

Sharing Good Practice



Working with our lineside neighbours – Scout Hut

The Scout Hut project will stabilise two embankments that have been subject to ongoing movement and failures causing disruption to passengers. The project consists of a total of over 350 linear metres of a sheet piled retaining wall, with the sheets varying in depth between eight to 12.5 metres. Noisy works, including piling and the use of heavy machinery, needed to take place directly behind the lineside neighbour's back gardens. Due to COVID-19 restrictions many of the residents are at home during the day. BAM Nuttall Ltd is the Principal Contractor on this project.

Key learning points:

- Many of the daytime activities would not usually be of concern to lineside neighbours during normal times; however, with many people working from home or home schooling their children they were much more sensitive to daytime noise and disruption.
- The importance of explaining why the works are necessary, listening to residents' concerns and being seen to take action where appropriate.

What the team did:

- Informed the residents what was happening before work commenced. This included inviting residents to a site meeting where drawings and plans were explained.
- Frequent updates and consulting the residents on what time of day suited them best for the noisiest works. The works methodology was also changed to limit the hammering of piles to three hours per day to reduce the duration of noise.
- Let the residents know when the noisiest works would take place so that they could plan to go out for shopping or exercise during those times. Hearing protection was also provided to all residents.
- Listened to residents' concerns and making positive changes when it was possible to do so. Residents were asked for their ideas about replanting the embankments, which was of concern.
- Used additional control measures to reduce noise such as eco-blankets on the hoarding and boundary fencing. Battery powered generators were also used to reduce noise levels.
- Tried to reduce to a minimum any unscheduled changes to the briefed plan.
- Worked with the local scouts to create additional hardstanding on their land.

Outcome:

While the local residents still have concerns over the final look of the embankment, they are fully engaged and understand why the project needs to take place. There have been no formal complaints about the disruption that has been caused and the residents feel able to contact the project team directly if they have any concerns. Network Rail's reputation has been enhanced as a direct result of the team's efforts.

