

SENUG RESPONDS TO NORTHUMBERLAND LINE DELAY

SENUG, the group that campaigns for better rail services in South East and East Northumberland, has responded to today's announcement that the Northumberland Line – the new Newcastle – Ashington passenger railway – will no longer open this summer. A new target month of December 2024 has been announced, which applies to the first tranche of stations at Ashington, Newsham and Seaton Delaval stations. The remaining stations will follow later.

SENUG Chair Dennis Fancett, who has led the campaign to re-open the line since March 2005 said: “we had of course suspected a delay would be announced. Even though we had previously been advised that “summer” should be taken as including September, there had still been no formal date set, and tickets are not yet on sale. However we have declined to participate in rumour and speculation and thought it best just to share information from official sources as soon as it is released.”

“Whilst we are of course disappointed at the length of delay – hoping it would only have been for a month or so with a late October opening, we take heart from the fact a number of key milestones have been or are being achieved this week. This includes the Newsham Road Bridge and Palmersville underpass both opened in the last few days, and the Blyth-Beside cycle and footbridge over the A189 Spine Road, due to be dropped in place this weekend.”

“We do however query the project management process as it must have been realised long before today that a September opening could not be achieved. Our own calculations were telling us that with a minimum of 8 weeks driver training needed which could not start until the Newsham Bridge was commissioned yesterday, a September date was looking impossible.”

“But the key thing now is to focus on the re-opening. The Northumberland Line will have a transformational effect on South East Northumberland creating access to jobs, training and leisure. So whilst we'll be waiting a few more months, I'm very much looking forward to travelling on the first passenger train when it does finally run, and to celebrating the success of our 19 year campaign”

SENUG is not a single campaign group and has a number of additional rail improvements it is campaigning for. For details or to join visit www.senrug.co.uk.

Ends (382 words)

Notes for Editors

SENUG – The South East Northumberland Rail User Group - is a voluntary pro rail campaign group: contact Dennis Fancett, Chair, tel 07810 353651, e: chair@senug.co.uk, www.senug.co.uk

Northumberland Line announcement of 2nd August 2024 is [here](#).