

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

HS2 Update

Chiltern tunnel, South Heath cutting and Colne Valley viaduct | Summer 2026

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 announcement

On 19 May 2026 the Government released a statement on resetting HS2, including measures to improve delivery, reduce costs and speed up completion.

The Secretary of State for Transport has announced HS2's updated cost and schedule ranges and confirmed the intention to bring HS2 into line with proven leading European high-speed operating standards, by reducing the maximum line speed from 360kph to 320kph.

The statement can be found online at www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hs2-reset

The news that the railway will take longer to build and cost more will be difficult to hear, particularly for the communities living and working alongside our construction sites, who have already shown enormous patience.

However, the rail systems work to install all the necessary systems for the operational railway will not start as soon as previously anticipated.

When will HS2 be completed?

The announcement included the new cost range for HS2 of £87.7 billion to £102.7 billion and that initial services between Old Oak Common, in west London, and Birmingham will start between May 2036 and October 2039.

We do not take lightly the disruption this project has caused, and continues to cause, to people's daily lives.

The full scheme, including both the section south to Euston and Handsacre Junction in the Midlands to the north, is expected to open between May 2040 and December 2043.



What this means for the works programme in your area

As the main civils works for the route in your area is complete, with key remaining works including the landscaping of the Colne Valley western slopes and around the Colne Valley viaduct and the mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) work for the Chiltern tunnel and ventilation shafts, the announcement will not impact the current programme of works.

Chiltern tunnel and ventilation shafts update

Main works have concluded on HS2's 16-km Chiltern tunnel and across all five ventilation and intervention shaft sites. These structures provide essential ventilation and safety access to the Chiltern tunnel below.

Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire

Work on the ventilation shaft is complete and the temporary access road between the A413 Amersham Road and the ventilation shaft has now been removed. Works to restore the landscape are complete and reseeded and maintenance will continue until September when the land will be returned to the landowner.



The A413 Amersham Road following the removal of the temporary access road near Chalfont St Peter in late June 2026.

Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire

The ventilation shaft on Bottom House Farm Lane, near Chalfont St Giles is complete. We are currently carrying out a range of surveys in the area and along the temporary access road to inform the design for the removal of the temporary road. We hope to be able to begin works to restore the rural character of the lane in 2027 at the earliest once a design has been agreed with Buckinghamshire Council.

Amersham, Buckinghamshire

The headhouse, distinctive outer wall, and landscaping and planting have now been completed. The temporary car park and compound on the opposite side of Whielden Lane will remain for the next contractor to use. The replacement of the vehicle restraint barrier and removal of the remainder of the site hoarding along the A404 will commence in autumn 2026.

Little Missenden, Buckinghamshire

The ventilation shaft at Little Missenden was completed earlier this year with internal lifts fitted and planting and seeding of the landscape around the site are now complete.

Chesham Road, Buckinghamshire

Construction is also complete at the Chesham Road intervention shaft, one of the sites providing emergency access to the tunnel below.

Mechanical, electrical and plumbing installation begins at ventilation shaft sites for the Chiltern tunnel

From late summer 2026 we will begin fitting out the ventilation shafts and headhouses at sites along the route of the Chiltern tunnel with the mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) assets that are needed to assist in the running of the railway systems.

Small teams of specialists will begin fitting out each site with utilities, fire-fighting assets, and mechanical infrastructure in readiness for the next contractor to begin the installation of the operational equipment.



An illustration of the complex MEP networks that will be installed in the ventilation shafts and buildings above ground.

The detailed design and programme for these works is still in development but enabling works at Chalfont St Peter ventilation shaft will begin in August 2026.

MEP installation will be rolled out progressively across the other shaft sites and the tunnel portal buildings throughout 2026 and early 2027. The programme at each site will take approximately a year at each site from start to finish, with works at all sites expected to be finished by late 2028.

With the MEP teams predominantly using small vehicles such as vans to access sites, the use of heavy goods vehicles will be very limited. The works will take place within the buildings, and we do not expect noise or vibration to be an issue for nearby residents. We will keep you updated as the design develops.

