

Northern Extension construction works – information for BRPS Members

As you should be well be aware, the continuing poor weather is severely impacting on the works north of Kingscote to East Grinstead.

So much is dependent on this project concluding on the target date that go beyond just the running of trains. It is a great credit to all those volunteers from across the various departments of the railway who are giving up additional spare time to make sure that all is done within our sphere of control to get the building complete and the line finally opened.

To this end, there are a number of things taking place. To begin with, construction and other work is proceeding 7 days a week.

Whilst there is an increase in the amount of plant on site, work is not just confined to the cutting area but it can be anywhere north of Kingscote.

To enable the clearance of the remaining materials and to aid the movement of men and materials, class 33 – 33103 “Swordfish” is being hired in to enable this to be done at pace and with the ability to use its better tractive power and speed putting less of a demand on the current ability of the 08.

Once the line is opened, there will still be the need to tidy the site. In particular, it is highly unlikely that all the remaining clay spoil and other construction materials will be cleared in time and thus this is being stored and will be removed post opening. No date has yet been set for the end of its hire but there is currently no planned use for it beyond the completion of all works associated with the Northern Extension, which will be some time after the opening.

With the imminent commissioning of operations and the commencement of training, there will be an increase in the volume of trains using the line north of Kingscote and thus as a reminder, the line north of Kingscote Vowels Lane bridge to the station at East Grinstead remains classified as a construction site.

Only those who have undertaken the relevant safety briefings and who are on the register as being permitted to enter the site for construction purposes or who are approved as being under supervision by a nominated responsible person are allowed within that perimeter.

There are plenty of public vantage points along the construction line but do not put yourself, the railway, working members or the project at risk. Anyone found with no reason (business or otherwise) to be on the site, will be asked to leave and that will certainly cause embarrassment.

Whilst some measures will seem extreme and I am sure there will be those who will view elements of this as just that, we are determined to get this final phase of this long running project brought to a safe and satisfactory conclusion.

Part of this simply has to be to provide the teams on the ground with the right tools to allow them to do the work.

Roy Watts (Chairman BRPS)