



Project Wareham

A multi-million pound civil engineering project has been completed to restore and upgrade three miles of former Network Rail line through Dorset. Passenger trains can once again run from the London Waterloo to Weymouth main line at Wareham to Swanage, along the heritage railway branch line.

The project was undertaken to provide an improved daily rail transport link, re-connecting the communities of Swanage and the Isle of Purbeck to the business communities around Poole, Bournemouth and Southampton. This enhancement of the local living and working environment will also help secure the long term commercial viability of the Swanage Railway.

Completed in 2016, Project Wareham has seen in-depth structural condition surveys, refurbishment work and strengthening to bridges; 1200 wooden track sleepers replaced; re-ballasting undertaken; half a mile of track laid; a quarter-mile-long embankment given a major upgrade; undergrowth and drainage cleared along six miles of embankments; and installation of a new set of track points. In addition, 2235m³ of soil has been excavated and a new siding laid so that a new road-rail interchange could be built to enable installation of a new state of the art level crossing at Norden Gates. The civil engineering input totals almost £1million.

Measures were taken to protect the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) during construction and relocate protected species, whilst material movements were carried out utilising the rail network where possible to avoid adding to already congested local roads.

Grant funding was gained from the Coastal Communities Fund, BP and Dorset County Council and Purbeck District Councils supported by the Purbeck Community Rail Partnership. Specialist consultants GB Card & Partners and Beam Consulting were involved in the design and construction, with local contractor Andrews Plant undertaking much of the construction work, supported by staff from Swanage Railway. The project featured in the ICE *This is Civil Engineering* initiative.

A trial service is due to commence in 2017.



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