

Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge railway closed until 20 February for landslip repairs

February 8, 2021



Network Rail engineers are working around the clock to repair a landslip that has caused the closure of the railway between Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge in Kent.

Following the landslip, which happened in the early hours of Monday 1 February, work is needed to protect the railway along a 150m stretch of cutting, where the line is cut around 10m deep into clay in the hillside.

The line will re-open on Saturday, 20 February allowing a full-scale and permanent repair to take place.

Fiona Taylor, Network Rail Route Director for Kent, said: "I'm so sorry we're having to put passengers in this position. We looked long and hard at the possibility of opening the railway sooner. However, it is absolutely essential that our railway is safe to travel on and, by taking this extra time, we can reinforce and protect the line for years to come.

"We've had exceptionally wet conditions this winter driven by climate change and have suffered a number of landslips across the Southern region. This is a long-term challenge we're facing and by taking another week to do this work, we can protect the line for generations to come. Thank you to our passengers and

lineside neighbours for their patience and understanding whilst we carry out these critical works.”

Southeastern’s Train Services Director, Scott Brightwell, said: “There is never an ideal time to close the railway but this work by Network Rail is essential to ensure that this stretch of track can reopen for trains as soon as possible, allowing passengers’ journeys to continue without delay.

“We’ll make sure that changes to journey times and details of replacement bus services are well communicated through our website, National Rail Enquiries, and through our Twitter account @Se_Railway, so please check before you travel.”

The slippage at High Brooms was picked up by remote sensors which had been in place following two previous smaller slippages in the same area. Engineers were immediately despatched to investigate and found that there was a risk to the track and trains so took the decision to close the line on Monday morning.

A permanent fix is now being put into place along approximately 150 metres of the 160-year-old cutting which will include re-grading it (making it less steep), soil nailing and placing netting over the top to ensure no more slippage occurs. Over 5000 tonnes of spoil will need to be removed from the site to make the repair. Passengers will be kept updated through Network Rail South East’s Twitter feed and service information will be provided by Southeastern and the National Rail website.

Replacement bus services are in place between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and trains will continue to run north and south of those stations as per normal services in order to minimise disruption to passengers.

Photo credit: Network Rail