



# Sittingbourne's Steam Railway

Registered charity no. 1057079

## Draft Press Release

Release date: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### **A step closer to step-free!**

This autumn, the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway has commenced replacing the life-expired platform at Sittingbourne Viaduct station ready for future step-free access.

The project has received a boost from building product supplier Ibstock, a leading UK manufacturer of a diverse range of building products and solutions. The Group has eight core product categories, including flooring & lintels and rail & infrastructure. Ibstock's factory in Sittingbourne generously topped-up an existing grant from Swale Borough Council providing concrete beams for the new beam-and-block concrete platform which sits on top of cast concrete piers and also provided pre-cast concrete platform edging. All these concrete products were delivered free of charge by Seymour Transport Ltd.

The use of pre-cast concrete products was a key enabler for reconstruction of Sittingbourne Viaduct Platform, due to the lack of road access to the station site. By choosing beam-and-block construction it was possible for the materials to be delivered to the Railway's Kemsley Down station, then taken to Sittingbourne

Viaduct by train. From there it could be directly unloaded into position by the Railway's hard-working volunteer workforce, which had already removed the old platform and installed foundations and cast concrete piers for the first section of new platform, generously funded by member donations.

The new platform will be higher and wider than the one it replaces, with the increased width and height intended to enable wheelchairs and pushchairs to be directly driven or pushed up a ramp into the awaiting train. The gap between the platform edge and the train is also being reduced to make boarding easier.

Please see the railway's website (<https://www.sklr.net/>) for information on volunteering or donating. Following the Santa specials during December, the railway will re-open to the public at Easter 2024 for the summer season.

---



Image DSC05148.JPG. Butterley pulp wagon 651 behind ex-RNAD 4w DH Hunslet 6651 of 1965 *Barton Hall* being loaded with Ibstock concrete beams at Kemsley Down ready for transfer to Sittingbourne Viaduct [P. Williams]



Image DSC05159.JPG. Sittingbourne Viaduct platform under construction showing the concrete beams being laid on the cast concrete piers ready for insertion of the concrete blocks and screed [P. Williams]



The new platform at Sittingbourne Viaduct station – Phase 1 is complete and used by the rear two coaches of the train. Phase 2 will be carried out in Autumn 2024. [SKLR]

(End)

---

**Information for the media:**

1. The SKLR is now the longest continuous operator of the railway and is operated and maintained entirely by volunteers.
2. Postal address: SKLR, PO Box 300, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2DZ.

3. Photographs of the Railway can be found on the Press Officer's Flickr account [www.flickr.com/stopem](http://www.flickr.com/stopem) Feel free to use them without a fee but please credit 'www.sklr.net' or 'SKLR'.
4. Press releases can be downloaded from the Railway's website:  
<http://www.sklr.net/latest-news/press-releases/>
5. The Press Officer is available for interviews and recording sessions at the Railway or studios. Other members may be requested for interview through the Press Officer.

Media enquiries to Paul Best, Vice-Chairman and Press Officer,  
telephone 07973 192938 or email [media@sklr.net](mailto:media@sklr.net)