’s Customer Services Director Chris Fowler said: “We’re grateful to our Arun Valley line customers for putting up with the inconvenience of longer journeys and replacement buses over the past nine days. It has allowed Network Rail to accomplish a huge amount and range of improvements to give customers a better travel experience in the years ahead.

“The extensive refurbishment of all the station buildings complements the new facilities we’ve installed as part of our network-wide improvement programme. Most Arun Valley stations now have more seats and shelters, and some have enhanced information screens, cycle parking or landscaping.”

The biggest single part of the week was rebuilding the railway junction at Horsham, where nine sets of points, which allow trains to cross from one track to another, were replaced.

In addition, 14 signal heads, the traffic lights of the railway, were replaced between Horsham and Crawley, the train detection system was upgraded in the same area, earthworks protected at Ockley, stations were deep-cleaned and decorated at Crawley, Ifield, Faygate, Littlehaven, Holmwood, Ockley, Horsham, Christ’s Hospital, Billingshurst, Pulborough, Amberley, Arundel and Warnham.

Finally, platform 2 at Littlehaven was extended to 12-cars, meaning longer trains will no longer overhang the adjacent crossing, and passengers will be able to get off trains without moving down carriages. The improvement will speed up journeys and increase safety for rail passengers and motorists using the crossing.

The efficiencies gained from delivering work over an extended 9-day line closure supported the investment case for the platform extension, which received funding of £1.9m from the Department for Transport.

This will come into use next year once trackside equipment associated with Parsonage Road level crossing is removed.*

*A set of treadles that trigger Parsonage Road level crossing barriers are set up just off the end of the original shorter Littlehaven platform. These will be moved as part of the forthcoming upgrade of the crossing next year, allowing trains to pull up to the full 12-car length.

- There will be one full weekend closure for follow-up work at Horsham on 4-5 September, and Sunday 3 October.

Photo credit: Network Rail