

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team on **08081 434 434**

HS2 Update

Chiltern tunnel and Colne Valley viaduct | Winter 2025

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high speed railway for Britain.

This is a newsletter about HS2 works from Harvil Road in Hillingdon to South Heath, Buckinghamshire.

HS2 reset news

Mark Wild was appointed as CEO of HS2 in December 2024. Mark is a rail infrastructure expert, who was brought in to put Crossrail on a successful path to opening in 2022.

He is now reviewing HS2's costs and schedule as part of a 12-month reset of the programme. He carried out a similar process as chief executive of Crossrail, helping to put the project back on track and deliver a successful opening of the Elizabeth line in 2022.

Reset timings

The reset is comprised of a series of stages and will be completed in 2026.

HS2 Ltd is not standing still during the reset. This year, we have implemented a rigorous plan to focus on driving productivity and efficiency.

The Spending Review

The multi-year financial settlement as set out in the Government's Spending Review – announced in June, provides greater certainty to the delivery of HS2 and lays the foundations for the reset.

The Spending Review document confirms HS2 Ltd.'s settlement as £25.3bn to progress the delivery of HS2 from Birmingham Curzon Street to London Euston. This multi-year financial settlement gives greater certainty to the delivery of HS2 and provides the foundations for the comprehensive reset of the project.

Future updates

We shall continue to provide you with updates on the reset and what this means in terms of our plans in this area.



HS2 CEO; Sir Mark Wild OBE

Align JV progress update

We are on target to complete all main works construction for the Chiltern tunnel and Colne Valley viaduct in 2026.

Since the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) breakthroughs in early 2024, we have been working incredibly hard to ensure we continue to meet our targets in completing the Colne Valley viaduct and the Chiltern tunnel.

Both landmark structures for the new high-speed railway have now been completed and delivered to HS2, slightly ahead of schedule.

It has been an incredible five years from when we arrived onsite to set up our numerous compounds in Hillingdon, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire to prepare for the viaduct and tunnelling works.

Throughout construction we have achieved industry-changing innovations, record-breaking mining feats, and created the longest railway viaduct in Britain.



Align JV and HS2 celebrate the completion of the Chiltern tunnel.

Thank you

We thank you, the residents and the businesses in the communities in which we are working, for your patience and understanding during the construction of the railway.

As we complete our works and move into the next phase of HS2 construction in this area, we have compiled this construction update to show you our progress to date and show you how the future railway is taking shape across the Chilterns, Hertfordshire, and London Borough of Hillingdon.

Christmas working hours

Align JV work sites will close at midday on 23 December 2025 and reopen on 5 January 2026.

Some security and maintenance operatives will be in attendance on our sites during the holiday period, but site activity and site lighting will be minimised to ensure that residents near to our works can enjoy a restful holiday.



Should you have any enquiries over the holiday period please do not hesitate to contact the HS2 Helpdesk on Freephone 08081 434 434, or by email to HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk.

Celebrating the completion of the Colne Valley viaduct

The deck of the viaduct was completed in September 2024 and since then we have been busy finishing the surfaces of the viaduct which spans roads and lakes in the Colne Valley.

In the last year alone over 3,600m³ of concrete have been poured, the installation of 1514 parapets completed, the viaduct has been fitted with high-performance waterproofing membrane protected by a 100mm thick steel fibre reinforced slab, 41,000 troughs placed by mechanical means and lids placed by hand.

As well as the 4m high noise barriers on each side of the viaduct, the internal drainage system and the structural health monitoring system are all now in place, ready for the railway systems contractor to begin fitting the track and electrical systems.



Align JV celebrate the completion of the new viaduct

The Colne Valley viaduct replaces the Tay Bridge as Britain's longest railway bridge.

Colne Valley viaduct landscaping works

The viaduct may have now completed but we are still hard at work restoring the landscape, seeding and planting and shaping the land beneath the Colne Valley viaduct. Our haul roads, site offices and compounds along the trace of the viaduct have now been removed and most of the landscaping, planting and seeding in the Colne Valley will be completed by the end of 2025.

Some residual works such as restoration works around Savay Lake, in the London Borough of Hillingdon, and at Dews Lane near Harvil Road will continue into mid-2025.

Works will also get underway in Spring 2026 to remove temporary traffic lights at Dews Lane, and to install the final maintenance bell-mouths (access) at Moorhall Road and on the A412 North Orbital.

The design and construction of the record breaking 3.4km long viaduct has garnered prestigious industry awards including:

- The Fine Art Commission Trust's Building Beauty engineering award
- British Construction and Infrastructure Award for Project Team Excellence
- New Civil Engineer Bridge Project Team of the Year
- New Civil Engineer Innovation in Carbon Reduction awards

Chiltern tunnel construction complete

Align JV are pleased to announce the construction of the 10-mile Chiltern tunnel, the south portal porous portal structures and the accompanying earthworks has now formally been completed.