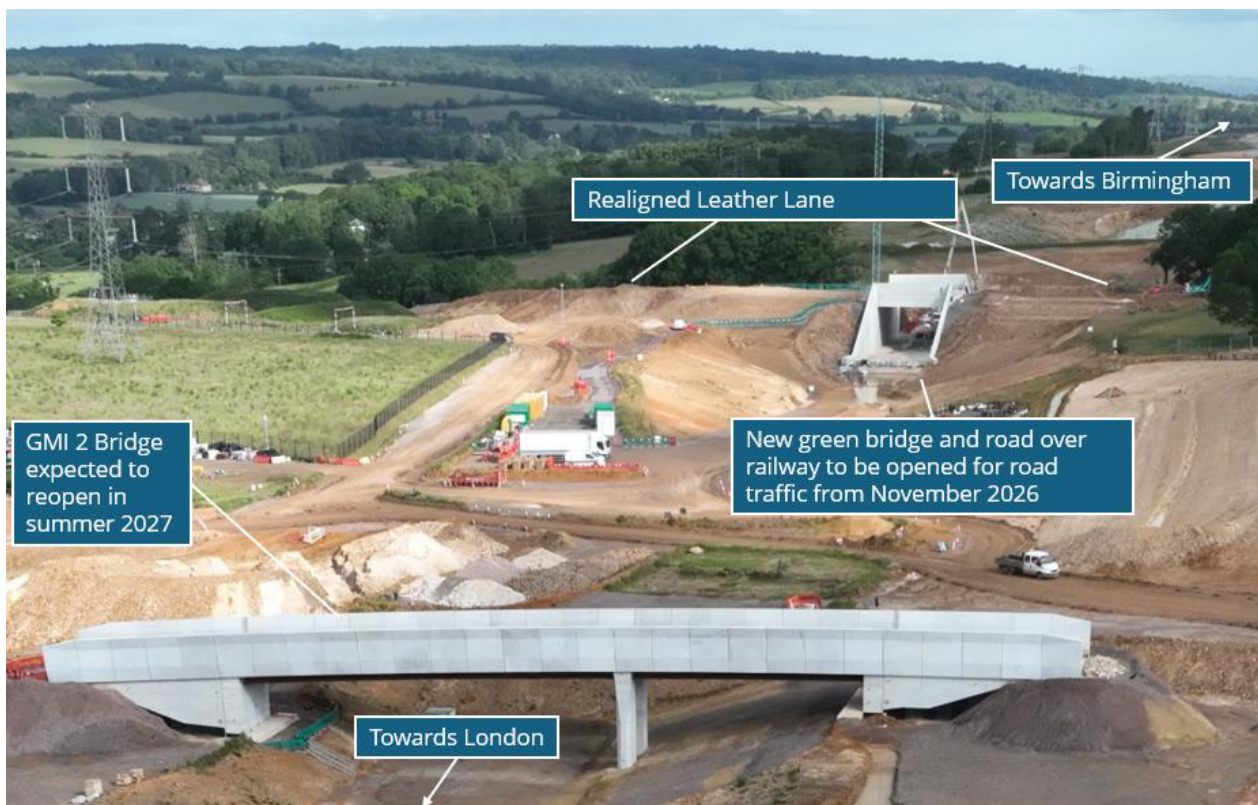
South Heath cutting – progress update

Works to excavate the railway cutting and complete the three bridges over the railway near South Heath in Buckinghamshire are progressing well.

We are on track to reopen Leather Lane in early November. When the road reopens it will restore the connection between A413 London Road and Potter Row / King's Lane and The Lee.

As we enter the final year of main civils work on this section of the railway, we will complete the accommodation bridge and pedestrian bridge that will enable us to reopen public rights of way GMI12 and GMI2.

We will provide updates in upcoming newsletters on the opening dates of these public rights of way when we have more information.



A view of the work site looking towards Wendover from GMI2 (west of Leather Lane).

As earthworks continue into summer 2026, residents may notice earthmoving equipment, lorry movements, and construction teams working across the area as we take advantage of the longer daylight hours to create the cutting and three crucial railway crossings.