A view inside one of the bores of the newly completed Chiltern tunnel

While the TBMs were operating, Align were also constructing 38 cross passages linking the north and southbound tunnels, adits (short passages connecting the tunnel to the ventilation shafts), internal walkways and the porous portal structures at both ends of the tunnel.

More than 450 people worked on the tunnels, which were bored as deep as 80 metres beneath the Chiltern hills.

The Colne Valley western slopes take shape

The 3 million cubic metres of chalk removed during tunnelling have been used to create 127 hectares of new landscape, wildlife habitat and biodiverse grassland on site.

Align moved a record amount of earth this summer to create the embankments, backfill structures and land around the south portal cutting. Drainage, under track crossing works at the south portal site have also been completed as demobilisation continues.



A view towards Harefield from the Colne Valley western slopes.

Over three quarters of the existing site will have been landscaped and reseeded by summer 2026 in preparation for the railway systems contractor to begin works.

Chiltern tunnel ventilation shafts completion

As part of the construction of the Chiltern tunnel we are now close to completing the four ventilation shafts and one intervention shaft above the twin bore tunnel. Works at these sites will all be completed by spring 2026.

Chalfont St Peter ventilation shaft

Below ground level the 65metre deep ventilation shaft intersects the twin tunnels. The tunnel connections are now fully complete. Since the summer the team have completed the plenum cladding, lift installation and the internal works. The site welfare demobilisation is now underway ready for completion, expected by the end of 2025.



Chalfont St Peter ventilation shaft site.

Once the main civil engineering works have been completed, we will be ready to start the process of removing the Temporary Access Road (TAR) which connects the ventilation shaft site directly to the A412 Amersham Road. Future contractors will not require the large numbers of Heavy Goods Vehicles, and so we plan to remove the temporary road in spring to summer 2026. We will come out to speak to local communities about this when we have more information.

Chalfont St Giles ventilation shaft



Chalfont St Giles ventilation shaft site.

After 5 years, construction of the Chalfont St Giles shaft is now complete.

The barn-style headhouse, plenum (for air distribution) and other buildings were all designed to blend into the local landscape began in September 2021 and were completed in October 2025.

At 34.8m deep, Chalfont St Giles is the shallowest shaft on the Chiltern tunnel route. Works began at the site in 2020 with diaphragm wall construction commencing in March 2021, followed by excavation of the shaft beginning in September 2021.

The shaft base and collar were constructed between October 2021 and Aug 2022, ready for TBMs Florence and Cecilia to safely pass. A total of 8,852 cubic metres of material was excavated from the shaft, with the chalk reused to landscape the site. The Temporary Access Road that connects the site to the A413 will be removed later.

Amersham ventilation shaft

The ventilation shaft site at Amersham was completed in December 2025. Hoarding will be removed at the site and seeding and planting will be completed in February 2026.



A view from street level of Amersham ventilation shaft site and the outer wall.

The installation of the impressive flint wall around the boundary of the site began in September and is now completed. Drawing on local flint wall precedents such as St Mary's Church, Amersham, the design team went through a rigorous process in selecting the quarry where the flint would be sourced. The use of flint in the wall and gabions makes reference to both the geology and historic buildings of the Chilterns and secures and screens views of the headhouse.

The small temporary compound and car park opposite the ventilation shaft will remain in place for use by the next contractor but will be restored once railway systems have been installed.

Little Missenden ventilation shaft



Little Missenden ventilation shaft site.

Work is now complete on the cladding of the louvre doors at the headhouse. Installation of the internal lift is currently in progress. Once construction of these structures is complete at Little Missenden, seeding and planting in early 2026 will mark the completion of Align's work at this site.

Chesham Road intervention shaft

At the intervention shaft (which will provide access for emergency vehicles) we have now completed the external work including cladding, drainage and access road.

The lift installation, planting and seeding are currently underway. Site offices and car park have now been removed from the site, ready for completion by the end of 2025.



Chesham Road intervention shaft site.

The Chiltern tunnel north portal

At the north portal site, near Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, the final concrete pour has taken place on the porous portal hoods effectively completing our works on the Chiltern tunnel.



The site team at the Chiltern tunnel north portal celebrate the final concrete pour.

Based on the lessons learned from the installation of the Chiltern tunnel south portal, the north portal porous hood structures were completed in just over twelve months with the first hood pour taking place on 19 September 2024. The completion of both tunnel portals is a significant milestone for all involved on the project.

As a result of the completion of this milestone we were also able to remove the requirement for the concrete batching plant from the site in late November 2025, reducing the number of HGVs on local roads.

South Heath cutting update

Align's works to create a railway cutting and three overhead crossings over the new railway currently extend a further 2km north from the north portal of the Chiltern tunnel.



The railway cutting at South Heath, and the associated railway crossings, will remain under construction by Align JV until 2027. Progress has been rapid on this 2km long stretch of earthworks, but not without its challenges, however we remain on target to complete these works in 2027.

The South Heath cutting team recently completed the last piling works to create the foundations for the GMI 12 footbridge.

View of the bridge over GMI12 at South Heath.

What happens when Align have completed their works at these sites?

With works completed, or close to being completed at most of our sites in the Colne Valley and Chilterns the main and heavy civil engineering construction activity will soon cease.

Once Align JV has completed our main civil engineering works we will enter into a period of “caretaking” until the incoming contractor for railway systems mobilises and is ready to begin the next stage of building the railway.

Our duties and responsibilities at the majority of our worksites will be to maintain site security and to manage the land and assets within the site boundary.

Staff presence and vehicle movements on all sites will be dramatically lower than during peak construction and there will be no noisy or potentially disruptive site activity. Please rest assured that we will still be available to investigate any concerns or issues that you may have regarding any sites in or near your communities.

There will be no noisy or potentially disruptive site activity. Nevertheless, we will still be available to investigate any concerns or issues that you may.

Advanced Works Notice: Closure of GMI/2 Footpath, near Great Missenden from Monday 5 January for 12 months

Align are currently carrying out earthworks in this area to create a deep cutting for the railway. We now need to close the Public Right of Way (PRoW) GMI/2 between Potter Row and A413 London Road for twelve months to progress our works in the railway cutting.

As part of these works Align also need to realign the temporary Site Access Road (SAR) to allow the structural cutting earthworks to continue into the 2026 earthworks season. PRoW GMI/2 interfaces directly with this section of works.

A diversion for pedestrians via the existing PRoW GMI/13 diversion and Frith Hill to access Potters Row will be put in place when we resume works in the area in 2026.

For further information and for a map of the planned closure and diversion route please visit: <https://www.hs2.org.uk/work-items/gmi-2-footpath-closure-great-missenden-buckinghamshire/>

Engaging with local communities

We know that planning and building the railway disrupts the lives of local people. We will always try to do the right thing and reduce disruption as much as we can.

Our specialists work across each section of the route and will keep you informed about work taking place. They will also respond to any question you may have.

Drop-in sessions are held regularly and provide important updates on the project. We encourage attendees to share feedback so we can understand the views of our communities.

We work closely with community groups and local authorities to find ways to mitigate any potential disruption caused by the construction of HS2.

Our teams also support community and school projects to benefit the areas where we work. These include giving back to communities by volunteering, fundraising, or providing materials, labour or investment. Our helpdesk is open 24/7 – ring us on 08081 434 434 if you would like to discuss an idea with our team.



Keep up to date on HS2 activity in your area

To receive notifications of our upcoming activity, sign up for email notifications:

www.engagement.hs2.org.uk/join-mailing-list/

To view more detail on what work is happening near you, visit our interactive map:

www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/map

Find out what engagement events are coming up in your area at:

www.hs2.org.uk/events

Stay informed about the progress of HS2

We are committed to keeping you informed about the planning and progress of HS2.

Please complete the form below to join our mailing list and receive emails about the aspects of the project that you are most interested in.

If you would also like to receive information about current or planned HS2 construction works in our area, please complete our **[local mailing list form](#)** or you scan the QR code.



Follow us on social channels



Keeping you informed

We are committed to keeping you informed about work on HS2. This includes making sure you know what to expect and when to expect it.

Residents' and Construction Commissioner

The independent Residents' and Construction Commissioner oversees and monitors our **community engagement strategy**, making sure we fulfil our commitments to you.

The commissioner monitors the way we manage and respond to complaints about construction and advises members of the public how to make complaints.

The commissioner helps settle disputes involving individuals and organisations that we can't resolve.

You can find the commissioner's report and our responses at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-hs2-commissioner

The commissioner can be contacted on:
hs2commissioner@dft.gov.uk

Property and compensation

You can find out all about HS2 and properties along the route by visiting:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property

Find out if you're eligible for compensation at:

www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2

Holding us to account

If you are unhappy for any reason, you can make a complaint by contacting our HS2 Helpdesk team.

For more details on our complaints process, please visit our website: www.hs2.org.uk/contact-us/how-to-complain

Reference number: HS2-ALIGN-25-1573

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited, registered in England and Wales.


Registered office: Two Snowhill, Snow Hill Queensway, Birmingham B4 6GA.

Company registration number: 06791686.
VAT registration number: 888 8512 56

Contact us

Our HS2 Helpdesk team are available all day, every day. You can contact them by:

 Freephone **08081 434 434**

 Minicom **08081 456 472**

 Email **hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk**

Write to:

FREEPOST
HS2 Community Engagement

Website **www.hs2.org.uk**

To keep up to date with what is happening in your area, visit:

www.hs2inyourarea.co.uk

Please contact us if you'd like a free copy of this document in large print, Braille, audio or easy read. You can also contact us for help and information in a different language.

We are committed to protecting personal information. If you would like to know more about how we use your personal information, please see our privacy notice (www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-speed-two-ltd-privacy-notice)