We will use land outside the formally designated Limits of Land to be Acquired or Used (Act Limits) to create two temporary stockpiles for the separate storage and management of chalk and topsoil, not exceeding 4 metres in height. This will enable us to work more efficiently within the confines of the South Heath cutting and reduce the amount of lorry movements onsite. We will work carefully to minimise any noise, dust or inconvenience caused to the community during these works. Should you have any concerns please contact the HS2 Helpdesk directly using the details on the last page of this newsletter.

Community events – South Heath cutting drop-in events

Our Community Engagement team will be holding community drop-in sessions at Great Missenden Memorial Centre from 5pm to 7pm on the following dates. Come along to meet our team and find out more about our works in the area:

- Wednesday 16 September from 5pm to 7pm
- Wednesday 18 November from 5pm to 7pm

With our main activities now predominantly in the South Heath cutting we will be focusing our community events in this area, however, please do reach out and get in touch if you want further information on any of the HS2 works in the Colne Valley or the Chiltern tunnel areas.

Chiltern tunnel south portal, Hertfordshire

The main construction site near Maple Cross is being transformed as main civils work and landscaping prepare to make way for MEP and railway systems.

Landscaping, planting and reseeding of most of the land around the Chiltern tunnel south portal and Colne Valley viaduct is now complete. We are continuing to finish the fencing and the network of bridleways and footpaths around the site, and maintenance of the land.



The Chiltern tunnel south portal nestled in the calcareous grassland near Maple Cross, Hertfordshire.

Tilehouse Lane, Hertfordshire set to reopen autumn 2026

Realigned road is due to be completed and opened to the public this autumn.

We are working with Hertfordshire County Council to prepare for the reopening of the road along with some of the public rights of way in the area. Notifications and updates regarding the new routes through and around the HS2 railway will be published in the coming weeks.

Chiltern tunnel south portal site six years on



The Chiltern tunnel south portal site (top of frame) and the approach to the Colne Valley viaduct, June 2026 including permanent pond and planting on chalk placement.



The same viewpoint of the site at the start of Align's works in March 2020.

Plant-life thriving across the Colne Valley western slopes

The range of species demonstrates the success of habitat creation and ecological restoration efforts in the area.

Carefully established using nutrient-poor chalk from the Chiltern tunnel and sown with native wildflower-rich seed mixes, the grassland is developing into a diverse and resilient habitat that supports a wide range of plant species.

Colourful chalk grassland wildflowers such as greater knapweed, kidney vetch, sainfoin and small scabious are flourishing, creating a vibrant landscape throughout the growing season. The increasing diversity of flowering plants will help to attract pollinators, including bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects, which in turn will strengthen the wider ecosystem.



Members of Align's Environment team surveying plant species in the newly created calcareous grassland in 2024.



Lady's bedstraw (pictured to the left) dominates but some of the species identified over the last few months are rare and significant finds. Examples include the first hedgehog clover recorded in Hertfordshire since 1878, spreading hedge parsley, and flowering rush (both nationally rare species), and our first pyramidal orchid. The growth of small scabious onsite is exciting as this is a chalk grassland indicator species, which was not included in the seed mix used when sowing the site, showing that an ecosystem is well underway.



From left to right: Devil's-bit scabious, flowering rush, spreading hedge parsley.

Colne Valley viaduct landscape works



Lakeside planting along the route of the Colne Valley viaduct.

Our remaining works on the Colne Valley viaduct focus on landscape restoration, planting, and removing temporary traffic assets that will no longer be needed now that main works are complete.

We recently completed the removal of the construction site access and resurfacing of the A412 near Denham Water Ski Club, including installation of vehicle restraint barriers. We have also completed the removal and resurfacing of former site entrances at Moorhall Road, and at Dews Lane, Hillingdon.

Thank you for your ongoing patience as we work in your area

We want to say thank you to residents and businesses in the areas in which we work, for your ongoing patience and understanding as we progress to the end of our civils works.

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 questions you may have.

Drop-in sessions are held 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/joinmailing-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 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, as well as how we can help.

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

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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

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(www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-speed-two-ltd-privacy-notice)